



  
RSABI  
Annual Review 2024

# About RSABI

RSABI provides practical, emotional and financial support to people involved in Scottish agriculture. Our support is available to those who previously or currently work in farming, crofting and occupations related to agriculture in Scotland.

## Our Mission

RSABI works steadfastly at the heart of Scottish agriculture, to improve the lives of people in farming and crofting.

## Our Vision

The lives of people in Scottish agriculture are consistently improved through the work of RSABI to enhance the wellbeing of farmers, crofters and others.

## Our Values

Kind  
Inclusive  
Supportive  
Trusted

*\*Cover pic: Duncan Maclellan who climbed Bennachie 17 times and walked coast to coast in his wellies to raise funds for RSABI and awareness of mental health in farming.*

*Photo credit: Cinecosse*



# Contents

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Chair's Welcome            | 4       |
| Trustees                   | 6 - 7   |
| CEO Update                 | 8 - 9   |
| Staff                      | 10      |
| Welfare                    | 11 - 12 |
| Mental Health First Aid    | 13      |
| Health Hut                 | 14 - 15 |
| Farm Resilience Programme  | 15      |
| Flooding Fund              | 16      |
| Dyslexia Campaign          | 17      |
| #KeepTalking Campaign      | 18 - 19 |
| Marketing & Communications | 20 - 21 |
| #Respect Campaign          | 22      |
| Fundraising                | 23 - 25 |
| Great Glen Challenge       | 26 - 27 |
| Edzell Charity Golf Day    | 28      |
| RSABI Supporters' Scheme   | 29      |
| Financial Review 2023 - 24 | 30 - 31 |
| Stand By Me                | 34      |
| Drumlanrig Event           | 35      |



# Chair's Welcome

The 12 months to March 31st, 2024 saw RSABI continue to step up its commitment to deliver a very strong range of services, grants and activities to support people in Scottish agriculture.

Our Help for Heating grants and free counselling services showed a significant increase in applications and Trustees also agreed to a one-off Flooding Grant to support farmers struggling after the exceptional weather events in autumn 2023.

With our Helpline now well established as 24/7 and a new WebChat option successfully introduced, a number of new initiatives were successfully taken forward during the year, including a trial of our new Health Hut initiative, working with ANM Group at Thainstone Mart.

This project continues to grow with a small band of Health Hut nurses and doctors now established around the country, encouraging farmers and crofters to make their health a priority, at auction markets and shows.

During the year we took the total trained through our Mental Health First Aid initiative with former Royal Marines at IED Training Solutions to over 700 people working in the frontline with Scottish farmers.

Partnerships and collaborations continued to be a priority for RSABI and we were pleased to work with the Royal Countryside Fund to deliver their Farm Resilience Programme in



Scotland, with groups established in Ayrshire, Aberdeenshire and Orkney. And we were able to offer the Thrive wellbeing app to even more people, after the successful pilot with three young farmers' clubs. We were delighted the Thrive app won an award at the inaugural Scottish Agricultural Awards.

We were pleased to work with Pete Black of Collessie Feeds who supported us with an important, very positive message for farmers with dyslexia, estimated to be around 25% of the farming community. Working with Dyslexia Scotland we launched a campaign to offer farmers over 40 a free dyslexia assessment, getting some excellent feedback on this initiative.

Our #KeepTalking campaign stepped up to a new level during the winter and early spring of 2024 with a drive to encourage people in Scottish agriculture to look out for each other. The campaign included music, comedy and even poetry!

We were delighted to welcome over 1,000 patrons to The Farmers' Choir Concert in Perth, a fantastic fundraising event which also benefitted Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance,

and was hosted by our #KeepTalking ambassador, Jim Smith.

The Great Glen Challenge and annual Edzell Golf Event, were also significant fundraisers and we are very grateful to NFU Mutual Charitable Trust who provided £80,000 of grant funding, the Scottish Government who provided £50,000 of funding and the Royal Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) who provided £16,000 to help us with our Helpline costs.

Our thanks go to all those who supported RSABI during the 12 months under review, including outstanding support from various young farmer clubs and individual members around the country.

During the year we completed a five-year review of our investment managers, with incumbent RBC Brewin Dolphin emerging successful from the resulting tender process. We also undertook a refresh of our strategy, vision and mission with a new five year strategic plan prepared.

We welcomed new Trustees, Carole Brunton and Ian Hope, and three new members of staff - Head of Fundraising, Pauline Macmillan, Projects Administrator, Rebecca Mackie, Case Officer, Shirley Hastings and more recently we have welcomed Laura Young to the Fundraising team and Susan Stewart to the Welfare team.

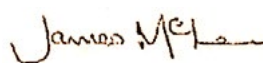
The charity also said thank you and farewell to its two inaugural Trainee Trustees, Eilidh Walker and John Armour, after they reached the end of their term. We are delighted to

have welcomed two new Trainee Trustees, Beth MacKinnon and Karen Stewart.

We are very grateful that the income from the individuals and clubs, organisations and businesses which form part of the wider farming community has continued the momentum of the previous year. Our particular thanks to everyone who supports us as members of our Supporters' Scheme, which is so important as a source of income for the work undertaken.

Despite substantially increasing its activities and expenditure, the charity managed to break even during the year under review and our thanks go to all those whose generosity allows us to continue to make a difference.

My thanks also go to the Trustees and Trainee Trustees for their invaluable support and guidance and to the hardworking and dedicated team of staff who are committed to providing emotional, practical and financial support to help improve the lives of people in Scottish agriculture, every day.



**Jimmy McLean**  
**Chair, RSABI**



*Jimmy McLean, RSABI Chair, with Trainee Trustees Beth MacKinnon (left) and Karen Stewart.*

# Trustees

## Honorary Roles

### Honorary Patron

His Majesty The King

### Honorary President

The Duke of Buccleuch  
and Queensberry KBE FRSE DL

### Honorary Vice Presidents

Arthur Anderson MBE FRAgS

The Earl of Airlie

(Sadly passed away on the 26th of June 2023)

The Earl of Roseberry DL

(Sadly passed away on the 30th of June 2024)

Margaret Anderson MBE DL FRAgS

Andrew Arbuckle MBE FRAgS

Gregor Caldwell

(appointed 19th March 2024)

John Forbes FRAgS

\*Robin J Forrest OBE

John Kinnaid FRAgS

David Leggat MBE FIA (Scot) FRAgS

(appointed 22nd November 2023)

Sheena Lamont

Ewan Pate FRAgS

Dr John Ross CBE FRAgS DVMS LL

\*Our thoughts are with the family and friends of our Honorary Vice-president and former Chair, Robin Forrest OBE who passed away peacefully on February 10th aged 85.

We remember Robin with great fondness and we are very grateful for his dedication to the work of RSABI through the years. This included stints on our FMD Helpline, with his wife Jennifer, during the Foot and Mouth crisis.

### Board of Trustees

James McLean BSc Agric, FRAgS – Chair

David Leggat MBE FIA (Scot) FRAgS

(retired as of 22nd November 2023)

Jane Mitchell ARAgS Vice Chair

Carole Brunton

(appointed as of 19th March 2024)

Christine Bowie MSc (Counselling), MBACP, PQD

Ian Hope

(appointed as of 19th March 2024)

Lois Newton

Mairi Renwick MacKenzie ARAgS

Patricia Glennie

Sandy Hay

Stephen Young ARAgS

### Trainee Trustees (2024/25)

Beth MacKinnon

Karen Stewart

### Chief Executive

Carol McLaren, ARAgS

### Company Secretary

Harry Seran CPFA

### Registered and Principal Office

The Rural Centre, West Mains of Ingliston,  
Newbridge, Midlothian EH28 8LT

Auditors Chiene + Tait LLP (trading as CT)  
Investment Managers RBC Brewin Dolphin and  
LGT Wealth Management  
Principal Bankers Bank of Scotland  
Legal Representatives Anderson Strathern



*Congratulations to Andrew Arbuckle who was awarded the MBE.*

The Trustees met to review strategy in January 2024 and a refreshed Strategy (2024 – 2029), Vision, Mission and Values were developed. The key strategic objectives of the charity were identified as outlined below.

## Strategic Objectives

1. To ensure Trustees, volunteers and staff operate in a culture of professionalism and kindness, truly living our values, **so the RSABI team feels supported to deliver strongly.**
2. To deliver impactful wellbeing and welfare activities, supported by strong strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, **so RSABI maximises its positive impact for people in Scottish agriculture.**
3. To develop & deliver a robust fundraising strategy and optimise income generation **so RSABI is prudently funded to grow and fully achieve its aims to support people in Scottish agriculture.**
4. To effectively promote RSABI and its activities via powerful and targeted communications (which also champion Scottish agriculture) **so there is strong awareness of the services and activities the charity delivers.**
5. To demonstrate full legislative compliance, transparency, efficiency and good practice in all of the charity's policies, procedures and practices **so RSABI maintains and grows its reputation for honesty and integrity.**



# Chief Executive Update

The professionalism and dedication of the RSABI team are vital to the success of the work done by the charity and my sincere thanks go to our staff for the commitment and enthusiasm they consistently show.

A recent visit to Dalmally Mart with one of our Health Hut nurses gave me a lovely snapshot of what makes me so proud of the work done by the RSABI team, supported by our Trustees. The Health Hut was buzzing all day with farmers, crofters, auctioneers, hauliers and others getting their blood pressures checked and receiving health and wellbeing advice and support from our nurse. It was also a great chance to share information about the wide range of financial, emotional and practical support offered by our Welfare Team, including free counselling and dyslexia assessments.

Our Health Hut initiative has really taken off over the past 12 months and involves a band of very enthusiastic and professional nurses and doctors, who all share a great fondness for farming, working with RSABI staff.

We now have Health Huts as far afield as Dingwall, Caithness, Lanark, Stirling, Uist, Ayr, Oban and Thainstone and the initiative has been very much driven by demand direct from the industry – we have been responding to requests and invitations from markets and shows.



Our Welfare team continues to be busy helping people involved in agriculture who can now reach us via email **Helpline@rsabi.org.uk** and live WebChat via our website, as well as our freephone, 24/7 Helpline, **0808 1234 555**.

The sorts of cases they are dealing with range from families who have been hit by illness or injury to those with serious financial worries, and others who have found themselves utterly overwhelmed for a wide variety of reasons.

Our Mental Health First Aid training, delivered by former Royal Marines at IED Training Solutions, continues to be popular, with excellent feedback from those who attend. We are delighted to have more than 700 mental health first aiders who have completed the training, working with farmers and having the confidence to know what to say and do when they fear someone may be struggling.

During the past year we have also stepped up our focus on suicide prevention, working closely with mental health and suicide prevention experts, including Scottish Action for Mental Health, who we have forged a working partnership with. Moving forward

we want to make the most of collaboration and research opportunities to improve understanding of suicide in Scottish agriculture and the steps needed to prevent it and support those bereaved by suicide.

To be able to deliver an increasingly challenging and complex workload to help support people to get back on track, it is essential that we raise funds to cover our costs.

Our Fundraising team have been working hard to achieve this and our thanks go to so many wonderfully caring people who choose to raise funds for RSABI. We are extremely grateful to the Trusts which support us and our particular thanks go to NFU Mutual Charitable Trust, RHASS, The Wiseman Family Charitable Fund and the Royal Countryside Fund for their continued support. Our thanks also go to the Scottish Government for their continued support but most of all we would like to thank the Scottish agricultural community for your unwavering kindness. In recent months we have seen someone walking coast-to-coast in their wellies for us, another drive to the Sahara in a vintage Land Rover and a cycling duo take on an arduous adventure from Land's End to John O'Groats.

We simply can't thank you all enough!

Our thanks also to all those who give up their time to help and support us, with particular gratitude to our board of Trustees for their wise counsel and robust input into the strategy and governance of RSABI.

During the past year we have undertaken a thorough review of our strategy, mission, vision and values and we are now very well placed to move forward and continue to build on our impact as a charity.

RSABI's mission is "to work steadfastly at the heart of Scottish agriculture, to improve the lives of people in farming and crofting." And our Vision is to ensure the lives of those people are "consistently improved through the work of RSABI to enhance the wellbeing of farmers, crofters and others."

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with the team here if you have any questions or suggestions relating to our work – we would be delighted to hear from you.



**Carol McLaren**  
**Chief Executive, RSABI**



# Staff

## Management Team

Carol McLaren, ARAgS – Chief Executive  
Lorraine Caven – Executive Assistant  
Pauline Macmillan – Head of Fundraising  
Chris McVey - Welfare Manager  
Harry Seran - Head of Finance & Compliance

## Staff - Charity

Stephanie Lawler - Finance Administrator  
Rebecca Mackie – Projects Administrator  
Margo Wills – Fundraising Executive  
Laura Young – Fundraising Executive

## Staff - Welfare

Shirley Hastings – Case Officer  
Kerry MacLennan – Case Officer  
Mary Anne McWilliam – Case Officer  
Shona Milne – Case Officer  
Susan Stewart – Case Officer  
Jan Welsh – Case Officer  
Kirsty Macaskill – Welfare Assistant

Our small team of dedicated staff work across several key areas including welfare, finance, fundraising, partnerships, communications, marketing, events, volunteers and administration.

During the past 12 months we have been pleased to welcome Laura Young, as a new Fundraising Executive, Rebecca Mackie as Projects Administrator and Susan Stewart, as a new Case Officer. Susan will take over the reins from Jan Welsh who retires after almost 10 years of excellent service to RSABI. Our thanks and very best wishes go to Jan.

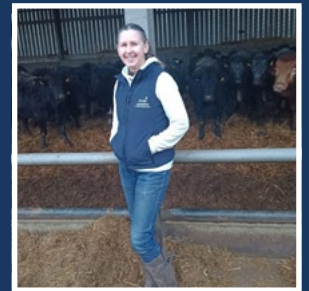
## We have welcomed three new members of staff.



New case officer Susan Stewart  
(pictured with Welfare Manager Chris McVey)

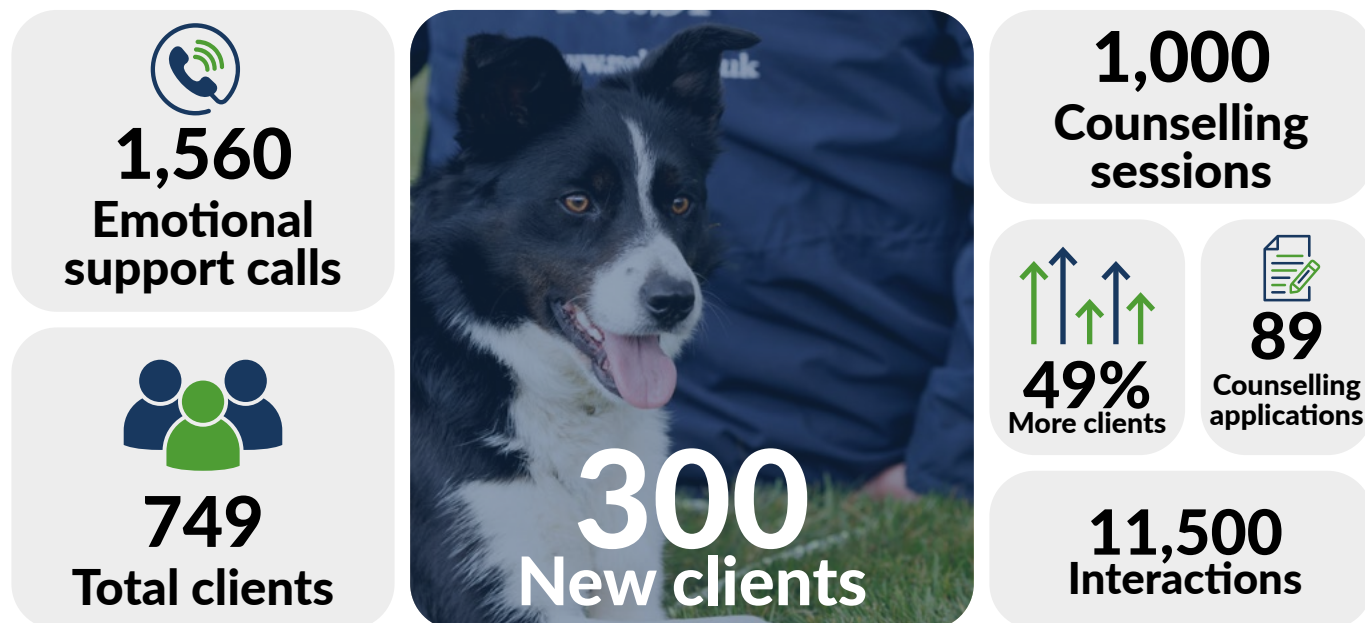


Laura Young



Rebecca Mackie

# Welfare



The 2023/24 year was one of our busiest years in recent history, in terms of both providing direct support to individuals and families in Scottish agriculture and delivering new initiatives in response to the needs of the sector.

A total of **300** new clients contacted us during the year, a **49%** increase compared to the prior year. The Welfare team carried out over **11,500** interactions on behalf of **749** clients in total.

This included making **1,560** outbound emotional support calls to those throughout Scottish agriculture who are feeling lonely, isolated and vulnerable.

As in previous years, time spent providing emotional and practical support continued to be greater compared with financial support. However, RSABI's ability to provide

financial support during a period in which farming families throughout the country have struggled with the cost of living has played a crucial role and complements our practical and emotional support services.

Demand for emotional and mental health support has continued to grow and now forms a large part of the work of the Welfare team. The total number of counselling applications reached a record number as **89** applications were approved which meant that RSABI provided funding for up to **1,000** counselling sessions for those in the sector struggling with poor mental health, including stress and anxiety. The majority of those seeking counselling fell within the working age bracket and they cite a number of reasons for seeking professional help, including work-related stress and anxiety as well as growing financial pressure.

# Welfare

The Welfare team continues to deliver important practical support to help move farming families and businesses forward. Our close relationship with agencies such as the Scottish Government Rural Payments Inspection Division (SGRPID), Animal Plant & Health Agency (APHA) and Local Authorities is crucial in supporting individuals in difficult circumstances during cross-compliance inspections.

Case Officers have been able to assist in the communication between several agencies and the individuals they are supporting as well as offering emotional support during what can be a stressful time. A number of clients have also reported increased debt and pressure from creditors. Our relationship with debt specialists has been invaluable during this time as we have been able to access specialist support for individuals, helping them to navigate a way forward.

We are also very grateful for the continued support and guidance from colleagues at the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) and the farm consultants who we work with throughout the year to obtain specialist guidance and advice for our clients who are in need of support to navigate their way through difficulties with their farm businesses.



## Helpline:

Our Helpline – **0808 1234 555** – is very kindly supported by the Royal Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS). It is available 24/7, 365 days a year and our live webchat is proving increasingly popular.



## Thrive App:

After a successful trial with three young farmers clubs, we decided to extend the reach of the project in its second year. This has involved providing access to anyone in Scottish agriculture, including young farmers. The app is NHS compliant and includes access to mental health support, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and resources on mindfulness and relaxation techniques. Access to live chat with trained therapists is also available at the touch of a button if individuals need professional support.

## Farm Resilience Programme:

The Royal Countryside Fund (RCF, formerly The Prince's Countryside Fund) has worked in partnership with RSABI to deliver the Farm Resilience Programme, a series of workshops providing free business skills training and one-to-one support to farming families.

Last year's programme took place in Ayrshire, Aberdeenshire and Orkney. The 2024/25 programme is taking place in Lanarkshire and the Cairngorms.

# Mental Health First Aid

RSABI has been working with former Royal Marine Ian Clark, Managing Director of IED Training Solutions, and Major Hugh Jones (rtd) for the past two years as part of the ground-breaking Mental Health First Aid initiative.

The certified training is aimed at encouraging people to talk more freely about mental health, reducing stigma and improving understanding about what to look out for and how to respond when someone may be struggling.

Over the past two years around 700 people working in the frontline with farmers have been trained through the initiative around the country from Orkney and Shetland to the Borders and Dumfriesshire. Those trained have ranged from vets, Scottish SPCA inspectors and quality assurance assessors to agronomists, consultants and bankers.

RSABI is very grateful to NFU Mutual Charitable Trust which is supporting the training, allowing the charity to continue providing it free of charge. In response to demand for the training, two additional retired Royal Marines, Major Neil Foreman (rtd) and Ross Wilson WO1 (RSM) will join Major Hugh Jones (rtd) to deliver the training in the year ahead.



**NFU Mutual**  
Charitable Trust

The aim is to provide individuals with the knowledge to identify the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health. The training will provide advice on how to facilitate a supportive conversation with people who may be experiencing a mental health problem. The skills learned will also help those who take part to understand more about their own mental health.

The innovative training is already making a really encouraging difference in the Scottish agricultural community.

Organisations or individuals working with farmers or crofters on a daily basis can request the training by emailing **[mentalhealthtraining@rsabi.org.uk](mailto:mentalhealthtraining@rsabi.org.uk)**

Ian Clark of IED Training Solutions said he was very pleased with the way the training has been received by the Scottish farming community which is benefitting from some excellent work by the former Royal Marines to reduce stigma and improve understanding of mental health.



*We have also been undertaking Suicide Prevention Training with SAYFC - delivered in partnership with Papyrus.*

# Health Hut Initiative



Our thanks to the ANM Group Charitable Trust which awarded £7500 funding to RSABI to support the continued growth of the Health Hut initiative to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of Scottish farmers and crofters.

The award of the funding follows a successful trial of the Health Hut initiative at ANM Group's Thainstone Centre where hundreds of blood pressures have been taken over the past 12 months, along with initiatives such as cholesterol testing and early diabetes detection.

The support from the Group's Charitable Trust allowed the Health Hut, run by RSABI with nurses and doctors with farming backgrounds, to join ANM Group at a host of summer shows in the northeast for the next three years.

The initiative aims to encourage individuals working in the Scottish agricultural industry to take a more proactive approach to improving their health and provides farmers with an opportunity to receive general health checks. They also have the opportunity to discuss any physical or mental health concerns they may have in confidence with health care professionals.



We also feature regular health focus themes, including Sepsis Awareness and the risks of Lyme Disease, transmitted by ticks.

We are delighted to be offering health huts at a range of marts around the country including Thainstone, Stirling, Lanark, Caithness, Dingwall, Uist (Lochboisdale), Dalmally and Ayr as well as many agricultural shows through the summer, Kelso Tup Sales and AgriScot in November.

Many congratulations to Health Hut nurse Irene Scott who was selected for the prestigious Queen's Nurse Award for her work, including playing a leading role in the Health Hut initiative.



# Flooding Fund

Scottish farming and crofting families who were severely hit by extreme weather events last autumn were encouraged to contact RSABI to apply for support via a Flooding Crisis Fund to support those who were most affected.

RSABI provided payments of up to £1,000 per farming family business for those who experienced greatest loss as a result of the extreme rainfall and flooding.

The funding was provided to those who met the eligibility criteria and were able to provide details and evidence of damage and losses.

RSABI also worked with the team at Forage Aid to assess what demand there was for replacement bedding, feed and forage.

We were very touched by the offers of donations and supplies of silage and straw from farmers in other parts of the country keen to support those who had sustained losses.



# Dyslexia Campaign

The Dyslexia Assessment grant was launched by RSABI, working closely with Dyslexia Scotland, to support those aged over 40 who believe they may be dyslexic but have never been formally assessed.

With around 25% of the farming community thought to be dyslexic and based on feedback from our case officers it was evident that this was an area that required support.

We worked alongside Dyslexia Scotland to determine the best way of offering a grant and to find out more about the practicalities of the assessment process. Pete Black, who farms at Newton of Collessie and spoke about his dyslexia diagnosis on the series, This Farming Life, helped us to launch the initiative.

To date, we have received 22 applications for a Dyslexia Assessment. Individuals who have reached out so far have advised that without access to formal assessment they have always felt in the dark. By offering assessments it is helping individuals to receive advice on the best tools and adjustments to make their lives easier.

We are proud to now have Dyslexia Scotland 'Official Changemaker' status and we have now updated our website to have accessibility tools available.



# #KeepTalking

During one of the wettest springs in living memory, we ramped up our #KeepTalking campaign to remind people in farming communities of the importance of checking in on each other.

Working with the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (SAYFC), a powerful social media campaign highlighted the vital #KeepTalking call to action along with SAYFC's powerful #AreEweOk? message.



## Music, Comedy and Verse

Music, Comedy and Verse were harnessed to counter the “graft and gutters” of winter and lift the spirits of farmers as part of RSABI’s #KeepTalking campaign this year.

Highlighting the importance of kindness and sharing the load, the aim is to encourage farmers to look out for each other during the winter months and to take a break when they can.

The role of singing in mental health is something which Kate Picken MBE, who established The Farmers Choir a decade ago, is passionate about.

“Singing plays a huge part of helping with mental health. There are many benefits of singing and the joy it brings everyone. It is a great way to get off the farm to do something different and feel part of the choir family. You can leave your troubles at the door when you are part of the choir and it takes you away from your daily struggles and the challenges you have in life and just enjoy some time for yourself,” said Kate.

RSABI has also been working with poet Becky Hemsley who gave us permission to use the words of her powerful poem “I’m Fine” as part of its #KeepTalking campaign.

Thanks go to the Perthshire and Lanarkshire farming families who helped produce a poignant video to accompany Hemsley’s words.

The words of the poem encourage people to check in on their community and look out for any telltale signs of someone who may be

feeling lonely or struggling with their mental health. Most importantly the message is, if you are concerned, to go back after that first “I’m Fine” and check again.



## World's Loneliest Sheep

A sheep which shot to stardom when she was rescued after two years living at the bottom of some remote cliffs, is now helping to encourage steps to prevent loneliness in the agricultural community.

The Scotch Mule cross Charollais ewe was named Fiona by the team of friends, including Cammy Wilson of The Sheep Game, who rescued her after she became known as the “world’s loneliest sheep” when Jill Turner spotted her while kayaking near the base of the cliffs.

The story of Fiona’s rescue attracted interest from the media around the world, with numerous TV stations and newspapers running the story – from CNN and the New York Times to the Sydney Herald.

She is now enjoying life – and lots of company – at Dalscone Farm, Dumfries where she has been helping to raise the profile of RSABI’s #KeepTalking campaign and the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs’ AreEweOK? mental health message.

# Marketing & Communications



A priority for RSABI is to ensure people in the Scottish agricultural community are aware of the services offered and a strong marketing and communications strategy is very important.

We use different communications platforms to ensure we reach our target audiences which range from retired farm workers to young farmers and crofters. Our thanks go to all those who support us, including the agricultural press and a wide range of stakeholders who very kindly help us spread the word.

Among those who have supported us in the past year have been NFU Scotland (events and publications), Scottish Tenant Farmers Association, National Sheep Association (Scotland), AgriScot, Royal Highland Agricultural Society Scotland (RHASS) and numerous others including many local agricultural shows.

We are proud to have earned Dyslexia Scotland Changemaker status and our thanks to Pete Black of Collessie for his support as our Dyslexia Ambassador.

**When life feels  
overwhelming RSABI  
is here for you.**

Call our freephone helpline on  
**0808 1234 555** or webchat at  
**[www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk)**

**#KeepTalking**

Scottish Charity Number SC009828

**RSABI**  
Supporting People  
in Scottish Agriculture



Our thanks to David Nicholson who is from a farming family in Fife, for sharing his experiences of having autism in the farming community, including some excellent advice offered in a video interview.

Many thanks also to Carole and Richard Rettie who shared their experience when Carole was injured during an incident while working with a bull, and airlifted to hospital. The couple are encouraging others to take an extra few moments to assess risk.

We invited farmers for a post-lambing MOT at NSA Scotsheep and were pleased to work with SAYFC on the development and roll-out of the RESPECT campaign. Our KeepTalking Campaign included a major push during one of the most challenging springs in memory and this included a wide range of activity detailed on pages 18 & 19.

Our adaption of Stand by Me, recorded by the wonderful Farmers' Choir has been viewed around 200,000 times on social media (see page 35).

# Respect Campaign

RSABI worked with the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (SAYFC) on a new RESPECT campaign launched at the Royal Highland Show.

The campaign aims to encourage every young farmer to play their part in positively contributing to SAYFC as a safe, inclusive and fun environment for young people.

The initiative will promote healthy relationships, kindness and inclusivity through positive role modelling supported by education, training and awareness-raising and see the appointment of Respect Ambassadors in every club throughout Scotland.

The initiative will focus on different priority areas through the year, with a focus on training and education. As well as Mental Health First Aid, First Aid and Suicide Prevention training, young farmers from each club will be offered Alcohol Awareness Training supported by RSABI, working with other organisations which specialise in these areas.

The campaign will also aim to raise awareness of the organisations which can offer specialist help and support to people who have been affected by any of the issues raised or negative behaviour. It is hoped that, as well as

raising awareness among young farmers the campaign may also have a wider beneficial impact among people of all ages in the Scottish farming community.

Penny Montgomerie Chief Executive of SAYFC said: "This campaign builds on work which has been done by SAYFC over recent years to promote an inclusive and safe environment for our members and the wider community, driven by the Development & Wellbeing Committee and the introduction of a new Youth Development Manager staff role.

We're grateful to RSABI for their ongoing support, particularly around promoting positive mental health for young people in the industry. We look forward to working closely with them on the RESPECT campaign to provide 150 young farmers across Scotland with alcohol awareness training."

Carol McLaren, Chief Executive of RSABI, welcomed the initiative. "We know that young people across Scotland benefit greatly from the experience of being a member of young farmers as a source of friendship, fun and learning and we are pleased to support the positive steps SAYFC is taking to remind everyone about the importance of inclusivity and respect," she said.



# Fundraising

Our Fundraising efforts were boosted during the year with the recruitment of Head of Fundraising, Pauline Macmillan, who is supported by Fundraising Executives, Margo Wills and Laura Young.

A new fundraising strategy has been developed which focusses on supporter stewardship, donor retention and building relationships. We continue to be visible across social media platforms to celebrate the success of our fundraisers and help promote activity.

We celebrated some outstanding young supporters with our Richard Huxtable Award – The Aviemore to Biggar Cyclists from SAYFC and Emma Gray who took part in a skydive in her Dad's memory.



We are very grateful to be supported by farming folk, groups, and organisations across Scotland and our thanks go to all those who dedicate time and effort fundraising for RSABI. We were well supported as always by many Scottish Association of Young Farmers' clubs, many of whom were celebrating anniversary years and kindly decided to fundraise for RSABI in the process.

These included Carluke Young Farmers, SSS Young Farmers, Machars Young Farmers, Caithness District Young Farmers, Inverross Young Farmers, Young Farmers Ambassadors and Orkney District Association Young Farmers.

The Scottish National Fat Stock Club supported us again, raising almost £2,000 at their LiveScot event and we are grateful for the continued support of Banff and Moray Grain Group. Fiona, the World's Loneliest Sheep, helped to raise over £10,000 for RSABI and the Scottish SPCA. Caitlin Ross raised an incredible £13,000 for RSABI and Diabetes UK in memory of her Mum and sister by hosting a stockjudging event.

John Robertson celebrated his retirement after 47 years in banking and raised over £8,000. Orkney Agricultural Discussion Society celebrated Christmas with Carols in the Mart and raised £2,000 for RSABI. James Begg and Katherine Kerr raised £4,000 collectively taking part in the Loch Ness Marathon.

We launched a partnership with Farmers Weekly alongside our colleagues at RABI to celebrate their 90th anniversary, with the partnership announced at the Farmers Weekly awards night in October 2023.

We were delighted to be supported at the NFU Scotland Conference in February, where over £5,000 was raised for RSABI and RHET and RSABI was very grateful to be selected as the recipient of Harbro Ltd Christmas



fundraising, where over £20,000 was raised to support our ongoing work. Hamilton Ross Group supported RSABI to celebrate their 90th anniversary and in addition to donating £2,500 they also included our #KeepTalking messaging and Helpline number on their calendars which went out to 1500 people across Scotland.

## Corporates & Partnerships Events

We are profoundly grateful for the unwavering support of the RSABI Great Glen Challenge.

The event raised around £60,000 in 2024, a feat that would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of all the teams, sponsors, volunteers, and staff.

To those who have participated in the past and those who stepped forward to join the 2024 event, we extend our deepest appreciation. See more on the Great Glen Challenge on pages 26 and 27.

We were lucky to be part of the magical performance by The Farmers Choir in February at Perth Concert Hall, where £46,000 was raised to be shared between RSABI and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA). Many kind organisations sponsored our event and made the evening a huge success.



*John Service and Gerry Lafferty raised a total of £5,631 for RSABI cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats.*

Our thanks to Agrovista who continue to support us including proceeds from the sale of their wheat variety, Mindful.

## Merchandise

With a streamlined sales process, our trading allows us to raise awareness through the distribution of over 26,000 branded Christmas cards and raise over £20,000 in sales revenue. During the year, we launched new merchandise which included RSABI mugs, beautifully decorated with artwork designed and donated by Gill Wilson. This included mugs and tea towels and have proved to be very popular on our online shop – [www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk)



*Many thanks to Hugh Chamberlain, Atholl Estates Farm Manager, who raised a brilliant amount on an epic trip to the Sahara in memory of his late father-in-law, Tony.*

# Fundraising

## Edzell Golf Day

The Edzell Charity Golf Day is always a great combination of competitive spirit and good fun and the 2024 event didn't disappoint. Our thanks to all the golfers, sponsors (with special thanks to The Wiseman Family Charitable Fund) and organisers involved who collectively managed to raise a brilliant £14,186. Well done to all involved!

## Results:

Longest Drive on 5th – Ladies – Claire Dyce  
(Grampian Growers)

Longest Drive on 5th – Gents – Andy MacDonald  
(RBS)

Ladies nearest the pin on 6th – Anna Stephen  
(Anything Can Happen)

Gents nearest the pin on 6th – Mark Finlayson  
(The PWS Possy)

Ladies nearest the pin on 14th – Tricia Halliwell  
(Shanks a Lot)

Gents nearest the pin on 14th – Patrick Hughes  
(SPO)

Ladies nearest the pin on 17th – Debbie Findlater  
(John's Ladies)

Gents nearest the pin on 17th – Patrick Hughes  
(SPO)

An additional prize, courtesy of Willie Officer in memory of David Officer who had many a happy round of golf at Edzell:

Gents Nearest the Pin in 2 on 16th – Neil Warden  
(Brian Warrender Plumbing & Heating)



## Teams:

**3rd place:** Berries & Bangers (93 points)

Team comprising – Murray Mitchell, Peter Fowlie, Ian Murray, Scott Mitchell

**2nd place:** Anything Could Happen (93 points – won on countback)

Team comprising – Carroll Gibson, Xander Gibson, Anna Stephen, Richard Stephen

**1st place:** Carnegie Fuels (109 points)

Team Comprising – Dylan Carnegie, Rhys Bailey, Kyllum Wilkinson, Kevin Whitecross

Bringing up the rear  
Grampian Growers (61 points)



Photo courtesy of Libby Penman

# Great Glen Challenge 2024

The Great Glen Challenge 2024 generated a record fundraising total of over £60,000.

Our thanks to the sponsors, teams, supporters and volunteers who made the team sporting event on Friday, August 30th such a huge success. The excellent total achieved in 2024 takes the amount raised since the event was launched 12 years ago to over £500,000.

The event, sponsored by Scottish legal firm, Gillespie Macandrew, received unprecedented interest this year with 27 teams across Scottish agriculture businesses taking part in a challenging day of outdoor sport, testing endurance and fitness, as well as offering a great opportunity for teambuilding and camaraderie.

Set against a picturesque backdrop between Fort Augustus and Fort William, teams taking part in the 90km race combining cycling, kayaking, running and walking to support the work of RSABI included: Agrovista, Azets, Bank of Scotland, Begbies Traynor, Bidwells, Blackhall & Powis, Crofting Commission, Johnston Carmichael, MHA Edinburgh, Gillespie Macandrew, Muckle Media, NFU Scotland, NFU Mutual, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), Royal Bank of Scotland, Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID), SAC Consulting, Scottish Woodlands Ltd, SP Energy Networks, Thomson Cooper, Virgin Money and Women in Agriculture Scotland.

RSABI staff members Harry Seran and Margo Wills led the planning and delivery of the event which is designed to raise awareness of the work of the charity as well as the importance of teamwork and fitness for mental and physical wellness. A team of volunteer marshals also played a vital part in the success of the event with special thanks going to George Lawrie who stepped down, after 10 years of volunteering at the Great Glen.

The overall team winner for the second year was Scottish Woodlands, with Johnston Carmichael taking second team place, followed by the NFU, Ninja Focused Union Sportspeople, in third.

Individual awards were made to David Hamilton (mountain biking) of SPEN – The Land Guys, Mark Donald (kayaking) of NFU – Ninja Focused Union Sportspeople, Lawrence O'Hara (running) of Begbies Traynor and walking David King – Scottish Woodlands.



# The Farmers' Choir

A magical performance by The Farmers' Choir in February 2024 raised a brilliant £46,000 for RSABI and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA).

Compered by farmer and comedian, Jim Smith, and kindly sponsored by leading livestock auctioneers, United Auctions, the 85-strong choir performed 18 well-known songs to a packed Perth Concert Hall on February 25th.

The choir received a standing ovation from the packed auditorium and the impressive sum was split equally between the two charities. This takes the total raised for charity by The Farmers' Choir – which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year – to over £170,000.

During the past decade the choir has supported many excellent rural initiatives and the Perth event was part of RSABI's #KeepTalking campaign to encourage people to reconnect and look out for each other. The idea for the concert first came when Perthshire farmer David Mitchell and his wife Janie, a member of the choir, hatched a plan to raise funds for two charities close

to their hearts. Their plans were delayed, due to COVID, but reignited during a chance conversation last year with RSABI CEO, Carol McLaren.

We are very grateful for all the support we received for the concert and our thanks go to everyone who played a part in making it such an unforgettable night.

We know how hard the choir practiced and it all paid off on the night – they literally sang their socks off and the result was a truly magical evening for everyone. Our thanks also go to a very dapper-looking, kilted Jim Smith, for a brilliant master of ceremonies (MC) on the night, our main sponsor, United Auctions, and all those who sponsored songs, bought tickets or supported in other ways.

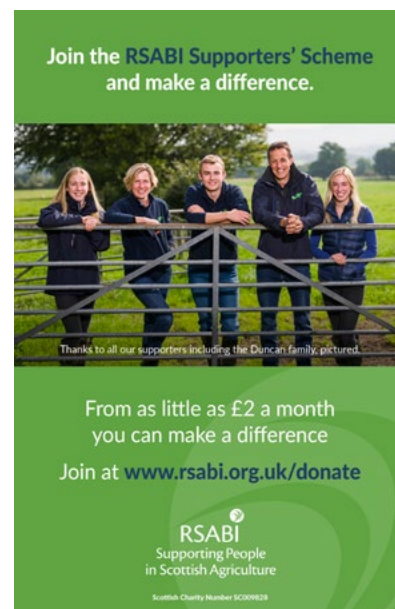
We were particularly pleased that so many farming folk had the opportunity to meet up and enjoy each other's company, with lots of reports of people meeting friends they hadn't seen for up to 50 years! This rekindling of friendships is very much in the spirit of our #KeepTalking campaign.





# RSABI Supporters' Scheme

Our Supporters' Scheme is a vital source of income for RSABI and we are very grateful indeed to everyone who kindly joins the scheme. There are three options – individual, business and corporate – and if you are not already a member, it is quick and simple to join, from as little as £25 per year for an individual membership. Information and application process can be found on our website – [www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk) – or by calling us on 0131 364 4205 or emailing [rsabi@rsabi.org.uk](mailto:rsabi@rsabi.org.uk)



## Supporters of RSABI as of 31st March 2024



**283**  
Individual  
Supporters



**416**  
Business  
Supporters



**75**  
Corporate  
Supporters

Achentoul Farms Ltd  
AIC Scotland  
A K Stoddart Ltd  
A Ritchie & Sons  
ABP Perth  
Agrovista UK Ltd  
Alan and Margaret Wiseman  
Anderson Beaton Lamond  
Ardwell Estates Ltd  
Atholl Estates  
Bank of Scotland  
Begbies Traynor  
Bell Ingram LLP  
Biggar Farmers Club  
Binn Group  
Birsay Farmers Ltd  
British Polythene Industries Ltd  
Cheviot Trees Ltd  
Craig Wilson Ltd  
Davidson & Robertson  
Dunbia (UK) Highland Meat  
Dundee Cold Stores Ltd  
Dunedin Advisory Limited  
East Coast Viners Grain (Drumlithie) Ltd  
East of Scotland Growers Ltd

Galbraith  
Gillespie Macandrew LLP  
Haddo Estate  
Hoodles Playbarn & Coffee Shop  
Johnston Carmichael (Scotland) Ltd  
Keith & Fiona McElrea Ltd  
Kettle Produce Ltd  
Lawrie & Symington Ltd  
Lothian Machinery Ring Ltd  
Lycetts  
Macphie Ltd  
Malcom Allan Housebuilders Ltd  
Massey Ferguson  
Moncreiffe Agricultural Enterprises  
Moncreiffe Farming  
Muirhall Energy Ltd  
NFU Mutual - Glasgow  
NFU Scotland  
North East Farm Management  
Association  
Over Hillhouse Farm  
Roadhead Farm Feeds RHASS  
Ringlink (Scotland) Ltd  
Royal Bank of Scotland plc SAOS  
Savills UK Ltd

Scot Agri  
Scotland Food & Drink  
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)  
Scotmin Nutrition  
Scottish Quality Crops  
Shepherd & Wedderburn  
Stewart Trailers  
Strathmore Estates (holding) Ltd  
Tarff Valley Ltd  
Taygrow Ltd  
The Earn Coffee Shop  
The Fresh Milk Company (Lactalis)  
The Hon John Dewar Charitable Trust  
The James Hutton Foundation  
The Moredun Foundation  
The Royal Northern Agricultural Society  
The Scottish Farmer  
United Auctions Ltd  
Virgin Money Bank  
Watson Seeds Ltd  
WCF Ltd  
Welbeck Scottish Farms Ltd  
Yara UK Ltd

# Financial Review

Welcome to our Financial Review for 2024. This year has been a remarkable journey for RSABI, and we're excited to share our progress and achievements with you.

## Financial Highlights

In line with our strategic objectives, we aimed to use our reserves to cover any anticipated shortfalls, with a goal to balance our finances within five years. We're delighted to report that, thanks to the support of a variety of philanthropic organisations, incredible fundraising efforts and generous donations, we didn't need to dip into our reserves this year. Instead, we ended the year with a modest operating surplus (+£57,000), showcasing the strength and resilience of our community.

## Community Engagement

Our activities have truly resonated with the Scottish agricultural community, inspiring many to give back. Despite increasing our activities and necessary spending, we managed to cover our expenditure, thanks to the unwavering support of our funders. After accounting for growth in our investment portfolio, we saw an increase in our total funds.



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



NFU Mutual  
Charitable Trust



THE ROYAL  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND

Supported by  rhass

## Investment & Sustainability

Our investment of these funds, including a new account with the CAF Charity Platform to maximise income on cash deposits, is expected to generate income to help reduce any planned deficits in the coming years. This strategy is not just about financial prudence; it's also about supporting future generations in Scottish agriculture. To prepare for potential future crises, we've boosted the balance of our designated Crisis Fund, ensuring we can provide rapid support when needed as in the case of the recent "Flooding Fund" to help support people affected by Storm Babet.

After a thorough review, we decided to retain RBC Brewin Dolphin as an investment manager. The Lasting Legacy Fund, managed by LGT Wealth Management, aligns with our values and focuses on investments that positively impact people and the environment.

We're committed to sustainability, promoting environmental responsibility, social engagement, and economic resilience. Our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint include a baseline carbon footprint calculation, an electric car salary sacrifice scheme, and reduced printing. Additionally, our investment portfolio is leveraged to influence positive environmental decisions within large companies.

# Financial Review

## 2023 - 24

### Income and Expenditure

Our income for the year was robust.

Investment income is gradually bouncing back from post-Covid levels. Our income streams included notable contributions from the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust (£80,000), the Scottish Government (£50,000); the Royal Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland (£16,000); and the Royal Countryside Fund (£15,000), as well as a multitude of individual and group fundraisers who undertook special events and activities to raise donations for RSABI.

On the expenditure side, our charitable activities covered direct payments to or on behalf of our clients, delivery costs, and governance costs. Direct payments included Help for Heating, Counselling and Food grants while delivery costs covered staff costs, Mental Health First Aid Training, the Thrive app, and the Health Huts initiative. Our Governance costs ensured compliance with legislation and best practise to maintain our strong reputation.

Raising funds incurred costs covering fundraising, trading, and investment management fees. We recruited a new Head of Fundraising and organised major events such as the Great Glen Challenge as well as the Farmers' Choir Concert, both fantastic successes.

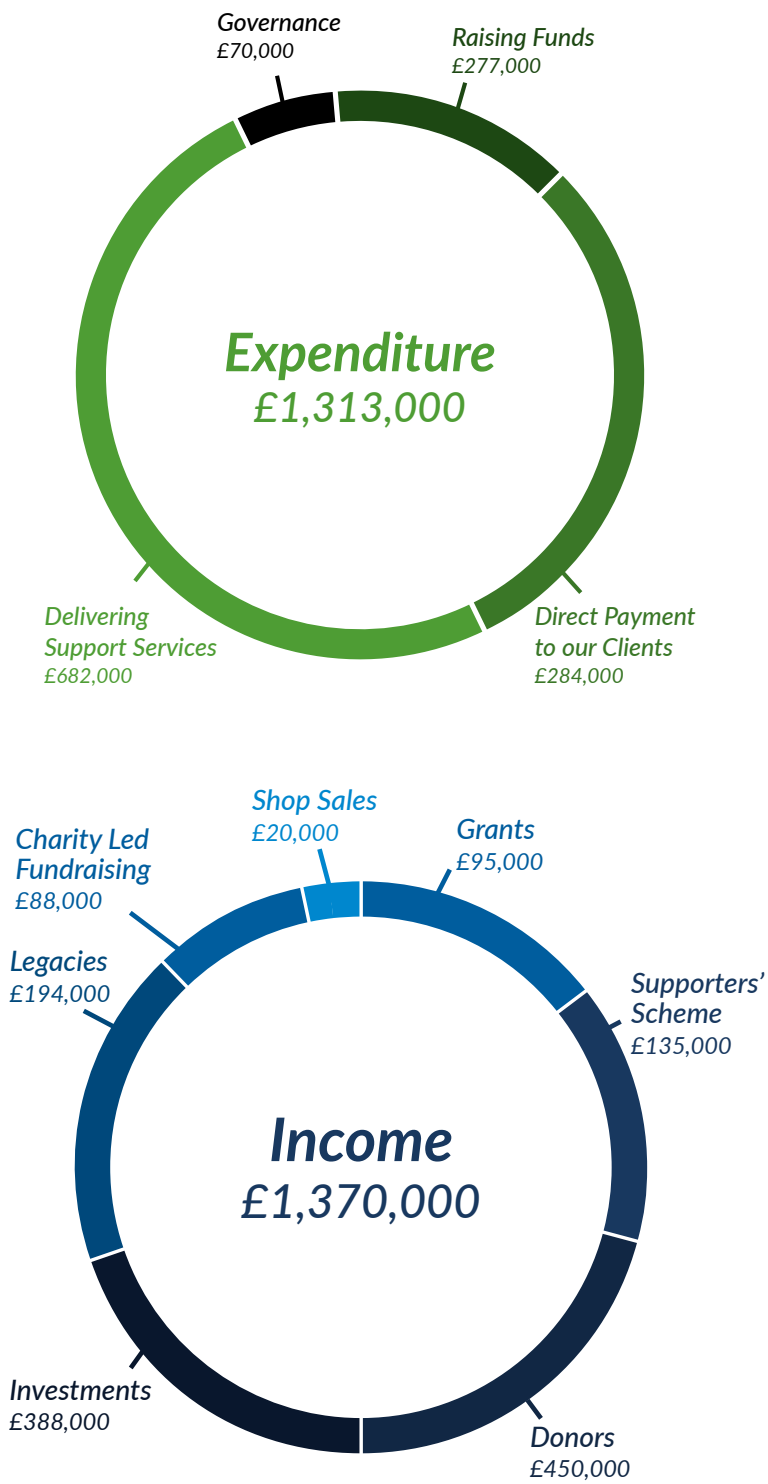
In our ongoing efforts to enhance our charity's operations, we are introducing a new Procurement Policy to ensure resource efficiency, cost-effectiveness, transparency, and ethical standards in acquiring goods and services. We are also revising our Business Continuity Plan to guarantee uninterrupted service to our beneficiaries and maintain stakeholder trust during unforeseen disruptions. Annual business continuity exercises will be conducted to test our preparedness. Lastly, we remain committed to staff development, including training on artificial intelligence tools to boost productivity while being mindful of associated risks.

Overall, our financial strategy and commitment to sustainability have positioned us well for future challenges, ensuring we can continue to support the Scottish agricultural community. We hope you find this review informative and inspiring. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to RSABI. Together, we're making a difference.

If you need any more details or have any questions, feel free to ask.

**To view our full annual Trustees' Report, please visit [www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk) or scan this QR code.**





# Royal Highland Show 2024



Our thanks to SAYFC for hosting us again at the Royal Highland Show where we had a vibrant four days with our staff and Health Hut team encouraging farmers, and others in Scottish agriculture, to think about their wellbeing.

This year we included a focus on alcohol and responsible drinking and working with DrinkAware and Alcohol Focus Scotland. One of the highlights was an interactive display demonstrating how much is in a unit of alcohol.

With the show being one of the key industry touch points for much of the agricultural community, RSAB was pleased to take part in several media interviews during the event, helping to raise the profile of the services we offer.

Our (temporary) tattoos proved popular again with younger visitors and our innovative “Stress Bucket” made a return to the show along as part of a range of initiatives by the charity to encourage good mental health.



The bespoke Stress Bucket, made from recycled farm materials and designed to raise awareness around mental health in agriculture, focuses on the common causes of stress build-up experienced in farming. It displays in a simple and engaging way how stress can be reduced through steps such as exercise, good sleep, a balanced diet, and talking with a friend or family member.

We also supported the SAYFC RESPECT initiative, introduced to encourage every young farmer to play their part in positively

contributing to SAYFC as a fun, inclusive, and safe environment for all members by reminding them of the importance of being respectful to themselves and to others. More info on page 22.

Visitors to RSABI's stand were also encouraged to think about the benefits of taking a break from the farm via a competition to win a four-night stay for up to six people in a luxury family pod, kindly donated by Lothian Glamping.

# Drumlanrig Afternoon Tea

The Queensberry Estate and our Honorary Patron, the Duke of Buccleuch, very kindly hosted a lovely afternoon for RSABI on Thursday 6th June.

Around 80 invited guests of RSABI attended Drumlanrig Castle, receiving a warm welcome in the Front Hall from the Duke of Buccleuch, who conveyed his deep affection for the work of the charity and thanks to those who give up their time to support us.



The afternoon was made up of Castle and Garden Tours, as well as a delicious Afternoon Tea and Charity Auction which raised over £4,000.



# Stand By Me

Scottish farming families, who endured one of the worst springs in living memory, had their spirits lifted with the launch of a song specially recorded as a powerful message of support.

RSABI recorded “Stand by Me” with around 100 members of the Farmers’ Choir. The emotive lyrics sung beautifully by the choir were aimed at reminding farmers about all the people who are there to stand by them, with the video accompanying the music including some of the vast number of people standing behind our farming industry.

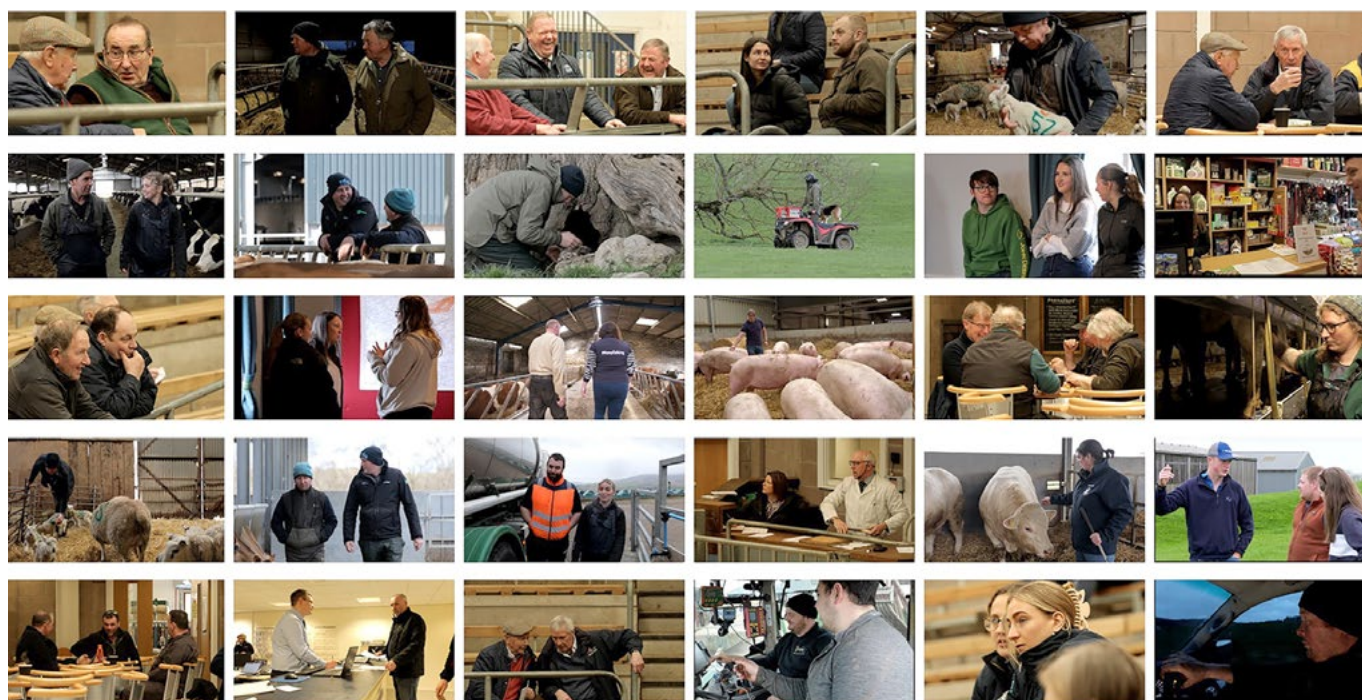
Those featured in the music video range from farm supplies retail assistants to vets, auctioneers, consultants and milk tanker drivers as well as farmers from different parts

of the country, including Aberdeenshire, Lanarkshire and Perthshire.

Our thanks go to Kate Picken MBE and the amazing Farmers’ Choir who brought the ‘Stand by Me’ lyrics to life to really resonate in the choir’s upbeat version of the song.

It is incredibly important to share the message, particularly to those working alone, that farmers have the backing and understanding of so many people, in the farming community and further afield.

The team at RSABI are also ready and waiting at the end of the phone 24/7 on **0808 1234 555** and our live webchat is available via **[www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk)**.





**RSABI**  
Supporting People  
in Scottish Agriculture

RSABI  
The Rural Centre | West Mains  
Ingliston | Newbridge | EH28 8NZ

RSABI@rsabi.org.uk  
Tel: 0131 364 4205  
Helpline (24 hours): 0808 1234 555  
Webchat (24 hours): [www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk)

Steps to make this publication dyslexia friendly include colour as well as use of pictures and infographics

