



NUFFIELD
Farming Scholarships

**2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIPS TRUST
AT P&J LIVE, ABERDEEN
ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 5.30-7.00 pm
MINUTES**

Serial	Agenda
1.	Welcome. The Chair welcomed all attending.
2.	Apologies for Absence. It was noted that the Director had a list of those unable to attend and for whom apologies were recorded.
3.	To remember Members who have died during the year. The Members of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust stood in silence to remember those who had died during the last year.
4.	Minutes of the 2024 AGM of the Trust held on Thursday 21 November 2024 The Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Trust were approved: Proposer: Lucy MacLennan; Seconder David Rose: with a clear majority voting in favour.
5.	Matters arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting There were no matters arising.
6.	2025 Trustee Report Tom Rawson, Chair, briefed Members on the 2025 Trustee Report which is designed to give greater transparency and demonstrate the progress and achievements of the Trust over the last 12 months. <i>We hope this Trustee Report will give you a clear picture of what has been achieved and answer any questions you may have.</i> <i>In December last year, alongside our regular Committees, we established a number of Trustee-led Task and Finish working groups; Sustainability, Fundraising, Alumni, Next-Gen and Impact. Each reporting into a main Committee. A particularly positive development has been aligning Board meetings with scholar training events, giving Trustees the opportunity to meet scholars informally during breaks and lunch. This year, the Board met at the Kennel Club, London during the March Pre-CSC, and at the Crowne Plaza, Leeds during September's Presenting Scholar Training. You'll also see Trustees serving as session chairs during the Conference, many have been supporting their presenting scholars over the past two months. I would like to thank all Trustees for their continued dedication and commitment over the past year.</i> <i>Office Team; Our thanks go to the small but exceptional Office Team; Rupert Alers-Hankey, Claire Laidler, Charlotte Merson, and Lindsay Woods. All of whom work part-time yet deliver an incredible amount for Nuffield. They are supported by Claire Bragg, who manages the accounts, and Steph Rogers, who recently joined us to lead on PR and social media. Together, they have ensured the smooth running of the Trust's many operations and events.</i> <i>Regional and Study Groups; It is encouraging to see the Regional and Study Groups continuing to act as a strong pipeline for potential scholars. This year, we held a productive briefing session with Regional Chairs before the mock interviews, and Trustees and the Director have attended most of the Nuffield show receptions. Personally, I particularly enjoyed attending Balmoral and the Great Yorkshire Show. We've also seen the creation of new study groups; the Aquaculture Study Group, Oldacre Group, and Food for Health Group, further strengthening our network.</i> <i>Membership; In September 2024, Trustees approved an increase in the annual donation from £120 to £150. We also introduced monthly direct debit payments and new options for members aged 70 and over to pay a lifetime donation of £1,500, or to prepay 10 years at £1,500. Implementing these changes, alongside switching to a new direct debit provider, has been operationally challenging, and I want to thank everyone who has already made their contribution. However, only 250 members currently make their annual</i>

donation, which is disappointing. This remains an important opportunity for members to give back and help sustain the Trust.

Nuffield International; I continue to represent the Trust on the Nuffield International Board, which meets in person during the CSC each March. The Nuffield International Board sets both the levy that each new scholar pays and the delegate cost for CSC attendance.

Strategic Plan 2024–2029; Our five-year Strategic Plan sets out clear objectives and key actions. It is reviewed annually at the June Away Day and adapted as needed. The four key objectives are:

1. *Energise the Groups and Alumni* – to ensure every scholar feels part of a vibrant community providing valued events, networking, learning, and celebration.
2. *Expand the Scholar Programme* – to ensure the industry continues to benefit from a growing number of high-calibre scholars who drive positive change.
3. *Secure the Trust's Future* – through effective long-term fundraising, collaboration, diversity, and leadership in sustainability.
4. *Build the Nuffield Brand* – enhancing our reputation and reach across the farming, food, horticulture, forestry, and rural sectors.

Achievements and Performance 2024–2025

Scholar Report Backlog; At last year's AGM, 67 scholars (from 2019–2023) had yet to complete their reports, largely due to COVID-related delays. I'm pleased to report this backlog has now been cleared, with only six outstanding — four presenting this year in Aberdeen and the final two next year in Leeds. In a firm stance by Trustees, three individuals were removed from the programme, and funds have been recovered or are in the process of recovery. Going forward, any scholar requesting an extension will now apply to a Trustee-led panel, as outlined in the scholar agreement.

Nuffield Farming Scholarship Programme; A major review in 2024 ensured the programme delivers both leadership value and financial efficiency. Outsourced services such as presentation training and video editing were retendered competitively. Scholars now receive a flight allowance for CSC travel, saving the Trust around £12,000 compared to central booking.

This year, the Selection Committee awarded 25 Scholarships — our highest number to date — with competition stronger than ever. Application trends are encouraging:

- Around 90 applicants per year.
- Interview success rate up 9% (from 75% to 84%) over five years.
- 64% female applicants in 2025.
- Average age 35.
- 3% of applicants identify as Black or People of Colour (above the 1% industry standard).

Interest remains strong, candidate quality continues to rise, and we are proud to be a diverse and inclusive organisation. Thank you to the 25 sponsor representatives, Trustees, and Regional Chairs who joined the interviews at Saffrey in October. Their input, especially from the sponsors, was invaluable.

Scholarship Review; Following a comprehensive review, the cost of a Nuffield Scholarship will increase to £21,000 from October 2026, fixed for three years. This reflects an increase to the travel bursary, covers expected rises in the NI levy and CSC delegate cost, and importantly includes the full economic cost of delivering the scholarship. At the end of October, I wrote to all scholarship sponsors, informing them of this change. Most sponsors have responded positively and understand the need for prudence, though some may opt out or part-sponsor. We remain confident in continuing to award at least 20 scholarships each year.

Our Sponsors; We are deeply grateful to our 35+ scholar sponsors, many of whom have been with us long-term. Over the last year we have put in a huge effort into sponsor stewardship. Improved communication and engagement; and meeting the trustees at a dinner in June, during the Nuffield receptions at shows, farm walk September, scholar interviews in June and the sponsor lunch at Conference. New sponsors since 2024 include the CHK Foundation, Milking Goat Association, British Goat Society, FCN, Journal of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology, and Arwain DGC. We continue to build partnership with prospective sponsor partners.

Global Focus Programme (GFP); Delivered by Nuffield Australia, for a number of Nuffield countries it is a core part of their scholarship. There are five GFPs per year each with 10 to 12 people and they visit five countries over five weeks. We are finding it challenging to get GFP sponsorship. In 2025, one scholar

attended the GFP and that was self-funded. Thank you to the Scotland Group for hosting a GFP leg recently. In June 2026, the UK will host GFP 4. We are working on a Grant Funding bid to the National Lottery, which if successful will fund 10 GFPs per year.

Nuffield Farming Postgraduate Certificate; In partnership with IBERS Distance Learning, Aberystwyth University, scholars can now undertake a PGCert worth 60 credits — a potential step toward a Master's. Since 2020, 21 scholars (including one from Ireland and Australia) have enrolled, with five graduations so far — three PGCerts and two MScs, including Tim Stevens who completed his MSc in 2024. In 2024 report requirements between the standard and IBERS-accredited routes were streamlined.

Next-Gen Scholarship; The Next-Gen Scholarship for 18–24-year-olds continues to thrive. In 2025, six scholars took part — three each on the Dairy and Poultry study tours — following an induction day in London in May. Thank you to Karen Campbell, Jamie McIntosh for organising the 2025 poultry tour, and all who supported the tours and hosted scholars, including Nuffield Ireland and France. Looking forward: 2026: Dairy and Regenerative Agriculture Next-Gen Scholarships; 2027: Dairy and Pig Next-Gen Scholarships. The impact on participants has been significant, and equally, the engagement of hosts and alumni has been revitalised. We're grateful to sponsors — The Trehane Trust, CHK Foundation, and ECCT — for making this possible.

Nuffield Farming Conference; The annual conference remains our flagship event and a major undertaking. Demanding a huge effort by the office team and poses a significant financial risk, making a significant loss in 2023. The 2024 Belfast Conference was a resounding success — over 400 delegates, 450 at dinner in the Titanic Belfast, and a £17,000 profit. I would like to thank and congratulate the Northern Ireland conference committee for their hard work in gaining significant sponsorship and for hosting such a good conference. This year's 2025 Conference in Aberdeen brings Nuffield to North East Scotland — with over 400 delegates registered. Huge thanks to Jenna Ross and her committee for their tremendous work. Looking ahead, the 2026 Conference will be held at the Royal Armouries, Leeds (18–20 November), Jo Speed and Rob Thornhill will co-chair the conference committee.

It has been a productive and positive year for the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust. We have cleared longstanding challenges, strengthened our programme, expanded partnerships, and laid firm foundations for the future. I'd like to thank all Trustees, staff, scholars, sponsors, and members for their contribution and commitment to Nuffield Farming over the past 12 months.

I'll now hand over to Nic Snell, Chair of the Communications and Operations Committee, to continue the Trustee Report.

As Chair of the Communications and Operations Committee, I'm pleased to share a brief update on what's been a busy and positive year. First, I'd like to thank my fellow committee members; David Rose, Anna Bowen, Tom MacMillan, Tanya Robbins, Jo Speed, Jenna Ross, Chris Taylor and Roisin Taylor for their continued hard work and support.

As with all communications we need a multi-channel approach to reach our key stakeholders; scholars, alumni and perhaps most importantly our sponsors. In June 2025, we made a change in how we manage the Trust's PR and social media. After several great years with Reverberate PR, we appointed Steph Rogers from The Social Farmhouse. This decision wasn't just about cost, it was also about bringing a fresh, creative approach to how Nuffield tells its story. Steph has made a fantastic start, and I hope you'll get a chance to meet her during the conference. Our social media channels continue to grow across LinkedIn, Instagram, X, Facebook and YouTube. We're moving from purely informational posts to more people-focused storytelling, celebrating the community and using short videos to engage audiences. We're delighted that Farmers Guardian remains our media partner for the conference. Katie Jones, their editor, is here in Aberdeen and will help judge the HSBC UK Best Presentation with trustee Anna Bowen. Our fortnightly Newsletter, edited by Claire Laidler, continues to perform strongly. Reaching over 670 members with an open rate of 55%, and over 150 sponsors and supporters with 44%. For context, a typical rate is 17–28%, so we're doing very well.

The 'Tales of a Nuffield Scholar' podcast, hosted by Wallace Currie and funded by Howden, ran two successful seasons, featuring more than 50 scholars and attracting about 7,000 listens. We hope to relaunch in December, hopefully with NFU Mutual as the new sponsor.

Our 2025 Annual Report has now been published. Thank you to all regional and study group chairs for your contributions.

We're also improving how we share scholars' research more widely and following the successful pilot, the Trustees have now approved the change from a 10,000 word report to a shorter 5,000 words and two short videos. This provides a far simpler format from which to promote scholar's work in the form of: YouTube

	videos, aiming to increase views from hundreds to thousands. Bitesized Guide project with the Royal Agricultural Society of England. Working with CABI to turn reports into case studies. The first, based on Heidi Hall's report, is now live in the CABI e-library. Operations; We have three major awards: Bullock Award for Innovation, Frank Arden Leadership Award, and LEAF Greener Future Award. This year, the 2025 Winners will be presented with their award during the annual dinner, and the 2024 Winners will have the opportunity to talk about their award journey on Thursday afternoon. The 2024 Bullock Award went to 2015 scholar Jonty Brunyee. Thanks to Stephen Fell, Meryl Ward, Andrew Meredith, and trustee David Rose for their judging work. The LEAF Greener Future Award went to 2017 scholar Lorna Davis. This year I had the pleasure of visiting our Three finalists with Rob Bebbington, and the quality was outstanding. The Frank Arden Leadership Award went to 2017 scholar Tim Stephens, who completed the Emerging Strategic Leaders Programme with Windsor Leadership Trust. The HSBC UK Best Report for 2024 was awarded to 2022 scholar Liz Cresswell, who also entered the international Jim Gelich Award. This year, 31 reports were judged by the Comms committee and standards were very high. Next year, judging will include both reports and scholar videos. AgDiversity; AgDiversity launched in October 2024 as a collaboration between Nuffield Farming, McDonald's UK & Ireland, Harper Adams University, AHDB, and the Frank Parkinson Agricultural Trust. It's a one-hour online course promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in food and farming. Participants receive a certificate and may opt into the AgDiversity Database, connecting people and organisations committed to these principles. The course costs £30, with group discounts available, and is now mandatory for trustees, employees, and new scholars. That brings me to the end of the Communications and Operations update. Thank you all for your attention and continued support of the Trust's work.
7.	Resolution 1: To Receive the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 5 April 2025 Jim Baird Vice-Chair and Chair of the Finance Committee briefed Members as follows; <i>The Financial Statements for Year Ended 5 April 2025 have been prepared by Albert Goodman LLP, who also acted as Independent Auditor. To remind you Albert Goodman took over as the Trust's accountants and auditors in 2024. They are specialist charity accountants and auditors and their charity lead Michelle Ferris, and her team have provided the Finance Committee, Board, our Director, Rupert Alers-Hankey and Claire Bragg who prepares the management accounts with excellent advice and support. From a governance perspective the whole process has been a step change in the robustness, openness and inclusiveness. As chair of the Finance Committee I have a direct link with our lead auditor. Michelle reported directly to the finance committee and to the full board. Neither of which had happened previously in my experience. As you would expect Albert Goodman have given the Trusts accounts a thorough review, including going back over the last 5 years.</i> <i>I would like to thank the Finance Committee; Trustees Olivia Champion and Lucy MacLennan, who also chairs the Fundraising working group, and the co-opted members; Tim Adams, Stephen Fell and Gus Selby.</i> <i>In the auditor's opinion the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 5 April 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended, have been properly prepared in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.</i> Significant findings from the audit are; Revenue recognition: <i>We are required by Auditing standards to consider revenue recognition as a significant risk. Income must be recorded for the period to which it relates in accordance with accounting standards. We have concluded that there have been no identified material misstatements arising from revenue recognition following the adjustment made.</i> Key accounting policies: <i>We have reviewed the appropriateness of all accounting policies and through our normal work have confirmed that they have been consistently applied throughout the year.</i> Fraud risk from management override of controls: <i>We have completed our testing as planned and have not identified any significant transactions outside of the normal course of business or other items that cause us concern.</i> Related party disclosures: <i>We have reviewed the charity structure and worked with management to identify related parties arising from related entities. Based on the requirements of the SORP we have concluded that the accounts disclosure is appropriate and sufficient.</i> Going Concern: <i>The auditors have concluded that the Company is a going concern.</i> Audit Adjustments; <i>The auditors have made a recommendation to change the Trust's 'recognition of scholarship income and expenditure' which has resulted in a prior period adjustment. Previously, the</i>

	<i>income and expenditure for the scholarship was recognised in full in the first year of the three year programme. This has been corrected to recognise income and expenditure on an annual basis once the scholar has completed the relevant year, or in the year the bursary is physically paid and support delivered. Trustees have agreed to this recommendation from the auditors, which also means that the Trust will be compliant with future revision to Financial Reporting Standard 102, Charity Statement of Recommended Practice which makes significant proposed changes to recognition of revenue and will take effect in 05 April Year end 2027. This has led to changed or Restated prior year figures in the current Financial Statements. The FY 2024-25 deficit of -£85,252.00, after a current period adjustment is now -£125,485.00. Which without the adjustment is a really good achievement against a budget of -£124,789.00. Total Net Assets now standing at £3,207,663 (2024:£3353640) as at 5th April 2025 a decrease of £145,977 compared to the previous year.</i> The NFST Trustee Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 5 April 2025 were adopted: Proposer: Stephen Watkins; Seconder Olivia Champion: with a clear majority voting in favour.
8.	Resolution 2: To re-appoint Accountants for the Trust who will also act as Independent Auditors The meeting noted that Albert Goodman, who have indicated their willingness to continue to serve, be re-appointed as Accountants and Independent Auditors to the Trust. This recommendation was approved: Proposer: Dorothy Fairburn; Seconder David Rose: with a clear majority voting in favour.
9.	Resolution 3: To accept the Retirement of the following Trustee Board Members The Meeting noted that the following Trustee Board members are due to retire at the AGM; - Nic Snell NSch, on completion of 6 years as a Trustee Board Member. - Jo Speed NSch, on completion of 6 years as a Trustee Board Member. - Tom MacMillan, on completion of 3 years as a Non-Scholar External Trustee. - Tanya Robbins, on completion of 3 years as a Trustee Board Member. - Anna Bowen, Lucy MacLennan and Chris Taylor to stand down as Returning Scholar Trustees. This recommendation was approved: Proposer: Trevor Alcorn; Seconder Campbell Tweed: with a clear majority voting in favour.
10.	Resolution 4: To Elect Members to Serve as Trustees of the Trust The Meeting noted that the Trustee Board had recommended that: - Extend Roisin Taylor (2023 NSch) as a Returning Scholar Trustee to be co-opted for a second year to serve until the 2026 AGM. - Amy Stoner (2024 NSch) having been chosen by an election of her year group will be co-opted for a year to serve until the 2026 AGM as a Returning Scholar Trustee in accordance with the Memorandum & Articles. - To elect Jim Davies and Steven Read as a Non-Scholar External Trustees to serve a three year term. This recommendation was approved: Proposer: David Rose; Seconder Trevor Alcorn: with a clear majority voting in favour. - To elect three of the following as Trustees following an e-vote conducted by Members from 1200 on 13 October to 1200 on 10 November 2025: Sarah Calcutt, Tony Evans, Lucy MacLennan, Jenna Ross and Diana Spellman. The three candidates receiving the most votes were Tony Evans, Lucy MacLennan and Jenna Ross. - To elect Tony Evans and Lucy MacLennan to the Board for a three year term. - To re-elect Jenna Ross to the Board for a second three year term. This recommendation was approved: Proposer: Trevor Alcorn; Seconder Ed Barnston: with a clear majority voting in favour.
11.	Resolution 5: To Award Honorary Scholarships The Trustee Board has nominated Richard Soffe, a member of the Selection Committee 2019-2024 for the Award of an Honorary Nuffield Farming Scholarship.

	This recommendation was approved: Proposer: Dorothy Fairburn; Seconder Diana Allen: with a clear majority voting in favour.
12.	To Receive the Minutes of the 2025 Selection Committee The minutes of the 2025 Nuffield Farming Scholars Selection Committee proceedings were received and endorsed: Proposer: Jo Speed; Seconder Sarah Calcutt: with a clear majority voting in favour.
13.	An Update on Nuffield International The acting CEO of Nuffield International, Jodie Redcliffe, gave an update to Members on Nuffield International.
14.	Date and place of 2026 Annual General Meeting The proposed date for the 2026 AGM will be Wednesday 18 November 2026 at The Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds; this was noted by Members.
15.	Any other business - Nil Looking Forwards: In 2026 new Trustee appointments will be made for: - Two Member Trustees. - One 2025 Returning Scholar Trustee.