

The Scottish Rural Network (SRN) encourages rural development by sharing information, ideas and good practice, with a large part of that brief delivered through our communications work. The SRN have a unique audience of people and organisations who live - or have a stake in - Scotland's rural areas.

If you have something to communicate to a rural audience, we offer unique expertise, access and linkages in Scotland and beyond.

2018 was one of the busiest years in the SRN's history, as we continued to distribute news and information, produce engaging content, deliver landmark events and forge new links. Partnership working is at the heart of everything we do, as we collaborate, lead, link up and add value across the rural economy.

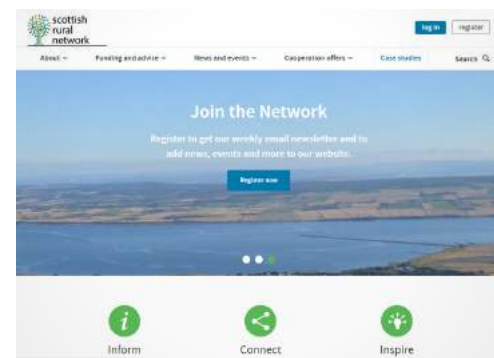
Channels and Audience

After three years in its current format, the SRN will be putting their website through focused user testing at the start of 2019 as we look to streamline the registration process and ensure that our audience is finding the right information at the right time in a modern context.

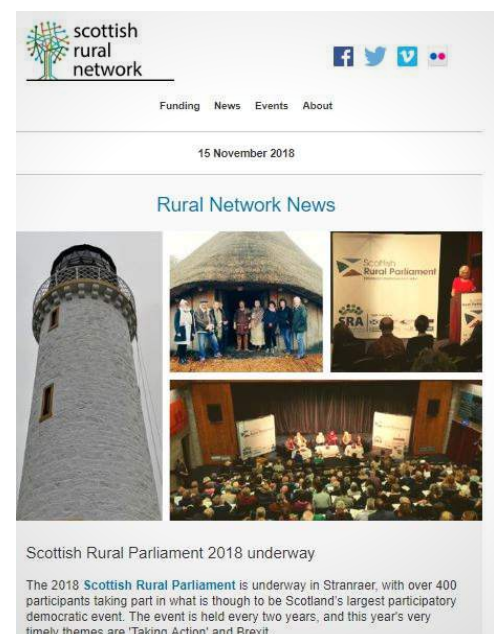
The implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation posed challenges in 2018, yet we still achieved audience growth across the board. We experimented with new channels, with the launch of an Instagram account.

The SRN use our digital channels not just to disseminate information, but to maintain and grow our network through regular contact and collaborative messaging, both within government and externally. We collect insights and feedback from our audience, and use different platforms to reach distinct audience groups.

Throughout 2018 we placed the focus on digital content and materials produced in-house by our skilled team, with no content commissioned externally in the 2018 financial year to date.



Top: Scottish Rural Network website
Bottom: Rural Network News



SRN website <https://ruralnetwork.scot>

The SRN website offers news about rural development issues, information about funding opportunities, cooperation offers, case studies and events. It hosts a LEADER LAG only section with dedicated resources, and is the portal through which LEADER Expression of Interest forms are submitted.

45,683 sessions**36,207** unique visits

SRN visits by country 2018

SRN News<https://ruralnetwork.scot/user/register>

Weekly e-newsletter featuring rural development news, information on SRDP and other funding schemes, events and more. Grew subscribers in 2018 despite becoming compliant with GDPR legislation. Most read newsletter 2018: Feb 14 issue featuring the launch of the Rural Innovation Support Service.

Subscribers: **1,415**

in 35 countries

*(10% growth Jan – Dec 2018)***LEADER News**

Monthly e-newsletter for LEADER LAG staff.

Subscribers: **264***(4% growth Jan – Dec 2018)***Facebook** <https://facebook.com/scotruralnet>

SRN use Facebook to connect with people and stakeholders. It is our most popular platform for video. Post with greatest reach in 2018: SRN's 'Amaze me LEADER' Video case study (appeared in 20,082 people's timelines)

Page likes: **1601***(8% growth Jan – Dec 2018)*Video views in 2018 to date
(8 December): **13,000****Twitter** <https://twitter.com/scotruralnet>

SRN post and share regularly on Twitter with bite-sized pieces of information, links and live-tweets from events.

Followers: **5853***(7% growth in 2018)***Instagram** <https://instagram.com/scottishruralnetwork>

SRN launched an Instagram account in April 2018, for photo and video updates, using it to engage with a younger audience.

Followers: **143***(as of 8 December 2018)***Vimeo** <https://vimeo.com/scotruralnetwork>

The bulk of SRN's video content has a home on the Vimeo platform.

Views: **7,611***(Jan – December 8 2018)***Yammer**

The SRN use Yammer to engage in discussion with LEADER LAGs and the LEADER thematic working groups.

The **11th OECD Rural Development Conference** came to Edinburgh from 9-12 April 2018. The SRN support unit led the UK in the organisation and the execution of the event.

442 delegates from 27 countries descended on Scotland's capital to discuss how innovation can help rural areas respond to the challenges of globalisation, shifting trading patterns, and growing inequality. We dedicated significant staff resources to the organisation of the event, providing expertise and linkages to organise a stimulating programme of speakers and workshops, scoping and identifying the venue, arranging activities and social events and providing logistical support. We also led a multi-national group of stakeholders to coordinate communications, helping boost the profile and impact of the conference through a social media campaign, media liaison and video coverage.

High-profile guests at the event included **European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland Lord Duncan**, who participated in a press conference, panel discussions, a ministerial breakfast and bi-laterals.

The conference ensured that the UK will be able to shape and influence engagement with the OECD Rural Working Party. Scotland's work on social innovation in rural areas received international recognition, resulting in an increased participation of rural Scottish stakeholders in European activities as part of ongoing work on Smart Villages. Scottish Ministers also received an offer to work in cooperation across tourism, energy and culture from the Slovenian Government.

At the closing session of the Conference, the **Edinburgh Policy Statement on Enhancing Rural Innovation** was adopted. You can watch a short video on what went into organising the conference and what it meant to Scotland here:

<https://bit.ly/2SDtXpl>

The rest of SRN's video coverage of the event is here:

<https://vimeo.com/album/5144311>



Worked with:

OECD, Scottish Government (Rural Communities Policy Team, Office of Fiona Hyslop MSP, Comms Greener, ARE Comms, SG Modern Apprentices), The Scotland Office, DEFRA, Wales Rural Network, Rural Network NI, Rural Development Programme for England, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Jane Craigie Marketing, European Network for Rural Development, European Commission

"It was an absolute pleasure to work with the Scottish team. We found the level of support, commitment and professionalism, and just "getting on with it with a smile" very impressive. We saw again the importance and challenges for all sides in large complex multi-partner events like this of identifying who is doing what and when." - European Commission, Deputy Head of Unit

2.9M

**TWITTER TIMELINES
REACHED WITH
TWEETS FROM THE
OECD RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE 2018**

Communications activity

Film: River Margins Enhancement Project

Film produced by SRN to support the ARE Comms Agri-Environmental Climate Scheme (AECS) promotional campaign.
Link: <https://bit.ly/2VBzclp>

Film: Gartlea Farm

Second AECS case study film to support the ARE Comms campaign on the Gartlea Farm conservation plan.
Link: <https://bit.ly/2CU34Z6>

Film: Beef Efficiency Scheme

Film on the Beef Efficiency Scheme tagging and carbon audit process.
Link: <http://bit.ly/2C6EliU>

Launch of the Rural Innovation Support Service

The Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) launched in March 2018 supported by SRN comms.
Link: <https://bit.ly/2FfDKhX>

Release of the LEADER Communications Toolkit

Delivered to all LAGs, after collecting their input. Link: <https://bit.ly/2CV4Gll>

SRDP Annual Strategic Communications Plan

Delivered to the Rural Development Operational Committee (RDOC) and European Commission.
Link: <https://bit.ly/2CXmvQP>

Worked with

ARE Comms, Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS), Scottish Natural Heritage

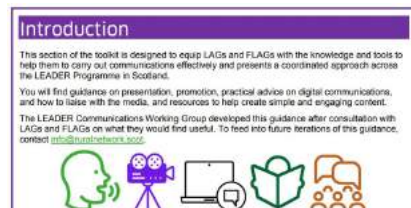
ARE Comms, Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS), Scottish Natural Heritage

Beef Efficiency Scheme

Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS)

LEADER Team, LEADER LAGS

SRDP schemes & stakeholders, ARE Comms, SRDP Team, Rural Development Operational Committee (RDOC)





In the Spring and Summer of 2018, SRN put the focus on the youth of rural Scotland as part of our work to tie in with **Scotland's Year of Young People 2018**.

We partnered with project managers Jane Craigie Marketing and a host of other stakeholder organisations on the **Rural Youth Project** - the largest exercise in collecting the views of rural young people (18-28) ever carried out in Scotland, producing a detailed report that outlined their views, aspirations and needs.

The aim was to increase understanding of how to support young people in rural areas and ensure that they continue to settle and work in them, long-term. The results of the survey were announced at the two-day 'Rural Ideas Festival' in August, supported by SRN and funded by Perth and Kinross LEADER. Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment Mairi Gougeon attended the event, supported by SRN and the Rural Communities Policy Team.

SRN provided the linkages that ensured that the insights gained through the Rural Youth Project were inputted into the policy-making process through the **National Council of Rural Advisors**, informing part of their blueprint for Scotland's rural economy. You can view the report and follow the work of the project here: ruralityouthproject.com

Then, throughout August, SRN ran the **Rural Youth August** social media campaign, producing and sharing videos, interviews and features that shone a light on Scotland's rural young people. We profiled exciting rural youth projects, interviewed young people and decision makers and reported from inspiring events such as Amaze me LEADER. Throughout the month we attracted a social media reach (Twitter and Facebook timelines) of over 100,000, and increased followers among a younger audience, forming new links with rural stakeholders. View content from the campaign here: <https://ruralnetwork.scot/ruralityouthaugust-round>



Top: Rural Youth Ideas Festival goes in August 2018

Worked with:

Jane Craigie Marketing, LEADER LAGS (Perth & Kinross, Dumfries & Galloway), LANTRA, Rural Youth Europe, National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, Young Farmers, Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Enterprise, The Scottish Farmer, YouthLink Scotland, TAP, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, APEX, Track 2 Train, Conservation Volunteers, YOYP18

"Track 2 Train was very pleased to take part in this year's 'Rural Youth August' campaign. The Scottish Rural Network team gave us the chance to showcase our project and produced an excellent video that we hope gives a flavour of the work we do. Everyone involved was professional and supportive throughout the process and made the experience a real pleasure."

- Dodie Piddock, Project coordinator, Track 2 Train

12,391

FACEBOOK TIMELINES REACHED WITH OUR AMAZE ME LEADER VIDEO FOR RURAL YOUTH AUGUST



Communications activity

Rural Innovation Support Service Film – speeding up dairy breeding

SRN produced this short film on the work of the first RISS group, working together on a project to improve dairy cow breeding.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/278451534>

Rural Touring Forum Profile

Profile of the Rural Touring Forum, who bring the arts to remote rural areas. Interviewed at their Edinburgh Fringe event.

Link: <https://bit.ly/2H09eeh>

Presentation on SRN video work

SRN gave a presentation on their video work at the ENRD communications workshop in Prague.

Link: <https://bit.ly/2C6f889>

Released subtitled versions of the ‘SRDP on Film’ series

Through 2017 SRN released 20 short films featuring SRDP funded projects.

We released subtitled versions in 2018. <http://bit.ly/2GZQuvF>

Royal Highland Show vox pops

SRN recorded interviews with young people for the NCRA.

Link: <https://bit.ly/2ACjV12>

Worked with

Rural Innovation Support Service, Kirvennie Farm, Dourie Farm, Glenapp Estate, Scottish Agricultural Organisation Association (SOAS)

Rural Touring Forum, Edinburgh International Fringe

European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), EU National Rural Networks

SRDP funded projects across Scotland

National Council of Rural Advisors



September - December



In Autumn/Winter 2018 the SRN worked with partners to deliver two of the most important stakeholder events in the rural policy calendar. In September the SRN partnered with Transport Scotland, Scottish Rural Action and transport expert Jenny Milne of JML Consulting to deliver the **Rural Transport Convention** in Inverness. This two-day event gathered together people living in rural areas, private and public sector organisations and leading policy makers to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by transport in rural areas across a series of workshops and talks. The outputs of the conference will directly feed into the National Transport Strategy review, and **Transport Minister Michael Matheson** was in attendance to give a keynote speech on the Government's plans. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and discussions are underway about holding a similar event in the future, with several new partnerships formed between attendees at the event. Watch out short film from the event here: <http://bit.ly/2RjYBrx>

The **Scottish Rural Parliament 2018** saw around 400 people from across rural Scotland gather in Stranraer for three days of debate, presentations, workshops, project visits and more. The SRN helped organise the event, putting together the programme of project visits by identifying local businesses and enterprises that were making a positive change in the rural community. We also helped promote the event and encourage registrations from a cross section of rural Scotland, providing logistical support and social media coverage across the three days. The Scottish Rural Innovators Awards were announced at the event, and the SRN supplied several films for a cinematic showcase. Post-event, a policy statement on Brexit was produced. You can view outputs from the event here: <https://scottishruralparliament.org.uk/srp2018>



Top: Scottish Rural Parliament, Stranraer
Bottom: SRP project visit, organised by SRN



Worked with:
Transport Scotland, Scottish Rural Action, JML Consulting, Scottish Rural Action, Rural Communities Policy Team, Logan Botanic Gardens, Crafty Gin Distillery, Portpatrick Community Council

"I loved this event, I made some great contacts and learned about some key issues for rural communities, as well as thinking about the needs of individuals from all stages of life. Really great event, hoping there will be another in the next 2 years!"
- **Rural Transport Convention attendee**

"It is amazing opportunity to network and really helps to open up new doors - it is not that often you have so many community organisations and individuals together."
- **Scottish Rural Parliament attendee**

82%

OF ATTENDEES FOUND THE SCOTTISH RURAL PARLIAMENT EXTREMELY OR VERY VALUABLE

71%

ATTENDEES RATED THE ORGANISATION OF THE RURAL TRANSPORT CONVENTION AS "EXCELLENT". 0% RATED IT AS POOR

4.4/5

AVERAGE RATING GIVEN TO THE PROJECT VISITS ORGANISED BY THE SRN AT THE SCOTTISH RURAL PARLIAMENT





Communications activity

Film: Castlebank Park case study

The Lanark Community Development Trust have opened a LEADER funded horticultural centre at Castlebank Park. Link: <http://bit.ly/2ACknMM>

Wild Oak Woods Eco campsite

The Wild Oak Woods Eco-campsite project will create a low carbon tourist facility in a hidden valley within the Stewartry National Scenic Area.

Link: <https://bit.ly/2CXqVHy>

SRN Newsletter Islands Special

To promote the work of the new Islands Team. Link: <https://bit.ly/2VziDNr>

Promoted government survey on air departure tax in the Highlands

SRN promotion boosted responses to over 6,000. Link: <https://bit.ly/2VFi84b>

Hosted visits from Danish LAG and Estonian farmers

The SRN hosted visits from Danish and Estonian delegations, organising visits to projects and businesses across rural Scotland. Link: <https://bit.ly/2VzjV6a> & <http://bit.ly/2Cjnr0j>

ENRD Rural Inspiration Awards

SRN coordinated nominations for the ENRD Rural Inspiration Awards to find ten of the most inspiring rural projects and enterprises in Scotland. Link: <https://bit.ly/2QuCSbi>

Worked with

Lanarkshire LEADER,
Lanark Community
Development Trust

Dumfries and
Galloway LEADER,
Wild Oaks Campsite

Scottish Islands
Team

Scottish Government
Devolved Tax Team

Jammerbugt-
Vesthimmerland
LAG,
Estonian
government

ENRD, Rural
enterprises and
businesses across
Scotland (over 40
applicants)

