



West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum presents a one day Conference

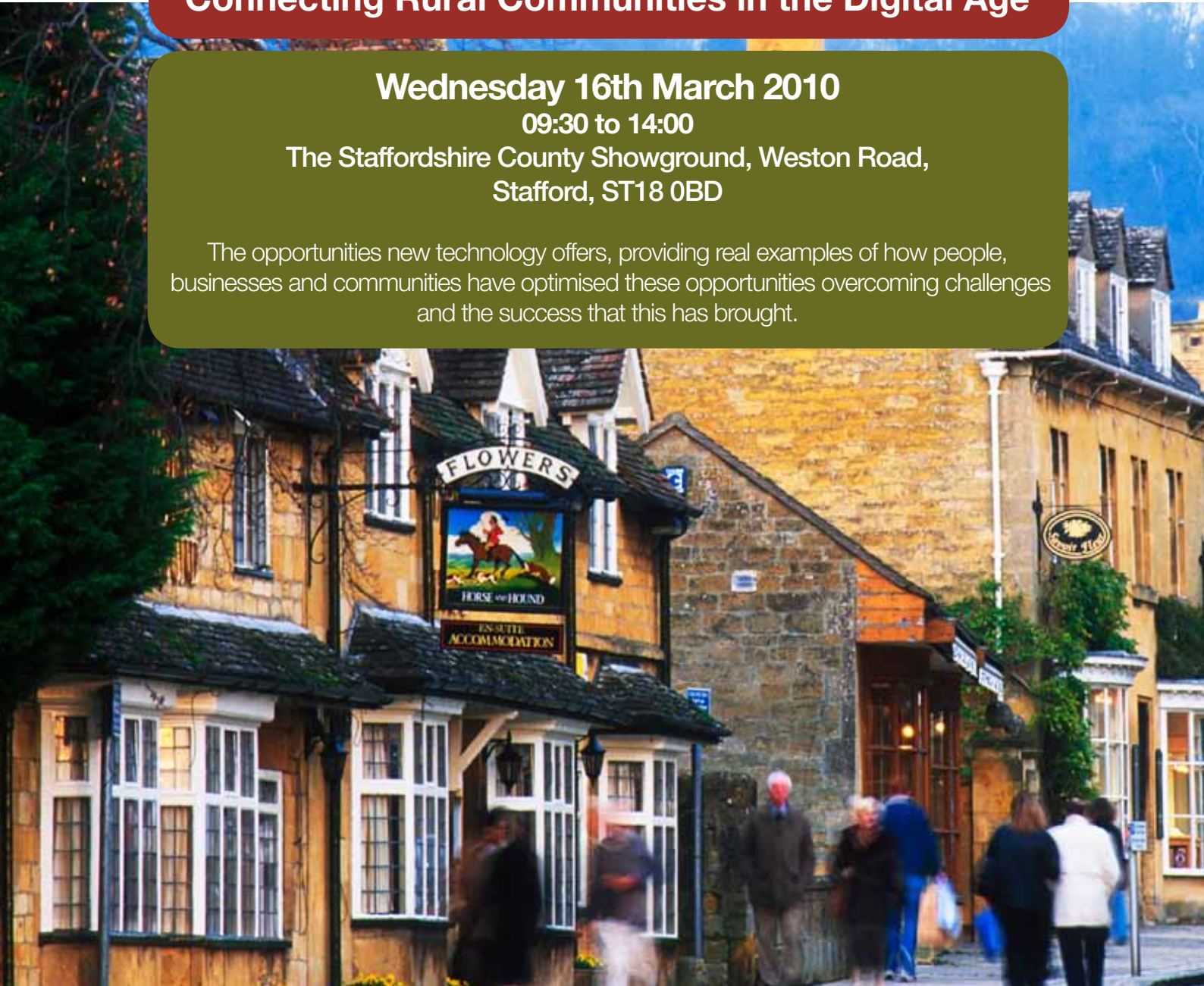
Connecting Rural Communities in the Digital Age

Wednesday 16th March 2010

09:30 to 14:00

**The Staffordshire County Showground, Weston Road,
Stafford, ST18 0BD**

The opportunities new technology offers, providing real examples of how people, businesses and communities have optimised these opportunities overcoming challenges and the success that this has brought.



Please cascade to your networks for their attention.

Please note that the conference is free to attend and includes a regionally sourced lunch and refreshments. Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.



The event is being sponsored by the Government Office for the West Midlands, and West Midlands Regional Assembly.

**West Midlands
Regional Assembly**

Building a Stronger Rural West Midlands

Message from the Chairman West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum

This will be the 7th West Midlands Regional Rural Affairs Forum annual rural conference some 18 months after the last event in 2008. Each time we try to reflect on one of the major current issues affecting rural areas. This time we propose looking at “Connecting Rural Communities in the Digital Age” - looking at communities, and discussing the opportunities new technology offers. We aim to provide real examples of how people, businesses and communities have optimised these opportunities overcoming challenges and the success that this has brought. It is important that we capture and build on shared good practice to help our communities come out of the recession stronger and fitter than ever. I would like to invite you to share your story, bring your concerns and your successes – so that we can share and enable a wider audience to benefit.

This is an important time of change to be debating the future prosperity of the Region, please come and join us for this exciting event.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Forster', enclosed in a white rounded rectangular box.

Bob Forster

Chairman West Midlands Regional Rural Affairs Forum

Conference Programme

	Topic	Summary of session	Speaker
	Introduction by WMRAF Chair	Brief introduction by Chair	Bob Forster
10:05 to 10:10	Introducing Roger Phillips – AWM Rural Board Member, Joint Chair of the Joint Strategy & Investment Board as well as Vice Chair of the WMLB	Eric Smith to introduce Roger Phillips	Facilitator - Eric Smith, Radio Shropshire
10:10 to 10:30	Key Note Speech	The Minister will deliver a key note speech on current topical rural issues	Dan Norris, Minister for Rural Affairs and Environment
10:30 to 10:50	Welsh Assembly Government's Deep Rural Project – using evidence to develop rural policy	Lessons from Welsh experience - Presenting an overview of the findings from recent research carried out with local authorities, businesses and communities; providing an insight for developing policy and promoting successful implementation	Terri Thomas, Head of Countryside Policy Division at The Welsh Assembly
10:50 to 11:25	Breakout sessions. Attendees to select one of the three sessions:	Personal experiences & Case Studies from different community perspectives	
	1. Enhanced futures for young people	From a young person's perspective: the opportunities enhanced technology has provided for education, work, socialising – in rural community	Bryce Mackellar
	2. Business the Virtual Way	Business perspective: Looking at the business opportunities. How broadband /digital media helped, challenges she overcame, other opportunities	Christine Hope
	3. Broadband - widening horizons for older generations	From an older person's perspective: how broadband has helped overcome some of the challenges for older people in a rural community	Magda Prail
11:25 to 11:45	Coffee Break – opportunity to see key point from the breakout seminars		
11:45 to 12:10	BT Openreach - Rural Areas and Broadband	Explanation of how broadband provision works, community provision, what's in the pipeline	Ian Binks
12:10 to 12:30	Community Media - a creative approach to strengthening rural communities	Telling the story of how rural media have worked with communities used enhanced technology, and helped articulate the community voice, encouraging greater community engagement, signposting skills...	Rural Media – Nick Millington
12:30 to 12:45	Speaker Q & A session	A chance for delegates to pose questions to a panel	Speakers
12:45 to 13:00	Chair summary and thank you		Bob Forster
Please complete and return your evaluation sheets			
Networking Lunch			

Travel and directions

**The Staffordshire County Showground,
Weston Road, Stafford,
ST18 0BD**

By Road

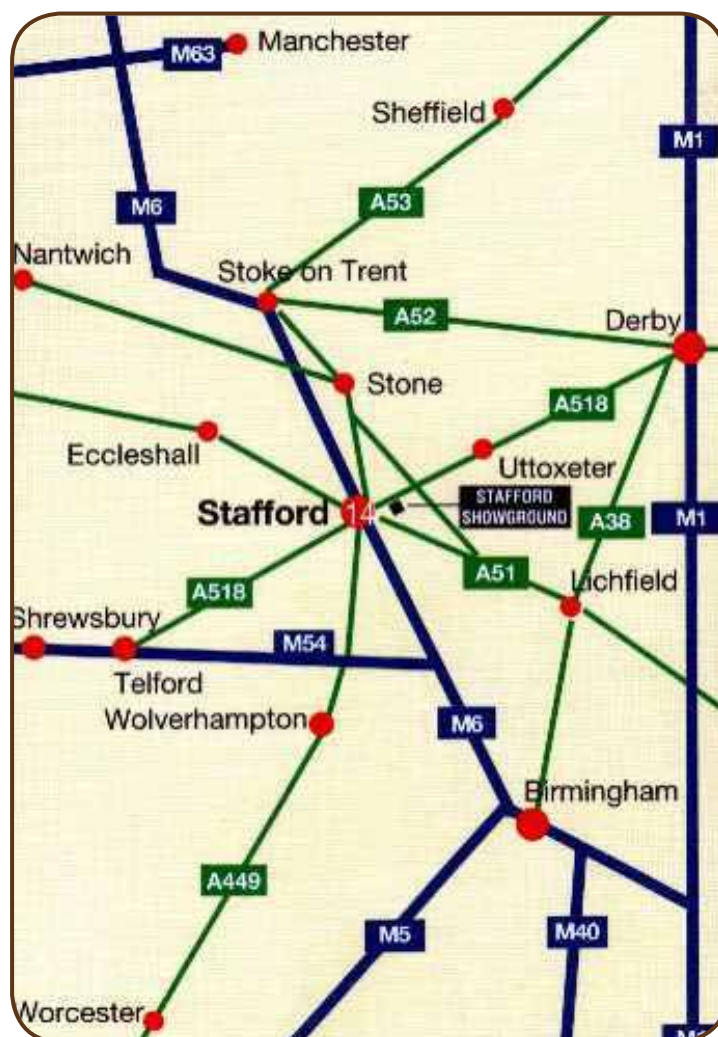
The Showground is situated on the A518 Stafford to Uttoxeter road some 4 miles from Stafford. Drivers from either the North or South using the M6 motorway should exit at junction 14 and follow the signs for the County Showground.

By Rail

The Showground is just 4 miles from Stafford Railway Station. The station is situated on the West Coast Main Line offering a direct service to London Euston with a journey time of approximately one and three quarter hours. It also offers direct services to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Manchester, Liverpool and Scotland. There is a bus link from the station to the Showground as well as a taxi rank.

By Bus

The Showground is served by route X1 Stafford to Hanley. The X1 bus departs from Stafford Railway Station and Hanley Bus Station with intermediate stops at Stoke Railway Station, Trentham Gardens and Stone. For further details contact the public transport information service on 0870 608 2 608 or www.traveline.org.



For further information:

Please visit the West Midlands Rural Network website:

www.ruralnetworkwm.org.uk

or contact Rebecca Mackay 0121 352 5371 at GOWM.



West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum

Connecting Rural Communities in the Digital Age

one-day conference

The Staffordshire County Showground, Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0BD,
Tuesday 16th November 2010

BOOKING FORM

Title.....Forename.....

Surname.....Job title.....

Address.....

Post-code.....Tel.....

Email address.....

Special Requirements (please give further details).....

Breakout sessions (please number 1-3 in order of preference, 1 being first choice)

Enhanced futures for young people Business the Virtual Way Broadband - widening horizons for older generations

To register for the conference:

Please complete and return this booking form to Rebecca Mackay

Government Office for the West Midlands
5 St Philips Place
Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 2PW
0121 352 5362

Reply no later than the 1 March 2010

Exhibition Stands and Posters: If you wish to have an exhibition stand please contact Rebecca Mackay on 0121 352 5371 rebecca.mackay@gowm.gsi.gov.uk. Please be aware that exhibition space is limited.

Data Protection:

The Information you have provided will be stored electronically on the West Midlands Rural Network database and may be used to inform you of other rural events. Your details will also be retained on the GOWM database and discarded following the Conference.

Please tick ✓ the box for consent to our: Retaining your details on our database and Informing you of other rural events.