RBST

Rare Breeds Survival Trust

Annual Report

& FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2025



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AND IN SCOTLAND OSCR NO SC053451
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#NativeBreedsForModernNeeds



Royal Golden Guernsey.

www.rbst.org.uk

RBST
Rare Breeds Survival Trust

Contents

Our goals 4

A message *from our Chairman* 5

A message *from our Chief Executive Officer* 6

A message *from our Chair of Conservation & Research Committee* 7

A message *from our Director of Finance & Operations* 8

Promoting our native breeds 9

Securing Government support 18

Delivering on priorities 28

Recognition 42

Financial Review 47

Governance 49

Independent Auditors Report 51

Statement of Financial Activities 53

Balance sheet 54

Statement of cash flows 55

Notes to the financial statements 56

RBST Corporate Directory 69

Cover photograph:
Ancient Cattle of Wales - the Mapledraig Herd.

Our goals and what we're doing to achieve them

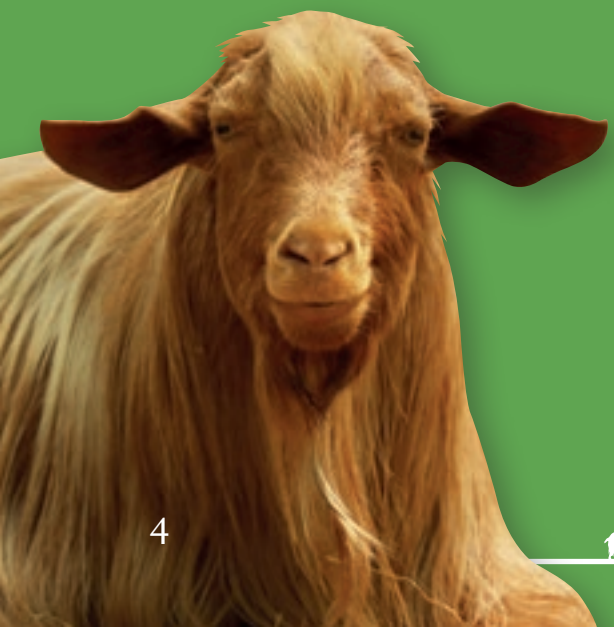
Goal: A reverse in the decline of all livestock breeds on the Watchlist

What: We aim to have all the breeds on the Watchlist stable by 2028.

How:

- We are refocusing our messaging showing the economic, social and environmental relevance of native breeds.
- We use the latest technology to save our rarest breeds, as with the British Lop Pig Project. What we learn from this project will be applied to the benefit of other breeds.
- We will continue to equip breeders and potential breeders with the knowledge they need to keep animals through our Grazing Animals Project courses and online resources.
- We are identifying "Priority Breeds" and creating Conservation Plans for each of them.

How are we doing: By 2028, we want every breed to have a stable conservation status, with none in decline. In 2026, two cattle breeds, White Park and OP Lincoln Reds, and two sheep breeds, Soay and Boreray, were added to the priority list. For the cattle breeds, the fall in registrations may be driving the change as much as any real drop in numbers. We're now working with breeders to develop tailored conservation plans for the White Parks, Soay and Boreray.



Goal: A comprehensive up-to-date Gene Bank

What: The RBST Gene Bank is the charity's single biggest investment and a key national asset. We will work towards making this a National Gene Bank, supported by government.

How:

- We are implementing a clear strategy which will support the maintenance and acquisition of animals to ensure the future of our native breeds.
- We need to ensure that the original genetics are preserved and can be drawn on in the future.
- We are actively promoting the importance of the Gene Bank to potential donors and funders and will ensure that its importance is widely understood.
- The gene bank is a living resource, not a collection that will ever be "complete". Material is constantly being added, used and renewed.

How are we doing:

- In 2025, we strengthened the gene bank with new material from including important priority such as Gloucester Cattle, Ancient Cattle of Wales, Dales Ponies and Welsh Section B Ponies.
- We also continued to press government for long-term public funding for the gene bank. We remain confident that we can secure the support it needs.

Goal: Livestock genetic diversity recognised by government and wider society as a fundamental element of agricultural and biodiversity policy

What: We lobby for genetic diversity to be recognised in government policies such as the Agriculture Act, Rural Development Policy and Biodiversity Policy.

How:

- We are joining formal partnerships and networks to highlight the many benefits of our native breeds.
- Our strategic work will build on our good media profile to ensure that native breeds are recognised in policy as being crucial to bringing greater sustainability to modern farming and land management practices.
- Our volunteer network represents us at shows and highlights the range of rare breeds that exist and their many and varied uses to the public.

How are we doing: After years of lobbying, we secured the strongest Government commitment yet to support our native breeds. The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan recognised the importance of genetic diversity, stating:

"We are maintaining and enhancing the diversity of our plant and animal genetic resources, from crop plants to native livestock. This will preserve valuable traits to help future-proof the profitability of our sectors and maintain our native breeds."

That commitment was reinforced by the decision to maintain SFI funding:

"We are keeping these actions to help show the government's commitment to supporting the preservation of native breeds."

A message from our Chairman



John Atkinson
Chairman

The past year has been one of growing recognition for the importance of the UK's native livestock and equine breeds and the vital role they play in the future of sustainable farming, biodiversity recovery, and resilient food systems. Across the UK, RBST has continued to champion these breeds not simply as part of our heritage, but as practical, adaptable and economically relevant animals for modern agriculture.

As Chair, I have been enormously encouraged by the increasing interest we are seeing from farmers, land managers, policymakers and the wider public. Whether at Groundswell, the Oxford Real Farming Conference, the Agroforestry Show, or regional agricultural events, the message is becoming clearer: native breeds have an essential contribution to make in regenerative farming systems, conservation grazing, climate resilience and local food production.

This growing awareness is reflected in the many conversations our staff, trustees, volunteers and support groups have had throughout the year. We are hearing from younger farmers looking to reshape family farms around native breeds, landowners seeking livestock suited to low-input systems, and consumers increasingly interested in provenance, sustainability and food quality. These trends provide real opportunity for the breeds we work so hard to conserve.

At the same time, we remain clear-eyed about the challenges. The continued decline of small abattoirs threatens the viability of native breed farming in many parts of the UK. Changes to agricultural support schemes, including concerns over recognition for Original Populations and the omission of Irish Moiled cattle from proposed Northern Ireland support measures, demonstrate that we cannot afford to step back from policy engagement and advocacy. RBST has therefore continued to ensure that the voice of native breeds is heard clearly at every level of government.

Conservation remains at the heart of everything we do. During the year we strengthened our Gene Bank through important new collections, including genetics from Priority breeds such as Gloucester cattle, Ancient Cattle of Wales, Dales ponies and Welsh Section B ponies. We also launched new initiatives focused on poultry conservation and the identification of valuable native breed traits, helping to build the evidence base needed for future conservation and commercial success.

Importantly, our work continues to demonstrate that conservation is most effective when breeds are actively used and valued. Partnerships such as our collaboration with Hawksmoor show how high-quality produce from native breeds can help create sustainable markets for farmers while raising awareness among consumers. Similarly, our consultancy and training work is helping more organisations understand how native breeds can deliver environmental benefits in landscapes across the UK.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our members, breed societies, volunteers, trustees, staff and supporters. Your commitment, expertise and passion continue to drive RBST forward, and on behalf of the Board I offer my sincere thanks to everyone who contributes to our shared mission.

As we look ahead, we do so with determination and optimism. The challenges facing agriculture, biodiversity and rural communities are significant, but so too is the potential of our native breeds to help address them. RBST will continue to lead the case for their conservation, promotion and practical use, ensuring these remarkable animals remain a thriving part of our farming and environmental future.

A message from our Chief Executive Officer



Christopher Price
CEO

RBST's work during the past year has demonstrated more clearly than ever that the conservation of native livestock breeds is inseparable from the future of sustainable farming, resilient food systems and biodiversity recovery.

For more than 50 years, RBST has worked to ensure that the UK does not lose its irreplaceable livestock genetics. Today, however, our role extends far beyond preservation alone. We must also ensure that native breeds are recognised, valued and actively used within the farming systems of the future. Encouragingly, this year we have seen growing momentum behind exactly that message.

At events such as the Oxford Real Farming Conference, Groundswell and the Agroforestry Show, RBST engaged with farmers, land managers and policymakers increasingly interested in the practical contribution native breeds can make to regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, conservation grazing and climate resilience. Native breeds are uniquely adapted to thrive in diverse landscapes and lower-input systems, and their value in delivering environmental outcomes is gaining long-overdue recognition.

Throughout the year, RBST has continued to strengthen its conservation work. Important additions have been made to the Gene Bank, safeguarding valuable genetics for future generations while also supporting current breeding programmes. Successful collections involving Gloucester cattle, Ancient Cattle of Wales, Dales ponies and Welsh Section B ponies represent significant achievements for breeds facing real conservation challenges.

We have also expanded our evidence-based conservation approach. New initiatives focused on native poultry and waterfowl conservation, alongside work to identify and document valuable breed traits, are helping us better understand the practical, environmental and commercial strengths of our native breeds. Reliable data and research remain essential if we are to build long-term resilience for these populations.

Alongside conservation activity, RBST has continued to advocate strongly for the infrastructure and policy support required to secure the future of native breed farming. Our campaign on small abattoirs has achieved growing political recognition, with increasing awareness that local abattoirs are critical not only for animal welfare and local food systems, but also for the survival of many native breeds. We have also continued to challenge policy decisions that risk undermining conservation efforts, including the exclusion of Original Populations from future support mechanisms.

This year also saw the launch of our enhanced consultancy service, helping estates, conservation organisations and public bodies integrate native livestock into sustainable land management plans. From regenerative grazing systems to biodiversity recovery projects, RBST's expertise is increasingly being sought to deliver practical environmental outcomes.

One of the most exciting developments of the year has been the growing market recognition for native breed produce. Our partnership with Hawksmoor demonstrates how commercial demand can directly support conservation outcomes by creating sustainable markets for rare and native breed farmers. Conservation through use remains one of the most effective ways to secure the future of these breeds.

Education, skills and engagement continue to underpin our work. Through our training courses, Young Shepherd competition, regional events and outreach activities, we are supporting the next generation of stockkeepers, graziers and conservationists. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by young farmers and breeders this year has been particularly inspiring.

RBST delivered a strong financial performance in 2025, achieving a surplus of £614,945 and recording its highest income over eight years, driven mainly by legacy income. The Trust increased investment in conservation, fundraising, staff, and strategic initiatives while maintaining long-term financial resilience. Although restricted funds and some income streams declined, RBST continues to invest in key conservation projects, expand public engagement, and strengthen its financial position to support future growth and the protection of the UK's rare and native breeds

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who makes our work possible - our President, Vice Presidents, Trustees, members, and especially our dedicated staff team: Claire McNicol, Tom Blunt, Tracy Wathen-Jones, Alice Lennox, Jenni Hughes-Ellis, Alice Marlow, Rachel Peckover, Tracey Howe, and Hannah Roberts. Thanks also to our communications advisers, Linda Trotman and Isobel Davidson.

And finally, thank you to our members, supporters, and partners. Your commitment ensures that native breeds remain not only part of our past- but a thriving part of our shared future.

The challenges ahead remain significant, but so too are the opportunities. Native breeds have an essential role to play in the future of farming and nature recovery, and RBST will continue working tirelessly to ensure that role is fully recognised and supported.

A message from our Chair of Conservation & Research Committee



Tom Fairfax
Chair of Conservation & Research Committee

This has been a fascinating year for RBST's Conservation and Research Committee. Our objective is to ensure that the UK's rare and native breeds are not only safeguarded, but remain useful, understood and valued within the farming systems of the future.

As a farmer, I know conservation and research cannot sit apart from practical reality. Breeds survive when people can keep them, breed them and build viable systems around them. Our work therefore balances long-term genetic security with the immediate needs of breeders, farmers and land managers.

The RBST Watchlist remains central to this work, helping us identify where conservation effort must be prioritised. This year, the recognition of Ancient Cattle of Wales as a Priority breed was an important milestone. Their small breeding population and limited geographical spread underline why careful monitoring matters. Recognition allows us to improve access to suitable bulls, widen genetic diversity and support breeders carrying significant conservation responsibility.

The Gene Bank remains one of RBST's greatest national assets. New collections from Gloucester cattle, Ancient Cattle of Wales, Dales ponies and Welsh Section B ponies strengthen our ability to protect valuable bloodlines against disease, market shocks and the gradual loss of genetic diversity. More importantly, the Gene Bank supports living breeding programmes today by helping maintain resilience in active populations.

We have also strengthened work in native poultry and waterfowl conservation following the continuing disruption caused by Avian Influenza. The new conservation initiative focuses on better population data, stronger collaboration and improved evidence to guide decisions while identifying sustainable commercial opportunities.

Alongside this, we have begun gathering stronger evidence on native breed traits. Characteristics such as hardiness, disease resistance, grazing behaviour and product quality are widely recognised but often poorly documented. Bringing together research, case studies and breeder experience will help demonstrate the value of native breeds as farming moves towards lower-input, more resilient systems.

Accurate pedigree registration remains fundamental. It protects bloodlines, provides reliable population data and enables risks to be identified early. Our expanded registration campaign reminds breeders that the records created today shape the conservation success of tomorrow.

Throughout the year we have continued to champion conservation through use. Native breeds are working animals with an increasingly important role in regenerative farming, conservation grazing, sustainable food production and landscape management. Their wider adoption must be supported by good stockmanship, sound breeding decisions and practical management.

Research also underpins RBST's consultancy, training and policy work. LANTRA-accredited training helps ensure growing interest is matched by practical capability, while our evidence supports policy makers on issues including Original Populations, Irish Moiled cattle and the decline of small abattoirs. Conservation depends not only on genetics, but also on markets, infrastructure and policies that recognise the value of livestock diversity.

Looking ahead, we must continue strengthening the Gene Bank, supporting breeders, expanding the evidence base and making the practical case for native breeds in modern farming. There are real challenges, but along side all of this we see growing recognition that these animals are essential to resilient farming, environmental delivery and national food security.

Our native breeds are both part of our farming heritage and foundations of a productive future. The Committee's role is to ensure they remain living, working populations - useful on the land, valued by society and available to generations to come.

A message from our Director of Finance & Operations



Claire McNicol
Director of Finance & Operations

2025 was a positive year financially, with RBST delivering a bottom line surplus of £614,945. This was achieved against a challenging economic backdrop, characterised by modest UK growth, inflation stabilising but remaining above pre-pandemic levels, and relatively high interest rates

These conditions contributed to ongoing cost pressures and subdued consumer confidence, creating a more difficult fundraising and operating environment for charities. Despite these headwinds, RBST delivered a strong performance overall, with increased income and the continuation of planned investment to support strategic priorities.

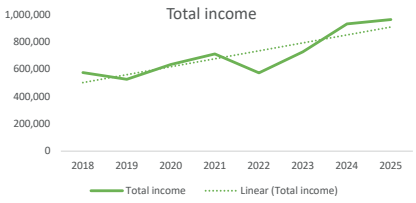
Investment returns and legacy income, outperformed in 2025, are higher than they have been in over eight years. While these figures can fluctuate materially from year to year, RBST's focus remains on long-term financial resilience rather than short-term variation. The Trust continues to plan and budget on this basis, recognising that annual surpluses and deficits will occur as a result of these movements, while maintaining overall financial stability over the long term.

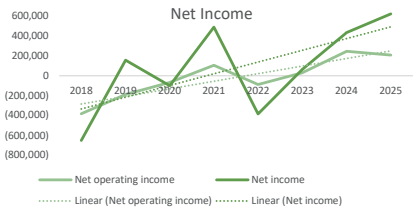
Income increased in 2025 to £966,065, predominantly driven by legacies of £468,932, offsetting decreases in other income streams. Grants and donations declined by 14% due to lower restricted funding, as RBST focused on delivering previously funded projects, however, unrestricted grants and donations increased by 89%. Membership income fell by 4%. Although this remains a challenge across the charity sector, the new website, dedicated volunteer and events hub, increased marketing activity and additional staff capacity are expected to support long-term membership growth. Income from charitable activities remained stable, and consulting and training courses, which both generate income and further RBST's conservation mission, remain key priorities for 2026 and 2027. Total expenses were up 10%, coming in at £757,510. This was due to the planned reinvestment of RBST's increased reserves in spend on charitable activities and raising funds. This is a trend that is planned to continue into 2026 and 2027 as staff are increased and conservation objectives and outreach are placed at the heart of the RBST strategy.

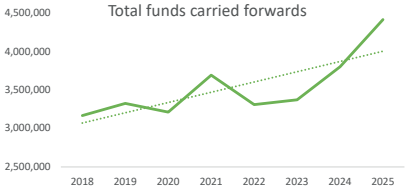
Restricted funds decreased by 10% in 2025, following an increase in 2024, as RBST focused on utilising funds raised in prior years. This will again be a fundraising priority in 2026 and 2027 to secure the restricted funding pipeline needed to deliver many of RBST's species and breed-specific objectives. Funding is already in place to continue projects underway, including the Priority Breeds Project, Native Cattle Project and ongoing Equine Project. Additional funding is being sought for a further equine project, a cattle genetic sequencing project, and projects promoting White Park cattle and primitive sheep.

As highlighted in last year's report, over the past eight years RBST has focused on strengthening its financial resilience through careful cost management and diversification of income streams. This strategy has enabled the Trust to steadily grow its reserves. In 2025, the Board took the strategic decision to reinvest these funds to accelerate delivery of RBST's charitable objectives. As a result, operating expenditure is expected to increase as investment is made in priority areas, before returning to a sustainable level supported by long-term legacy and investment income and growth across RBST's strategic workstreams. During the year, additional investment strengthened conservation capacity and expanded RBST's presence across the devolved nations. Alongside this, the Trust launched its new website and volunteer hub, embedding a refreshed marketing strategy, broadening digital reach and creating new opportunities for people across the UK to support RBST through volunteering, fundraising and community engagement.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who contributes to the Trust's success. Strong financial performance is only meaningful because of the people behind it. Our staff continue to demonstrate exceptional commitment and professionalism, achieving an extraordinary amount with the resources available. I am equally grateful to our members, whose ongoing support strengthens our ability to conserve and champion the UK's rare and native breeds. My thanks also go to our corporate partners and sponsors, whose investment reflects a shared commitment to safeguarding our heritage livestock and equine breeds. Finally, I would like to recognise those who have chosen to remember RBST in their wills. Their generosity provides invaluable support for our conservation work.









RBST

Promoting our native breeds

A Sebastopol goose at White Post Farm Park, one of three at the farm. Photograph by Thomas Costello of White Post.

Promoting our native breeds


Promoting pigs at Oxford.

> ***2025 was another year of farmers, smallholders, breed societies and RBST working together to conserve and promote the UK's native breeds.***

Across all four countries of the UK, RBST continued to work with its members and partners to champion these breeds and the high-quality produce they provide.

Throughout the year, RBST maintained a strong presence at events focused on sustainable and regenerative farming, engaging with a growing audience increasingly interested in where their food comes from and recognising the importance of farming in harmony with nature.

This rising awareness is creating new opportunities for native breeds and reinforcing the vital role they can play in the future of sustainable agriculture.

Promoting pigs at Oxford

RBST took to the stage at this year's Oxford Real Farming Conference to put the case for the use of pigs in nature conservation and regenerative farming systems.

The presentation "Pigs: Environmental Engineers or Architects of Destruction" set out to explode the myth that pigs are destructive foragers that simply uproot all before them.

The aim was to promote the wide range of behaviours of pigs and the potential benefits they offer by exploring their versatility, adaptability and the conservation opportunities native pigs bring. These behavioural characteristics, and their resulting impact on helping to maintain herb-rich pasture and shrub layer, are almost impossible to replicate using other forms of management.

CEO Christopher Price chaired the RBST session and said: "The Oxford Real Farming Conference offers an excellent platform for RBST. Over the years, we have seen the discussions become ever-more relevant to the key issues that we have to address as the understanding of the principles of regenerative farming has increased. There was a high turnout for our session, with many of the audience being practising farmers which led to an excellent level of discussion."

The Oxford Real Farming Conference runs alongside the international Oxford Farming Conference and addresses subjects including agroecology, regenerative agriculture, organic farming and indigenous food and farming systems. The broad programme explores farming practices and techniques as well as addressing the bigger questions relating to our food and farming system.

RBST at Groundswell

RBST returned to the Groundswell Festival in July to find that native and rare breeds are gaining well-deserved recognition within regenerative farming circles.

The annual festival is designed to provide a forum for farmers, growers, or anyone interested in food production and the environment to learn about the theory and practical applications of regenerative farming systems. While Groundswell began with a stronger arable focus, it was encouraging to see a rising number of livestock farmers and organisations represented this year.

The RBST stand welcomed a steady stream of visitors throughout the festival and a highlight was the talk given by Alice Lennox, RBST's Scottish Co-ordinator, who spoke passionately about native breed wool. Her presentation - set against a striking "wall of wool" showcasing 35 different fleeces - sparked many conversations. As Alice put it: "Native wool is not just ethical - it's beautiful, practical, and ready for a renaissance."

Summing up the event, Conservation Adviser Tracy Wathen-Jones said: "The overall atmosphere was one of openness, collaboration, and positivity. It's clear that native livestock breeds are being increasingly recognised for their critical role in building soil health, supporting biodiversity, and producing high-welfare, climate-resilient food and fibre."

"Groundswell 2025 confirmed that RBST's message is resonating: the future of regenerative farming must include the native breeds that shaped our landscapes and still have so much to offer today."



The wall of wool.

. . . in Scotland



Lynn Sneddon of Fresaichigo.

> ***RBST Scotland enjoyed a hugely successful presence at this year's Royal Highland Show, with rewarding footfall throughout the weekend and a host of engaging conversations that highlighted the strength and enthusiasm of our native and rare breed community.***

Themed weekend at the Royal Highland

The themed weekend, "The Flocks, Fibre and the Future: The Craft of Conservation", captured the imagination of visitors and proved to be a true celebration of traditional skills and sustainable practices. A highlight for many was Pam Sutherland of Shearing Crafts, whose felting demonstrations brought the tactile beauty of wool to life. Equally well received was Lynn Sneddon of Fresaichigo, who works with "found fleece". Her insightful talk resonated with audiences and sparked valuable discussion about the future of fibre and conservation.

A special highlight was a beautiful display by RBST Scotland Chair, Rebecca McLellan of Chocflock, which showcased the charm and character of rare and native breeds, drawing great interest and engagement from showgoers. RBST Scottish Co-ordinator Alice Lennox said: "The stand was a hub of interest and activity, creating a perfect space for members, supporters, and newcomers alike to connect, learn, and share ideas."

Promoting our native breeds ... in Wales

> ***RBST Wales and Borders made their way to Llanelwedd, Builth Wells in July for the 2025 Royal Welsh Show, a four-day show that has long been one of the key events in the Welsh agricultural calendar, attracting visitors from across the UK and further afield.***



Chair Mark Davies, Secretary Emma Davies and volunteer Robbie Blackhall-Miles.

Native breeds interest at Royal Welsh

RBST Wales and Borders Chair Mark Davies says: "We noticed this year that we had greater numbers of younger people talking to us about how they plan to change the system on the family farm over the coming years to one that is predominantly based on native breeds, matching livestock to the land they farm. A significant driver for this change appears to have been the increased costs of supplementary feed, and farmers seeking to reduce input costs. We also spoke to people keen to explore commercial opportunities in their local area, and we were able to point them in the direction of organisations in Wales that support people to develop their food business ideas.

"Prior to the show, RBST had co-signed a letter to the Welsh agriculture minister, highlighting the concerning decline in small abattoirs in Wales. People approached us to talk about the situation, their personal experiences and difficulty in trying to send their livestock to slaughter. The recognition of the problem by so many organisations was a welcome and necessary step to highlight the current situation."

With 2025 being the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Balwen Sheep Society, it provided some sheep for RBST to showcase on the stand this year which were a popular addition. Mark adds: "It was encouraging to hear people telling us that they are growing their flock to significant numbers and are commercially successful. As well as the Balwens on the stand, we were situated next to the Castlemilk Moorit Society, and were able to set up the stand to provide a seamless transition from the RBST stand to theirs and vice versa.

"As always, a huge thank you to the volunteers and RBST staff that gave up their time to support us on the stand, the National Sheep Association for their support in preparation, and to the breed societies and likeminded organisations that came to see us and engage with us during the show."



A valuable gathering at Agroforestry

The 2025 Agroforestry Show, organised by the Soil Association and the Woodland Trust, once again proved to be a valuable gathering for farmers, advisers, and organisations exploring the integration of trees and livestock. Representing RBST, Tom Blunt and Tracy Wathen-Jones hosted the stand across both days, engaging with a wide range of visitors keen to discuss traditional and native breeds within agroforestry and silvopasture systems.

On the first day, Tracy chaired a session on Livestock Breeds for Silvopasture, featuring RBST Trustees Tom Fairfax and Claire Whittle. Both speakers shared practical insights from their own farms, highlighting how native breeds' hardiness, grazing behaviour, and adaptability make them especially well-suited to tree-rich systems. Discussion covered breed choice, system design, health management, and the wider environmental benefits of combining livestock with trees. Despite bouts of wet weather, the session attracted a strong audience with lively questions and follow-up conversations.

Throughout the event, the RBST stand maintained a steady flow of visitors. Farmers and land managers came to talk about their own livestock, evolving farming systems, and experiences introducing trees into pasture. Interest in native and rare breeds within agroforestry continues to grow, and RBST's presence ensured these breeds and their role in regenerative, resilient farming were firmly on the agenda.

A new approach to volunteering

For decades, Support Groups have been vital to RBST and their efforts, and together with those of individual members, have made a major contribution to its work. However, over recent years, the support group structure has faced growing challenges and, to overcome those, the Board made the decision to introduce a new volunteer network, designed to make volunteering easier and more flexible and creating new ways of reaching and engaging people who want to conserve and promote native breeds.

The new approach is designed to make active participation much more straightforward, making it easier to ensure a unified national voice under one strong, consistent brand, with a simpler system allowing volunteers to harness creativity, community spirit and local knowledge to flourish without procedural headaches and to connect with new audiences interested in native breeds.

The RBST website provides the platform for the new approach, with a dedicated section providing registration forms, starter guides, activity ideas and branding kits, insurance FAQs and a code of conduct and safety templates. Members will be able to form local groups, signing up online, with just one member nominated to act as local co-ordinator and point of contact with RBST. There will also be opportunities for members to act as event hosts, for activities such as farm visits, ambassadors giving talks to schools, other local organisations or at shows, and fundraisers organising activities such as sponsorships or events that help introduce native breeds to wider communities.



Promoting our native breeds

Crowded rings for Young Shepherds 2025

"It was a case of crowded rings for both classes in the 2025 Finals of the RBST Young Shepherd of the Year competition, with 22 entrants vying for the Junior title and 17 in the Senior class."

With some outstanding showing skills on display, judge Barry Evans had difficult decisions to make and the competition ended with Senior champion Millie Johnson taking the supreme title with Junior champion Vinnie Lambert in reserve. Both were showing North Ronaldsays. Reserve Junior champion was Dexter Noel Martin and Logan Tyson took Senior reserve.

Commenting on his task as judge, Barry Evans said: "To qualify for the national final of The Shepherd of the Year is a great achievement and the standard of both the junior and senior shepherds was impressive. With so many competitors in each class the task of picking the final seven was based on how they handled the sheep in the ring and their knowledge of the breed. Those who did well spoke with a passion for their sheep and gave a comprehensive description of the breed. When it came to the final four in the line up for the supreme championship I asked each of them the same question – "if I had a pocketful of money, why should I buy your sheep' – and they all answered brilliantly."

Established in 2011, the RBST Young Shepherd of the Year competition goes from strength to strength. For the 2025 finals, which took place at Stafford Showground, competitors travelled from as far as Scotland, Kent, Devon and Cornwall. RBST Senior Conservation Adviser Tom Blunt, who co-ordinated the competition, said: "The competition is designed to encourage the next generation of shepherds and stockkeepers and we had a fantastic line-up of talented young handlers showing a variety of breeds. It is rewarding to see how much time each competitor spends preparing their animals and how dedicated they are to showing the sheep to the best of their ability."





Celebrating sustainability in Scotland

Members of RBST Scotland gathered at this year's Royal Highland Show to celebrate the 2025 Food & Farming Sustainability Awards, which once again demonstrated the diversity of successful enterprises which have native breeds at their core.

The awards recognise businesses and individuals from Scotland's food and farming industries who have placed environmental sustainability and native breeds at the heart of their activities. Once again, the awards attracted an impressive range of entrants.

Attending the awards presentation, Agriculture Minister Jim Fairlie MSP said: "I am delighted to be part of the RBST Scottish Forum's Scotland Food & Farming Sustainability Awards, as we celebrate the people and businesses throughout our farming and food industry who place environmental sustainability at the heart of what they do. I would like to congratulate everyone taking part."

The winners of the six categories were chosen from the entrants by a judging panel led by RBST Scotland Chair Rebecca McLellan who said: "Congratulations to all the winners of this year's RBST Food & Farming Sustainability Awards, who are showcasing the excellence that can be achieved for communities, for the environment and for native breeds in farming, food production and retail. The standard of entries was incredibly high and it was a real pleasure to hear about the fantastic projects, businesses and individuals championing native breeds. RBST is proud to showcase and celebrate such expertise, dedication and innovation in sustainable farming, land management and food production."



Rebecca McLellan Chair of RBST Scotland and Alice Lennox, RBST Scottish Coordinator accepting the award of RBST Champion on behalf of winner Zoe Robson.

Putting native breeds on the menu

RBST has launched a partnership with award-winning steak restaurant group Hawksmoor in a UK-first to champion rare and native breed livestock farmers and showcase their produce. The initiative marks the first large-scale scheme of its type dedicated to supporting the conservation of rare and native breed livestock in the UK.

The UK-wide programme will see farms keeping herds of the UK's rare native cattle breeds selected to supply their produce for T-bone, Porterhouse and Prime Rib sharing steaks. These will be showcased on Hawksmoor's weekend blackboard at all restaurants across the UK and Ireland, and will also be embedded as a permanent menu feature at Hawksmoor's latest restaurant at St Pancras.

RBST CEO Christopher Price says: "We want to see all our rare and native breeds thriving again: back at the heart of British agriculture with a strong market for their produce which is essential to enable more farms to keep these breeds. I thank Hawksmoor for recognising the fantastic quality of this produce, and for their wonderful support for farming with native livestock."

Hawksmoor's co-founder, Huw Gott comments: "For those who care deeply about beef and provenance, and even for those who might not often think about it, this really matters. Across all our UK and Ireland restaurants, our weekend blackboard steaks now come from named rare and native breeds, supporting the farmers and landscapes that make them possible.

"We are incredibly proud of this partnership, and for a business of our scale to deliver an initiative of this kind. In an industry where there are many opportunities to cut corners or reduce costs, this is something we will never compromise on. When every part of that chain is working at its best, the beef speaks for itself. You can genuinely taste the difference."

Promoting our native breeds

The 2025 Marsh Award heroes



Graham and Debbie Lennox in the days of Doonies.

> ***The Marsh Awards for 2025 recognised two RBST supporters who have worked tirelessly to raise the profile of rare breeds in Scotland. The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Graham Lennox and Grant Reid was named Support Group Volunteer of the Year.***



Grant Reid with RBST Scotland co-ordinator Alice Lennox in front of the Wall of "Wool".

RBST is proud to work with the Marsh Awards to celebrate the people who make a difference.

The Marsh Awards recognise outstanding contributions from volunteers and individuals across the UK and internationally, championing those who give their time, energy and expertise to social, cultural, environmental and heritage causes.

For RBST, this partnership is a natural fit. Our work depends on people who care deeply about protecting native breeds and the landscapes, farming traditions and genetic diversity they represent. The Marsh Awards give us an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the dedication of people making a real difference.

MARSH
Charitable Trust

Native breed traits - RBST sets out to get the facts

Reliable, high-quality data are essential to effective livestock conservation, yet much of the evidence surrounding rare and native breeds remains anecdotal. These breeds are often believed to possess valuable traits, such as resistance to specific diseases, but there is limited empirical evidence to substantiate these claims. RBST is therefore working to gather robust data and establish the real picture, helping to build a stronger evidence base for the conservation and sustainable use of our native livestock breeds.

To this end, RBST has launched a survey aimed at collecting data and will analyse the findings with a view to carrying out more comprehensive research projects. The first step has been to write to breed societies and, already, feedback has started to come in.

Senior Conservation Adviser Tom Blunt says: "We are particularly interested in identifying characteristics that offer practical, environmental, or commercial advantages. These might include, for example, resistance to sunburn, foot rot or flystrike, superior food quality, lower environmental emissions, or other notable health and management benefits. We are particularly interested in identifying any traits that may not yet be widely recognised or formally documented."

While its initial approach is via breed societies, RBST would also be interested in hearing from individual breeders or keepers to support this work. Tom adds: "Any supporting information that can be provided would be extremely helpful. This could include formal studies, case studies, or anecdotal or observational data."

For more information on the survey, contact Tom Blunt on tomblunt@rbst.org.uk.

Working with farm parks

Almost since its inception, RBST has run an approved farm park scheme which comprises a diverse group of locations where members of the public can enjoy a native breeds experience.

First and foremost, RBST approved farm parks are selected for their active breeding programmes of Watchlist breeds. As well as those operating as visitor attractions, the farm parks in the Education category are integral to educational facilities while Associate members keep and breed natives as an adjunct to their core conservation activity.

Farm parks offer an important public showcase for RBST's work with native breeds, attracting many thousands of visitors each year. In addition, many farm parks can be seen out and about at their local agricultural shows, showing off their pedigree livestock to an even wider audience. And, because they are actively involved in breeding programmes, they can be an important source of pedigree stock.

Introducing Saffron Walden County High School

When Saffron Walden County High School established its school farm back in 1963 it started with just three rabbits. Now, the school's Agricultural Science Unit (ASU) has an established breeding programme for rare breeds and has achieved accreditation as an RBST Education Farm Park.

On the verge of closure in 2016, the farm was effectively re-purposed by a new manager as the Agricultural Science Unit, gaining approval to offer City and Guilds qualifications and extending its reach far beyond the school itself.

The ASU is run as a not-for-profit programme, relying on generous donations and the engagement of the public to fund its work. As well as running levels 1, 2 and 3 animal care and management courses for students at Saffron Walden High School, it offers a wide range of activities, ranging from taking external students on a referral basis – often to those who need something out of the mainstream – to goat yoga.

With limited resources, the ASU is selective about the livestock it keeps and chooses animals that will enable it to carry out conservation breeding programmes, keeping Oxford Sandy & Black pigs, Whitefaced Woodland sheep, Royal Golden Guernsey goats and a selection of poultry.

RBST

Securing Government support



A Whitefaced Woodland ewe with her lamb on Nashenden Down Nature Reserve in Kent. Photograph by Jessica Allam.

RBST's Call for action for our native livestock

1 Honour Our Living Heritage: Native Breeds as Biodiversity Champions.

Native livestock and equines are not just farm animals - they are living, breathing biodiversity. Bred for specific landscapes, they are the original ecosystem engineers, deeply woven into the fabric of our environment and culture.

We are calling on all UK governments to recognise native breeds as a vital part of national biodiversity - equal in importance to wild species - and deliver on international obligations to conserve them. Protecting these animals means investing in the public goods they provide: sustainability, resilience, and identity.

2 Power Up the Abattoir Network: Local, Diverse, Essential.

A thriving network of small, local abattoirs is essential. Without it, native breed farming is under threat, animal welfare is compromised, and food security is at risk.

Government must act now: support small abattoirs to handle the diversity and scale of native breeds, cut red tape, and invest in regional infrastructure that keeps food local and traceable. This is about more than slaughter - it's about sovereignty, sustainability, and survival.

3 Make Biosecurity a National Priority.

Disease doesn't wait.

Government must join forces with RBST and native breed farmers to champion biosecurity and contingency planning that works for all. Rare native breeds must be embedded in national animal biosecurity strategies - not as an afterthought, but as frontline defenders of our food future. This partnership will build rural resilience, safeguard genetic diversity, and ensure the UK is ready for tomorrow's threats, today.

4 Rethink Carcass Grading: Taste, Not Just Tonnage.

The current EU-based carcass grading system is outdated and unfair. It rewards bulk, not brilliance - measuring meat by shape and fat cover alone, and ignoring what really matters: taste, quality, and character. Native breeds, with their extraordinary flavour profiles and sustainable rearing, are penalised by a system that sees only volume. Worse still, it's all based on a subjective visual check.

The UK must follow smarter models - like Australia's eating quality-based grading - and legislate for a system that celebrates diversity, values eating experience, and empowers consumers to choose better meat.

Protecting heritage and delivering sustainability

Securing Government support

Advocacy Activities

Throughout 2025, RBST continued to champion the recognition, protection and sustainable use of the UK's native livestock and equine breeds. Across all four nations, RBST engaged with governments, agencies, parliamentarians, farming organisations and the agricultural press to ensure native breeds remained central to discussions on sustainable agriculture, biodiversity recovery, food security and climate resilience. Growing interest in regenerative farming and food production systems that work more closely with nature created further opportunities to demonstrate the practical and environmental value of native breeds. Media coverage throughout the year helped amplify RBST's message and reinforce the importance of conserving the UK's livestock genetic diversity.

England

In England, RBST's advocacy work focused on ensuring that native breeds were fully recognised within Defra's developing agricultural and environmental policies. During 2025, RBST responded to consultations on the Land Use Framework, Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes and wider agricultural reform. The organisation consistently highlighted the role native breeds play in low-input grazing systems, biodiversity enhancement, carbon management and the maintenance of traditional landscapes.

RBST engaged directly with Defra officials and parliamentarians regarding future support for rare and native breeds within agri-environment policy. Advocacy centred on ensuring that conservation grazing systems using native livestock are properly valued within environmental payments and nature recovery programmes. RBST also continued to promote the principle of "Right Breed, Right Place, Right System" as a practical approach to resilient and sustainable farming.

Publication of the 2025–26 RBST Watchlist generated significant agricultural media coverage and provided an opportunity to highlight the vulnerability of many native breeds. RBST used this attention to call for renewed government engagement and stronger coordination between government, breed societies and conservation organisations.

Wales

In Wales, RBST focused much of its advocacy activity on the Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). Throughout the year, RBST worked to ensure that native livestock breeds and conservation grazing systems were recognised within the emerging framework. The organisation highlighted the suitability of Welsh native breeds for low-input upland and marginal farming systems and their contribution to biodiversity, carbon management and cultural heritage.

RBST also stressed the importance of conserving uniquely Welsh breeds and bloodlines as part of Wales' wider biodiversity strategy. The addition of the Ancient Cattle of Wales to the RBST Watchlist Priority category attracted attention within both the farming and conservation press and helped raise awareness of the risks facing small and geographically concentrated populations.

Through stakeholder engagement and media commentary, RBST also highlighted concerns about the pressures facing upland livestock systems and the importance of ensuring that environmental policy does not unintentionally disadvantage native breed keepers or traditional farming communities.

Scotland

RBST Scotland continued to strengthen its profile during 2025 through policy engagement, conferences and media advocacy promoting the role of native breeds in Scotland's agricultural future. Building on its growing organisational presence, RBST Scotland became an increasingly important voice within discussions on regenerative agriculture, biodiversity and sustainable land use.

A major focus during the year was the RBST Scotland Conference 2025, "Native Breeds: Their Role in Scotland's Agricultural Future." The conference brought together farmers, policymakers, researchers and environmental organisations to discuss the contribution of native breeds to sustainable food production, conservation grazing and climate resilience. Agricultural media coverage extended the reach of these discussions and reinforced RBST Scotland's position as a leading advocate for native breeds within Scottish agriculture.

RBST Scotland also engaged with Scottish Government policy development relating to agricultural reform and the Circular Economy Vision, highlighting the importance of supporting low-input native breed systems that contribute to biodiversity enhancement, local food production and resilient rural economies.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, RBST's advocacy activity focused particularly on the future of the Irish Moiled cattle breed, Northern Ireland's only native cattle breed listed as "At Risk" on the RBST Watchlist. During 2025, RBST and partner organisations raised concerns regarding the absence of specific support for Irish Moiled cattle within aspects of DAERA's Sustainable Agriculture Programme and Farming with Nature scheme.

These concerns received significant agricultural media coverage, helping to raise awareness among policymakers and the wider farming industry. RBST used this opportunity to emphasise the wider importance of conserving native livestock genetics as part of sustainable agriculture policy in Northern Ireland.

RBST's Response to the Land Use Framework

RBST Conservation Adviser Tracy Wathen-Jones explains the RBST position and response to the recent Land Use consultation.

RBST broadly supports the direction of the Government's proposed Land Use Framework (LUF), recognising its potential to reshape how England balances food production, nature recovery, and climate resilience. With 91% of agricultural land set to remain in food production, the LUF offers an important opportunity to embed native livestock breeds into sustainable land management.

Why native breeds matter in land use transition

RBST believes there is significant potential to integrate native and rare breeds into land use categories transitioning away from traditional farming (LUF Categories 3.2 and 4). These breeds are uniquely suited to marginal and low-input environments and can deliver high-value environmental services through conservation grazing. Their grazing patterns support biodiversity, help maintain species-rich grasslands and peatland edges and enhance the ecological condition of restored habitats.

These native livestock are not just a heritage asset - they are practical, resilient tools in land management, capable of contributing to climate mitigation, biodiversity recovery, and sustainable food systems.

RBST is calling for native breeds to be formally recognised as part of nature-based solutions and urges that future land use schemes include explicit incentives to support their use. Such support would also deliver on national genetic conservation objectives, ensuring the survival of rare breeds for generations to come.

Supporting farmer-led, place-based approaches

RBST welcomes the LUF's emphasis on spatial planning and participatory policy development. Farmers, landowners, and land managers must be empowered to co-design solutions that reflect their landscapes, communities, and farming systems.

We believe land use policy must recognise:

- The multifunctionality of land, where food production coexists with ecosystem restoration.
- The long-term value of native breeds as low-input, resilient grazers and food producers.
- The importance of keeping land productive and farms financially viable.

Future decisions must be evidence-led, adaptive, and inclusive, with a clear role for native breeds in meeting environmental targets without compromising food security.

Expanding the circle of decision-makers

While central government departments are key, RBST believes the success of land use change depends on a wider coalition of decision-makers applying the LUF's principles. These include:

- Local authorities, National Parks, and National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), who set regional land use strategies.
- Environmental NGOs, land-based colleges, and research institutions, who support innovation and training.
- Farmers and landowners, whose knowledge and stewardship will drive implementation.
- Retailers, supply chains, and investors, who must support the transition through fairer markets and green finance.

Greater collaboration between public and private sectors is vital to achieve long-term, resilient outcomes that deliver for people, nature, and the climate.

What farmers need to deliver this vision

To enable the agricultural sector to deliver land use change at scale, RBST recommends:

- Stronger support for native and rare breed livestock for their ecological and genetic value.
- Incentives for regenerative and conservation-based grazing, especially in marginal areas.
- Sustained investment in the National Livestock Gene Bank, securing future food and breed security.
- Policies that guarantee high animal welfare and robust biosecurity.
- Clear, long-term policy frameworks that offer certainty and reward environmental outcomes.

RBST's call to action

RBST urges policymakers to ensure native breeds are not an afterthought in the UK's land use strategy. Their role in supporting biodiversity, landscape resilience, cultural heritage, and sustainable food production deserves formal recognition and tangible support.

By embedding native breeds into the Land Use Framework, we can unlock a nature-positive future where traditional livestock play a modern role in tackling the biggest challenges facing our land and climate.

RBST also recognises the importance of the upcoming Farming 25-Year Roadmap and looks forward to further detail, where we anticipate even closer alignment with our priorities around native breeds, genetic conservation, and sustainable land management.

The full consultation response can be read at www.rbst.org.uk.

Securing Government support

Recognition for the Irish Moiled in Ireland

> ***Despite it being the only surviving cattle breed native to Northern Ireland, there are no plans to include actions for Irish Moiled cattle in the Northern Irish Government's proposed changes to the current farm support schemes, published by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).***

Working with the Irish Moiled Cattle Society, RBST is strongly urging DAERA to review this position and has set out the case for making provision for the breed in a letter to the government.

The Farming with Nature (FwN) Programme forms part of DAERA's Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP), through which it is seeking to "transition to a more sustainable farming sector by implementing policies and strategies that benefit our climate and environment, while supporting our economically and socially significant agriculture sector."

RBST CEO Christopher Price says: "In a document published in May addressing questions and answers relating to SAP, it is specifically stated that there were no plans to include actions to support Irish Moiled cattle in the first stage of the FwN Programme. RBST and the Irish Moiled Cattle Society have written jointly to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs at DAERA to urge that such provision is made in the latter stage."

The letter states: "As the only surviving domestic cattle breed native to Northern Ireland, the Irish Moiled embodies our agricultural heritage, ecological resilience, and premium food potential. Its inclusion in nature-based farming initiatives can significantly strengthen our environmental goals while supporting rural communities.

"The FwN programme is rightly focused on rewarding farmers who make meaningful contributions to biodiversity, soil health, water quality, and climate mitigation. Irish Moiled cattle are exceptionally well-suited to delivering these outcomes."



RBST challenges government over threat to OP conservation

> ***RBST is continuing to campaign for special recognition for Original Populations (OPs), currently excluded from future government support under new policy changes confirmed by Defra.***

The Native Breeds at Risk (NBAR) list was replaced in March 2026 by the UK Native Breeds Support (NBS) list, which aims to adopt a "whole breed" approach

Original Populations represent the founding genetics of breeds which have been "modernised" . A key example of this is the Aberdeen Angus, the phenotype of which was radically altered in the 1970s by the introduction of genetics from the North American Angus, cattle fed on the vast surpluses of grain then on the American market. Similarly, Traditional Herefords are genetically distinct from the wider breed with no imported lines but they, like the Native Aberdeen Angus, will lose access to financial support, despite their rarity.

RBST CEO Christopher Price says: "By maintaining a breed's original bloodlines, which don't carry the influences of imported lines, we are maintaining their original traits. It is vital that these are maintained with conservation activities and distinct breeding programmes which retain these crucial rare genetics.

"While RBST understands the government's starting point in the broader context of this policy review, we strongly disagree with the stance that will put the onus on breed societies to maintain support for the OPs within their breeds. While the societies may recognise and support the maintenance of original genetics, they are hardly going to be in the position to step in to replace lost financial support from the government.

"RBST is now calling on the government to introduce new safeguards, including specific conservation funding and breeding programme requirements aimed at protecting critical within-breed genetics. We are urging government to put in place new mechanisms to incentivise and require the conservation of particularly important genetics within breeds, including these original populations,"



Native Aberdeen Angus cattle from the Dunlouise herd.

Securing Government support

Call to capture potential of grasslands



> ***RBST has become a signatory to a call to government to "capture the untapped potential of grasslands". The open letter, also signed by other leading environmental charities, universities and conservation groups, says that this is something currently overlooked by government.***

The letter highlights that "protecting, restoring and managing grasslands is crucial to tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies, whilst producing food" and calls for the swift establishment of a cross departmental Grassland Taskforce to ensure grasslands are not shaded out of the conversation by policy-makers.

The letter reads, "From urban green spaces to upland pastures, grasslands are the largest land use category in England, covering at least 40 per cent of land, yet there is no dedicated resource within Defra working specifically on them. Unlike trees and peatland, there is no equivalent action plan or taskforce for grasslands that can leverage opportunities such as private finance mechanisms for species recovery and habitat management, restoration and creation."

As well as RBST, signatories to the letter – coordinated by Plantlife – include the Soil Association, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Buglife, Nature Friendly Farming Network, and author Dave Goulson (Silent Earth).

Jo Riggall, Plantlife's Grassland Advocacy Officer, said, "A taskforce would help to ensure that resources and staff within Defra are specifically dedicated to grasslands. We need investment in research and evidence building across different grassland types, for example, meadows, pastures and road verges, as well as coherent policy to deliver on multiple government targets for nature, food, climate, circular economy and health."

RBST CEO Christopher Price adds: "We partnered with Plantlife back in 2013 at the launch of the former Prince of Wales Coronation Meadows project which was designed to help reverse the loss of species-rich meadow grasslands across the United Kingdom. Our message then, as now, was that these are environments that are vital to the maintenance of natural diversity – and that rare breeds are the ideal tool for managing them. It is, therefore, essential that RBST adds its voice to this call to the government."

RBST advocacy helps secure Mudchute's future

> ***RBST played a key role in the successful campaign to secure the future of Mudchute Farm and Park on London's Isle of Dogs.***

A long-standing member of the RBST Approved Farm Park network, Mudchute had faced considerable uncertainty after being unable to secure the 99-year lease it had previously been working towards with Tower Hamlets Council.

RBST joined the campaign at a crucial time, using its voice and expertise to highlight the national importance of Mudchute's rare and native breed conservation work, alongside the wider environmental, educational and community benefits it delivered. RBST wrote directly to Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets, together with other key local politicians, setting out the case for securing Mudchute's long-term future.

The campaign achieved a major breakthrough in March 2026, when Tower Hamlets Council agreed a new 30-year lease for Mudchute Association, securing the farm's future on the site until 2055. RBST's advocacy formed an important part of the wider campaign that helped achieve this outcome.

Farm manager Tom Davis had previously warned of the consequences of the uncertainty: "We had been on the verge of signing a 99-year lease under the old mayoral administration, but the new administration is not letting it go ahead. With no lease, we have no security, no access to major funding."

Established in the 1970s, Mudchute occupies 32 acres of countryside just a stone's throw from Canary Wharf and is one of the largest city farms in Europe. As well as being an important community space, it is a nationally significant centre of excellence in rare and native breed conservation, education and environmental engagement.

In its letter to Mayor Rahman, RBST emphasised that Mudchute's importance extended well beyond its local community. The farm played a vital role in conserving traditional livestock breeds and contributed to wider environmental and biodiversity objectives. RBST highlighted the responsibilities placed on local authorities under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021, including the conservation of biodiversity, nature recovery, access to green space and environmental education.

RBST CEO Christopher Price commented: "It is impossible to under-estimate Mudchute's role in delivering major benefits to the community it serves allied with the part it plays in breeding, managing and maintaining its livestock to an exemplary standard. Its sheep and poultry flocks are recognised among the best examples of their breeds anywhere in the UK, as proven by numerous awards at agricultural shows nationwide."

RBST's intervention added significant weight to the campaign, alongside the efforts of Mudchute, its supporters and the local community. The agreement of the new 30-year lease in March represented a significant success for Mudchute and for rare breed conservation.

For RBST, it demonstrated the importance of its advocacy role in protecting the places that are vital to the survival of Britain's rare and native livestock breeds, helping ensure that Mudchute could continue its conservation, education and community work for years to come.



Tom Davis, manager at Mudchute Park and Farm.

Securing Government support

Small abattoirs campaign

> ***Small abattoirs are a vital yet increasingly endangered part of the UK's farming and food production infrastructure.***

Their importance spans animal welfare, local food systems, conservation of native livestock breeds, and the resilience of rural economies. Over the past few decades, the number of small abattoirs in the UK has declined sharply, leading to rising concern across the agricultural sector.

That's why, for RBST, this issue is central to its mission to conserve and promote the UK's rare and native breeds. Through evidence-based advocacy, policy engagement, and working with our friends and allies, RBST is leading the call for urgent action to save and support the small abattoir network.

What RBST Has Achieved

RBST's campaign has achieved several important outcomes:

- Mainstream recognition: Government departments and parliamentary groups now acknowledge the link between small abattoirs and rare breed conservation.
- Policy momentum: Parliamentary debates and consultations now reference RBST's research and recommendations.
- Coalition-building: RBST works with groups such as the Sustainable Food Trust, National Craft Butchers, and Pasture for Life to coordinate messaging and strengthen the case for reform.
- Community engagement: RBST supports local campaigns to protect or reopen small abattoirs and offers advice to community-led and cooperative ventures.
- Strategic focus: RBST now formally includes abattoir access in its risk assessments for breed endangerment.

The future of the UK's native livestock breeds is inseparably tied to the future of the country's small abattoir network. Without these essential facilities, conservation through use becomes impossible, rural economies are weakened, and sustainable farming is threatened. Thanks to RBST's leadership, there is now growing political and public awareness of the issue - and growing momentum for change.

Yet much more is needed. The time has come for governments across the UK to treat small abattoirs not as relics of the past but as keystones of a resilient, low-carbon, nature-friendly farming future. RBST will remain at the forefront of this fight, working to ensure that rare and native breeds - and the communities that care for them - have a viable, thriving future.

Campaigning for registration

> ***Livestock conservation, as with all conservation, depends on data. With livestock conservation, that data is primarily based on the registrations submitted by individual breeders to the relevant breed society. In the case of our rarest breeds, registration really is a vital part of saving them from extinction.***

The livestock we keep are part of a long history of farming in Britain, with genetics that can be traced back in many cases to the origin of the breed. It only takes one generation for that branch of the "family tree" to be lost, so if these animals are not registered, the available gene pool is narrowed.

We are also custodians of part of a data set that consists of the whole breed. If breeders are not registered with a breed society and registering the offspring of their animals, those animals cannot be included in research into breed characteristics and parameters, giving at best an incomplete picture and at worst dramatically inaccurate conclusions.

By registering your rare breed, you are enabling RBST and your breed society to determine an accurate picture of the breed's position, trends, outlook and threat level. Year-by-year, this analysis informs and underpins RBST's conservation priorities and programmes of work.

Sadly, many breeders do not register all or in some cases any of their stock, generally seeing it as too burdensome or expensive compared with any benefit it brings.

For a number of years, RBST has run campaigns encouraging breeders to register, largely based on features in the Ark and the farming press. However, it has been difficult to assess the impact. Accordingly, this year we have been more ambitious, with a wider ranging campaign. The campaign goal has been to increase the number of native livestock and equine keepers registering their animals with the breed society by emphasising the benefits of registration and fostering a sense of community pride and stewardship.

Our campaign was launched in the Farmers Guardian in a special edition on breed societies and we are conducting an ongoing social media campaign, supported by a suite of printed materials. The aims of the campaign are to explain why registration matters so much to native breed conservation and to encourage breeders to engage with their relevant breed society and register – or at least birth notify – their pure-bred stock.



RBST

Delivering on priorities



Hackneys Buddy and Shadow. Photograph by Jonny Oliff-Lee.

Watchlist 2026-27 the impact of registrations?


Boreray.


Lincoln Red OP - June Windmill Herd Notts.

> ***The 2026 Watchlist highlights significant conservation concerns across native livestock breeds.***

Two sheep breeds and two cattle breeds have moved into the Priority category, while no breed has improved sufficiently to move to a lower-risk classification.

For any breed the number of registrations plays an important role in breed conservation. In 2025, RBST ran its "Conservation Starts with Registration" campaign to encourage breeders to register stock with breed societies. Financial pressures, however, continue to affect registration decisions. Strong commercial meat prices in 2025 encouraged some breeders to prioritise commercial sales over pedigree registrations.

Alongside registrations wider factors including genetic diversity, breeder numbers and geographic concentration are equally important. We use the measure of Effective Population Size (N_e), which reflects genetic diversity by considering the balance of breeding males and females. A low N_e increases the risk of inbreeding and loss of diversity. There are also the likes of breeder numbers and geographic concentration which can leave breeds vulnerable to disease outbreaks.

Cattle

The picture for cattle breeds is mixed. Most breeds remain stable or show signs of improvement, but the White Park and Original Population Lincoln Red have now moved into the Priority category, bringing the total number of Priority cattle breeds to nine.

The White Park's N_e has fallen below 100, with total registrations declining for the third consecutive year and dropping 32.6% between 2022 (215) and 2025 (145). RBST is working with the breed society to identify ways to improve the breed's status.

The Original Population Lincoln Red also experienced significant declines in registrations and breeder numbers during 2025. Although there had been improvement in 2024, the latest data confirms continuing challenges.

Northern Dairy Shorthorns remain another major concern, with registrations declining for a third consecutive year and N_e remaining extremely low.

There are, however, several encouraging developments. Native Aberdeen Angus total registrations increased by 37.2% (55), the highest levels seen since records began in 2000. In both 2024 and 2025 Gloucester cattle have shown improved performance from 2023, in 2025 total registrations were 115 compared to 92 in 2023, this is combined with N_e rising for a second consecutive year. Shetland cattle registrations rose by 14.2% (33), while Whitebred Shorthorns increased by 35.8% (67).

Traditional Herefords remain stable, while the British White continues to perform strongly despite a small reduction in registrations. Irish Moiled cattle also showed recovery in 2025 following weaker performance in the previous year.

Ancient Cattle of Wales remain a Priority breed due to low breeder numbers and geographic concentration, although RBST continues to support conservation work through the Gene Bank. Vaynol cattle registrations showed a slight reduction, though this appears linked to delayed registrations rather than an actual population decline.

Among non-rare native breeds, Guernsey cattle remain a breed of concern following a 20.5% fall in registrations between 2024 and 2025, although improvements in N_e suggest genetic diversity may be stabilising.

Sheep

In 2025, the Manx Loaghtan and Leicester Longwool moved into the Priority category. Encouragingly, both breeds have since shown strong recovery. Manx Loaghtan registrations increased by 66.8% (165) compared with 2024, reaching their highest level since 2020, while breeder participation was the highest recorded since 2013. Leicester Longwool registrations also rose sharply, increasing by 65.6% (139).

Despite these gains, concerns remain for other breeds. Both the Soay and Boreray have now been reclassified as Priority breeds. Boreray registrations and breeder numbers have steadily declined over recent years, falling by 35.8% between 2020 (299) and 2025 (192). Soay registrations fell by 48.8% between 2021 (543) and 2025 (278).

The Cotswold and Devon and Cornwall Longwool also

Delivering on priorities


Berkshire pigs clearing out old garden. Photo by Richard Barker.


Bagot goats.

experienced substantial reductions in the number of dams producing registered progeny. Devon and Cornwall Longwool registrations declined by 35.5% (155), although further monitoring will determine whether this represents a long-term trend.

For most other sheep breeds, the picture is more positive. Portland sheep saw a 23.8%increase in dams producing registered lambs, while Dorset Down registrations exceeded 1,000 for the first time in available records.

Pigs and Goats

All 11 native pig breeds remain classified as rare, with seven categorised as Priority breeds. Nevertheless, 2025 data was generally positive.

The British Pig Association survey, which records all pigs including those outside pedigree breeding, provides valuable insight into overall breeding potential. Most breeds showed increases in sow numbers, although Gloucestershire Old Spots and Middle Whites recorded declines.

Gloucestershire Old Spots experienced a 23% reduction in dams producing registered pigs alongside a decline in N_e, although the breed remains classified as At Risk. In contrast, Middle Whites recorded a 35% increase in registrations (29 more animals) despite fewer sows identified in the survey.

Overall, stability or modest growth across pig breeds is encouraging, particularly for the Large White and British Lop, both of which showed improved N_e. Berkshire, British Landrace and Large Black pigs also recorded positive performance indicators.

For goats, the overall picture remains positive. English and Old English goats continue as Priority breeds, while Bagot and Royal Golden Guernsey goats remain At Risk.

The English Goat experienced a particularly successful year, with registrations increasing by 132% (45 more animals) following efforts by the English Goat Breeders Association to emphasise the importance of registration.

However, the Bagot goat remains a concern. Breeder numbers have fallen by 39.5% over the past three years (from 38 to 23), increasing the concentration of genetics within fewer herds and creating greater vulnerability to disease and reduced diversity.

Equines and Poultry

The categorisation of native equine breeds remains unchanged, with six Priority and seven At Risk breeds.

The Hackney horse and pony are in an increasingly critical position. In 2025, the number of dams producing registered progeny fell by 41% (from 34 to 20), while breeder numbers declined by 37.5% in a single year (down to just 10).

The New Forest Pony has also experienced continuing declines, with the number of dams producing registered progeny falling by 24.7% between 2022 and 2025 (a reduction of 184 dams).

The Cleveland Bay, which had previously shown significant progress, recorded its lowest breeder and dam numbers since data collection began in 2002, with dam numbers falling by 42.8% in a single year to just 16.

Other breeds showed more positive trends. Suffolks experienced a third consecutive year of N_e growth, while Dales ponies recorded increased registrations and improved N_e. The Eriskay pony remained stable despite operating at very low numbers.

Section B Welsh Ponies, recently added to the Watchlist, saw registrations decline by 9.6% (down 36 animals) and breeder numbers fall to their lowest level since records began in 2000 (336).

For poultry and waterfowl breeds, all remain categorised as Priority while RBST continues to improve data collection and conservation analysis. Expanding this work remains essential to securing the long-term future of rare poultry breeds.


Hackney.

RBST
Rare Breeds Survival Trust

WATCHLIST
- 2026/27 -

KEY
Priority · Native · At Risk · Feral

Sheep

Boreray
Leicester Longwool
Lincoln Longwool
Manx Loaghtan
North Ronaldsay
Pedigree Welsh Mountain
Soay
Whitefaced Woodland

Balwen
Border Leicester
Castlemilk Moorit
Cotswold
Derbyshire Gritstone
Devon and Cornwall Longwool
Devon Closewool
Dorset Down
Dorset Horn
Hill Radnor
Llanwenog
Lonk
Norfolk Horn
Oxford Down
Portland
Teeswater
Torwen Badger Face
Wensleydale
Whiteface Dartmoor

Black Welsh Mountain*
Bluefaced Leicester
Brecknock Hill Cheviot
Clun Forest
Dalesbred
Eppynt Hill and Beulah Speckled Face
Exmoor Horn
Greyface Dartmoor*
Hampshire Down
Hebridean*
Herdwick
Jacob*
Kerry Hill*
Llandovery Whiteface Hill
Lleyn*
North Country Cheviot
Poll Dorset
Romney
Rough Fell
Ryeland*
Scottish Blackface
Shetland*
Shropshire*
Southdown*
South Country Cheviot
South Wales Mountain*
Suffolk
Swaledale
Torddu Badger Face
Welsh Hill Speckled Face
Wiltshire Horn*

IRISH BREEDS IN THE UK
Galway

Cattle

Albion
Ancient Cattle of Wales
Chillingham Wild Cattle
Dairy Shorthorn (OP)
Gloucester
Lincoln Red (OP)
Northern Dairy Shorthorn
Vaynol
White Park

British White
Irish Moiled
Native Aberdeen Angus
Shetland
Traditional Hereford
Whitebred Shorthorn

Aberdeen Angus
Ayrshire
Beef Shorthorn*
Belted Galloway* (including White)
British Friesian
Dairy Shorthorn
Devon
Dexter
Galloway (including Riggit)
Guernsey
Hereford
Highland
Jersey
Lincoln Red
Longhorn*
Luing
Red Poll*
South Devon
Sussex
Welsh Black

IRISH BREEDS IN THE UK
Kerry

Equine

Cleveland Bay Horse
Dales Pony
Eriskay Pony
Exmoor Pony
Hackney Horse and Pony
Suffolk Horse

Clydesdale Horse
Dartmoor Pony
Fell Pony
Highland Pony
New Forest Pony
Welsh Pony (Section B)
Shire Horse

Shetland Pony
Welsh Mountain Pony (Section A)
Welsh Pony Cob Type (Section C)
Welsh Cob (Section D)

Dartmoor Hill Pony
Carneddau Pony

IRISH BREEDS IN THE UK
Connemara Pony
Irish Draught Horse

Pigs

Berkshire
British Landrace
British Lop
Large Black
Large White
Middle White
Tamworth

British Saddleback
Gloucestershire Old Spot
Oxford Sandy and Black
Welsh

Goats

English Goat
Old English Goat

Bagot
Royal Golden Guernsey

Cheviot

Poultry

CHICKENS
Ancona
Andalusian
Australorp
British Araucana
British Faverolles
Brussbar
Buff Orpington
Burmese
Campine
Cochin
Cream Legbar
Croad Langshan
Derbyshire Redcap
Dorking
Hamburgh
Indian Game
Ixworth
Legbar
Leghorn
Malay
Marsh Daisy
Minorca
Modern Game
Modern Langshan
Nankin
Norfolk Grey
North Holland Blue
Old English Game
Old English Pheasant Fowl
Orpington (non Buff)
Rhodebar
Rosecomb
Rumpless Game
Scots Dumpy
Scots Grey
Sebright
Sicilian Buttercup
Spanish
Sultan
Sussex
Welbar

TURKEYS
Blue
Bourbon Red
British White
Bronze
Buff
Crollwitzer (Pied)
Harvey
Speckled
Narragansett
Norfolk Black
Slate

DUCKS
Abacot Ranger
Aylesbury
Black East Indian
Campbell
Cayuga
Crested
Hook Bill
Magpie
Orpington
Pekin
Rouen
Shetland
Silver Appleyard
Silver Bantam
Stanbridge White
Welsh Harlequin

GEESE
Brecon Buff
Buff Back
Embden
Grey Back
Pilgrim
Roman
Sebastopol
Shetland
Steinbacher
Toulouse
West of England

** These breeds were formerly Priority or At Risk breeds*



SCAN TO JOIN OR DONATE

Photo Credit: Jonny Olliff-Lee

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The methodology used by RBST to prioritise breeds compares population size with measures of inbreeding and takes into account both females and males and the internationally recognised effective population calculation. RBST would like to thank Defra and UK Breed Societies for their help producing the Watchlist.

Delivering on priorities 5-year strategy


Photograph by Beth Driscoll.

> ***The need for each of the UK's nations to develop its own post-Brexit agricultural policy over the next two to three years presents a valuable opportunity and RBST is ready to influence the future of farming by advocating for agricultural systems that are environmentally-friendly, extensive and low-input.***

These are systems that naturally support the use of native breeds and it is within this context that RBST has developed its conservation and research strategy for the next five years.

Our key aim is to ensure that policies include direct support for native breeds and investments in the essential infrastructure crucial for a sustainable supply chain. Of course, we have to be realistic and face the fact that some breeds may still struggle, even with a supportive market and government aid, but with sufficient funding, scientific expertise and commitment, we believe that even these breeds can have a secure future.

How are we going to achieve this?

As I said at the start of our 50th anniversary year, conservation of the UK's native breeds, with a particular focus on ensuring that we don't lose any of the most vulnerable, is what RBST is and always has been about. To achieve its objectives today, however, RBST has to look beyond saving their valuable genetics to ensuring a wider understanding of just why they are valuable.

Integral to our needs

In some ways, to look forward, we need to look back. If we are to move beyond simply preserving these breeds and instead actively promote their use, we must start by recognising their value and origins. Our native breeds developed over centuries to thrive in our diverse landscapes, climates, habitats and altitudes. They have provided essential resources – food, clothing and transportation – tailored to meet the needs of local communities. In other words, they evolved to become integral to day-to-day living. While the roles have changed, the lesson from the past we should take forward into the future is that our native breeds are capable of fulfilling roles today that are integral to the needs of the way in which farming needs to evolve, delivering environmental benefits that contribute to healthier ecosystems.

There are challenges and the path forward is not without obstacles, not least the fact that many livestock farmers face economic hardship. Established supply chains, primarily focused on providing low-cost, uniform products to supermarkets, often fail to accommodate the diversity and quality that native breeds offer. This misalignment can make it difficult for farmers to fully realise the potential of these unique animals. What we need to prove is that, for resourceful farmers, maintaining native breeds can be both economically and environmentally advantageous.

Key objectives

RBST's objectives for the next five years can be summarised as follows:

- **Preservation of livestock breeds:** Ensuring the preservation of breeds and breeding groups of domestic livestock that are significant for agricultural promotion, especially those at risk, to safeguard their unique characteristics for zoological research and education. This includes the preservation of genes that hold special or potential value for hybridisation and other related work.
- **Research and knowledge sharing:** Conducting and promoting research into the aforementioned preservation activities and related topics to expand communicable knowledge and publishing the results of such research.

A new look at poultry conservation



The conservation and long-term sustainability of native poultry breeds in the UK presents a complex and urgent challenge. One of the major barriers to effective action is the lack of comprehensive, reliable data on breed populations and their distribution.

To address this issue, RBST's conservation team has launched a new Native Poultry and Waterfowl Conservation initiative to protect and promote the UK's native breeds. Senior Conservation Adviser Tom Blunt says: "These breeds face complex and urgent challenges. Reliable data on their populations and distribution is lacking, making it difficult to assess their status or coordinate conservation efforts effectively. This situation has been made worse by continued sector pressures, particularly the ongoing impact of Avian Influenza (AI). Although hard data is scarce, we are hearing widespread anecdotal reports of declining flock sizes, fragmented breeding populations, and in some cases, breeders withdrawing entirely.

"Historically, native poultry have been kept primarily for showing and exhibition. While this tradition remains important, we believe that to secure the future of these breeds, we must also explore and support their commercial potential—especially in meat and egg production."

To address the issues identified, RBST is launching a series of targeted workstreams, focused on:

- Improving data collection and breed monitoring
- Supporting evidence-based decision-making
- Encouraging wider sector collaboration
- Identifying sustainable commercial opportunities for native breeds

The initiative was launched in September 2025 with an online meeting of key stakeholders with the goal of developing a co-ordinated, informed approach to conserving the essential genetic resources represented by our native poultry and waterfowl breeds.

If you would like to be involved, or or would like more information, contact enquiries@rbst.org.uk.

A Gene Bank first for Section B

RBST has received a donation of semen from a Welsh Section B pony, the first new stallion since the breed was added to the Watchlist as an At Risk breed.

Owner Kerry Wainwright says: "Skellorn Bronze Soldier has won pretty much all of the county shows in hand, he's a Royal Welsh Champion, and has sired a Royal Welsh Champion, a Royal International Horse Show winner and multiple Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) qualifiers. He's also sired successful dressage ponies, show jumpers and working hunter ponies.

"In his own right, he has been a champion under saddle and is the most qualified mountain & moorland pony of all time for the in-hand championship at HOYS, having qualified no less than six times!"

RBST Senior Conservation Adviser Tom Blunt adds: "The addition of Skellorn Bronze Soldier to the RBST Gene Bank is fantastic. Not only has he been a very successful stallion on the show circuit, he is also a proven sire with successful progeny. We can now ensure that his genetics are secure for the future conservation of the breed and we are extremely grateful to Kerry for the donation of 30 doses."



Skellorn Bronze Soldier. Photo by First Class Images.

Delivering on priorities


Buryfield's Playboy (Hugh).

Meeting challenges with Gloucesters

> ***For several years, RBST has been working with the Gloucester Cattle Society on measures to protect the future of this Watchlist Priority breed.***

One aspect of the work is Gene Bank collections to ensure that valuable genetics are available both for current breeding programmes and also as an insurance measure for the future. And this work has not been without its challenges.

Following the selection by the breed society of a number of bulls, the first collection took place in 2022, as reported in The Ark, resulting in Bembrook Henry being added to the Gene Bank. A second attempt at collection took place in July 2024 from two bulls from prominent Gloucester breeder Clifford Freeman but, unfortunately, these collections were unsuccessful.

A further bull identified by the society was Buryfields Playboy, owned by RBST member Cymbre Baseley. Born in July 2021, Buryfield Playboy is sired by Buryfields Gladiator EX92 and bred from Dymock Isla VG85.



Cymbre says: "We have had a small Gloucester herd for 10 years, choosing Gloucesters for their temperament and versatility as we wanted to milk as well as bring on some stock for the freezer.

"When the granddaughters of our homebred bull Millholme Allium started to come into the herd we took the hard decision to sell him and buy a new bull. We approached Craig Phillips, who we met through the society and trusted to have quality stock. He introduced us to a young unproven bull that he had bred from his prize-winning bull Gladiator. Buryfield's Playboy (Hugh) was a calm two year old, and we purchased him to use in the 2023 breeding season. In early 2024 his first calves were born, proving his fertility."

The plan was to collect from the bull in late 2024/early 2025 when he would not be required to be out working with the cows. This was planned as an on-farm collection with testing required including TB, Brucella i.ELISA and EBL ELISA. Things were going smoothly until the bull's holding was placed in a Bluetongue Restriction Zone in early November. The collection was still able to go ahead, but an additional licence was required as well as pre and post collection Bluetongue testing.

The first attempt at collecting semen in early January was not successful, but the signs were positive so the decision was made to attempt to collect again a few weeks later. Fortunately, this collection was successful, resulting in a total of 208 straws.

Cymbre explains the process: "We were required to do a collection within the 60 days of a clear TB test and Hugh was isolated with his sons ahead of collection. Unfortunately, being put in the Bluetongue restricted zone did add further paperwork and tests.

"We opted to use an old cow, who was calm and now in retirement, as a teaser and she was injected a few days prior to collection to bring her into season, then we had two collection days a fortnight apart."

RBST Senior Conservation Adviser, Tom Blunt adds: "This was not a simple process so special thanks go to Cymbre, Towcester Farm Vets and Scawfell Genetics for ensuring the collection could be undertaken. The work with the Gloucester Cattle Society is a long term project and this latest collection is very important for the breed."

New to the Watchlist


Ancient Cattle of Wales. Photo: Jenny Davies.

Ancient Cattle of Wales (ACW) has been added as a recognised native breed on the RBST Watchlist, now listed as a Priority breed. This Priority categorisation reflects the breed's current very small population size, narrow geographic concentration, and concerns at the recent decline in new births registered.

To become accepted on the RBST Watchlist, breeds must meet specific guidelines and the Ancient Cattle of Wales Society has been working with RBST for a number of years to gain recognition. Having met all the criteria, the Society was able to demonstrate, with data going back to 2000, that ACW is clearly a Priority breed. Since that year, there have been no more than 12 breeders registering animals in a single year, with an annual average of just 33 females producing pedigree females, despite the fact that the breed is gaining a good reputation as conservation grazers, being used by the Wildlife Trusts, Forestry England and the Woodland Trust.

The breed, which comes in six colour variations, is believed to possess unique inherited traits. Evidence reports the presence of coloured cattle in Wales dating back to the time of Hywel Dda in the 10th Century, where the existence of native Welsh cattle of varying colours is recorded. Over time, particular colours tended until the Ancient Cattle of Wales were kept and bred only in a few remote hill farms in Wales, appreciated for their hardiness and suitability for the terrain and inclement weather.

During the late 1970s, a small number of dedicated farmers identified the remaining non-black cattle in the uplands of Wales, and since its formation in 1981 the Ancient Cattle of Wales Society (Gwartheg Hynafol Cymru) has detailed the breed standard, created a herd book for pedigree cattle, and worked on increasing the breed's population.

First semen donation


Nympsfield Keith, a three-year old Belted bull.

When the Ancient Cattle of Wales (ACW) was added to the RBST Watchlist as a Priority breed, one of the key conservation priorities identified was the urgent need to expand the availability of bull genetics within the RBST Gene Bank. While semen from two historic bulls had previously been collected and successfully used by breeders, it was recognised that additional bloodlines were needed to strengthen the breed's long-term genetic security.

Following discussions with the Ancient Cattle of Wales Society, a workplan was developed and a list of suitable bulls identified for collection. Four senior and five junior bulls were selected for review, with collections prioritised according to genetic value and urgency.

The first bull chosen for collection was Nympsfield Keith, a three-year-old Belted bull born in 2022. Keith, whose lineage can be traced back for at least eight generations, was regarded as one of the purest surviving ACW bulls. At the time, he was moving from Helen Upson's Dyfi herd to Jessi Stephens' Hafren herd.

The process faced additional challenges when the Hafren herd came under TB restrictions during 2025. An alternative solution was provided by G H Woollatt Farming, which offered specialist cattle livery facilities suitable for on-farm semen collection. Following health testing, UK Sires successfully collected 530 semen straws from Keith, which have now been added to the RBST Gene Bank, providing an important safeguard for the future of this vulnerable breed.

Delivering on priorities

Understanding breeding decisions

In 2024, RBST secured funding from the HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust to deliver a major project on native cattle. A key part of this work is a series of surveys, the first of which focused on reproduction and breeding decisions. The first part of the survey focused on breeding practices, while the second explored motivations for keeping certain breeds, the market for native cattle, and the role of breed societies and RBST in supporting breeders.

The breeding practices element of the survey highlights both the strengths and the challenges currently facing native cattle breeders.

Herd structures remain relatively stable, with the majority of breeders either maintaining or increasing their breeding numbers, and a range of breeds being represented. While many herds are small to medium in size, there is clear evidence of long-term commitment to maintaining native genetics, with breeders managing a balance between longevity and replacement in their cow herds.

Breeding practices

When it comes to breeding practices, there is no single preferred approach. Attitudes to leasing or loaning animals are split, reflecting the ongoing tension between the need for genetic diversity and the priority placed on maintaining biosecurity. Similarly, while AI and other reproductive technologies are widely adopted, practical barriers such as cost, labour, infrastructure, and reliability mean that natural service continues to play a central role.

Fertility overall remains good across herds, though challenges persist, particularly in relation to disease, mineral deficiencies, and environmental pressures. These findings underline the importance of continued collaboration among breeders, the sharing of best practice, and the support of research into fertility and reproductive efficiency.

Overall, the results point to a resilient community of native cattle breeders who are deeply invested in the health, diversity, and future of their herds, but who also face practical and structural barriers that need to be addressed if the conservation and sustainable use of these breeds is to be secured.

Motivations

The second part of the survey revealed motivations for keeping certain breeds, the market for native cattle, and the role of breed societies and RBST in supporting breeders.

When asked what attracted respondents to the breeds that they

own, a range of attributes were quoted:

- **Low input and efficiency:** Hardy, thrifty, low vet costs, finish well on grass/rough forage, little or no concentrate needed.
- **Ease of management:** Easy calving, docile temperament, small/medium size, easy to handle.
- **Meat and milk quality:** Excellent beef flavour, marbling, tenderness; A2 milk in some breeds; dual/triple-purpose utility.
- **Adaptability:** Cope with rough ground, poor forage, heavy clay, hill land, and all-weather outwintering.
- **Heritage and conservation:** Connection to local/native breeds, family tradition, supporting rare breeds, preserving genetic diversity.
- **Appearance and public appeal:** Attractive looks, horns (sometimes useful for crafts), polled traits, distinctive presence for farm visitors.
- **Multi-purpose roles:** Beef, milk, conservation grazing, land management for wildlife.
- **Personal connection:** Inherited from family, local county breeds, long history with certain breeds, love for specific cattle.

The financial aspect

Looking at the financial aspect, only 11.7% of respondents said that their herd was their main source of income although most respondents generate some income from their cattle, but profitability is often low. While a few rely on cattle as a main income source through meat sales, breeding, or store trading, many simply break even or use cattle for land management, conservation, or personal interest. Rising costs, loss of subsidies, and limited market returns were common challenges, with some adapting through crossbreeding, diversification, or tourism.

Purpose

There was a clear consensus that native cattle are best suited to grass-based, low-input, and extensive systems. Farmers consistently highlighted ability to thrive on forage, rough grazing, and herbal leys, with many emphasising out-wintering and year-round outdoor management. The breeds were also strongly associated with regenerative practices, such as mob grazing and "Pasture for Life" systems.

A second prominent theme was the use of native cattle for conservation and environmental management. Respondents frequently described them as particularly well suited to nature reserves, upland and marginal land, rough grazing, and rewilding schemes. Alongside conservation, a significant number of farmers identified their value within suckler beef enterprises, including calf production, finishing, and the supply of store cattle.

While fewer in number, some responses pointed to the suitability of the breeds for dairy or dual-purpose systems, particularly in niche or value-added markets such as artisan cheese. A smaller group of farmers highlighted their versatility across a wide range of systems, while a minority noted individual or non-commercial uses such as hobby farming or display. Taken together, the responses suggest that although native cattle are versatile and adaptable, their core strengths lie in supporting forage-based, low-input beef production and conservation-focused land management systems.

From 146 responses, 47.9% thought the market was expanding, driven by consumer interest in product origin, flavour and environmental benefits. Increasing demand comes from direct sales, conservation schemes, and low-input farming systems. Farmers report good demand for breeding stock and beef sold directly to consumers, highlighting a niche but growing market.

Conclusions

The survey highlights that breeders select native cattle for a combination of practical, environmental, and heritage reasons. Key factors include hardiness, low-input management, adaptability to extensive systems, maternal qualities, and high-quality meat or milk production. Breeders value the role of these cattle in conservation grazing, land management, and the preservation of genetic diversity, often alongside personal or family connections to particular breeds.

Economically, few respondents rely on their herds as a primary income source, with most integrating cattle into broader farming systems for conservation, land management, or niche markets. Rising costs, limited market returns, and infrastructure constraints particularly access to small abattoirs present ongoing challenges. Despite this, many breeders remain committed to low-input, sustainable, and environmentally friendly systems, reflecting both practical and ethical motivations.

RBST and breed societies are viewed as critical to supporting breeders through access to genetic resources, guidance on breeding decisions, market development, education, and advocacy. Promoting breed integrity, increasing public awareness, and ensuring equitable policy support are essential for the long-term conservation and commercial viability of native breeds. Overall, the findings underscore that while native breeds are adaptable and versatile, their continued survival and success rely on a combination of breeder dedication, organizational support, and sustainable farming practices.

Delivering on priorities

Dales donation


Daloumie Duke of Earl

"Collection of semen from a Dales pony for export to the United States has created the opportunity for RBST to add genetics from a valuable stallion to the Gene Bank. Daloumie Duke of Earl had been chosen by the Dales Pony Conservancy North America (DPCNA) to enable owners of registered Dales ponies in the US and Canada to access fresh genetics."

The collection was undertaken at Stallion AI Services at Whitchurch and, with some of the semen ineligible for export, the opportunity arose for RBST to add it to the Gene Bank.

Owner Rebecca Jayne Rawlinson describes her stallion: "His sire is Penmire Dudley and his grandsire Wolsey Master Oliver so he has some fantastic bloodlines and, being grey, Duke is very rare."

Founded in 2015, DPCNA is a grassroots organisation, staffed by volunteers which aims to support the Dales pony population in North America by education and promotion, and supports breeders who focus on maintaining the Dales pony as the "great allrounder".

It maintains an unofficial database of ponies in North America, which is shared with the UK's Dales Pony Society (DPS) and supports new Dales owners in registering their ponies. The DPCNA tracks both registered and unregistered Dales ponies in North America but only registered ponies are included on its database. It currently has over 380 registered ponies on its database and encourages the use of SPARKS to inform breeding decisions.

Jennifer Mims, co-secretary of the DPCNA says: "The project to collect a stallion in the UK started in 2024. Duke was collected for storage and distribution within North America to provide a stallion with good Dales character, while also providing genetic diversity from other stallions that were currently standing at stud in the USA. We are hopeful these frozen AI doses will provide Dales pony mare owners in North America with an alternative to breed their mares, especially for those who do not keep a stallion.

"Since the import of doses from Duke, DPCNA has also added very limited doses from two additional stallions, Castle Hill Rob and Dartdale Peter boy. Driving our mission forward to support the Dales pony population in North America, DPCNA is offering two doses for one breeding from one of the stallions in our storage, where all fees for the doses and delivery has been covered by a grant.

"We hope these efforts will improve access of breeding doses of Dales pony stallions in North America. DPCNA would like to thank Rebecca Rawlinson for providing Daloumie Duke of Earl for collection, Hamilton Rare Breed Foundation for a grant for this project, Equus Survival Trust for grant logistics and support, and RBST for its continued work on Dales pony breed conservation and education."

Gene Bank in action

> ***The RBST Gene Bank is a unique resource that not only ensures that valuable genetics are preserved for the future but also gives breeders the opportunity to use them in their current breeding programmes.***

Jackie Sparrow is one such breeder and her use of Gene Bank genetics has resulted in the birth of a beautiful Cleveland Bay foal that is already showing some winning ways.

The Cleveland Bay is the only British native warmblood breed and is a Priority Watchlist breed with an estimated UK female breeding population of 112. Once prolific, it is a breed that by the 1990s had experienced a significant loss of genetic diversity, a fact recognised by Dr Andy Dell, himself a Cleveland Bay breeder. He developed SPARKS (Single Population Analysis & Records Keeping System), a system taken up by the Cleveland Bay Horse Society (CBHS) which formally launched a SPARKS-based breeding programme in 2004, enabling breeders to choose the optimum pairing of male and female for the maintenance of genetic diversity.

Jackie Sparrow uses SPARKS but has experienced difficulty finding suitable stallions, as she explains: "Choosing a live stallion within SPARKS for my mares is getting increasingly difficult as fewer colts are being run on to licensing, and "popular sire" syndrome is becoming a serious risk to diversity.

"I made the decision to look outside the box of a limited number of live stallions to the semen of deceased stallions held by RBST. This enabled me to look at a wider choice of suitable coverings that also allowed me to lower the inbreeding coefficient at the same time. I had to research the stallions on the list to ensure they suited my mare, Shireburn Ava, and that they were not going to double up on her lesser strengths. I used the CBHS stud books and year books and asked questions of breed elders before narrowing my choices.

"I collected the semen from Stallion AI and took it to Rossdales in Newmarket. My own vets, Meadowbrook Equine, scanned Shireburn Ava and when she produced a good large follicle I took her to Rossdales where, at the optimum time, their repro team inseminated her with frozen semen from Borderframe Prince Charming who was born in 1988. Eleven months and two days later she produced a large 75kg filly foal, Scarholme Juno. Juno's first show outing was with Ava to the Great Yorkshire Show where Ava came second in the Cleveland Bay brood mare class and Juno won the foal class and the Keenleyside Memorial Trophy. Juno then went on to win Best Foal at the Sport Horse of Great Britain hunter championships.

"I will continue to use the semen held by RBST as an essential tool to maintain genetic diversity in the breed until numbers have increased beyond reach of the extinction vortex. Watch this space."



Scarholm Juno - Sport Horse Breeding hunter championship best foal. Photo by Sarah Kelman.

Photo by Sarah Kelman.

Delivering on priorities

Enhanced consultancy service from RBST

RBST has announced the launch of its strengthened consultancy service, offering landowners, estates, public bodies, and conservation organisations expert, practical guidance on sustainable land management and the use of native and rare livestock.

Building on several years of successful projects across the UK and Ireland, the expanded service brings together RBST's nationally recognised expertise in rare breeds with a renewed focus on problem-solving, farm-specific advice, and measurable environmental outcomes.

RBST's consultancy portfolio has grown rapidly in recent years, supporting estates, farms, charities, and public bodies with rewilding projects, conservation grazing strategies, whole-farm plans, herbivore reintroductions, and regenerative land use. Clients have included Forestry England, National Trust, Bristol City Council, and leading estates across England, Wales, and Ireland.

The enhanced service introduces three clear consultancy offers designed to meet the evolving needs of land managers:

- **Starter Pack Consultancy –** a practical, structured package for new landowners and estates seeking guidance on rare breeds, grazing systems, soil health and sustainable land use.
- **One-Question Consultancy –** rapid, expert advice that provides impartial solutions to focused challenges, from grazing conflicts to breed selection.
- **Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Support –** specialist advice for landowners pursuing native breed grazing within agri-environment schemes, maximising ecological outcomes and scheme compliance.

RBST's refreshed approach places emphasis on applied, context-specific recommendations, integrating livestock knowledge with wider environmental objectives such as biodiversity recovery, soil resilience, and landscape management.

"Native breeds have a vital role to play in delivering nature recovery, climate resilience and sustainable food systems," said RBST Chief Executive Christopher Price. "Our strengthened consultancy service will help more landowners and organisations harness that potential, with advice rooted in evidence, practicality and conservation impact."

For more information contact Tracy Wathen-Jones - ***tracywathen-jones@rbst.org.uk***



Courteenhall Estate where RBST provided consultancy services leading to the return of native livestock to support conservation goals.



Conservation grazing course- Sandwell March 2023

RBST courses

RBST was one of the first organisations to recognise the conservation benefits of managed livestock grazing and, as a result, has an unparalleled degree of expertise and experience.

RBST runs three LANTRA accredited courses, Conservation Grazing in Practice, Advanced Conservation Grazing in Practice and Livestock Checkers. The Conservation Grazing in Practice course, run over two days, provides a basic introduction to extensive/conservation grazing and the use of livestock to achieve environmental objectives. The advanced course, also run over two days, provides experienced graziers with a comprehensive insight into some of the more advanced aspects of conservation grazing, including grazing ecology, physiology and designing complex grazing systems.

The one-day livestock checkers' course provides a basic introduction to stock checking in the conservation/land-based sector. It is ideal for beginners, volunteers or anyone with limited experience of livestock. The course covers animal health and welfare, key legislation, the role and responsibilities of a stock checker and how to safely and effectively check livestock.

All courses are delivered by LANTRA accredited trainers and all delegates receive a LANTRA certificate after successful completion of the course.

> ***Whatever your relationship to conservation grazing is, non-existent to experienced, the RBST grazing course provided an extensive, accessible and comprehensive overview of how to efficiently and ethically utilise livestock used for grazing. The plentiful resources and practical activities and the knowledge to be gained by both were excellently taught, and heightened by the course lecturers' own knowledge. Working within conservation grazing, the course allowed us to share ideas, learn new ideas and ultimately improve our efficacy and welfare.***
>
> **Fleur White**,
> Essex Wildlife Trust.

RBST is delighted to be the chosen provider of conservation grazing training to organisations including the National Trust, RSPB and Wildlife Trusts and has been awarded a three-year contract with Natural England.

RBST

Recognition



A Tamworth piglet at Heeley City Farm. Photograph by Rachel Develin.

Our Patron

RBST is honoured to continue to enjoy the patronage of His Majesty The King, a role he took on when Prince of Wales in 1986.

His invaluable and far-sighted support has helped enable significant expansion of RBST's work, as well as many crucial conservation projects and farm park programmes. His Majesty's own animals have been key to a number of RBST breeding programmes to help secure vulnerable, irreplaceable genetic bloodlines, and he has given a home to new herds that RBST has formed to save some of our very rarest breeds.

In July 2025, when His Majesty, together with Her Majesty Queen Camilla, visited Guernsey, the occasion was marked by a special title being granted to the island's native goat breed and the Golden Guernsey breed now proudly carries the Royal title, becoming the Royal Guernsey Goat. This was the first time in recent history that the protected title has been granted to a livestock breed and it will apply to all Golden Guernseys, both on the island and elsewhere in the world.



Award winners

RBST Trustee Claire Whittle, a veterinary surgeon and farmer from North Wales, was named Dairy Industry Woman of the Year 2025 at the annual Women in Dairy conference.

The award, sponsored by HSBC, aims to celebrate the achievements of women in the dairy sector and is presented to the individual who has demonstrated the core values of Women in Dairy of connect, share, and inspire.

Claire combines her work as a practising vet with consultancy for farming businesses, bringing around 10 years' clinical experience alongside a strong commitment to environmental stewardship.

For the second year, RBST member Lyn Arrowsmith achieved honours in the Yorkshire Post Rural Awards, as joint winner of the 2025 award for Rare Breed Farm of the Year.

Lyn owns and manages Raskelf Rare and Heritage Breeds where she and her family currently hold over twenty different breeds. Lyn specialises in high-quality rare breed meat and breeding stock and she and her family are familiar faces at shows up and down the country. As well as working to preserve our rare breeds, Lyn works to educate the public about their significance and helps and encourages others interested in getting started with rare breeds.



Claire Whittle



Lyn Arrowsmith

Recognition

Media activity 2025 review

Throughout 2025, RBST proactively secured coverage of the right RBST and native breeds messages across target titles:

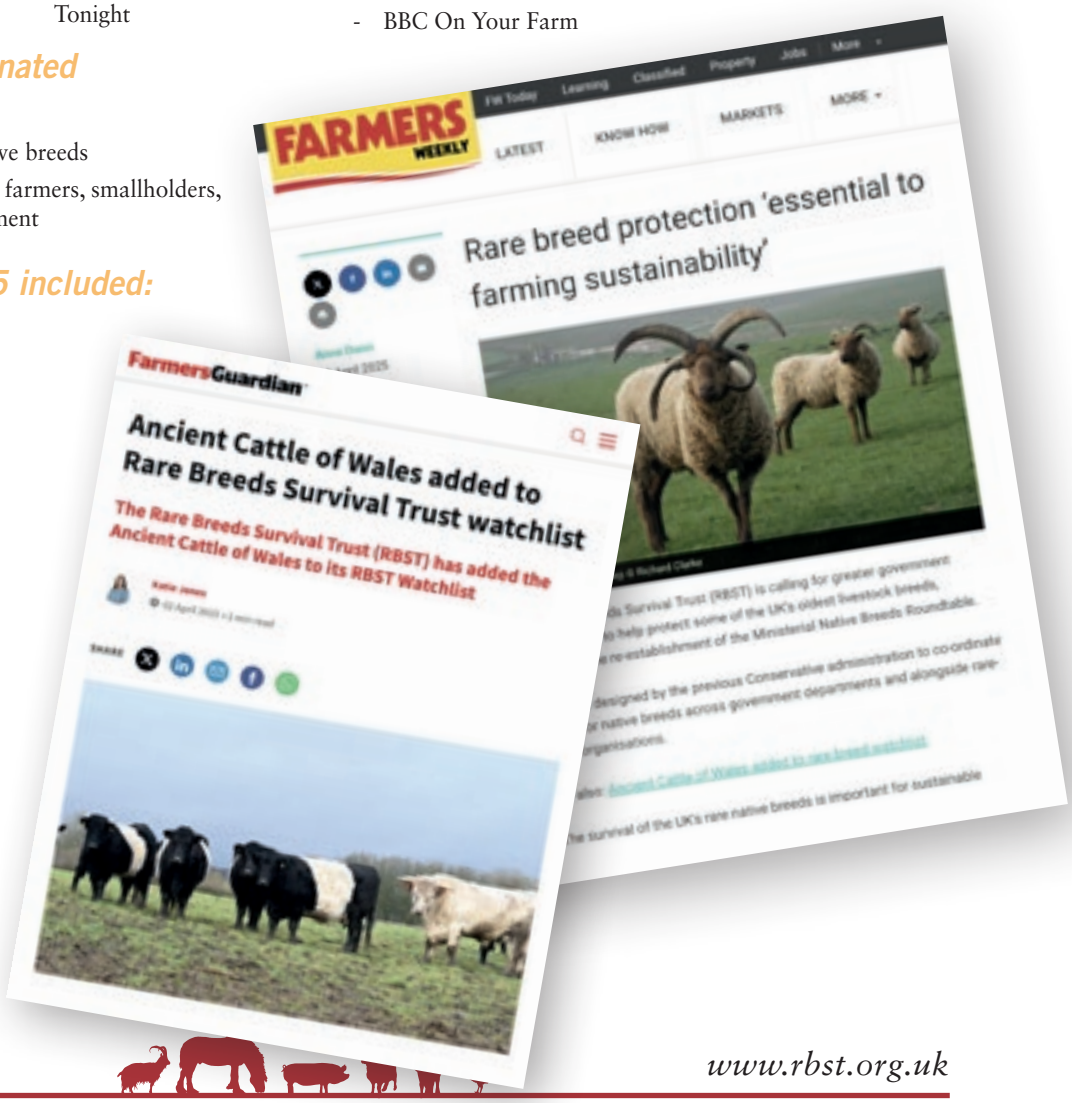
- **Specialist media, including:**
  - Farmers Guardian
  - Farmers Weekly
  - Country Life
  - Country Smallholder
  - Horse & Hound
  - Scottish Farmer
  - Wales Farmer
  - Farm Life (NI)
- **Regional media, including:**
  - Yorkshire Post
  - The Courier
  - Press & Journal
  - Western Morning News
  - Western Daily Press
  - Eastern Daily Press
  - Northern Echo
  - BBC Spotlight (SW)
  - BBC Look North
  - BBC North West Tonight
  - BBC Look East
  - BBC Radio Cornwall
  - BBC Radio Leicestershire
  - BBC Isle of Man
  - BBC Wales
  - BBC Cymru
- **National media, including:**
  - BBC.co.uk news pages
  - BBC Radio 4 Farming Today
  - BBC On Your Farm
  - Channel 5 News
  - The Daily Telegraph
  - The Times
  - Times Radio
  - The Independent
  - i News
  - Evening Standard
  - Metro

Core messages disseminated

- RBST's actions and impact
- Importance of rare and native breeds
- Benefits of native breeds for farmers, smallholders, consumers and the environment

Topics of focus in 2025 included:

- Ancient Cattle of Wales
- Watchlist (sheep, especially Manx Loaghtan and Leicester Longwool)
- Commercial opportunities
- Environment and biodiversity, including native breeds for rewilding
- Policy
- Hawksmoor scheme
- Wool revival
- Gene bank
- Abattoirs
- Poultry
- RBST Scotland conference
- RBST Scotland awards
- Registration




NEWS Insider
A mixed picture for Britain's rare native breeds
BBC NEWS
Survival plan agreed Guernsey goats
FarmersGuardian
Four in 10 small abattoirs 'likely to shut' without small abattoir discount
It comes as the Food Standards Agency is due to discuss the discount on at a board meeting on Wednesday
FarmersGuardian
Recognising the value of rare and native breeds
farminguk
New national scheme connects restaurants with rare-breed farmers
THE STANDARD
Ancient Cattle of Wales added to watchlist for urgent action to save rare breeds
RBST



A trio of Irish Moiled calves. Photograph by: Rachel Armour.

#NativeBreedsForModernNeeds

Financial Review

Operating statement

	2025				2024
	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	**Total**	Total
	£	£	£	**£**	£
Income and endowments from:					
Grants and Donations	99,140	-	26,199	**125,339**	145,491
Legacies	468,932	-	-	**468,932**	398,521
Membership Subscriptions (inc Gift Aid)	173,586	-	-	**173,586**	181,700
Charitable Activities	82,089	-	-	**82,089**	81,188
Advertising Revenue	12,955	-	-	**12,955**	14,539
Investments	103,164	-	-	**103,164**	112,070
Total income and endowments	**939,866**	**-**	**26,199**	**966,065**	933,509
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	217,514	-	-	**217,514**	190,259
Investment management fees	20,579	-	-	**20,579**	18,548
Charitable activities	449,691	52,868	16,858	**519,417**	478,930
Total expenditure	**687,784**	**52,868**	**16,858**	**757,510**	687,737
Net gains/(losses) on investments	412,390	-	-	**412,390**	187,644
Net income/(expenditure)	**664,472**	**(52,868)**	**9,341**	**620,945**	433,416

Income

Total income from 2025 was £966,065 compared with £933,509 in 2024. The increase was predominantly driven by an increase in legacies.

This offset declines in other areas of income, although income from charitable activities remained stable.

In line with accounting requirements, we revalue our investments at each year end. In 2025 our investments returned to a net positive movement in funds of £412,390, up £224,746 from the gain of £187,644 experienced in 2024. It must be remembered that this figure is simply a snap shot of our investments at a point in time and is highly dependant on the markets at that moment.

Expenditure

Expenditure for 2025 totalled £757,510 compared with £687,737 in 2024. The increase was inline with plans to reinvest RBST's increased reserves to continue forwarding Charitable activities.

Unrestricted spend on Charitable activities increased as the Trust continued to ensure spend was being directed to forwarding the Trust's objectives.

Balance sheet

The Balance Sheet remains robust, with net assets increased by 16% to £4,417,727 at the end of 2025.

Financial Review (continued)

Reserves policy

	31 December 2025	31 December 2024	% Increase/ (Decrease)
Unrestricted funds (Free Reserves)	1,978,107	1,347,021	46.9%
Unrestricted funds (Tangible Fixed Assets)	82,138	95,101	-13.6%
Total Unrestricted funds	2,060,245	1,442,122	42.9%
Designated Funds:			
- Gene Bank	2,000,000	2,000,000	0.0%
- Conservation – Breed stock	12,529	18,529	-32.4%
- Property demolition works	25,000	-	100.0%
- Property improvement fund	132,000	132,000	0.0%
- Lop Fund	5,884	5,884	0.0%
- Website development	34,623	40,000	-13.4%
Restricted Funds:			
- Cattle Conservation	39,373	44,422	-11.4%
- Equine Conservation	24,946	26,536	-6.0%
- Goat Conservation	3,711	3,711	0.0%
- Pig Conservation	49,069	56,498	-13.1%
- Sheep Conservation	22,777	22,196	2.6%
- Other projects	7,570	10,884	-30.4%
Ratio of Free Reserves to Annual Operating Expenditure	2.6 years	2.0 years	

The charity maintains a large investment portfolio in order to create an income, currently in the region of £100,000, to help fund its charitable activities.

Free reserves are shown in accordance with Charity Commission guidance CC19.

One of the prime objectives of the charity is to ensure the preservation of breeds. Therefore, a Gene Bank is maintained to ensure the characteristics of old and current breeds are conserved. This Gene Bank is treated as a heritage asset, which is irreplaceable. The Trustees have therefore designated £2million to maintain and develop the Gene Bank for the next generation.

The reserves that the Trustees have set aside provide financial stability and the means for the development of our principal activity. The Trustees' aim is for free reserves to always cover at least the annual operating expenditure.

The Trustees regularly review the amount of reserves that are required to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil our continuing obligations.

Investment policy

Assets are held within the RSBT investment portfolio and are managed by Evelyn Partners. The portfolio invests in a combination of segregated equities and collective funds, targeting a balance of capital appreciation and income generation within a medium risk framework over the longer term, with a total return equivalent to CPI + 2.5%

In 2025 the portfolio achieved 14.2%, which was acceptable given market conditions. The value of the RBST portfolio as at 31 December 2025 was £4, 166, 150 compared with £3, 627, 054 as at 31 December 2024.

Governance

Structure

RBST is a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Registration No. 269442). It is also a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (Registration No. 01204694). It was founded in 1973. Its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Trustees

The Board of RBST is comprised of unpaid trustees, with no fewer than six elected from its membership and up to five co-opted. The trustees are also the directors of RBST for the purposes of company law. The Board is responsible for setting policy, agreeing strategy and approving major commitments based on advice from senior management, and the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer. Day-to-day operations are delegated by the Board to the Chief Executive Officer, who leads the executive and volunteer teams. RBST's Memorandum and Articles of Association provide that elected trustees may be appointed for two periods of up to four years, with years being defined by AGMs, at a time and must then take a minimum break of 24 months. Co-opted trustees may be appointed for two periods of up to three years, with years being defined by AGMs, at a time and must then take a minimum break of 24 months. The Board has two principal committees: the Conservation and Research Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee. Membership of these committees along with a full list of trustees and staff at the time of writing of this report are provided at the end of this report. The Conservation and Research Committee advises the Board of Trustees on strategic issues concerning conservation programmes and related activities. The Finance and Governance Committee is responsible for reviewing RBST's financial performance and matters relating to management, organisation, governance, investments and risk management. Each new trustee is provided with training and an induction, where s/he learns about the organisation and the role and responsibilities of a trustee. The induction includes a pack containing the Charity Commission guidance "The Essential Trustee"; RBST's governing documents; and the most recent annual report and financial statements. Trustees receive ongoing training, receive charity law updates, and are involved in strategic sessions relating to the operations during the year.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of RBST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom generally accepted accounting practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards). Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions, disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, and the provisions of the Charity's constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all reasonable steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information. The trustees are also responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website.

Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Governance (continued)

Grant making policy

RBST occasionally makes donations or grants, in line with its charitable and strategic objectives, to partners in the RBST network, the outcomes of which are reviewed at regular periods.

Public benefit

In reviewing RBST's charitable objectives and as part of planning its future programme of work, the trustees of RBST have taken account of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and have considered how the planned programme of work will consistently contribute to the Charity's aims and objectives.

Remuneration policy

RBST's approach to remuneration across the organisation is designed to ensure it can attract and retain the talented and motivated people it needs to deliver its mission.

Fundraising Regulator Statement of Compliance

The charity does not contract with a third party to undertake any fundraising on its behalf. The charity does employ a fundraising officer who initiates campaigns and supports fundraising activities.

The charity only makes fundraising approaches to contacts who have given explicit consent to receive such campaign documentation under GDPR guidelines. We have received no fundraising complaints during the year.

Risk management

The trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and confirm that systems have been established to mitigate those risks. Particular attention has focused on Support Groups. These and other risks are kept under review. A full review of the risk register will be carried out next year.

Trustees Indemnity

The charity has Trustees' indemnity insurance in place.

Our employees & volunteers

The delivery of RBST's mission relies on talented and motivated people, and RBST is proud of the performance of its staff and volunteers across the UK. The trustees and Chief Executive Officer encourage widespread consultation and exchange of information at all levels of the organisation and continue to work together on a range of actions to improve employee and volunteer engagement, ensuring that RBST remains a great place to work and volunteer.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The trustees are committed to addressing equality, diversity and inclusion, recognising that doing so helps a board to make better decisions and means RBST is more likely to stay relevant to those it serves and to deliver its public benefit. Trustees will work to recognise and counter any imbalances in power, perspectives or opportunities in RBST, and in the attitudes and behaviour of trustees, staff and volunteers, so helping to make sure RBST achieves its aims.

The trustees' report (including the directors' report) was approved by the Board of trustees on 10th September 2026 and was signed on their behalf by:



John Atkinson

Chairman of the Board of trustees

Date: 10th September 2026

Independent Auditors Report

Year Ended 31 December 2025

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (the "charitable company") for the year ended 31 December 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cashflows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2025, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report (incorporating the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 49, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the

Independent Auditors Report (continued)

going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- Enquiry of management, those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of entity staff in compliance functions to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Performing audit work over the risk of management override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for bias.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Geoffrey Cox BA FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Dafferns Audit Limited, Statutory Auditor
One Eastwood
Binley Business Park
Coventry, CV3 2UB
Date: 10th September 2026

Statement of Financial Activities

(Including Income and Expenditure Account)
Year Ended 31 December 2025

		2025				2024
		Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	**Total**	Total
	Note	£	£	£	**£**	£
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	2	741,658	-	26,199	**767,857**	725,712
Charitable activities	3	82,089	-	-	**82,089**	81,188
Other trading activities	4	12,955	-	-	**12,955**	14,539
Investments	5	103,164	-	-	**103,164**	112,070
Total income and endowments		**939,866**	**-**	**26,199**	**966,065**	933,509
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds		217,514	-	-	**217,514**	190,259
Investment management fees		20,579	-	-	**20,579**	18,548
Charitable activities	6	449,691	52,868	16,858	**519,417**	478,930
Total expenditure		**687,784**	**52,868**	**16,858**	**757,510**	687,737
Net gains/(losses) on investments	16	412,390	-	-	**412,390**	187,644
Net income/(expenditure)		**664,472**	**(52,868)**	**9,341**	**620,945**	433,416
Transfers between funds	21	(46,349)	72,491	(26,142)	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets	14	-	(6,000)	-	**(6,000)**	(3,180)
Gains/(losses) on disposal of fixed assets	14	-	-	-	**-**	(683)
Net movement in funds		**618,123**	**13,623**	**(16,801)**	**614,945**	429,553
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward	21	1,442,122	2,196,413	164,247	**3,802,782**	3,373,229
Total funds carried forward	21	**2,060,245**	**2,210,036**	**147,446**	**4,417,727**	3,802,782

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. Activities relating to the Gene bank are disclosed in note 15.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

Balance sheet

Year Ended 31 December 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	13	**5,377**	-
Tangible assets	14	**82,138**	95,101
Heritage assets	15	**-**	-
Investments	16	**4,166,150**	3,627,054
		4,253,665	3,722,155
Current assets			
Stocks	17	**22,693**	24,030
Debtors	18	**74,018**	76,257
Cash at bank and in hand		**152,996**	42,101
		249,707	142,388
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	**85,645**	61,761
Net current assets		**164,062**	80,627
Net assets		**4,417,727**	3,802,782
Charity Funds			
Unrestricted funds	21	**2,060,245**	1,442,122
Designated funds	21	**2,210,036**	2,196,413
Restricted funds	21	**147,446**	164,247
Total charity funds		**4,417,727**	3,802,782

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 10th September 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board of trustees

M Campbell

John Atkinson, Chairman of Trustees,

Morven Campbell, Treasurer

The notes on pages 56 to 67 form part of these financial statements

Company registration number: 01204694

Statement of cash flows

Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Cash flow from operating activities	**143,739**	186,929
Cash flow from investing activities		
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	**(3,925)**	(8,539)
Payments to acquire intangible fixed assets	**(5,377)**	-
Payments to acquire investments	**(1,334,458)**	(1,012,552)
Receipts from sales of investments	**1,207,752**	695,279
Interest received	**27,992**	24,846
Dividends received	**75,172**	87,224
Net cash flow from investing activities	**(32,844)**	(213,742)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	**110,895**	(26,813)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January 2025	**42,101**	68,914
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December 2025	**152,996**	42,101
Cash and cash equivalents consists of:		
Cash at bank and in hand	**152,996**	42,101
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December 2025	**152,996**	42,101

	2025	2024
	£	£
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income / (expenditure) for year	**614,945**	429,553
Dividends received	**(75,172)**	(87,224)
Interest receivable	**(27,992)**	(24,846)
Depreciation and revaluation of tangible fixed assets	**16,888**	13,588
(Gains) / losses on investments	**(412,390)**	(187,644)
Decrease / (increase) in stock	**1,337**	4,818
Decrease / (increase) in debtors	**2,239**	40,668
(Decrease) / increase in creditors	**23,884**	(1,984)
Net cash flow from operating activities	**143,739**	186,929

Analysis of changes in net debt

	31/12/24	Cashflows	**31/12/25**
	£	£	**£**
Cash and cash equivalents	42,101	110,895	**152,996**

Notes to the financial statements

Year Ended 31 December 2025

1 Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) General information and basis of preparation

Rare Breeds Survival Trust is an incorporated charity registered in England. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is Avenue Q, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are:

- For the benefit of the public to ensure the preservation of breeds and breeding groups of domestic farm livestock of importance in the promotion of agriculture being breeds at risk, and having characteristics worthy of preservation in the interests of zoological research and education to ensure the preservation of genes of special or potential value in hybridisation or other work; and
- To conduct, carry out and promote research within all areas of the Trust's interest to increase knowledge and to publish the results of such research.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

A network of volunteer support groups is constituted within the Trust and accordingly the accounts include their financial activities.

(b) Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements. The cost of raising and administering such funds is charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

(c) Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received.

Subscriptions are included in the Income and Expenditure Account in the accounting period in which they are received.

This treatment is also adopted for the limited number of subscriptions received from new life members.

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Donated facilities and donated professional services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the charity has control over the item. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity, for example the amount the charity would be willing to pay in the open market for such facilities and services. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). Further detail is given in the Trustees' Annual Report.

For legacies, entitlement is the earlier of the charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received. At this point income is recognised. On occasion legacies will be notified to the charity for which it is not possible to measure the amount expected to be distributed. On these occasions, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed.

Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is received in exchange for supplying goods and services in order to raise funds and is recognised when entitlement has occurred.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes such as shares and property. It includes dividends, interest and rent. Where it is not practicable to identify investment management costs incurred within a scheme with reasonable accuracy the investment income is reported net of these costs. It is included when the amount can be measured reliably. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method and dividend and rent income is recognised as the charity's right to receive payment is established.

(d) Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

- Costs of raising funds includes fundraising and non-charitable trading activities;
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs of services and of grants, also support costs and depreciation on related assets; and
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into the categories above.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

(e) Support costs allocation

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not directly represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs, and administrative payroll costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out at Headquarters. All support costs have been allocated on the basis of number of employees. Fund-raising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

The analysis of these costs is included in note 7.

(f) Intangible fixed assets

Intangible fixed assets comprise website development costs. Costs incurred in the development of the charity's website are capitalised where they meet the recognition criteria for internally generated intangible assets.

Website development cost are stated at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment losses.

Amortisation will be charged on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful life of the website once development has been completed.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2025

(g) Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost (or deemed cost) or valuation less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Cost includes costs directly attributable to making the asset capable of operating as intended. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset on a systematic basis over its expected useful life as follows:

Leasehold land and buildings	Over the period of the lease
Office and Computer Equipment	10%-33% according to the nature of the asset
Conservation Breeding Stock (agisted)	Annual Revaluation

(h) Heritage assets

The Gene Bank is a collection of semen and embryos obtained from rare breeds of cattle, horses, sheep, goats and pigs. It acts as an archive to preserve bloodlines of breeds. Each year additions are made to the archive to ensure that it includes the current characteristics of a breed. The archive is regarded as an irreplaceable resource which cannot be valued with any degree of accuracy and will never be sold. As such it generates no income and so has no realisable value. Therefore it does not have a carrying value in the balance sheet. The costs incurred in maintaining the archive for conservation purposes are written off each year.

(i) Investments

Investments are recognised initially at fair value which is normally the transaction price excluding transaction costs. Subsequently, they are measured at fair value with changes recognised in “net gains / (losses) on investments” in the SoFA if the shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably. Other investments are measured at cost less impairment.

(j) Stocks

Stocks comprise genetic resources, which are not part of the Gene Bank, and goods for resale. Genetic resources are valued at the lower of cost of production and market value. Retail stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

(k) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

(l) Impairment

Assets not measured at fair value are reviewed for any indication that the asset may be impaired at each balance sheet date. If such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, or the asset’s cash generating unit, is estimated and compared to the carrying amount. Where the carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount where the impairment loss is a revaluation decrease.

(m) Leases

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

Rentals payable and receivable under operating leases are charged to the SoFA on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

(n) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service. The charity operates a defined contribution pension plan for the benefit of its employees. Contributions are expensed as they become payable. The Trust agrees to pay a defined contribution into the employee's own personal pension scheme for eligible employees. The pension charge represents contributions payable by the Trust for the period. The Trust's liability is limited to the amount of the contribution. The liability for meeting future pension payments rests solely with the employee's personal pension scheme.

(o) Tax

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

(p) Financial instruments

The Trust enters into only basic financial instrument transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other amounts receivable and payable and loans to related parties. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

(q) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	2025	2024
	£	£
Grants and donations	**125,339**	145,491
Legacies	**468,932**	398,521
Membership Subscriptions (including gift aid)	**173,586**	181,700
	767,857	725,712

Of the income from donations and legacies of £594,271 (2024 - £544,012), £26,199 (2024 - £114,895) was attributable to restricted, and £568,072 (2024 - £429,117) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

Income from membership subscriptions was attributable entirely to unrestricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

	2025	2024
	£	£
Conservation activities (including Support Groups)	**82,089**	81,188

Income from charitable activities was attributable entirely to unrestricted funds.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2025

4 Income from other trading activities

	2025	2024
	£	£
Advertising revenue	**12,955**	14,539

Of the income from other trading activities, £12,955 (2024 - £14,539) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

5 Income from investments

	2025	2024
	£	£
Dividends - equities	**75,172**	87,224
Interest - Fixed interest securities	**27,992**	24,846
	103,164	112,070

Income from investments was attributable to unrestricted funds in both years.

6 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2025			
	Activities undertaken directly	Grant funding of activities	Support costs	**Total**
	£	£	£	**£**
Conservation Activities (including Support Group)	297,198	-	163,956	**461,154**
ARK Magazine	58,263	-	-	**58,263**
	355,461	**-**	**163,956**	**519,417**

£16,858 (2024 - £29,637) of the above costs were attributable to restricted funds. £52,868 (2024 - £49,298) of the above costs were attributable to designated funds. £449,691 (2024 - £399,995) of the above costs were attributable to unrestricted funds.

7 Allocation of support costs

	2025			
	Raising funds	Conservation Activities	ARK Magazine	**Total**
	£	£	£	**£**
Governance	-	18,036	-	**18,036**
Management salaries and expenses	32,174	80,434	-	**112,608**
Office operational costs and utilities	14,441	36,104	-	**50,545**
Depreciation	3,111	7,777	-	**10,888**
Professional charges	3,839	9,599	-	**13,438**
Irrecoverable VAT	2,676	6,690	-	**9,366**
Other	2,127	5,316	-	**7,443**
Total	**58,368**	**163,956**	**-**	**222,324**

Supports costs, except governance costs, have been allocated based on staff time.

8 Governance costs

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Trustees' remuneration	11	**-**	-
Trustees' expenses	11	**857**	2,326
Cost of Trustees' meetings and the AGM		**4,801**	1,681
Auditors' remuneration	10	**7,900**	7,600
Legal fees		**4,478**	6,123
		18,036	17,730

9 Net income / (expenditure) for the year

	2025 £	2024 £
Net income / (expenditure) is stated after charging / (crediting):		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	**10,888**	9,725
Operating lease rentals	**2,963**	2,513
Loss/(gain) on fair value movement of investments	**(412,390)**	(187,644)

10 Auditors' remuneration

The auditors' remuneration amounts to an audit fee of £7,900 (2024 - £7,600) and other services of £13,438 (2024 - £13,938).

11 Trustees' and key management personnel remuneration and expenses

The Trustees neither received nor waived any remuneration during the year (2024 - £nil).

The total amount of employee benefits (these benefits include employer's national insurance and pension costs) received by key management personnel is £185,976 (2024: £173,590). The Trust considers its key management personnel to comprise the Chief Executive Officer and Director of Finance and Operations.

Two trustees (2024: Four) were reimbursed expenses as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Travel	**563**	1,760
Accommodation	**294**	566
	857	2,326

12 Staff costs and employee benefits

The average monthly number of employees and full time equivalent (FTE) during the year was as follows:

	2025 Number	2025 FTE	2024 Number	2024 FTE
Raising funds	**2**	**2**	2	2
Charitable activities	**5**	**5**	3	3
Governance	**2**	**2**	2	2
	9	**9**	7	7

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2025

The total staff costs and employees' benefits was as follows:	**2025**	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	**361,292**	309,932
Social security	**46,438**	31,963
Defined contribution pension scheme	**18,273**	16,350
	426,003	358,245

The number of employees receiving total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of over £60,000 per year was as follows:

	2025	2024
	No.	No.
£60,001 - £70,000	**-**	1
£70,001 - £80,000	**1**	-
£80,001 - £90,000	**-**	-
£90,001 - £100,000	**1**	1
£100,001 - £110,000	**-**	-

13 Intangible fixed assets

	Website	**Total**
	£	**£**
Cost or valuation:		
At 31 December 2024	-	**-**
Additions	5,377	**5,377**
Disposals	-	**-**
Revaluation	-	**-**
At 31 December 2025	5,377	**5,377**
Depreciation:		
At 31 December 2024	-	**-**
Charge for the year	-	**-**
Eliminated on disposal	-	**-**
At 31 December 2025	-	**-**
Net book value:		
At 31 December 2025	5,377	**5,377**
At 31 December 2024	-	**-**

14 Tangible fixed assets

	Short Leasehold	Office & Equipment	Conservation Breeding Stock (Agisted)	**Total**
	£	£	£	**£**
Cost or valuation:				
At 31 December 2024	221,443	174,868	18,530	**414,841**
Additions	-	3,925	-	**3,925**
Disposals	-	-	-	**-**
Revaluation	-	-	(6,000)	**(6,000)**
At 31 December 2025	221,443	178,793	12,530	**412,766**
Depreciation:				
At 31 December 2024	159,585	160,155	-	**319,740**
Charge for the year	4,440	6,448	-	**10,888**
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	-	**-**
At 31 December 2025	164,025	166,603	-	**330,628**
Net book value:				
At 31 December 2025	57,418	12,190	12,530	**82,138**
At 31 December 2024	61,858	14,713	18,530	**95,101**

15 Heritage assets

Heritage assets held are The National Archive Gene Bank and no value has been placed on this asset.

These assets are significant to the charity in order to safeguard the future of rare breeds. Expenditure to acquire preserve and develop The National Archive Gene Bank in the year was £55,948 (2024 - £74,669).

16 Fixed asset investments

	Listed Investments
	£
Cost or valuation	
At 31 December 2024	**3,627,054**
Additions	**1,334,458**
Disposals	**(1,207,752)**
Revaluation	**412,390**
At 31 December 2025	**4,166,150**

Investments at fair value comprise:	**2025**	2024
	£	£
Equities & unit trusts	**4,094,866**	3,580,129
Cash within investment portfolio	**71,284**	46,925
	4,166,150	3,627,054

The fair value of listed investments is determined by reference to the market value of the unit trusts or quoted share price.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2025

17 Stocks

	2025	2024
	£	£
Semen for sale	**8,050**	6,360
Merchandise stock	**14,643**	17,670
	22,693	24,030

18 Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	**25,742**	9,595
Amounts owed by support groups	**10,197**	11,526
Prepayments and accrued income	**33,776**	48,698
Taxes recoverable	**4,303**	6,438
	74,018	76,257

19 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	**16,676**	13,705
Other tax and social security	**11,268**	8,866
Other creditors	**3,820**	3,205
Accruals	**53,881**	35,985
	85,645	61,761

20 Leases

Operating leases – lessee

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:	2025	2024
	£	£
Not later than one year	**2,651**	2,963
Later than one and not later than five years	**10,551**	10,605
Later than five years	**16,104**	18,702
	29,306	32,270

21 Fund reconciliation

	Balance at 31 December 2024	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains / (losses)	Balance at 31 December 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds						
Unrestricted	**1,442,122**	939,866	(687,784)	(46,349)	412,390	**2,060,245**
Designated Funds						
Gene Bank	**2,000,000**	-	(52,868)	52,868	-	**2,000,000**
Conservation – Breed Stock (Agisted)	**18,529**	-	-	-	(6,000)	**12,529**
Property demolition works	**-**	-	-	25,000	-	**25,000**
Property improvement fund	**132,000**	-	-	-	-	**132,000**
Lop Fund	**5,884**	-	-	-	-	**5,884**
Website development	**40,000**	-	-	(5,377)	-	**34,623**
	2,196,413	-	(52,868)	72,491	(6,000)	**2,210,036**

Unrestricted funds description

Unrestricted funds are those funds available for use, at the discretion of the Trustees, in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds description

The archive Gene Bank is held to maintain the Heritage Assets for the benefit of the next generation.

The Conservation Breeding Stock (Agisted), reserve is the value of RBST rare breed stock on loan to livestock keepers to increase rare breed population numbers.

The Property demolition fund relates to the estimated cost of demolishing the premises at Stoneleigh Park on the expiry of the licence.

The Lop Fund was created to help support the work in regard to British Lop pigs, along with the donation received from the Gerald Fallowes Discretionary Trust.

The website development fund relates to the intended development of a new RBST website as part of ongoing efforts to increase public engagement, improve access to conservation resources, and support members.

Restricted funds and Trusts

We are extremely grateful to the charitable trusts and foundations that support our work. Some trusts provide general funding, while others prefer to sponsor specific projects as detailed on page 66.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 December 2025

Restricted funds Fund Descriptions	Balance at 31 December 2024 £	Income £	Expend-iture £	Transfers £	Gains / (losses) £	Balance at 31 December 2025 £
Restricted cattle conservation						
N Bailey Albion Fund	**2,015**	-	-	-	-	**2,015**
Gloucester project	**1,173**	-	(1,173)	-	-	**-**
2019 Cattle Campaign	**64**	-	-	-	-	**64**
General Cattle	**20,670**	-	(126)	-	-	**20,544**
Native Project HDH Wills	**20,500**	-	-	(3,750)	-	**16,750**
Restricted equine conservation						
Houserace Betting Levy Board	**1,275**	-	-	-	-	**1,275**
Heavy Horse Appeal 2017	**19,770**	571	-	-	-	**20,341**
Marjorie Coote Animal Charity Trust	**2,491**	-	(1,780)	-	-	**711**
Equine general	**3,000**	-	(81)	(300)	-	**2,619**
HBLB 3 year conservation programme	**-**	22,266	(2,891)	(19,375)	-	**-**
Restricted goat conservation						
Goat Appeal	**1,196**	-	-	-	-	**1,196**
John Spedan Lewis Foundation	**1,463**	-	-	-	-	**1,463**
Gene Bank	**1,052**	-	-	-	-	**1,052**
Restricted pig conservation						
PG Fallowes Lop Project	**19,889**	-	-	-	-	**19,889**
PBA Priority Breeds Appeal	**36,109**	2,781	(9,660)	(550)	-	**28,680**
Black Pig Pot	**500**	-	-	-	-	**500**
Restricted sheep conservation						
Love a Longwool Appeal	**20,320**	581	-	-	-	**20,901**
Rosie Green Wool Sheep Fund	**1,876**	-	-	-	-	**1,876**
Restricted poultry conservation						
Luton & District Poultry Group	**75**	-	-	-	-	**75**
Restricted Other projects						
Somerset Conservation Fund	**2**	-	-	-	-	**2**
Foundation for Common Land	**2,167**	-	-	(2,167)	-	**-**
Farm Park - Princes Charities Fund	**3,582**	-	(1,147)	-	-	**2,435**
Epping Forrest - Fenceless Grazing	**58**	-	-	-	-	**58**
Northern Breeds - Raymond Moss Fund	**5,000**	-	-	-	-	**5,000**
	164,247	26,199	(16,858)	(26,142)	-	**147,446**

22 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	**Total**
	£	£	£	**£**
Fixed assets	2,043,629	2,210,036	-	**4,253,665**
Cash at bank and in hand	13,600	-	139,396	**152,996**
Other current assets / liabilities	3,016	-	8,050	**11,066**
Total	**2,060,245**	**2,210,036**	**147,446**	**4,417,727**

23 Pensions and other post-retirement benefits

Defined contribution pension plans.

The charity operates a defined contribution pension plan for its employees. The amount recognised as an expense in the period was £18,273 (2024 - £16,350).

Leaving a gift in your Will could be the greatest difference you ever make!

Planning for the future

RBST depends heavily on voluntary donations. Without the incredible generosity of our members and supporters, we simply couldn't continue our vital work in research, conservation and saving rare breeds. We know that with the help of generous donors like you, RBST can continue striving to achieve its crucial goal, to ensure that the genetic diversity represented by our native breeds is safeguarded for many years to come. Our vision is a secure future for each of the UK's native breeds of livestock to ensure long-term food security, the conservation of important habitats and landscapes and the preservation of the UK's culture. Help ensure our native farm animals have a secure future and can be enjoyed by generations to come.

What to do?

If you have already made a Will but you are considering including a gift to RBST, your solicitor will advise you on the correct wording to update your Will. You will need to provide your solicitor with our charity details. For your convenience, we have provided this here:

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG. (Registered Charity no. 269442).

Please also state that you wish to make the gift for the 'general purposes' of Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

Our promise

RBST will always respect your privacy. Your information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and we will never ask the amount of your legacy. We understand and respect that you will want to remember family and friends first when planning for the future, but we hope that once you've taken care of your loved ones, you'll consider leaving a legacy gift in your Will, as a lasting way to support the future of RBST.

No Will yet?

Have you thought about leaving a gift in your Will to RBST? This year we have partnered with Free Wills Month. They bring together a group of well-respected charities to offer members of the public aged 55 and over, giving you the opportunity to support RBST and have a simple Will written or updated for free, by using one of their participating solicitors. The next campaign opens on 1st October 2025, you can register your interest here **www.freewillsmonth.org.uk/** and receive an email reminding you that the campaign has started. An up-to-date Will written by a solicitor ensures your wishes are respected. It also avoids difficult decisions and legal complications for your loved ones.



RBST
Rare Breeds Survival Trust



If you have any questions, visit our website, call 02476 69551 or email fundraising@rbst.org.uk.

Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST), Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG
Registered Charity in England and Wales No 269442 and in Scotland OSCR No SC053451

Corporate Directory

Charity Reference and Administrative Details: As at the date of this report

Charity registration number 269442
Company registration number 01204694

Patron
His Majesty King Charles III

President
Vacant

Vice Presidents
Miss Elizabeth Buchanan, C.V.O, FRAgS
The Earl De La Warr, DL
Jimmy Doherty
Lord Iliffe
Gail Sprake

Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Price

Trustees
John Atkinson
Morven Campbell (appointed May 2025)
Mark Davies (appointed Jan 2025)
Tom Fairfax
James Fanshawe
Catherine Le Grice-Mack (resigned Sept 2025)
Jan McCourt
Steve McMinn (resigned Dec 2025)
Anna Pennell (appointed July 2026)
Martin Penny (resigned Feb 2025)
Alfred Perry (appointed July 2026)
Ryan Perry (resigned March 2026)
Alison Pope (appointed Feb 2025) (resigned June 2025)
Dr James Prendergast
John Reed
Claire Saunders (resigned Feb 2025)
Hilary Shenton (appointed March 2026)
Laura Smit-Chesterfield (appointed July 2026)
Joanna Swiers (appointed March 2026)
Claire Whittle

Conservation and Research Committee
John Atkinson, James Fanshawe, Catherine Le Grice-Mack, Ryan Perry, Steve McMinn, Marcus Bates (British Pig Association – in attendance), Dr James Prendergast, Tom Fairfax, Claire Whittle
In attendance: Hilary Shenton, Joanna Swiers, Christopher Price (CEO), Tom Blunt, Tracy Wathen-Jones, Alice Lennox

Finance and Governance Committee
John Atkinson, Morven Campbell, Mark Davies, Catherine Le Grice-Mack, Alison Pope, Jan McCourt, Steve McMinn
In attendance: Hilary Shenton, Joanna Swiers, Christopher Price (CEO), Claire McNicol (Dir F&O)

Nomination Committee
Alison Pope, Steve McMinn, Jan McCourt, James Fanshawe, Gail Sprake

Registered office
Avenue Q, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG

Auditor
Dafferns Audit Limited
One Eastwood
Harry Weston Road
Binley Business Park, Binley
Coventry, CV3 2UB

Legal advisors
Lodders LLP
10 Elm Court
Arden Street
Stratford upon Avon
Warwickshire, CV37 6PA

Bankers
Barclays Bank, 48/50 The Parade, Leamington Spa CV32 4DD

Investment managers
Evelyn
45 Gresham Street,
London EC2V 7BG

Staff
Claire McNicol – Director of Finance and Operations and Company Secretary
Tom Blunt – Senior Conservation Advisor
Tracy Wathen-Jones – Conservation Adviser
Alice Lennox – Scottish Co-ordinator
Jenni Hughes-Ellis – Conservation Adviser (Wales)
Alice Marlow – Marketing and Business Development Manager
Rachel Peckover – Office Administrator and Accounts Assistant
Hannah Roberts – Office Administrator (maternity Leave)
Tracey Howe – Office Administrator

RBST is incredibly grateful for every single penny donated to its cause by members, donors and supporters, both individuals and organisations. RBST simply would not exist without their generosity.

Whilst we would like to be able to thank everyone by name, due to space and data protection limitations this is not possible.

We would however like to take the opportunity to make special reference to the Trusts who donated funds to RBST in 2025 and all those who so kindly remembered RBST in their Wills.

Trust income in 2025

The Ancaster Trust
Registered Charity Number 270822

Dingwall Trust

Hutchinson Charitable Trust
Registered Charity Number 1155643

The H J Cooper Trust
Registered Charity Number 213668

Duncan Norman Trust Fund
Registered Charity Number 250434

The Horserace Betting Levy Board

Legacy Income Received 2025 (over £500)

Julia Florence **SMALL**

Caroline Renee **PARKINSON**

Corinna **WILTSHIRE**

Alfred George **HARRIS**

Dorothy Francis **KENNEDY**

Anthony Francis David **KENNEDY**

Fay Elizabeth **GAREY**

RBST's Corporate Supporters

Birch Farm

Find My Poultry

Hawksmoor

Peter Hunter Seeds Ltd

Edge & Son Butchers

Marsh Charitable Trust

Dumfries House Home Farm Ltd

Dengie Crops Ltd

Little Beau Sheep

Kelly Bronze Turkeys

Royal Ulster Agricultural Society

Old Hall Farm Woodton

Incredible Eggs Franchise Ltd

Wychwood Farm

Edge & Son Butchers

Cliverton Insurance

Swaledale Butchers

Yorkshire Agricultural Society

Shearwell Data

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RBST
Rare Breeds Survival Trust

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RBST's Patron is His Majesty The King

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