



THE ROYAL
COUNTRYSIDE
FUND
CELEBRATING
15 YEARS

Trustees' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025



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Editorial Team: Helen Day and Patrick Davies

Design: Ford Creative

Cover image: In 2024 the RCF awarded Knoydart Farm CIC £24,869 to help establish a community-run farm, to address the issues of food insecurity and cost faced by this isolated rural community in the Scottish Highlands. Historically the community has relied upon food deliveries via boat, which are vulnerable to delays and come at a high price and a substantial carbon footprint. The community farm has created new employment opportunities for young people and is contributing to a greener, circular economy, supplying fresh produce to local businesses. The farm has also become a community hub where local people of all ages can connect with sustainable agriculture and food production.



Trustees and advisors

Trustees

(in the year covered by the report)

- Stephanie Brimacombe**
- Robert Collins** (Vice Chair)
- David Fursdon LL**
- Heather Hancock LVO, DL**
(Chair)
- The Earl of Lindsay DL**
- Janet McCollum CBE**
- Steven Murrells CBE**
- Meurig Raymond CBE, DL**
- Baroness Kate Rock**
- Christopher Sparrow**
(appointed 21 May 2024)
- Jonathan Warburton**
- Allan Wilkinson**
- Charlotte Weston**
(appointed 1 March 2025)

Key management personnel	Keith Halstead Executive Director
Company number	07240359
Charity registration numbers	1136077 SC048055
Registered office	13th Floor 33 Cavendish Square London W1G 0PW
Auditor	Saffery LLP 71 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4BE
Banker	Coutts 440 Strand London WC2R 0QS
Solicitor	Bates Wells 10 Queen Street Place London EC4R 1BE



Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees present their annual report and the charity's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.



Introduction

Welcome to our 2024/25 trustees' annual report. In 2025 we mark 15 years since The Royal Countryside Fund was established, and we are seizing this anniversary opportunity to reflect on how we began, how we've grown and what we've achieved since those early days.

It's exciting to see how quickly The Royal Countryside Fund has become recognised as the only nationwide charity with this single relentless focus on people in the countryside. We are incredibly fortunate in this to have the warm encouragement of His Majesty The King. Without His Majesty we simply wouldn't exist, and his enduring and widely recognised commitment to the countryside and its people continues to benefit the RCF in countless ways. It was a great honour earlier this year to receive confirmation of His Majesty as our Royal Founding Patron, a distinction which spurs us on and is deeply appreciated. The King's support is informed and active; this year it included His Majesty graciously and generously hosting a memorable reception at Buckingham Palace to thank Farm Support Groups across the nations for their important and unsung work building and supporting farmer networks and providing an essential delivery channel for the RCF.

Across the UK, rural communities and farm businesses are living with challenges we couldn't have contemplated back in 2010. The uncertainty and volatility besetting farming, make for deeply unsettling times. There's no doubt that our work is needed more than ever to back the self-help instinct, resourcefulness and determination of farming families and rural people as they carve out a secure future in their own precious corners of the UK. We're incredibly grateful to our supporters, large and small, individuals and corporate, trusts and foundations, for helping the RCF to do more, and especially for backing our growth ambition, as do our Ambassadors who have supported and backed the RCF over many years.

In 2024/25 we went further, faster in addressing those needs as we began to implement a new four-year strategic plan. We remain focused on developing locally attuned programmes delivered via trusted partners on the ground, leveraging our convening power and extending our scale and reach. This year, our operations focussed on ten English counties, and we made further progress in Wales. Our geographic approach to expansion ensures that the RCF itself has a sustainable platform for further growth, while putting down deep roots, area by area. We continue to monitor, evaluate and learn from all our programmes, tailoring and adapting to changing external circumstances as well as to local situations, and that's reflected in the revamp of our support for sustainable rural community projects and in our new environmental programmes for farmers. We continue to hold on fiercely to our belief in a business-first approach to the future of family farms.

Fifteen years of the RCF also means some changes in trustees as we said farewell to some anchors of the RCF at the end of this financial year and welcomed new faces. Allan Wilkinson departed the board, having been here from the very beginning. He has been a truly invaluable shaper of our distinctive Farm Resilience Programme, the



cornerstone of our support for family farms. Rob Collins served as a trustee for almost a decade, transforming our development committee's fundraising successes, putting his impressive network in the food sector at the service of the RCF, and latterly offering brilliant leadership as our Vice Chair. Our Welsh trustee Meurig Raymond, known to many for his past leadership of the National Farmers' Union and who brought much appreciated insight into farming policy as well as hands-on experience of farming, was the third departure. We are more grateful than we can say to all of them.

In their place, we have been delighted to appoint new trustees for 2025/26. They are Charlotte Weston, Sustainability, Clients and Markets Leader at EY, and Chris Sparrow, chartered surveyor, natural capital specialist and Founder Director of the Environmental Farmers Group. Our longstanding trustee David Fursdon, Chair of Dyson Farming, becomes our Vice Chair.

We have a wonderful staff team, and I place on record my thanks and those of the board for the dedication of this small team to always deliver to the very best standards and hold family farms and rural communities at the heart of everything they do. Without such a solid and experienced resource, our ability to meet the ambitions of our strategic plans would be impossible. Thank you.

We have a bright future ahead as we go into the next phase of our growth.



Heather Hancock

Chair

The Royal Countryside Fund



Activities and objectives

Principal activity

The Royal Countryside Fund was established as a response to concerns expressed by His Majesty King Charles III (our Royal Founding Patron) when he was The Prince of Wales, and by Business in the Community's Rural Action Leadership Team regarding the future of farming and rural communities in the UK. Given these origins, the RCF operates in accordance with the vision of our Royal Founding Patron, which is to help improve the sustainability of British farming and the rural communities in the UK.

Right now, hardworking family farms and rural communities face social, environmental and economic pressures that threaten the livelihoods they love. They shouldn't have to face these alone – and with us, they don't have to.

Our locally based programmes help farming families discover achievable ways to make their farms more financially and environmentally resilient. And by combining their ideas with our funding and guidance, we help rural communities run community-led projects that will stand the test of time. So far, we've supported over 5,000 farming families, and invested more than £12 million in 500-plus rural community-led projects.

Whether it's through farming support or rural projects, we're all about bringing people together and making changes that last. We help countryside communities thrive now and for generations to come.

The trustees are satisfied that, having considered the general guidance on public benefit from the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, the charity is in compliance with such regulations.

How the activities of The Royal Countryside Fund delivered benefit

A four-year strategy from 2024-2028 was approved by the board to inform our work from April 2024. This recognised that the RCF's activity coalesced around five pillars, designed to guide us in setting our priorities and assessing how we are performing against our vision. The year covered by this report is the first year in this strategic cycle.

Our vision is of a thriving countryside – a living landscape of working family farms and prosperous rural life, built on connections and relationships – which in turn shapes rural places, creating vibrant, sustainable communities.

Our ambition is to be the countryside charity of choice for people living and working in rural and farming communities across the UK, and for those who care about helping them to secure a sustainable future.

Our four-year strategy is to:

- Maintain and build our reputation as the trusted source of advice and support for farming families seeking a sustainable future.
- Develop our reputation as a supporter of sustainable rural communities to equal that of our farming support, building on our strengths as a catalyst, convener and funder.
- Introduce a tailored approach to all activity in each of the four nations of the UK, reflecting that each is different and unique in terms of its farming and rural communities.
- Strengthen our brand recognition, to benefit our fundraising and partnerships, and to build awareness and confidence in the UK's farming and rural communities.
- Bring together more people, places and partners through our unique position as a catalyst, convener and funder.

The activities described in this report demonstrate how the RCF makes a positive difference through helping those who live and work in the countryside, particularly the smaller family farms. They are the stewards of what makes our countryside so special. Our transformational business training, our practical workshops on the environment and our bespoke support for farmers are needed now more than ever.

This report also illuminates how we enable rural communities to become more self-sufficient and viable, particularly through our grant programmes which support projects in many hamlets, villages and small towns across the UK.

We report how we have fulfilled our charitable purpose and delivered benefit against the five pillars outlined in our strategy, which are:

- 1. Accelerate our scale and reach as an operational, delivery-focussed charity**
- 2. Develop our locally place-based packages**
- 3. Build a platform for growth and longevity**
- 4. Make The Royal Countryside Fund the best we can be by unlocking our potential**
- 5. Ensure that we monitor, evaluate and learn from all aspects of our work**



How we delivered our charitable purpose during 2024/25

Our monitoring shows that the RCF performed strongly in 2024/25. Rural communities and small family farms demonstrate resilience and confidence in their future. Farm businesses which we have supported have enhanced their ability to compete, innovate and boost productivity.

1,173

farm businesses
participated in our
farming and
environmental
programmes

(alongside those
continuing activity
from 2023/24)

£572,783

was given in grants
to **29** organisations

Enabling family farms to thrive

669

farm businesses
participated in
the Farm for the
Future programme

91

farm businesses
participated in the
Farm Resilience
programme

413

farm businesses
participated in our
environmental
programmes

Building confident rural communities

>£387k

was given to **16**
organisations in
rural communities

£170k

was awarded
through **9** grants
to Farm
Support Groups

£15k

was awarded
through **4** grants
to Farm Support
Groups for
healthcare projects

For more details of our impact see the 'Sharing our learning and impact' section later in this document

Support from His Majesty The King

His Majesty The King, Royal Founding Patron of The Royal Countryside Fund, hosted a reception at Buckingham Palace in March 2025 to celebrate our 15th anniversary.

The reception brought together representatives of 32 Farm Support Groups from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in recognition of the crucial role they play in helping farmers navigate the challenges they face, offering not only practical guidance on business, farm administration, managing the consequences of climate change and succession planning, but also in addressing a wide range of wellbeing needs.



His Majesty meets with Farm Support Group members at Buckingham Palace, March 2025

Later in March 2025, His Majesty met guests and farming families from the Herefordshire Rural Hub at an RCF event held at Somerset House. Farmers spoke with The King about the Regenerative Agriculture roundtable they had taken part in earlier that morning. Discussions from earlier in the day focused on the importance of soil health and enabling more farmers to adopt regenerative farming practices, cut input costs, and improve the resilience of their business. The RCF event brought together Herefordshire farmers, as well as soil health experts and corporate partners including McDonald's UK and Ireland and Regenified, to mark the launch of new support for farmers.



His Majesty meets with Herefordshire farmers at Somerset House, March 2025

We nominated some of our beneficiaries to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2024 to celebrate the terrific contributions they have made to their local communities. These included representatives from Farm Support Groups (Exmoor Hill Farming Network, The Farming Life Centre and Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services), as well as two rural community organisations (North Norfolk Community Transport and Hour Community).



Representatives from Farm Support Groups at Buckingham Palace, May 2024

“ I feel very privileged to be part of the Exmoor Hill Farming Network and I am so passionate about the work that we deliver and seeing the difference it makes to many of our farming businesses. It was a huge honour to attend the Royal Garden Party acknowledging my contribution to the network. I will cherish the memory for many years to come. ”

Katherine, Network Manager at the Exmoor Hill Farming Network



How we delivered our strategy

Strategic pillar 1:

How we have accelerated our scale and reach as an operational, delivery-focused charity

We have been supporting farmers for over 15 years and in this time farming has seen more change and uncertainty than at any time since the Second World War. We understand the farming families we work with and want to help them continue doing what they do best.

Our business-first approach gives farmers the support they need to build more financially resilient farm businesses. By getting a clearer understanding of their finances, they can focus their attention on finding solutions where they're needed most. Our practical, on-the-ground guidance helps farmers gain confidence and make rewarding changes so they can secure their farms for generations to come.

Over the last year, we have accelerated the scale and reach of our practical farming programmes to deliver more support to more farming families across more of the UK.

The Farm for the Future programme

The Farm for the Future programme, which started in 2022, drew to a close in early 2025, as the final cohort of 669 farmers completed their workshops. The programme assisted family farms across England to adjust to the post-Brexit transformation in government support for farmers, which offers not only challenges but opportunities for their businesses. As family farms are the lifeblood of the UK's rural communities, we recognise how important the sustainability of family farm businesses is for the stewardship of our rural landscape.

The programme was supported by the Farming Resilience Fund from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Royal Countryside Fund was one of 17 providers of support to farmers under this scheme.

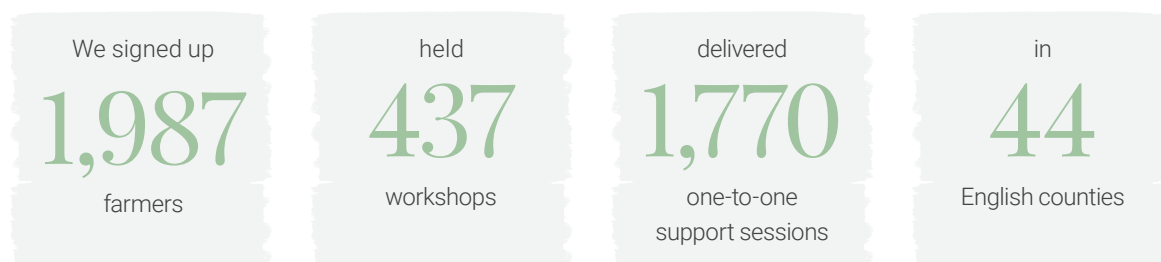
As the only charity providing support to farmers under this scheme, our offering was unique.

The aim was to support farmers to understand the potential impacts of the policy changes at the same time as improving the management of their farmed environment and developing their business models.

Building on our 15 years' experience of supporting farmers, we delivered this programme through our network of locally embedded delivery partners, meaning we could extend Farm for the Future to the farmers who were most at risk of being adversely affected by the policy changes sweeping through agriculture. We could also ensure that the programme was tailored to local farmers' experiences. We provided unbiased advice: we had no agenda and nothing to sell. Trust and community were at the heart of our offer.



We compiled a comprehensive evaluation of Farm for the Future as it ended. During the full lifetime of the programme:



Feedback from participating farmers was overwhelmingly positive with:

89% of participants saying they developed an increased awareness of the new environmental land management schemes

74% saying they felt more resilient after the programme



The Farm for the Future evaluation provided a comprehensive overview of the programme

“ When I signed up to the RCF’s Farm for the Future programme, the family farm had been struggling with profitability for several years and that had been taking its toll on me personally. My family said that they rarely saw me happy any more.

During the programme the topics that we covered were wide and varied. Almost everything was relevant or useful to me...I now find that I feel happy and more positive most of the time and much more able to deal with issues as they arrive. Whilst I have no idea what the future holds or whether the business will survive, which I think it will, the programme has given me the confidence and strength to fight on. ”

Crispin, Essex, Farm for the Future participant



The programme played an important role in strengthening farming communities. Many of our delivery partners, mostly small, not-for-profit Farm Support Groups, were able to build their capacity and networks thanks to the programme. Farm for the Future also brought together farmers themselves and

87%

of participants said they felt better connected to their peers.



“ The social aspect of the workshops has been highly beneficial, even if ours were held online. They gave us all a chance to share our concerns and show support for one another. ”

Michaela, West Midlands, Farm for the Future participant



The Farm Resilience Programme

The Farm Resilience Programme offers free business skills training to family farmers across the UK. The 2023/24 programme closed at the end of June 2024 and saw 91 farming businesses participating, throughout the seven groups across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. All groups completed the six core workshops, and post-workshop evaluations showed highly positive feedback, with 98% of attendees saying that the workshops met their expectations.



“ We are a family farm business where I farm alongside my grandparents. We currently milk 150 cows, have a small suckler herd and finish all the stock on farm. We also put in crops, such as barley, wheat and more recently beans and have renewable enterprises through hydro, wind and solar energy.

The Royal Countryside Fund has been of huge benefit to us through the Farm Resilience Programme. We took part in a range of workshops to allow us to understand where our business currently is and discuss where we want to be. This also helped me gain insight into the important parts of the farm that we don't often focus upon – it isn't all about running about after stock and driving tractors, as nice as that would be!

It allowed me to look in depth into our farm accounts, get to know our figures and reduce costs where we felt money was being wasted. It allowed me to see the value in benchmarking and to see what we should do differently or where best to focus our efforts. ”

Andrew, County Down, Northern Ireland, Farm Resilience Programme participant

The 2024/25 programme built on this success for a final year, recruiting participating groups throughout Scotland (in the Cairngorms and Lanarkshire), Wales (in Llanwrst and Monmouthshire) and Northern Ireland (in Ballyclare and Armagh).

In Scotland, we were awarded funding from the Scottish Government Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF) to deliver the Farm Resilience Programme at four locations across Scotland until March 2025.



“It takes a lot of courage to make changes on your farm, and so it takes a push to make those changes to do something different to your business. I would recommend to anybody and everybody to take part in the Farm Resilience Programme.”

Simon, Orkney, Farm Resilience Programme participant

We also increased the scale and reach of the programme by working to deliver it through private and institutional estates. The 2023 programme to support up to 58 National Trust tenants across four estates drew to a close in 2024. The programme supported 17 tenants across three estates in Eskdale, Carmarthenshire, and Buscott and Coleshill.



Savings in Soil

124 farmers in Herefordshire, Northumberland, Norfolk, Clywd, Devon and Cumbria were delivered our Savings in Soil programme organised by us.

The workshop-based programme, supported by McDonald's UK & Ireland, looks at practical ways to manage and improve soil health and grassland to maximise agricultural efficiency. The sessions also introduce ideas linked to regenerative agriculture, such as the role of herbal leys, reduced movement and disturbance, and carbon sequestration opportunities. The workshops were open to everyone in the family or farm business and included free laboratory soil testing for each farm.

120 family farms across England and Wales were supported by the programme during 2024/25 to better understand their soil health and how healthy soil can benefit both the environment and the resilience of their business.

>78% of attending farmers were making changes to their soil management as a result of the workshop, impacting thousands of hectares of UK farmland.

Thanks to renewed support from McDonald's, which we announced in March 2025 at an event held at Somerset House, we can continue to provide free Savings in Soil workshops for British farmers during 2025/26.



New funding for the Saving in Soils programme is announced at Somerset House, March 2025



Biodiversity on farms

Following the success of the biodiversity workshop held in February 2024, supported by Barbour, we ran a further workshop for 24 livestock farmers in Lancashire in September 2024, supported by The Royal Warrant Holders Association Charity Fund.



Farmers attend a Biodiversity workshop in Lancashire, September 2024

This workshop aimed to help farmers better understand the environmental opportunities available to them and the practical actions that they could take to boost biodiversity on their farms, while still benefitting their farm business. Informed by feedback from the farmers we work with, the programme focuses on promoting productive agriculture that is in harmony with nature.

24 farm businesses signed up to the workshop and 44 farmers attended.



People's Postcode Lottery funding

The long-term future of all farming businesses relies on a healthy environment and that's why we help family farms adopt methods to work in harmony with nature. We want to help farmers to make their farms more nature-friendly, while encouraging productive agriculture. We do this by helping farmers understand and unlock the natural resources already available on their farms.

Farming in harmony with nature also creates more resilient farm businesses, which are less exposed to rising input costs as well as extreme weather. Over the last year, we have accelerated the scale and reach of this work.

In March 2024 we were successful in our application to receive £900,000 over three years from the People's Postcode Lottery's Postcode Earth Trust. This is enabling us to develop our environmental programmes, building upon what we are already doing and testing new ideas and formats for inclusion in our future farming programme.

We accelerated the scale and reach of our Carbon Clarity programme thanks to new funding from The People's Postcode Lottery, which allowed us to provide support to 245 farm businesses. Over the course of the year, we held workshops in Scotland, Wales and England, on Orkney, Anglesey, and Dartmoor.



Farmers attend a Carbon Clarity workshop in Anglesey, January 2025

These workshops, which include a carbon audit, allow farmers to benchmark their carbon footprint against the industry standard to help their business set realistic goals to reduce carbon emissions. We've had excellent feedback from these workshops.

In June 2024 we sponsored the Da Byw regenerative livestock conference in North Wales, and in October we were exhibitors at the Norfolk Landscapes Conference and Exhibition, where we met new contacts and raised awareness of the RCF's work.

For the second year of this funding, we have plans to expand into new areas with a tree planting initiative in Aberdeenshire and workshops on water management in Norfolk taking place in 2025.

We made three grants totalling £87,150 to three cluster groups across the year for bespoke projects. The North Highland Initiative and the Orton Fells Farm Cluster are undertaking year-long baselining projects with the Soil Association Exchange, which will help participating farmers to gain a better understanding of how to monitor their farm’s impact on the surrounding environment and help them feel more in control of their data in supply chain interactions. In Shropshire, the Upper Onny Farmers Group is working on establishing itself as a farmer-led cluster and improving its communications to work with local communities and landowners to create a healthy natural environment in the Shropshire Hills.

Rural Communities

Alongside our work with farming families, we have accelerated the reach and impact of our work with rural communities. Our aim is to power up, not prop up those who live and work in the countryside.

Our aim is to combine local knowledge and leadership with our funding and support, so that rural communities can define, design and develop their own solutions to the challenges they face. We want to create a more resilient and sustainable future for the countryside.

We aren’t about quick fixes. Every move we make is with the future in mind, and we encourage rural communities and organisations to do the same. By setting a clear vision for their community, they can identify the core challenges they face. And, with our funding and guidance, they can set up their own solutions.

This year we funded a raft of new rural community projects and our hope is that every project we fund goes from strength to strength, taking on a life of its own and generating new opportunities for the community, long into the future.

The number of organisations we funded during 2024/25 were:



Summary of 2024/25 funding

Funding awarded	Number of organisations
2024 Cumbria-focused programme	13
2024 Northumberland-focused programme	3
2024 Farm support groups	9
2025 Healthcare for farmers	4
Total	29

New funding

In January 2025, we launched a new UK-wide grant programme for rural community organisations. Community-led organisations were able to apply for a grant of up to £25,000, paid over a period of 24 months. We also streamlined our application process to make it easier for organisations to apply.

We received over 200 applications for funding from across the UK and successful applicants for this funding will be announced in the summer of 2025.

Our work with The National Lottery Community Fund

During 2024/25, we accelerated the scale of our rural community funding, thanks to a partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund. In February 2024, we announced £387,000 of funding for rural community organisations in Cumbria and Northumberland.

More details on this place-based funding are set out in the next section of the report.

Our work with The Health Lottery Foundation

We were selected to apply to The Health Lottery Foundation through a closed grant for £20,000 of funding. This funding is being used for a programme called 'Checking the Pressure of Farming Life'.



Checking the Pressure of Farming Life programme

This programme will deliver health care to farmers in partnership with four local Farm Support Groups which understand and are embedded in farming communities in their local area. These groups are Field Nurse, Lincolnshire Rural Support Network (LRSN), Monmouthshire Rural Support Centre (MRSC), Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RSABI)

Health services will be offered to farmers at places they go to frequently and where they feel comfortable – agricultural shows and livestock markets. Via a station or hub at each location, farmers can meet a nurse who will deliver services according to local needs and resources, such as health screenings, blood pressure tests, quick referrals to GPs or specialist organisations, cholesterol tests, and nutrition, fitness and wellbeing advice.

Our work with Farm Support Groups

In October 2024, we announced £170,000 of new support for Farm Support Groups across the UK to build their local capacity and extend their activities into harder-to-reach communities.

More details on this place-based funding are set out in the next section of the report.



Strategic pillar 2:

How we have developed our locally place-based packages of help via trusted partners

Our place-based approach: supporting rural communities in Cumbria and Northumberland

The RCF's new county-based programme, in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, opened for expressions of interest on 1 August 2024. This was our first programme to take a place-based approach, and it specifically targeted rural organisations in Cumbria and Northumberland which had the potential to 'power up, not prop up' their communities. Organisations were able to apply for up to £30,000 over a period of 18 months to deliver activities along the themes of:

- Powering up rural communities
- Increasing environmental sustainability.

The programme was aimed at supporting projects that:

1. Help provide financial benefits to the locality.
2. Build a stronger sense of community and connectedness.
3. Benefit the local environment, creating positive benefits for the community.
4. Create an innovative and replicable approach addressing an unmet need within the rural area.

We also trialled a new two-stage application process, designed to reduce workload for applicants and the RCF team. To apply, organisations sent a short video and completed a simple 'Expression of Interest' form, highlighting why their idea was needed in the local area, how it would help the community, why it was innovative, and their long-term ambition.

We held launch events in July 2024 at The Sill in Northumberland and The Mardale Inn (a previous recipient of funding from the RCF) in Cumbria to formally announce the funding. Attendees at the launch represented infrastructure organisations and key contacts in the counties working with community organisations.

Alongside encouraging all attendees to promote the new funding with their networks, we aimed to bring together organisations working in each county to build relationships and facilitate networking. Feedback was positive, with 97% of attendees reporting they met new contacts and 90% of attendees reporting they were more aware of other local stakeholders working in the county.

We also held two webinars for prospective applicants in each county on 7 August, with 50 registrations.



Representatives from 13 Cumbrian rural community organisations come together to celebrate their new funding at the Rheged Centre in Cumbria, February 2025



In February 2025, we announced the Cumbrian funding recipients at an event at the Rheged centre, a venue in the Lake District. We provided funding for 13 rural community organisations:

- [Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre](#)
- [Another Way](#)
- [Alston Moor Partnership Ltd](#)
- [Barton and Pooley Bridge Community Fund](#)
- [Bothel Village Hall](#)
- [Carlisle Radio FM Limited](#)
- [Grange over Sands Foodshare](#)
- [Grizedale Arts](#)
- [Orton Fells Farm Cluster CIC](#)
- [Skelton Toppin Memorial Hall](#)
- [VistaVeg Ltd](#)
- [Watchtree Nature Reserve Ltd](#)
- [West Lakeland Farmer Led Nature Recovery CIC](#)

“ This award will help us to continue and expand our impactful work across Cumbria supporting hundreds of young people to take action for climate and nature, and improving their connectivity and wellbeing. We have found that often rural communities are left out of national opportunities for development or climate action, making this award even more salient and important for local young people. ”

Amy, Founder and CEO of Another Way

“ We have been trying for so long to find a way to support the many organisations on Alston Moor. The work on our local community plan made very clear, even pre-Covid, that many of the groups that provide a wide range of activities and support for social needs on Alston Moor are struggling to attract more members and to maintain and develop their services. This wonderful award will enable us to help these groups to thrive and create a vibrant community that will make a real difference to the population of Alston Moor. ”

Sonia, Chair of Alston Moor Partnership



“ This award means we can establish a new market garden in the small rural community of Dentdale & Sedbergh to provide year-round, seasonal vegetables and fruit to local people and businesses there through our Home Grown Here veg box scheme. Importantly, the project will also provide bespoke, on-the-job training for new-entrant growers keen to learn how they can set-up similar small-scale market gardens from scratch back in their own communities. This project has the potential to impact people’s lives and livelihoods in a really positive way. ”

The VistaVeg team with local Cumbrian produce from their market garden



Northumberland funding

In March 2025, we announced the Northumberland funding recipients at an event at Lesbury Community Shop, a village shop that is owned and run by local residents and which provides other community services too. We provided funding for three rural community organisations in Northumberland:



Lesbury Community Shop in Northumberland is community-owned and run, March 2025

- [Lesbury Community Shop Ltd](#)
- [The Nurture Project CIC](#)
- [Rural Design Centre Ltd](#)

“Receiving this funding from the Royal Countryside Fund will allow us to co-design and trial a brand new approach to small business support in Bellingham and surrounding communities, with direct input from the local business community. By adopting a place-led approach to business support, we hope we can design services that better serve the needs of local business owners, powering up new and existing businesses in Bellingham and boosting the local economy.”

Lesbury Community Shop in Northumberland is community-owned and run



“ This award will enable The Nurture Project CIC to work together with local community groups to develop 'Bridging people through nature' – a project to enhance community cohesion through connecting with nature. People who struggle to garden will have opportunities to connect with nature and contribute to our community at an accessible plant nursery, specialising in nature friendly plants propagated from The Nurture Community Garden, which will supply a plant and produce stall, as well as planters around the village on our new Bee Friendly walk route. The stall will raise funds for the Village Gardeners and encourage nature friendly planting in private gardens, reducing the need to travel further afield for plants, whilst also raising awareness of nature friendly gardening. ”

Siobhan, Director of The Nurture Project CIC

Alongside the funding, we launched a new project in early 2025 to build the capacity of rural community organisations in Northumberland, particularly in harder-to-reach areas, following feedback from applicants for our Northumberland place-based funding. The project is also funded in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund.

This capacity-building project is being delivered by working with Rural Catalyst – a local partner with a strong track record of delivering change. Rural Catalyst is a partnership between [Community Action Northumberland \(CAN\)](#), the [National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise \(NICRE\)](#) and the [Rural Design Centre](#).

The project is being delivered in three phases through 2025:

1. The first phase focuses on understanding the existing landscape of community organisations in Northumberland and the challenges they face, via a mapping and survey process.
2. The second phase involves engaging with selected local organisations to give them the support they need and build their capacity, via one-to-one advice and mentoring, signposting to existing training and resources, and group sessions.
3. The final phase helps the organisations to develop sustainable funding solutions to deliver on their potential.



The Confident Rural Communities Network

The Confident Rural Communities Network brings together over 300 rural community organisations who have benefited from The Royal Countryside Fund's grant programme.

In April 2024, we sent out the first edition of our Confident Rural Communities Network newsletter, which included a summary from our inaugural annual conference, announcement of the recipients of our latest round of grants and some highlights from recent project visits by the team.

We now have 70 organisations officially registered with the Confident Rural Communities (CRC) Network and are developing the 'network area' on our website, specifically for grant recipients past and present to access resources, an organisation directory alongside blogs and case studies.

In the summer of 2024, we began hosting our first joint online seminars between the Farm Support Group Initiative and Confident Rural Communities Network, where organisations have the opportunity to network with others working in their region, to promote knowledge exchange and learning across both Farm Support Groups and rural community projects. Since then, we've run five joint seminars, covering topics, including governance requirements, GDPR, safeguarding and emergency resilience.

“ I think the network is a really positive initiative...there is already some learning emerging for me from the main group on RCF sustainability grant development, carbon framework, Farm Resilience Programme and the breakout group yesterday on SSE renewable energy grants in the north of Scotland...very useful! Thanks to all the team for all your efforts on the network development and including us in your initiative at Skipton, it was really appreciated...our best funder experience to date in my opinion! ”

RCF funding recipient

We've continued to grow the reach of our work with rural communities and during 2024/25 we met with several community foundations across the UK to promote the work of the RCF and discuss potential opportunities for future collaboration. These include meetings in Kent, Devon, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, Somerset and Cumbria, Lancashire, Wales and Northamptonshire.

In October 2024, we also attended the UK Community Foundations Conference and a new 'Rural Philanthropy' steering group, established to help shape and define the field of Rural Philanthropy in the UK.

Since then, we attended the Welsh Funders' forum and Cumbria Funders' Forum, with the aim of convening with other funders to connect, contribute and work collectively.

The RCF is also proud to be a rural partner of the National Emergencies Trust, and our role is to assist in the delivery of support for rural communities in the event of an emergency. We were invited by the National Emergencies Trust to a partnership event in Hertfordshire which was very beneficial.



The Farm Support Groups Initiative



In October 2024, we announced £170,000 of new support for nine Farm Support Groups across the UK to build their local capacity. These trusted partners, which are embedded in the communities which they serve, form part of the RCF's Farm Support Groups Initiative, which is supported by Waitrose & Partners and the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust.

This will be the last of our three-year commitment to these organisations to cover core costs to ensure they can continue to deliver vital ongoing services to farmers.

As part of the 2024/25 funding, the following seven Farm Support Groups each received £20,000:

- Herefordshire Rural Hub
- Dartmoor Hill Farm Project
- Exmoor Hill Farming Network
- Farm Cornwall
- The Farmer Network
- The Farming Life Centre
- Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services Ltd (UTASS)

Rural Support in Northern Ireland and RSABI in Scotland also each received £15,000.

During 2024/25 we also welcomed GP Toolkit, Chelmsford Agricultural Chaplaincy and Salisbury Farmer Welfare Project into the Farm Support Groups Initiative, taking the total to

32 total
memberships

We continue to provide monthly seminars for these groups and during 2024/25 we provided over 48 hours of online seminars. These provide opportunities for the network to discuss pressing issues, local solutions, and share ideas.

We also distributed twice-monthly email newsletters, which include updates from the RCF as well as government and other funding opportunities, and sharing news and queries from within the network.



Farm Support Groups Conference



Farm Support Groups Conference, The Rheged Centre, February 2025

In February 2025, we held our sixth annual Farm Support Groups Conference, which brought together representatives from 23 Farm Support Groups, as well as a host of interesting speakers. The event was held at the Rheged centre in Cumbria, thanks to the generous support of the Westmorland Family, and included a tour of the Tebay Services farm shop and butchery.

Sessions over the two days covered topics such as our ongoing Farm Support Groups mapping project (more details below); a 'fireside chat' with RCF trustees Allan Wilkinson and Chris Sparrow, discussing the challenges and opportunities in farming; an introduction to Regenified, a verification and product certification programme that champions regenerative agriculture; and a 'round the kitchen table' session with guest speakers about succession planning and future-proofing family farm businesses.

“ Thank you for a couple of days in Cumbria for this year's Farm Support Groups Conference. It's good to share experiences and ideas – but also important for us to look out for each other, so we can continue to provide the support we do. It's quite a unique mix but we can all draw on common ground. ”

Speakers at the RCF's 2025 Farm Support Group conference which brought together representatives from 23 Farm Support Groups from across the UK at the Rheged Centre in Cumbria, February 2025



Farm Support Groups mapping project

As part of our new strategy, we are committed to continuing and expanding our work with Farm Support Groups across the UK. To enable us to do so, we are reviewing the existing network to better understand the status of each group, what further support is required and where there are geographic gaps in the network.

This data gathering will be essential in the development of the RCF's support for Farm Support Groups. The research will also map the RCF's work among the UK's the farming and rural communities to aid our strategic planning.

The research got under way in 2024 and will be completed in two stages: the first will be a review of the current Farm Support Group Initiative members, which will be displayed on a digitised map on our website.

The second stage will involve conducting additional research into the support available via existing or emerging Farm Support Groups as well as what is required by farm businesses across the UK. The results will be invaluable in showing the collective impact of Farm Support Groups, raising the profile of the work they do, and we hope, in attracting further funding.

As part of this work, funded by the NFU Mutual, we will also survey stakeholders to understand what further support is available via existing/emerging groups. We presented an update on this work at our Farm Support Groups Conference in February 2025.

Farm clusters

Through our funding from the People's Postcode Lottery, during 2024/25 we worked on a research project to better understand the clusters of farms we work with across the UK. So far this has involved interviewing the coordinator of each cluster and a participating farmer, covering topics such as why they joined the cluster, what the main benefits are, what issues they face, advice they would give on setting up a new cluster.

The funding from the People's Postcode Lottery has also allowed us to experiment with a new way of working, focussed on farm clusters. This has been a successful approach so far and we are currently working on four projects with clusters in Shropshire, Cumbria, Northumberland and the North Highlands.

Coupled with the research, we hope that building our connections with clusters across the UK will help us deliver more tailored, place-based support to farmers in both our environmental and farming programmes.



Strategic pillar 3:

How we have built a platform for growth and longevity for The Royal Countryside Fund

Fundraising

We ended the 2024/25 financial year with solid performance in all three areas of fundraising: corporate partnerships, trust & foundations, and philanthropy. This performance when combined with our grants from DEFRA and the Scottish Government (which lie outside our fundraising activity) have led us to fulfil our budgeted funding for the financial year.

Corporate partnerships

During the year several of our corporate partners renewed their support for our charitable activities.

Our corporate partners remained closely connected with both our farming and grants programmes, and during the year the RCF was included in a number of high-profile features in our partners' marketing channels. These included annual sustainability reports, indicating the centrality of the charity within each of these businesses' CSR strategies, as well as on-pack promotions, which have helped us to promote the Friends of the Countryside scheme and expand our brand reach to larger customer bases.

We are indebted to our corporate partners for their commitment to support programmes underpinning our strategic direction. Our thanks go to all organisations involved with the RCF.

Organisation Name	
Aldi UK	Gregory Distribution
Barbour	Lloyds Banking Group
Berry Bros. & Rudd	Marks & Spencer
Booths	McDonald's UK & Ireland
Caravan and Motorhome Club	Morrisons
Castell Howell	Musto
Clarence Court	NFU Mutual
Denhay	Saputo Dairy UK
Dovecote Park	Waitrose & Partners



Trusts & foundations

We saw strong growth in our fundraising from trusts and foundations during the year. The table below shows funding secured during the financial year.

Funder	Grant
King Charles III Charitable Fund (formerly Duchy Organics contribution)	£200,000
The National Lottery Community Fund	£360,000
NFU Mutual Charitable Trust	£75,000
People's Postcode Lottery	£300,000
Sir John Sumner's Trust	£800
Scott (Eredine) Charitable Trust	£5,000
Inman Charity	£2,500
Dickinson Family Charitable Trust	£3,000
Total received	£946,100

We continued to work closely with our existing funders, in-line with our newly created stewardship plan. As part of this, all of our funders receive a copy of this annual trustees' report and financial statements as well as other publications which are either directly related to their funding or RCF-wide publications.

Philanthropy

In 2024/25, we saw encouraging growth in donor engagement and income, particularly through repeat giving and growth of our Friends of the Countryside giving programme. Our retention rate for donors remained high, with many repeat donations being made at the same levels or higher. Much of this can be attributed to our continued work in improving communications and promotion of the charity through social media, newsletters, improved presence at programme workshops and working with our partners. We also received our first ever legacy gift, which was an important milestone for our individual giving.

Events have also been instrumental in both income generation and improving our relationships with donors and partners. Our annual Journal launch in November 2024 raised nearly £2,000, thanks to generous support and prize donations from Fortnum & Mason, The Ritz, The Goring, Barbour, Musto and Berry Bros. & Rudd.

In February 2025, the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, Lady Pippa Dannatt, hosted a dinner in aid of the RCF, which resulted in a donation from the John Innes Foundation, a charity partnership with Ben Burgess at the Royal Norfolk Show and a further pledge from a major donor.

In March, the Earl and Countess of Moray hosted a lunch at Darnaway Castle. The Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire, Sandy Manson, was also in attendance. We would like to thank the Earl and Countess of Moray for their support and for hosting the event which helped to build new connections with local organisations, which have offered to support our grant giving and farming programmes.

We held a lunch in Dorset, kindly hosted by RCF trustees Kate Rock and Rob Collins, which enabled new connections to be made in the county, which was particularly important as this is not an area where we've historically had a lot of activity. We were delighted that HM Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Michael Dooley also attended and gave the concluding remarks.



Additional community fundraising, such as harvest collections and a film screening of *Six Inches of Soil*, also contributed to a diverse income stream in 2024/25. These activities reflect the strength of our existing support relationships as well as our growing ability to reach new audiences through strategic engagement and stewardship.

Press and media

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we secured 715 pieces of press coverage with a total reach of 641 million and a total publicity value of £539 million.

This coverage included 75 mentions of the charity on television, 20 mentions on the radio and 120 in newspapers. We also featured heavily in farming media, online publications and local press.

Some of our top outlets included, *Farmers Guardian*, *Farmers Weekly*, *BBC Radio Cumbria*, *ITV Tyne Tees*, *The Scottish Farmer*, *The Mail*, *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*.

Highlights from this press coverage included:

- Coverage of our new Strategy in *The Daily Telegraph*, available to read [here](#).
- Promotion of our new funding in Northumberland and Cumbria with a large amount of regional press coverage, including mentions on *ITV Tyne Tees* and a seven-minute radio interview with *BBC Radio Cumbria*.
- An interview with RCF ambassador Alan Titchmarsh on *ITV1*.
- Coverage of one of our grant recipients, *Blackhall Mill Community Association*, on *BBC Look North*.
- Promotion of our *Farm for the Future* programme in a number of key geographical areas to push sign-ups. We generated strong regional coverage, including an interview on a farming programme on *BBC Lincolnshire*.
- Announcing our latest *Farm Support Groups* strategic grants, with wide coverage in a range of relevant farming and local titles, including *BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester*.

Events

The events we organise and attend play an important role in boosting the profile of the charity, gathering, energising and celebrating our supporters (old and new), as well as highlighting the incredible work of our grant recipients, delivery partners, *Farm Support Groups*, and all the communities we work with.

The team attended a large number of events during 2024/25, with a particular focus on our new county-based approach. We were very grateful to attend several events to raise awareness and support for the charity. These included: the 2024 Lord Lieutenant's conference in Lancashire, and fundraising events in Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, Dorset and Moray.



Team members also attended the Waitrose farming conference at the Leckford Estate, where Waitrose launched its Farming for Nature strategy.

At our strategy launch at Fortnum & Mason, in partnership with Country Life, 80 guests joined us to hear about our plans for the next four years. Country Life followed up the event with a two-page photospread and a full-page advert to promote Friends of the Countryside featured in the magazine in June 2024.



The RCF launches its New Strategic Plan at Fortnum & Mason, April 2024

Ambassadors

We were delighted to have Alan Titchmarsh feature in the annual Journal which we launched in November 2024, and to have Liz Earle and Phil Vickery join us for the Journal launch.

Alan Titchmarsh also kindly joined us at Buckingham Palace where His Majesty The King, Royal Founding Patron of The Royal Countryside Fund, hosted a reception in March 2025 to celebrate our 15th anniversary.

Publications

As well as compiling and publishing our largest ever edition of our annual Journal, we have also been working on a number of other key publications.

In January, we produced a workbook for farmers who have participated in our Farm for the Future programme. The workbook takes farmers through ten steps to a more sustainable and resilient farm business, with the help of practical activities throughout, focused on topics such as understanding their farm structure, investing in business skills and tackling barriers to improving their farm's environment.

In March 2025, we completed our third publication focused on soil health, as part of the Savings in Soil programme, funded by McDonald's UK and Ireland. This 30-page booklet combines an overview of the programme's main learning points, with a practical guide to soil health for farmers. As well as emphasising the environmental case for improving soil health, the booklet also looks at how investing in soil can improve the resilience and longevity of a farm business, while also helping farmers save money in the short-term. The publication is available for [free online](#).



The RCF's Savings in Soil publication is a practical guide to soil health for farmers



Newsletter

In 2024/25 we sent out 33 newsletters, giving updates on our work and promoting our programmes. We have seen a consistent open and click rate for our newsletter at 45.6% and 3.9% respectively. This is above the industry average of 22.1% and 2.7%.

To achieve this, we have used month-on-month testing to tailor the newsletter to our readership to ensure it is both engaging and of value. This too has contributed to our improved website traffic.

Social media

In 2024/25, we continued to use our social media channels to broaden and deepen our support base, promote our work and build awareness.

During this period our Instagram content reached 77,000 viewers. Some of our most-viewed content was around our Savings in Soil programme, our partnership with Clarence Court, and our participation in #farm24 – an online awareness campaign which celebrates British farming.

Our content on Facebook reached an audience of 715,000 viewers during this period. Some of our most viewed content was our attendance at an event at Buckingham Palace, promotion of our Farm for the Future programme, and our Farm Support Groups conference.

On LinkedIn, we generated over 27,000 impressions and some of our most viewed content included posts about our new funding opportunities, our attendance at an event at Buckingham Palace, and our team's visits to agricultural shows.

Brand strategy

In 2024 we updated our brand strategy and reviewed the way we talk about ourselves as a charity to inform all of our future communications activity. To do this, we developed a new brand story and messaging framework, underpinned by data on the impact of our work.

We undertook this work to make our communications more accessible. We also want to increase our brand recognition, continue to build our charity's reputation, and better target our messages.

As part of this new strategy, we began planning for our 15th anniversary campaign in 2025 and we began to work on updating our website.

Website

In 2024/25 we had over 25,000 active users of our website and 78,000 views.

We continued to develop online network areas for Confident Rural Communities, Farm Resilience Network and Farm Support Groups. These new and updated areas aim to increase long-term engagement with us and in the case of the Confident Rural Communities network, give members a platform to connect with other rural community organisations across the UK to share knowledge and ideas.

We began refreshing the main website. The aim of this it to not only improve navigation, given the volume of programmes we now run, but also to update it so that the language is more accessible and engaging, and to make our corporate partnerships and news stories more visible.

Videography

We introduced a new emphasis on high-quality videography and photography to re-focus our communications on to the human impact of our programmes and highlight the individual stories of the people and communities we work with.

In November 2024, we organised filming at an event outside Inverness run by one of our rural community grant recipients, Countryside Learning Scotland. From this footage we created a case study video, which we shared on social media and on our website, as well as a short clip outlining our new UK-wide grant programme.

The videos have now achieved thousands of views on social media and we had 200 applications for our new funding programme from across the UK, which is which is significantly higher than for previous funding rounds.



Watch a [short film](#)

about how our funding has supported the work of **Countryside Learning Scotland** to increase career awareness and opportunities for young people.

At our Farm Support Groups Conference in February 2025, we held a 'round the kitchen table' session, showing a family navigating succession, and brought in expert speakers. This session was filmed and shared by us as a resource for our programme delivery partners.

We also produced a short film about soil health, funded by McDonald's UK & Ireland, which complements the booklet mentioned above. The film looked at our Savings in Soil programme, showcasing our work with farmers across the UK and hopefully encouraging more farmers to invest in their soil health. The film was aired at our event at Somerset House in March 2025 and has also received a very positive reception on our website and social media.



Filming our soil health film with farmers in Norfolk, February 2025



Watch a [short film](#)

about how we've supported farmers with our **Savings in Soil programme**



Corporate membership scheme

Our new corporate membership scheme brings together businesses with a deep connection to rural Britain, giving them an entry route to supporting The Royal Countryside Fund over a period of three years, with a number of benefits, including membership-exclusive digital logo licensing, networking events, tailored communications support and more.

Through this scheme, we are creating a network of supporters to become a part of our vision of a thriving countryside – a living landscape of working family farms and prosperous rural life. Our first two corporate members signed up during 2024/25 and we were delighted to welcome Castell Howell and Dovecote Park.



Strategic pillar 4:

How we have made the RCF the best we can be by unlocking our potential

Governance

During 2024/25 we carried out the first comprehensive review of our board and committee structure since disembarkation from the King Charles III Charitable Fund. We also reshaped our advisory groups. The nominations committee oversaw this programme of work and in doing so met four times during the year. Our aim was to reduce the frequency of board meetings and to make use of the delegated authority of each committee to progress the work of the RCF between board meetings. We reviewed and revised the terms of reference, composition and purpose of all the committees and the advisory groups to enable a more effective governance structure for the RCF.

In March 2025, the board approved revised terms of reference and composition for all board committees and advisory group. As a result of the review, we were able to reduce the number of annual board meetings held in each future year from four to three. We have also created a Finance & Resources Committee, as well as a trustee role with extensive financial experience. The changes we made better reflect the requirements of our new strategic plan as well as make more effective use of trustees' and committee members' time. Further details on the committees and business conducted during the year is available on page 47.

We also created a further trustee role. This role is for one three-year term of office and is open to an individual with first-hand experience of our Farm Resilience Programme. Recruitment starts in the summer of 2025. Our board felt this was an important additional trustee role given the new strategic plan and the development of our new farming programme.

These developments are being consolidated in our first comprehensive governance handbook to be available later in 2025, once the new positions are filled.

Staff team

2024/25 saw the team grow in size and experience. Four new staff posts were created to augment our resource for delivering our new strategic plan. These roles were in environmental, working environmental programmes, communications, events and office management. Other roles developed, and three team members were promoted within the organisation.

Staff turnover and retention both significantly improved during the year. This demonstrates our commitment to offering ongoing training and support. While a hybrid working framework is in place, individual office presence has increased over the year with the team meeting together in person at least once a month. Team meetings alternate between focusing on an external speaker and internal matters.

The team also met twice to look at and develop the new RCF Impact Framework as well as undertaking training in Natural Capital, led by trustee Charlotte Weston and her team at EY.

All team members have had the opportunity to spend a day at FarmEd, a farming and food education organisation, to gain a deeper understanding of the UK farming landscape and current trends. Each team member attends at least one agricultural show over the summer period. In addition, the whole team attended the Journal launch in November.



The RCF team learn about food production at FarmEd in Oxfordshire, July 2024

Our attendance at agricultural shows across all four nations, enables us to meet with delivery partners, corporate partners, Farm Support Groups, local farmers and community groups, and supporters from all over the UK. In 2024/25 we visited:

- The Balmoral Show
- The Northumberland County Show
- The Royal Cornwall show
- Da Byw
- The Royal Highland Show
- The Royal Norfolk Show
- Groundswell Regenerative Agricultural Festival
- The Great Yorkshire Show
- The Royal Welsh Show
- The Westmorland Show

All team members have completed Performance Development Reviews and training needs will be addressed from April 2025.



The RCF team at Buckingham Palace, March 2025

Strategic pillar 5:

How we have ensured that we monitor, evaluate, and learn (MEL) from all aspects of our work

Impact framework

We continued to work closely with an external consultant to finalise a charity-wide impact framework, alongside a focused rural communities and farming programme framework.

These frameworks are accompanied by a set of indicators and learning questions, and a data collection methodology which clearly aligns with the overarching framework. This is the culmination of a review of all previous RCF impact measurement, which considered the key indicators we wish to report on and how these directly align with the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

The staff team were involved in the development of the framework and indicators and have received training on the data collection methodology and reporting.

This impact framework has been developed to ensure we ask the right questions and collect the right data to monitor, evaluate and learn from our work. This framework is as follows:



Overarching strategy 2025–2028

The RCF envisions a thriving countryside—a living landscape of working family farms and prosperous rural life, all connected by strong relationships. These connections, in turn, shape vibrant, enterprising communities.

1.

Working together to create a thriving countryside

The RCF's programmes strengthen rural fabric - improving community resourcefulness and resilience in the face of the social, economic and environmental challenges impacting the countryside.

The RCF supports local communities to develop self-sustaining community-led solutions, which aim to leave a positive legacy for future generations.

2.

Testing, learning and sharing an evidence base for best-practice

Guided by local expertise and on-the-ground knowledge, the RCF delivers, tests, and learns.

The RCF produces actionable insights that are used to improve targeting of support and effectiveness of program design, and are shared across network

3.

Building brand recognition and visibility to achieve growth

The RCF ensures its sustainability by strengthening brand reputation for farming and rural community work as an effective and trusted charity partner.

The RCF will expand and diversify partnerships and funding streams; building enduring relationships with supporters while communicating its role in supporting community-led change.



Overarching strategy 2025–2028: Overview

	<div>1.</div> <div>Working together to create a thriving countryside</div>	<div>2.</div> <div>Testing, learning and sharing an evidence base for best-practice</div>	<div>3.</div> <div>Building brand recognition and visibility to achieve growth</div>
Short term	The RCF implements place-based support to help communities address local issues collaboratively, establishing early evidence of improved resourcefulness and cooperation.	The RCF builds a robust evidence base to foster a shared understanding of rural challenges, test innovative approaches, and improve programme design and delivery.	The RCF clarifies its identity and cultivates new partnerships, leveraging impact stories to align with key audiences and secure initial support.
Medium term	Through multiple interventions in each locality and stronger local leadership, rural communities deepen partnerships and collectively advance practical solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges.	Insights from “test and learn” are systematically integrated into programme refinements, while expanded networks facilitate deeper collaboration among communities, funders, and policymakers.	The RCF extends and diversifies its funding base and reinforces its reputation as a trusted, high-impact charity in rural development.
Long term	Rural communities become more self-sustaining—maintaining forward-thinking initiatives, demonstrating enhanced resilience, and thriving beyond the RCF’s direct involvement.	Evidence-driven practice is embedded across RCF’s work, where knowledge and best practice is shared to create high-impact solutions to rural challenges.	The RCF achieves widespread recognition as a leading voice in rural community-led change, ensuring sustainable revenue and influence.



Supporting Rural Communities 2025–2028

Supporting rural communities to increase resilience, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness in the face of economic, social and environmental challenges – to create a thriving rural countryside.

1.

Creating prosperous and financially stable rural communities

Projects funded by the RCF stimulate local economic activity (i.e. local skills, marketplaces, innovations to prompt new business to serve rural needs).

The countryside becomes more vibrant and prosperous, incentivising people to stay and do business.

2.

Building stronger, connected, and resilient rural communities

The RCF funds partners who are working to foster community spirit in rural areas, and provides opportunities for partner networking within and across rural communities.

Residents and community organisations feel a sense of ownership over and more connected to their rural locality as a result of the funded activities.

3.

Improving environmental sustainability and climate resilience in rural areas

The RCF funds partners who work with rural communities to develop solutions to achieve emergency preparedness and environmental sustainability in the face of climate change.

4.

Creating the conditions for change via funding, support and local network activation

The RCF strengthens collective action across rural communities nationwide by offering grants, tailored support, and opportunities for networking—ultimately laying the groundwork for meaningful, community-led transformation in rural areas.



Supporting Rural Communities 2025–2028: Overview

	1. Creating prosperous and financially stable rural communities	2. Building stronger, connected, and resilient rural communities	3. Improving environmental sustainability and climate resilience in rural areas	4. Creating the conditions for change via funding, support & network activation
Short term	RCF-funded projects stimulate local economic activity, laying the groundwork for growth and skill development	Local organisations are brought together to explore shared challenges, laying the groundwork for community-based solutions	Groups identify environmental vulnerabilities and build initial action plans, tackling local sustainability challenges.	Networking events connect organisations to share ideas, sparking local collaboration and joint problem-solving.
Medium term	Local organisations enhance service provision, build community assets and opportunities, and share successful community-led solutions	Community organisations develop collaborative solutions and involve local residents in shaping and owning the solutions, strengthening community ties	Local groups and residents refine and implement resilience plans and co-create inclusive, practical environmental initiatives.	Community capabilities expand as they partner, share ideas, and explore new opportunities through RCF-supported networks.
Long term	Localised solutions are developed and shared within the community and rural networks. Rural communities become more vibrant, creating greater incentive to stay, live, and do business	Community activities help create a sense of cohesion, where proactive residents and groups work together to build belonging and resilience.	Communities become better prepared for climate impacts, embed sustainable practices in the rural economy, and embrace custodianship of the local environment.	A culture of collaboration takes root, with rural organisations operating within robust support networks that drive widespread community-led transformation.



Farming Programmes 2025–2028

Improving the viability of the family farm business as a pathway to environmental transition and productive agriculture in harmony with nature.

1.

Building "foundations of capability" to improve resilience, productivity and profitability of family farm businesses

RCF programmes offer practical advice, skills and support to enhance the financial viability and productivity of farm businesses; reducing vulnerability to economic and policy conditions and encouraging engagement in future-facing and productive farming practice in harmony with nature.

2.

Enhancing connectedness of family farms to encourage future-facing and collaborative problem solving

The RCF strengthens local support networks and farmer clusters, building peer relationships that foster mutual support, reduce isolation, and encourage knowledge exchange.

These networks help farmers look beyond short-term challenges and plan collaboratively for the future.

3.

Making environmental farming practice accessible for family farms

The RCF provides hand-on, farmer-friendly training and individualised support on environmental topics.

This is to increase access to practical tools enabling farmers to adopt sustainable practices - without compromising their farm's financial viability.

4.

Delivering high-quality and evidence-based programmes to rural family farming businesses

Across all of the services and programmes offered to family farms, the RCF maintains quality of delivery, and reaches a wide diversity of farmers who benefit.

The RCF explores and tests different models/mechanisms to understand how best to support farmers improve productivity and nature friendly agricultural practice – providing evidence on what works and why.



Farming Programmes 2025–2028: Overview

	1. Building "foundations of capability" to improve productivity & profitability of family farms	2. Enhancing connectedness of family farms to encourage collaborative problem solving	3. Making environmental farming practice accessible for family farms	4. Delivering high- quality and evidence-based programmes to rural family farms
Short term	Farmers improve their financial literacy and create clear action plans to avoid crises, gaining the confidence to navigate risks and policy changes.	Local networking events bring farmers together, reducing isolation and improving wellbeing, while beginning to address shared challenges.	Farmers attend hands-on training that clearly shows the practical and financial benefits of environmental practices, learning to collect and interpret data on their farm's ecological health.	The RCF provides accessible, needs-based initiatives to a broad range of farming businesses, ensuring localised and consistent, high-quality support.
Medium term	Farm businesses enhance productivity and profitability, become more financially secure, and increasingly open to nature-friendly practices as they plan for the future.	Peer-to-peer exchange grows into self-governing networks where farmers routinely collaborate, share knowledge, and test new practices.	As more farmers trial new techniques and gain confidence in measuring environmental impact, they balance profit and sustainability in their planning decisions.	The programme extends to new regions while maintaining delivery standards, drawing in more hard-to-reach farmers and strengthening local capacities for farm support.
Long term	Resilient and adaptive farms operate more profitably, with farmers feeling in control of their long-term prospects and adopting productive methods that work in harmony with nature.	Lasting community networks persist without heavy external support, fostering a culture of shared problem-solving and resourcefulness among farming communities.	Family farms incorporate nature-friendly methods, see stable profits alongside ecological gains, and champion environmental leadership by sharing successes with peers.	The programme extends to new regions while maintaining delivery standards, drawing in more hard-to-reach farmers and strengthening local capacities for farm support.



Structure, governance and management

The Royal Countryside Fund (formerly The Prince's Countryside Fund) was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 30 April 2010 (company number 07240359) and received charitable status in England & Wales on 24 May 2010 (charity number 1136077) and in Scotland on 12 January 2018 (charity number SC048055). The RCF was established under a Memorandum of Association and is governed by its Articles of Association. It commenced trading on 1 July 2010, with an official launch held at St James's Palace, London on 22 July 2010. The RCF has a trading arm, Countryside Fund Trading Ltd, which raises funds for the charity via commercial participation agreements and specific trading activity.

The trustees are also directors under company law. All trustees gave of their time freely. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 15 of the accounts. Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and to register them with the Executive Director and, in accordance with the RCF's policy, withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises.

The board supports the principles of good governance set out in the Charity Governance Code. When recruiting trustees, the board aims to attract a diverse range of candidates with the skills required to deliver the RCF's charitable objects. All appointments are made on merit and in the best interests of the RCF.

Trustees serve a three-year term, which is renewable up to two times to a maximum of nine years. Exceptional circumstances may apply whereby a trustee remains on the board after serving for nine years. At the board meeting closest to the end of a trustee's three-year term of office, they must either retire from office or offer themselves for reappointment.

Remuneration of key management personnel is set in accordance with the RCF remuneration policy and is approved by the RCF trustees.

The trustees met on four occasions during the 12 months to consider among other things:

- Impact of projects, including the Farm Resilience Programme
- The Farm for the Future programme funded by Defra
- Fundraising and resource allocation
- Funding applications and new partnerships
- The first year of the new strategic plan for 2024-2028

The Chair and the Vice Chair of the board met regularly with the Executive Director outside of board meetings to discuss the activities of the RCF, as did the chairs of the sub-committees of the board.

The board has delegated specific responsibilities to its committees, each of which has detailed terms of reference and reports to the board, via the chair of each committee, who is a trustee.

The nominations committee, chaired by Allan Wilkinson, met four times to review the charity's governance arrangements, including the size, structure and composition of the board (including the skills, knowledge and experience of trustees), to review and finalise terms of reference for all board committees and groups. It makes recommendations on trustee appointments to the board.

The grants committee, chaired by Janet McCollum, did not meet during the year as the UK-wide grants programme was suspended during 2024/25 financial year.

The development committee, chaired by Rob Collins (who is the board's Vice Chair), met four times to review our fundraising income, and to identify and follow up new income generation opportunities. This committee also ensures that the RCF follows high standards of fundraising practice set out by the Fundraising Regulator and the Institute of Fundraising.

A Task and Finish Group chaired by Heather Hancock was established during 2024 to finalise and scope the development of the RCF's new farming programme. This group met three times during the year.

The Farming Advisory Group, which was established in 2021, and which is chaired by Allan Wilkinson, met once during 2024/25, enabling the charity to draw on a wide range of expertise for all of the RCF's farming activity

Trustee recruitment

Trustees are recruited from those with an interest in the aims of the RCF and, in particular, the ways in which business can provide support to rural and farming communities. As explained above, the nominations committee oversees this process and makes recommendations on appointments which are then offered for approval by the board.

New trustees undertake an induction programme, which includes guidance from the Charity Commission for England and Wales. They receive an induction pack containing key documents, briefings with the chairs of the board and committees, and the Executive Director. New trustees are encouraged to visit our programmes and support our events across each nation.

Training needs for new and existing trustees are assessed on an on-going basis to reflect the changing requirements in the sector.

Two new trustees were appointed for their first three-year term. On 21 May 2024 Christopher Sparrow, Recce Rural was appointed, and on 1 March 2025, Charlotte Weston, Director, Sustainability, Clients and Markets and Public Policy at EY was appointed.

Three trustees retired when their terms ended on 31 March 2025: Allan Wilkinson, Rob Collins and Meurig Raymond.

Financial results for the year

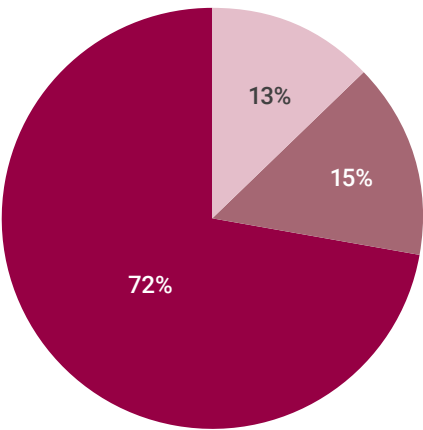
Incoming resources for the year were £4,107,487 (2024: £2,500,162) which included £6,250 coming via Gift Aid and in-kind support (2024: £12,500).

The income from the trading subsidiary comes from commercial partners and corporate sponsors who support the charity's brand on a wide range of products and materials.

The charity received £519,016 (2024: £633,857) directly in donations from companies and individuals.

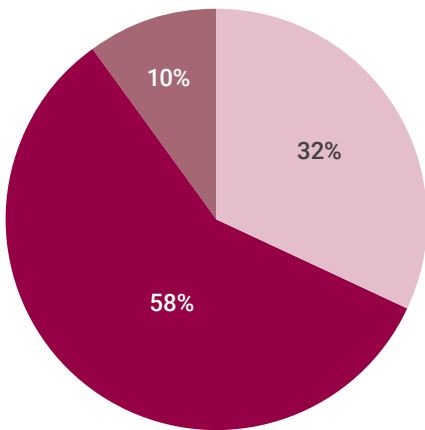
Other significant grants of over £250,000 were made by Defra and the People's Postcode Lottery.

RCF income 2024/25



- Grant & statutory funding
- Commercial trading
- Donations

RCF fund split 2024/25



- Unrestricted funds
- Designated funds
- Restricted funds

The net incoming resources for the year on unrestricted funds was a negative movement of £140,264 (2024: negative £81,175), designated funds had no movement during the year (2024: negative £237,049) and restricted funds showed a positive movement of £307,266 (2024: negative £27,374), giving an overall net positive movement on funds of £167,002 (2024: negative £345,598).

At the end of March 2025, the charity held unrestricted funds of £600,767, £101,684 of designated funds with a further £327,962 held as restricted funds (see note 12).



Risk management

The trustees regularly review the charity's risk register and have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed and considered them along with the systems and procedures in place to manage them. The trustees consider that at present the charity is not running any significant reputational or financial risks; its operational risks relate to maintaining its profile and fundraising capacity, its grant making activities and to its ability to maximise the impact that its grants have in areas of need and deprivation. The knowledge and experience of the staff, the trustees and the networks in which they operate provide mitigation of these risks, in the opinion of the trustees.

The Executive Director and senior staff also review the risk register at their monthly meetings.

Funding policy

The trustees have established a funding policy to deliver on the charity's objectives and support projects in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland that clearly contribute towards one or more of the aims of the charity. The charity invites applications for funding from community organisations to support capital, project and resource funding that contribute to the sustainability of British farming, rural communities and the countryside, particularly in areas of greatest need. In addition, funding is allocated by the trustees from their "emergency" funding to meet immediate and urgent needs arising from events which can have a devastating effect on rural communities. Full details of the RCF's funding programmes, application processes, and criteria are available on the charity's website.

Reserves and reserves policy

The charity holds total funds of £1,030,413 at the end of March 2025 (2024: £863,411). Of these, £327,962 (2024: £20,696) are held as restricted funds where the application of the funds is limited within the overall objectives of the charity; £101,684 (2024: £101,684) are held as designated funds and £600,767 (2024: £741,031) are held as unrestricted funds.

The trustees of the RCF reviewed the reserves policy in September 2024 and agreed that a new level of free reserves should sit within a range between £500,000 and £600,000. The trustees considered this a more appropriate level having taken in to account the RCF's current expenditure particular around fixed costs, staffing and essential support for programmes.

Designated funds

The designated funds for rural communities have not moved during the 2024/25 financial year. The designated funds for emergency purposes remain at £100,000.

Unrestricted funds

The RCF's unrestricted funds stand at £600,767 and free reserves stand at £558,000 which is within the charity's reserves policy range.



Future plans

Our [2024-28 strategy](#) is about picking up the pace. Our strategy describes an ambitious growth plan, expanding and replicating our model for supporting family farms and rural communities selected counties, while tailoring our advice to local circumstances. In tandem, we will develop our rural community programmes on that same convening model, aiming to help build confident self-help networks which will survive and thrive beyond our specific intervention, and with a particular focus on the next generation and innovative, repeatable solutions.

Bringing people together is at the heart of everything we do. We know that when local people, places, and partners join forces, incredible things happen. We've made a commitment to be the go-to partner for farming families, rural communities, and everyone who values the vital role they play in shaping the future of the countryside. We want to bring as many people with us on this journey. Which is why we share our on-the-ground learnings to spur on progress on a national scale.

When our countryside thrives, we all do.

Fundraising

The board approved a fundraising strategy in August 2020 to enable the RCF to scale up our work over the subsequent three years to continue to bring our Royal Founding Patron's vision to life. 2023/24 saw the final year of this strategy implemented. As a charity, we are dependent on securing increased funding to extend our programmes of support to family farms and rural communities, particularly during a period of significant change in agriculture. Our fundraising strategy sets out our ambitions for income growth in the three areas of corporate partnerships, philanthropy, and trusts and foundations. We are conducting a full review of our fundraising strategy in 2025/26.

We have continued to make good progress against our fundraising targets in spite of a challenging fundraising climate, with particular growth in the areas of corporate and trust fundraising. The board continues to review our fundraising strategy twice a year, and our development committee continues to meet quarterly to support the Executive.

The RCF is reliant on the generosity of our corporate partners, trusts, foundations and individual donors to continue our work. To them, we wish to acknowledge our appreciation and express our sincerest thanks.

The RCF is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and complies with its Code of Fundraising Practice in all our fundraising activities, including the use of rigorous commercial participation agreements with corporate partners. In line with the Charities Act 2016 our board of trustees closely monitors our fundraising activity and performance alongside the development committee and Executive, and fundraising team members undertake regular training activities.

We have policies in place to ensure we maintain the highest level of fundraising practice, including a gifts acceptance policy and cash handling policy. We treat all donors and potential donors fairly and with respect and never pressure anyone to make a donation; we are particularly sensitive when engaging with vulnerable people, particularly with elderly people and in all legacy fundraising material.

All our charity communications, including those to potential and existing supporters, are compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, and we ensure we have consent from all beneficiaries whose stories or images may be used in communications.

The RCF has not received any complaints related to our fundraising, and we do not employ any external agencies to assist with our fundraising.

Going concern

The trustees have considered the plans they have for the future, the level of reserves held and the cash projections, together with the charity's ability to match its costs to its income. The trustees consider that these give reasonable assurance of the adequacy of resources for the foreseeable future. The accounts have therefore been prepared on the basis that the charity is a going concern.



Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of the RCF for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of Directors 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 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 (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 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.

So far as each trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware. The directors have each taken all the steps that they ought to have taken in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

Approved by the trustees and signed on 17th September 2025 on their behalf by:



Heather Hancock LVO DL

Chair of The Royal Countryside Fund board of trustees

17th September 2025



Independent auditor's report to the members of The Royal Countryside Fund

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Royal Countryside Fund (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the consolidated statement of financial activities, consolidated and charity balance sheets, consolidated cash flow statement and notes to the financial statements, including 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 affairs of the group and the parent charitable company as at 31 March 2025 and of the group's 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, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

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 group and parent 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 group or the parent 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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. 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. 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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

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' Annual Report which includes the Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' Annual Report which includes 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 the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' Annual Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' 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' exemption in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the Strategic Report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of trustees' responsibilities set out on page 53, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent 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 the 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 group and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent 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

We have been appointed as auditors under the Companies Act 2006 and under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the group and parent 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 are detailed below.

Identifying and assessing risks related to irregularities

We assessed the susceptibility of the group and parent charitable company's financial statements to material misstatement and how fraud might occur, including through discussions with the trustees, discussions within our audit team planning meeting, updating our record of internal controls and ensuring these controls operated as intended. We evaluated possible incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements. We identified laws and regulations that are of significance in the context of the group and parent charitable company by discussions with trustees and updating our understanding of the sector in which the group and parent charitable company operate.

Laws and regulations of direct significance in the context of the group and parent charitable company include The Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and guidance issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Audit response to risks identified

We considered the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items including a review of financial statement disclosures. We reviewed the parent charitable company's records of breaches of laws and regulations, minutes of meetings and correspondence with relevant authorities to identify potential material misstatements arising. We discussed the parent charitable company's policies and procedures for compliance with laws and regulations with members of management responsible for compliance.

During the planning meeting with the audit team, the engagement partner drew attention to the key areas which might involve non-compliance with laws and regulations or fraud. We enquired of management whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud. We addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and identifying any significant transactions that were unusual or outside the normal course of business. We assessed whether judgements made in making accounting estimates gave rise to a possible indication of management bias. At the completion stage of the audit, the engagement partner's review included ensuring that the team had approached their work with appropriate professional scepticism and thus the capacity to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the parent charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the parent charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the parent charitable company's members and trustees 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 parent charitable company, the parent charitable company's members and trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Cara Turtington (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Saffery LLP, Statutory Auditors

71 Queen Victoria Street
London EC4V 4BE

Date: **2 October 2025**

Saffery LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006



Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating an income and expenditure account)

for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	General Fund £	Designated Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Incoming resources						
Voluntary income:						
Donations	2	519,016	-	-	519,016	633,857
Grant funding	2	432,640	-	2,525,626	2,958,266	1,250,512
Commercial trading	2	629,218	-	-	629,218	601,054
Investment income		987	-	-	987	14,739
Total incoming resources		1,581,861	-	2,525,626	4,107,487	2,500,162
Resources expended						
Charitable activities	3	(1,478,392)	-	(2,218,360)	(3,696,752)	(2,596,245)
Fundraising costs		(73,958)	-	-	(73,958)	(79,183)
Commercial trading		(169,775)	-	-	(169,775)	(170,332)
Total expenditure		(1,722,125)	-	(2,218,360)	(3,940,485)	(2,845,760)
Net income/(expenditure)		(140,264)	-	307,266	167,002	(345,598)
Transfers between funds	12	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(140,264)	-	307,266	167,002	(345,598)
Reconciliation of funds:						
Fund balances brought forward	12	741,031	101,684	20,696	863,411	1,209,009
Fund balances carried forward		600,767	101,684	327,962	1,030,413	863,411

All of the charitable company's operations are represented by continuing activities.

The charitable company has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 62 to 77 form part of these financial statements.

Consolidated balance sheet

at 31 March 2025

Company Number: 07240359

	Note	2025	2024
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	8	15,391	12,410
Intangibles	8	26,689	28,899
		<u>42,080</u>	<u>41,309</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	9	1,298,067	764,987
Cash in bank		487,967	910,294
		<u>1,786,034</u>	<u>1,675,281</u>
Current liabilities			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within 1 year	10	797,701	853,179
		<u></u>	<u></u>
Net current assets		<u>988,333</u>	<u>822,102</u>
Net assets		<u>1,030,413</u>	<u>863,411</u>
Funds			
Unrestricted - general funds		600,767	741,031
Unrestricted - designated funds		101,684	101,684
Restricted		327,962	20,696
Total funds		<u>1,030,413</u>	<u>863,411</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime. These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 17th September 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:



Heather Hancock LVO DL
Chair of the trustees

RCF balance sheet

at 31 March 2025

Company Number: 07240359

	Note	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
Investment (in subsidiary)	7		1		1
Fixed assets					
Tangible fixed assets	8		15,391		12,410
Intangibles	8		26,689		28,899
			<u>42,080</u>		<u>41,309</u>
Current assets					
Debtors	9	1,099,074		786,236	
Cash in bank		<u>424,856</u>		<u>492,534</u>	
		1,523,930		1,278,770	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within 1 year	10	<u>535,602</u>		<u>456,671</u>	
Net current assets			<u>988,328</u>		<u>822,099</u>
Net assets			<u>1,030,408</u>		<u>863,408</u>
Funds					
Unrestricted - general funds			600,762		741,028
Unrestricted - designated funds			101,684		101,684
Restricted			<u>327,962</u>		<u>20,696</u>
Total funds			<u>1,030,408</u>		<u>863,408</u>

As permitted by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006, a Statement of Financial Activities for the Fund only has not been presented. The income of the Fund for the year was £3,937,711 (2024: £2,329,830) and its net movement in funds was £167,000 (2024: (£345,630).)



Heather Hancock LVO DL

Chair of the trustees

Consolidated cashflow statement

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Year ended 2025 £	Year ended 2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
<i>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</i>	(401,767)	(373,739)
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchasing property plant & equipment	(7,128)	-
Purchasing intangible software	(13,432)	-
<i>Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities</i>	(20,560)	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the period	(422,327)	(373,739)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	910,294	1,284,033
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period (Note 17)	487,967	910,294

Reconciliation of net incoming resources to net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities

	Year ended 2025 £	Year ended 2024 £
Net income/(expenditure):		
- Unrestricted funds	(140,264)	(81,175)
- Designated funds	-	(237,049)
- Restricted funds	307,266	(27,374)
Net income/(expenditure) for the period as per the (SOFA)	167,002	(345,598)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	19,789	17,507
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(533,080)	(382,595)
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors less than one year	(55,478)	336,947
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	(401,767)	(373,739)

The notes on pages 62 to 77 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Charitable status

The company is limited by guarantee (company registration number 07240359) and is a registered charity in England and Wales (1136077) and in Scotland (SC048055). The address of the registered office is 13th Floor, 33 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0PW.

b) Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

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 (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006, and comply with all applicable accounting standards.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Royal Countryside Fund constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

Basis of consolidation

The financial statements consolidate the results of RCF and its wholly owned subsidiary, CFT Ltd, on a line-by-line basis. The acquisition method of accounting has been adopted. The assets and liabilities of subsidiaries are recorded initially at their fair values on the date of acquisition.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, which are described below, trustees are required to make judgements, estimates, and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects the current and future periods.

In the view of the trustees, no assumptions concerning the future or estimation uncertainty affecting assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date are likely to result in a material adjustment to their carrying amounts in the next financial year.

Financial information for the comparative year is shown in notes 17-19.

c) Going concern

As highlighted in the report of the trustees, having assessed the charity's financial position, its plans for the foreseeable future, the risks to which it is exposed and the detailed cash projections, the trustees are satisfied that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

d) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recognised once the charity has entitlement to the resources, it is probable that the resources will be received and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

e) Resources expended

Liabilities are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.

f) Support costs

Support costs are allocated to activities based on a percentage of staff time spent on the particular activity.

g) Grant making costs

Grants payable are payments made to third parties in furtherance of the charitable objects of the charity. Single or multi-year grants are accounted for when the trustees have agreed to pay the grant without condition and have notified the recipient, or the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and any condition attaching to the grant is outside the control of the charity.

Grants approved but not yet paid are shown as creditors in the accounts.

h) Financial instruments

The Royal Countryside Fund has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method (equating to the present value). Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors and accrued income. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors and accrued expenditure.

i) Funds

The charity has Unrestricted Reserves, Designated Funds and Restricted Funding. Those funds that are received with restrictions as to their use within the charity's overall objectives are treated as restricted and held as such. Designated Funds are Unrestricted Funds which the trustees have set aside for a specific purpose. Details of funds are given in note 12.

j) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the Foundation has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from use of the item or service is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably.

On receipt, donated services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity, which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

k) Investments

The Royal Countryside Fund has an investment in one wholly owned subsidiary, Countryside Fund Trading Ltd. This is held at the cost of investment.

l) Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment. Depreciation is provided by the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets which has been determined as 5 years.

m) Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated at cost, net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation is provided by the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets which has been determined as 5 years.

Notes (continued)

2. GROUP INCOME

	2025	2024
	£	£
Unrestricted donations		
General donations	88,016	103,832
Grant funding and trusts & foundations	432,640	71,158
Corporate donations	431,000	530,025
Investment income	987	14,739
Commercial trading	629,218	601,054
	1,581,861	1,320,808
Restricted donations		
Grant funding and trusts & foundations	2,525,626	1,179,354
Corporate donations	-	-
	2,525,626	1,179,354
Total donations	4,107,487	2,500,162

Please note that £1,412,725 within Restricted Donations: Grant Funding and Trusts & Foundations relates to a government grant received from Defra and £87,901 relates to a government grant received from the Scottish Government.



Notes (continued)

3. ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly	Grant funding activities	Grant written off	Support costs	2025	2024
					£	£
Unrestricted fund						
Core programme	1,033,869	192,783	(9,588)	505,061	1,722,125	1,243,201
Restricted fund						
Farm Resilience Programme	-	-	-	-	-	310,802
Rural 4	-	-	-	-	-	244,854
Farm Support Groups	-	75,000	-	-	75,000	60,000
People's Postcode Lottery (Environmental Programmes)	221,045	87,150	-	-	308,195	-
FFRP (Defra)	1,412,725	-	-	-	1,412,725	749,854
The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)	30,000	300,000	-	-	330,000	-
Biodiversity (RWHACF)	4,538	-	-	-	4,538	-
Scottish Government Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF)	87,902	-	-	-	87,902	-
Designated fund						
Rural Communities	-	-	-	-	-	237,049
Total charitable activities	2,790,079	654,933	(9,588)	505,061	3,940,485	2,845,760

A total of £1,222 was paid to two trustees as expenses during the financial year (2024: £620).

The figures above include governance costs totalling £43,011 comprising of the annual audit fee plus a proportion of staff time allocated towards secretarial roles. In the previous financial year, governance costs included the annual audit fee and the time of the company secretary totalling £33,096.

The charity undertakes its charitable activities through direct support as well as through grant making and awarded grants to a number of organisations (see note 5 below) in furtherance of its charitable activities.



Notes (continued)

4. GROUP STAFF COSTS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Salaries & wages	663,536	560,931
Social Security	70,755	59,766
Pension & healthcare	45,729	38,512
Total staff costs	780,020	659,209

The Royal Countryside Fund has 17 members of staff (based on average headcount) whose salaries are partially recharged to Countryside Fund Trading Limited. (2024: 14 members) The staff costs totalled £780,020 (2024: £659,209) of which, £87,978 (2024: £115,477) was recharged to Countryside Fund Trading Limited. The total staff cost to The Royal Countryside Fund is £692,042 (2024: £543,780). The total cost to The Royal Countryside Fund of the key management personnel is £109,074 (2024: £99,580).

No salaries were paid to trustees in the current or previous year. The number of employees whose emoluments for the year were over £60,000 (including taxable benefits in kind but not employer pension contributions), fell within the following bands:

	Total 2025	Total 2024
£60,000 - £69,000	-	-
£70,000 - £79,000	-	-
£80,000 - £89,000	-	1
£90,000 - £99,000	1	-



Notes (continued)

5. GRANTS AWARDED IN 2024/25

Unrestricted	£
Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre	23,250
Grange Over Sands Community Foodshare	22,430
The Farmer Network Ltd	20,000
Dartmoor Hill Farm Project	20,000
UTASS	20,000
Exmoor Hill Farming Network	20,000
Lesbury Community Shop Ltd	19,365
RSABI	15,000
Orton Fells Farm Cluster CIC	13,615
Fishguard Young Farmers Club T/A The Pembrokeshire Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs	10,000
Bothel Village Hall	6,000
Skelton Toppin Memorial Hall	3,123
	192,783

Restricted	£
North Highland Initiative	40,560
Another Way	30,000
CRFM CIC	30,000
Grizedale Arts	30,000
The Nurture Project CIC	30,000
Watchtree Nature Reserve Ltd	30,000
West Lakeland Farmer Led Nature Recovery CIC	29,988
VistaVeg Ltd	29,960
Rural Design Centre Limited	29,700
Barton & Pooley Bridge Community Fund	29,600
Alston Moor Partnership Ltd	28,875
Upper Onny Farmers CIC	24,850
Orton Fells Farm Cluster CIC	21,740
Farm Cornwall	20,000
Herefordshire Rural Hub	20,000
The Farming Life Centre	20,000
Rural Support	15,000
Skelton Toppin Memorial Hall	1,877
	462,150
	654,933

Notes (continued)

The total amount of new grants issued in 2024/25 was 654,933 (2023/24: 701,665). Please note that after a review of outstanding grants, The RCF has written off and been reimbursed for grants to the value of £9,588 during the financial year.

The total grants awarded in the prior year were £216,631 from unrestricted funds, £247,985 from restricted funds and £237,049 from restricted funds.

6. THE RESULTS ARE STATED AFTER CHARGING

	2025	2024
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration – RCF audit fee	16,800	16,300
Auditor's remuneration – CFT audit fee	6,000	6,000
Auditor's remuneration – other services	4,466	2,400
Depreciation	19,789	21,392
	47,055	46,092

7. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Investment in subsidiary	1	1

Countryside Fund Trading Ltd (CFT) made a profit of £459,443 which was gift aided to the parent charity.

CFT's Income and Expenditure for the year was £629,218 and £169,775 respectively.

The Shareholder's Funds at 31st March 2025 were £1.

The investments in subsidiary companies are stated at cost of investment

Subsidiary	Countryside Fund Trading Ltd
Company number	07274582
Registered office	13th Floor, 33 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0PW
Class of shares	Ordinary
Percentage of holding	100%

Notes (continued)

8. GROUP & CHARITY ONLY FIXED ASSETS

Cost or valuation	Intangibles	Computers	Total
At 1 April 2024	72,249	16,892	89,141
Additions	13,432	7,128	20,560
at 31 March 2025	85,681	24,020	109,701
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	43,350	4,482	47,832
Charge for the year	15,642	4,147	19,789
at 31 March 2025	58,992	8,629	67,621
Net book value at 31 March 2025	26,689	15,391	42,080
Net book value at 31 March 2024	28,899	12,410	41,309

9. DEBTORS

GROUP DEBTORS	2025	2024
	£	£
Accrued income	944,861	290,952
Prepayments	21,044	12,776
Other debtors	36,886	60,017
Trade debtors	295,276	401,242
	1,298,067	764,987
RCF DEBTORS	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts due from subsidiary	159,442	430,722
Accrued income	886,273	290,952
Prepayments	21,044	12,776
Other debtors	32,315	51,786
	1,099,074	786,236



Notes (continued)

10. CREDITORS

GROUP CREDITORS	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	152,076	123,998
Amounts due to grant recipients (within 1 year)	317,353	187,635
Deferred income	208,387	383,000
Taxation, social security & VAT	53,842	86,534
Accrued costs	66,043	72,012
	797,701	853,179

RCF CREDITORS	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	152,076	123,998
Amounts due to grant recipients (within 1 year)	317,353	187,635
Deferred income	-	75,000
Taxation, social security & VAT	6,434	4,557
Accrued costs	59,739	65,481
	535,602	456,671

11. MOVEMENTS IN THE YEAR ON AMOUNTS DUE TO GRANT RECIPIENTS

	RCF 2025	RCF 2024
	£	£
Opening balance at 1st April 2024	187,635	156,330
Grants awarded in the year	654,933	701,665
Payments in the year	(515,627)	(610,833)
Grants Written off in the period	(9,588)	(59,527)
Closing balance 31 March 2025	317,353	187,635

Notes (continued)

12. FUNDS

	Opening Balance	Income 24/25	Expenditure 24/25	Transfers	Closing Balance
Unrestricted fund	741,031	1,581,861	(1,722,125)	-	600,767
Restricted					-
DEFRA	-	1,412,725	(1,412,725)	-	-
People's Postcode Lottery (Environmental Programmes)	8,196	600,000	(308,196)	-	300,000
Confident Rural Communities	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
Biodiversity (RWHACF)	10,000	-	(4,538)	-	5,462
FSG Grants (NFU Mutual CT)	-	75,000	(75,000)	-	-
The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)		330,000	(330,000)	-	-
Scottish Government Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF)		87,901	(87,901)	-	-
Health Lottery Foundation		20,000		-	20,000
Designated					
Emergency Fund (designated)	100,000	-	-	-	100,000
Rural Communities (designated)	1,684	-	-	-	1,684
Total funds	863,411	4,107,487	(3,940,485)	-	1,030,413

Funds comprised of eight restricted funds and two designated funds:

Restricted funds

DEFRA – A restricted grant was received during the year from Defra to carry out the RCF's Farm for the Future programme.

People's Postcode Lottery (Environmental Programmes) - funds have been received via The People's Postcode Lottery, which are restricted for use on the RCF's new farming programme.

Confident Rural Communities – A restricted donation was received in the previous financial year to contribute towards RCF's Confident Rural Communities initiative. These funds will be spent in 2025/26.

Biodiversity (RWHACF) – The Royal Warrant Holders Association Charity Fund awarded a grant of £10,000 to be used for the RCF's Biodiversity workshops. The remainder of these funds will be utilised in the 2025/26 financial year.

FSG Grants (NFU) – NFU Mutual Charitable Trust granted £75k to the RCF specifically to award in the form of grants to Farm Support Groups.

The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) – The NLCF provided a restricted grant during the year to support communities in Cumbria and Northumberland.

Notes (continued)

Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF) – The Scottish Government awarded a grant to the RCF during the year to carry out the Farm Resilience Programme in Scotland.

Health Lottery Foundation – Restricted funding has been received at the end of the financial year for onward grants to be awarded in the 2025/26 financial year.

Designated funds

Emergency Fund (designated) - established as a result of an emergency appeal to help the farmers' facing hardships from the severe flooding seen in recent years. The board of trustees have previously agreed that £100k remains available in this fund at all times.

Rural Communities (designated) – a designated fund created in September 2021 to set aside funds to award grants and support to rural communities. This fund will be utilised during the 2025/26 Spring Grant awards.

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

(2025)	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Fixed assets	42,080	-	-	42,080
Net current assets	558,687	101,684	327,962	988,333
Total funds	600,767	101,684	327,962	1,030,413
(2024)	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Investment	-	-	-	-
Fixed assets	41,309	-	-	41,309
Net current assets	699,722	101,684	20,696	822,102
Liabilities > 1 year	-	-	-	-
Total funds	741,031	101,684	20,696	863,411



Notes (continued)

14. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The following trustees are directors or senior managers of companies, which currently have commercial participation agreements with Countryside Fund Trading Ltd.

CFT Director	Company	Amount 2025 £	Amounts owing at year end 2025 £	Amount 2024 £	Amounts owing at year end 2024 £
Edwin Booth	E H Booth & Co	10,000	Nil	31,219	Nil

The companies and the directors also contributed to the work of the charity by their in-kind support.

During the year, the Charity received gift aid from Countryside Fund Trading Ltd of £459,443 (2024: £430,722).

At the year-end the Charity was owed £159,442 (2024: £430,722) by Countryside Fund Trading Ltd.

15. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

At the balance sheet date the charity held financial assets at amortised cost comprising cash and short term deposits, trade debtors, other debtors and accrued income of £1,508,882 (2024: 1,662,505) and financial liabilities at amortised cost, comprising trade creditors, other creditors and accrued expenditure of £498,932 (2024 £853,179). Total interest income received in respect of financial assets held at amortised cost totalled nil (2024: Nil).

16. ANALYSIS OF CHANGE IN DEBT

	At start of year £	Cash flows £	At year end £
Cash and cash equivalents			
Cash	910,294	(422,327)	487,967
Total	910,294	(422,327)	487,967



Notes (continued)

17. PRIOR YEAR COMPARISON

Group Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	General fund £	Designated fund £	Restricted fund £	Total 2024 £
Incoming resources					
Voluntary income:					
Donations	2	633,857	-	-	633,857
Grant funding	2	71,158	-	1,179,354	1,250,512
Grant funding	2	601,054	-	-	601,054
Donation from trading subsidiary	2	14,739	-	-	14,739
Total incoming resources		1,320,808	-	1,179,354	2,500,162
Resources expended					
Charitable activities	3	(993,686)	(237,049)	(1,365,510)	(2,596,245)
Fundraising costs		(79,183)	-	-	(79,183)
Commercial trading		(170,332)	-	-	(170,332)
Total expenditure		(1,243,201)	(237,049)	(1,365,510)	(2,845,760)
Net income/(expenditure)		77,607	(237,049)	(186,156)	(345,598)
Transfers between funds	12	(158,782)	-	158,782	-
Net movement in funds		(81,175)	(237,049)	(27,374)	(345,598)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Fund balances brought forward	12	822,206	338,733	48,070	1,209,009
Fund balances carried forward		741,031	101,684	20,696	863,411



Notes (continued)

18. PRIOR YEAR COMPARISON

FUNDS

	Opening Balance	Income 23/24	Expenditure 23/24	Transfers	Closing Balance
Unrestricted fund	822,206	1,320,808	(1,243,201)	- (158,782)	741,031
Restricted					
Farm Resilience Programme	-	62,000	(220,782)	158,782	-
DEFRA	-	749,854	(749,854)	-	-
Rural 4 (PPL)	3,050	250,000	(244,854)	-	8,196
Farm Resilience Workshops (Aldi)	45,020	-	(45,020)	-	-
Carbon Clarity (Barclays)	-	45,000	(45,000)	-	-
CRC (Cairnford)		2,500		-	2,500
Biodiversity (RWHF CF)		10,000		-	10,000
FSG Grants (NFU Mutual CT)	-	60,000	(60,000)	-	-
Designated					
Emergency Fund (Designated)	100,000	-	-	-	100,000
Rural Communities (Designated)	238,733	-	(237,049)	-	1,684
Total funds	1,209,009	2,500,162	(2,845,760)	-	863,411

Funds comprised of eight restricted funds and two designated funds:

Restricted funds

The Farm Resilience Programme (FRP) - funds were negative for the year due to costs for the programme outweighing income. The shortfall is covered by Unrestricted Funds as agreed by the board of trustees. This is shown as a transfer of £158,782.

DEFRA – A restricted grant was received during the year from Defra for RCF to carry out the RCF's Farm for the Future programme.

Rural 4 - funds have been received via The People's Postcode Lottery, which are restricted for use on Rural Communities.

Farm Resilience Workshops (Aldi) – Funds were received from Aldi to support the RCF's Farm Resilience Programme during the year.

Notes (continued)

Carbon Clarity (Barclays) – A grant was received from Barclays to contribute towards RCF's Carbon Clarity workshops.

CRC (Cairnford) – A small donation of £2.5k was received to support RCF's Confident Rural Network. These funds will be utilised in 2024/25.

Biodiversity (RWHA) – The Royal Warrant Holders Association Charity Fund awarded a grant of £10,000 to be used for the RCF's Biodiversity workshops which will take place in the 2024/25 financial year.

FSG Grants (NFU Mutual CT) – NFU Mutual Charitable Trust granted £60k to the RCF specifically to award in the form of grants to Farm Support Groups.

Designated funds

Emergency Fund (Designated) - established as a result of an emergency appeal to help the farmers' facing hardships from the severe flooding seen in recent years. The board of trustees have previously agreed that £100k remains available in this fund at all times. The board reviewed whether the funds should be utilised in response to a dairy crisis in the March 24 board meeting, however, ultimately decided that no funds would be used.

Rural Communities (Designated) – A designated fund created last financial year to set aside funds to award grants and support to Rural Communities.



Notes (continued)

19. PRIOR YEAR COMPARISON

ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly	Grant funding activities	Grant written off	Support costs	2023 £
Unrestricted fund					
Core programme	680,599	216,631	(59,527)	405,498	1,243,201
Restricted fund					-
Farm Resilience Programme	220,079	-	-	90,723	310,802
Rural 4		187,985	-	56,869	244,854
Jordan's Bursary	-	-	-	-	-
National Lottery Community Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Farm Support Groups	-	60,000	-	-	60,000
Farm Support Group Initiative	-	-	-	-	-
FFRP (Defra)	643,736	-	-	106,118	749,854
Designated fund					
Rural Communities	-	237,049	-	-	237,049
Total charitable activities	1,544,414	701,665	(59,527)	659,208	2,845,760

A total of £620 was paid to two trustees as expenses during the financial year (2023: £1,865). No further donations were received by trustees during the year. (2023: Nil).

The figures above include governance costs totalling £33,096 comprising of the annual audit fee plus the cost of time relating to company secretarial roles. In the previous financial year, governance costs included the annual audit fee and the time of the company secretary totalling £29,419.

The charity undertakes its charitable activities through direct support as well as through grant making and awarded grants to a number of enterprises (see note 5 below) in furtherance of its charitable activities.

The Charity's staff, including the Executive Director of the RCF who manages the day-to-day operations, are all employed directly by the Royal Countryside Fund.





THE ROYAL
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www.royalcountrysidefund.org.uk

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