

Application statement — Trustee, Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust



I would bring to the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust a combination of **Nuffield experience, practical farming, business leadership, public-sector governance & international agricultural expertise**, together with a strong personal commitment to developing people & encouraging positive change.

As a 2011 **Nuffield Scholar & 2020 Bullock Award winner**, I understand first-hand the transformational opportunity that Nuffield provides. The scholarship gave me the opportunity to challenge established thinking & bring new ideas back to UK agriculture. I have subsequently sought to give back to the industry through leadership, mentoring, knowledge exchange, speaking, writing & governance. I strongly support Nuffield's ambition to develop people who can make a difference & as a Trustee wish to help Nuffield thrive, achieving greater reach & impact.

I offer substantial **board & governance experience**. I am currently a Non-Executive Director of the Rural Payments Agency, with responsibilities including customer service, digital transformation, audit & risk assurance. I am Deputy Chairman and a Non-Executive Director of the AHDB, where I lead on environment, sustainability & climate adaptation. I chair multiple committees & serve on its Audit & Risk Assurance Committee & have direct involvement in strategic planning, fiscal management, monitoring operational delivery & accountability. These roles have developed my ability to provide constructive challenge, exercise independent judgement, scrutinise operational & financial performance/risk, & work collectively to reach effective decisions.

I would also bring 30 years of **practical commercial farming, agroforestry and international consultancy experience**, including building & growing multiple businesses across **farming, forestry & retail**. I have significant connections across the farming & forestry sectors, including strong links with regenerative & organic sectors & businesses. This gives me a grounded understanding of the pressures & opportunities individuals and businesses face in turning ideas & innovation into practical, commercially viable outcomes.

My **international experience** is particularly relevant to the Nuffield ethos. I have worked extensively across Africa, India, China, Europe, North America & Australia/New Zealand & Europe, including agricultural development projects for DFID, FAO/UN/World Bank. I have strong farming & academic connections throughout Europe as a partner in more than 25 pan European research & development programmes. Following my Nuffield scholarship, I was the founding vice chairman of the European Agroforestry Association, now embracing 28 countries & 800 members. I understand the value of international comparison & translating ideas from other countries into a UK context.

I can also contribute strongly to **Nuffield's impact, communications & future leadership agenda**. I have extensive experience of communicating complex agricultural & environmental issues to farmers, Government, industry, students & wider audiences. I have taught postgraduate students, contributed to major agricultural publications & regularly work across organisational & sector boundaries in agriculture and forestry.

I can bring strong **fundraising experience** from my director role at RASE & IFA, with substantial success with commercial & philanthropic funders. As a Trustee, I would want to help **improve the visibility of Nuffield**, achieving **better recognition of scholars & study findings**. This in turn will increase awareness of Nuffield across agriculture, forestry, rural & policy areas, open further partnership & sponsorship opportunities, leading to a more robust future for the Trust. The '*bitesize guide*' programme is one such successful initiative I have personally developed. I would be particularly keen to support the Trust in demonstrating the long-term impact of its Scholars & strengthening the network that makes Nuffield so distinctive.

Above all, I would bring **commitment, independent judgement, curiosity & a willingness to contribute**. I see the Trustee role as an opportunity to help ensure that future generations of Nuffield Scholars receive the same opportunity I was given: to challenge assumptions, broaden their horizons, develop as leaders & return better equipped to create positive change.

Jamie Stokes, 2024 Scholar - Anglia Region

Application for election as a Trustee of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust

Why I am applying to be a trustee

When I presented my Nuffield findings in November 2025, I was relieved to be finished. Able to walk away from the stress and anxiety that I had been carrying, but also pleased to look back on what I had achieved as an active scholar. My Nuffield journey exposed failings in both myself and Nuffield. Rather than accept things as they were, I pushed myself and the organisation to become better versions of ourselves. And as I stood on stage I was proud of delivering a report and presentation that was true to me, as much as I was of hearing from our Director that the changes I had helped to instigate, helping to accommodate neurodiverse scholars and manage the mental health pressures around the CSC, had had a positive effect across the organisation. There is always more that could be done, but I had made a good start and someone else could pick it up.



Then as I stepped back to normality I kept hearing grumblings that Nuffield could and should be better, especially in the areas I had fought for. And in that situation you can either complain about it, or do something about it. And the trustee position is probably the best place to do something about it. Doing a Nuffield should be a challenge, but it shouldn't be more difficult for those of us who are neurodiverse. I can honestly say I don't know if I will be a good trustee or an absolute pain in the arse for the board, but if elected "leaving Nuffield better than I found it" will be the reasoning behind my actions.

Key skills I would bring to the board

- I am an excellent communicator in both written and verbal formats, and have the ability to translate complex ideas into easily understandable language.
- I am a grounded and unflappable problem solver, with the ability to see solutions that more neurotypical people often cannot.
- I am a proactive decision maker. I am able to take in, understand and use information quickly and as such am able to see and solve problems before they become problems.
- I am a good people manager, able to build relationships with people across diverse backgrounds and viewpoints.

Relevant experience

15 years managing a large arable farm where my unique management approach has been recognised nationally, namely a holistic approach to the farming system reducing stress and man hours whilst increasing profitability. I am also a trustee of a family farming estate so I am used to the collaborative decision making process and the need to understand the impact of decisions.