



**DIOCESE OF TRURO**  
The Revd Bill Stuart-White  
Rural Link Officer  
01208 816431  
billstuartwhite@btinternet.com

# Rural Ramblings

**November 2009**

Please note the change of my contact details, subsequent to my change of parishes:

Address: **8 Winwell Field, Wadebridge, PL27 6UJ**  
Tel: **01208 816431**  
Email: **billstuartwhite@btinternet.com**

I continue as Rural Link Officer, but will from now on have only the equivalent of one day per week assigned to the role. Please, though, do not hesitate to contact me if you think I may be of any help or if there are issues which concern you.

## RURAL ISSUES GROUP

I hope to establish a Diocesan **Rural Issues Group**, comprising both ordained and lay people who have an interest or a stake in what is happening in the Cornish Countryside. This Group will be a focus for discussion and action and will, I hope, help me to focus my efforts more clearly on issues of real concern. Ideally I would like to have at least one representative from each Deanery, and I will be writing to Rural Deans/Synod Secretaries to that effect. If you, or someone you know, might be interested, especially if you have some area of specialist knowledge, I'd be pleased to hear from you.

## Bovine TB update

The government has again ruled out a cull of badgers to help control bovine TB in England, though both the Lib Dems and the Conservatives have indicated that they would allow a badger cull if in power, though farmers may be asked to contribute to the cost. The annual report of the government's Chief Veterinary Officer, Nigel Gibbons, highlighted the devastating impact TB was having on the industry and stated that £94.7m had been spent on attempts to control the disease during 2008. Provisional year-end statistics showed an 18.9% increase in the number of new incidents recorded in Great Britain during the year compared to 2007, the bulk of these in the west of England and in Wales.

This is undoubtedly the single most important issue facing Cornish farmers, and current Government policy, politically expedient though it may be, will ensure that it continues to have devastating effects on animals (cattle **and** badgers... as well as deer, cats and others) and people for many years to come. NB the "Stress and Loss" Report from Farm Crisis Network highlighted in the September Ramblings. When the General Election is announced, I hope that this issue can be the focus of searching questions to all prospective parliamentary candidates.

## Sustainable Post Offices

Few of us will need convincing of the crucial role that Post Offices play in the life of Rural Communities, and the recent round of closures has been felt hard in a number of Cornish villages (and towns). *How may a sustainable network of Post Offices be developed which will serve a useful function well into the C21<sup>st</sup>,*

*and not be dependent on the £150 million state subsidy that currently props up loss-making branches?*

That is the question addressed by the Federation of Small Businesses, which proposes a radical structural and financial overhaul of the network. This is a summary of the report (to be found in full at [www.fsb.org.uk/frontpage/assets/postofficereport.pdf](http://www.fsb.org.uk/frontpage/assets/postofficereport.pdf))

"The Post Office® should be transferred into a small business hub with a dedicated business desk at each branch, with specially trained staff and mobile Business Link services. There should be dedicated advertising facilities to help small businesses reach other small local businesses and potential customers, Wi-Fi, meeting rooms and a full range of financial services, including business banking. The Post Office® network is also a community hub essential for the Government's sustainable communities' agenda, the only national network that encourages intergenerational contacts and generates footfall for surrounding small businesses."

Any thoughts?

## A RURAL MANIFESTO

In the run-up to an expected 2010 General Election, the Rural Services Network is planning to publish a Rural Manifesto urging political parties to give a fair deal to people living in the countryside. A consultation paper claims that funding problems mean rural residents often enjoy a lower standard of service than urban dwellers. The paper focuses on ten key areas of concern for the countryside:

- Rural proofing – designing policies that don't harm the countryside
- The rural economy after the recession
- Supporting rural communities
- Central government funding formulae
- Safeguarding small rural schools
- Affordable rural housing
- Healthcare in the countryside
- Rural transport and safer roads
- Digital Britain in the countryside
- Fuel poverty in the countryside

Network chief executive Graham Biggs said: "The consultation paper provides an important opportunity for all people in the countryside to start to make their voices heard."

***I am planning to submit a response. If you have any thoughts you'd like included on any of the above issues, please let me know.***

**Worship Resources from the Arthur Rank Centre (ARC) website:** There are resources relating to Remembrance Sunday, Stir Up Sunday and Advent (many of them All-age) at: [www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk) click on "find rural worship resources"

**Bill Stuart-White**

