



MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE
Held 28-30 September 2026
At Saffrey, 71 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4BE

<u>Present:</u>		Tom Rawson NSch – Chair Jim Baird NSch - Vice Chair Jo Price Christine Snell Diana Allen NSch	<u>Apologies:</u> Nil <u>In attendance:</u> Rupert Alers-Hankey (RAH) Director and Secretary Charlotte Merson (CM) – Programme Delivery Manager Claire Laidler (CL) - Office Manager Nick Green (NG) – for Frank Arden Leadership Interviews only																																												
Item		Topic																																													
1	a.	Welcome and Apologies Chair welcomed the Committee, there were no apologies.																																													
2	a.	Declarations of interest. Selectors had reviewed the list of applicants and there was one conflict of interest raised; Christine Snell – Richard Meredith, she stood down from scoring his interview.																																													
3		2026 Nuffield Farming Scholar Interviews – Pre-meeting.																																													
	a.	RAH outlined the interview and scoring process and went through the interview programme. There were 40 scholar interviews. Selector scores would be collated after each interview by CM. 25 Sponsor representatives, all observing a number of candidates would also be present during the interviews. Trevor Alcorn and Bev Dixon joined on 29 Sep to observe the interviews, they will both join the Committee in 2027. CL registered and confirmed candidate identity and received the sponsor representatives.																																													
	b.	The following sponsor representatives attended the interviews;																																													
		<table><tr><th>Sponsor</th><th>Representative</th></tr><tr><td>AHDB</td><td>Izak van Heerden, NSch</td></tr><tr><td>Cibus Foundation</td><td>Georgie Khule</td></tr><tr><td>Worshipful Company of Gardeners</td><td>Melissa Ashcombe, Jonathan Matheson, Tom Young NSch</td></tr><tr><td>East Malling Trust</td><td>James Simpson</td></tr><tr><td>Worshipful Company of Fruiterers</td><td>Sarah Calcutt NSch</td></tr><tr><td>Three Counties Agricultural Society</td><td>David Smart</td></tr><tr><td>NFU Mutual Charitable Trust</td><td>Huw Price by Teams</td></tr><tr><td>Central Region Farmers Trust</td><td>Mark Jeffrey</td></tr><tr><td>McDonald’s UK and Ireland</td><td>Caroline Lewis and Catherine Keogh</td></tr><tr><td>Poultry Meat</td><td>Harry Irwin</td></tr><tr><td>The Trehane Trust</td><td>Tony Evans NSch, Johnny Alvis NSch, Oli Chedgey NSch</td></tr><tr><td>The Alan and Anne Beckett Award</td><td>Stephen Watkins NSch and Doug Harkin NSch</td></tr><tr><td>MacRobert Trust</td><td>Sarah Mackie, NSch by Teams</td></tr><tr><td>Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust</td><td>Paul May and Lucy Wallace</td></tr><tr><td>Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association</td><td>Mark Nicholas</td></tr><tr><td>Yorkshire Agricultural Society</td><td>Allister Nixon</td></tr><tr><td>Alastair and Margaret Miller Charitable Trust</td><td>Lucy Miller by Teams</td></tr><tr><td>Worshipful Company of Farmers</td><td>Chris Behagg</td></tr><tr><td>Royal Welsh Agricultural Society</td><td>Aled Jones NSch, by Teams</td></tr><tr><td>Food Chain Scholarship</td><td>Steve Ellwood, Duncan Rawson</td></tr><tr><td>Dartington Cattle Breeding Trust</td><td>Dick Sibley</td></tr></table>		Sponsor	Representative	AHDB	Izak van Heerden, NSch	Cibus Foundation	Georgie Khule	Worshipful Company of Gardeners	Melissa Ashcombe, Jonathan Matheson, Tom Young NSch	East Malling Trust	James Simpson	Worshipful Company of Fruiterers	Sarah Calcutt NSch	Three Counties Agricultural Society	David Smart	NFU Mutual Charitable Trust	Huw Price by Teams	Central Region Farmers Trust	Mark Jeffrey	McDonald’s UK and Ireland	Caroline Lewis and Catherine Keogh	Poultry Meat	Harry Irwin	The Trehane Trust	Tony Evans NSch, Johnny Alvis NSch, Oli Chedgey NSch	The Alan and Anne Beckett Award	Stephen Watkins NSch and Doug Harkin NSch	MacRobert Trust	Sarah Mackie, NSch by Teams	Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust	Paul May and Lucy Wallace	Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association	Mark Nicholas	Yorkshire Agricultural Society	Allister Nixon	Alastair and Margaret Miller Charitable Trust	Lucy Miller by Teams	Worshipful Company of Farmers	Chris Behagg	Royal Welsh Agricultural Society	Aled Jones NSch, by Teams	Food Chain Scholarship	Steve Ellwood, Duncan Rawson	Dartington Cattle Breeding Trust	Dick Sibley
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	c.	The Committee awarded Nuffield Farming scholarships to the following 25 candidates, the list gives sponsor arrangements which were confirmed post meeting;																																													

		Name	Study Topic	Sponsor	
		Tristan Bennett	How can the family dairy farm model be adapted so it can survive and thrive for future generations	Three Counties Agricultural Society	
		William Davies	Exploring Globally Scalable Farm Business Models	Royal Welsh Agricultural Society supported by the Era Francis Davies bursary	
		Claire Eastham	Agri Grants - Incentive or Illusion?	Worshipful Company of Farmers	
		Lucy Edwards	Do multi-species swards and herbal leys deliver measurable environmental and economic benefits?	Cibus Foundation	
		Harry Fisher	More Than Cider: How farm and cooperative cideries could drive agroforestry on UK farms	MacRobert Trust	
		William Galbraith	After renewable subsidies end, how can the poultry sector avoid reverting to fossil fuels?	Poultry Meat Award	
		Sayed Ali Goldansaz	More Data or Better Decisions? Practical Technologies for UK Beef Farms and Farmer's Working Life	Thomas Henry Foundation	
		Bryony Graham	Short rotation coppice willow: the present, the potential, and the future	Alastair and Margaret Miller Charitable Trust	
		Rob Halliday	Getting Growing. Scaling a Family Farming Business	John Oldacre Foundation	
		Fiona Holder	The Middle Ground- The future of farms between intensification and nature conservation	McDonald's UK and Ireland	
		Rosie Ireland	Not just another bovine: Water Buffalo in British Agriculture	Richard Lawes Foundation	
		Nan Jones	Addressing Labour Shortages in the Meat Industry: Solutions for a Modern Workforce Beyond Short-Term	John Oldacre Foundation	
		Laurie Kent	Investigation into Nut Processing Machinery to unlock the UK's nut industry	The Beckett Award	
		Tom Kinnear	Fixing Nitrogen in a Drying Climate: What UK Farming Can Learn from Cropping in Arid-Regions	S. Abell Award	
		Richard Meredith	Faster science, better farming: accelerating research impact	Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association	
		Henry Miller	Can foliar feeding reduce our intensive grasslands reliance on artificial Nitrogen?	The Trehane Trust	
		Rodrigo Navarro	Everything but the beak: adding value to UK spent hen trade through global market research	Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust	
		Georgina Nixon	Connecting Government and Agriculture: Lessons in Communication and Collaboration	Central Region Farmers Trust	
		Hakeem Ojo	From dependency to resilience: How can UK fresh produce imports complement & strengthen domestic production	Worshipful Company of Fruiterers and Malcolm Isaac Charitable Trust	
		James Ramskir-Gardiner	The Overlooked Crop: Unlocking Agroforestry's Timber Potential	Malcolm Isaac Charitable Trust	
		Anna Renouf	Building a commercially viable industrial hemp supply chain for Scotland	Food Chain Scholarship	
		David Roberts	Building resilient arable businesses	NFU Mutual Charitable Trust	
		Shona Russell	Beyond Bugs in Bottles: Building commercially scalable circular input systems	East Malling Trust	
		Tom Slattery	Owning it together: how farmers co-own the middle of the food chain	John Oldacre Foundation	
		Phoebe Traquair	Driving growth in the Great British beef sector	AHDB	
4	a.	Frank Arden Leadership Award Interviews The Selection Committee, with Nick Green NSch representing the Farmers Club Charitable Trust, held two interviews for the Frank Arden Leadership Award. Wed 30 Sep 2025 – Ed Barnston and Jamie McCoy. The winner is embargoed and will be announced on 19 November 2026 during the 2026 Nuffield Farming Conference Awards ceremony.			
5	a.	The Bullock Award for Innovation The Bullock Award interviews took place on Tuesday 29 Sept 2026 at Saffrey. The panel led by Stephen Fell with Meryl Ward, and Andrew Meredith, Farmers Weekly editor with Trustee David Rose as an observer. Those shortlisted for interview were; Robin Asquith, Neil McGowan and Anna Jones. The winner is embargoed and will be announced on 19 November 2026 during the 2026			

		Nuffield Farming Conference Awards ceremony.	
6	a.	Any Other Business. The Selection Committee took the opportunity to review the candidate scoring matrix. Action: To revise the candidate scoring matrix for 2027.	CM

RAH