

# Balmoral News

Spring Edition 2024



## Message from the new President

I was honoured to be elected as the 37th President of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society at our Annual Meeting held in early March and look forward to working with the Council and staff in this role over the next two years.

Thank you to my predecessor Mrs Christine Adams for all her hard work over the past two years and I wish Christine, and her husband Edwin, well during her term as Vice Patron and in the future.

I attended my first Balmoral Show in 1967 before joining the Society in 1979 and became actively involved in the late 80's through work before being elected to Council in 1995. Over the past 30 odd years I have been involved in many aspects of both the Balmoral Show and Royal Ulster Winter Fair as a sponsor, trade exhibitor, steward and livestock exhibitor, and this year hope to exhibit Aberdeen Angus cattle at our thirtieth consecutive Show.

This broad involvement in so many different aspects of the Show gives me a unique insight and better understanding of the massive input from staff and volunteers which ensures that Balmoral Show delivers a first-class event, showcasing all that is good about farming and food in Northern Ireland and further afield.

The RUAS celebrates its 170th anniversary this year and in addition to the many regular features and new attractions there will be some special activities and events at the Show to help mark this momentous occasion. That will fit neatly with my Presidential theme of Show Success - making

the Society and Balmoral Show more Relevant, distinctly Unique, Agricultural focused and involving Schools.

Thank you for electing me as your President and I look forward to seeing many of you at Balmoral Show on 15th to 18th May - Please do feel free to say hello at the Show!

John Henning OBE,  
RUAS President



# The Greatest Show

## The Balmoral Show is Back!

The 155th Balmoral Show, in partnership with Ulster Bank, will return to the Eikon Exhibition Centre from Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th May 2024.

As the pinnacle agri-food event in Northern Ireland, the Show is sure to be bustling with families, foodies, and farmers as they come together to celebrate award-winning livestock and mouth-watering local food and drink, not to mention a host of family friendly entertainment across the packed programme.

This year the Main Arena will play host to the exhilarating Bolddog Lings Motorcycle Display Team, marching bands and a full programme of show jumping classes.

The Show is renowned as a fantastic day out for families and the new Children's Area will be a hive of activity across the four-day event. Located beside the Poultry and Rabbit Pavilions, the **Kidz Farm** is returning with an array of animals from the

farmyard to more tropical climates, giving children the opportunity to learn about their different natural habitats. The exciting new **Glenarm Castle Mini Land Rover Experience**, sponsored by NFU Mutual, will allow future farmers to get into the driving seat and explore our bespoke adventure trail alongside their parents. For older children, there will also be a climbing wall to challenge even the most adventurous visitors.

With entries closed and exhibitor packs on their way, the Show is anticipating over 3,000 competitors across our livestock, equine and show jumping classes. The calibre and quality of entries year on year is a testament to the exceptional quality of local produce in Northern Ireland and the competitive spirit only adds to the excitement across the showgrounds.



NI Food & Drink Pavilion

The 'Balmoral Buzz' wouldn't be complete without the tantalising tastes of the **NI Food and Drink Pavilion** as well as the catering areas across the showgrounds. From mini tasters to food on the go and cooking demonstrations within the Pavilion and the Healthy Horticulture Area, food lovers can enjoy an array of treats and tastes each day.

The 2024 Balmoral Show will also host the **Strategic Power Connect Sustainability Village** as a new addition to the event within the Annex building. With a focus on a more sustainable future, visitors will be able to tap into expert knowledge on household energy bills and more efficient solutions. Back by popular demand, the Eikon will once again host the Makers' Market alongside hundreds of industry specialists and charities from across Northern Ireland.

We are as always indebted to our sponsors for their continued support; thank you to our principal sponsor **Ulster Bank**, our platinum sponsors **ABP, M&S, SPAR and Tesco** and to all our additional sponsors who help make the Show such a special event.

To find out more about the 2024 Show visit [www.balmoralshow.co.uk](http://www.balmoralshow.co.uk) or follow us on **Facebook, Instagram and TikTok**.



Kidz Farm



Glenarm Castle Mini Land Rover Experience



Platinum Sponsors; ABP, M&S, SPAR & Tesco



Principal Sponsor, Ulster Bank



Strategic Power Connect Sustainability Village

# Members' Information for the 2024 Balmoral Show

There are only a few weeks until the Show and we want to make your visit as enjoyable as possible, from arrival to exclusive dining options.



## Public Transport

We encourage all visitors to consider public transport options when planning their journeys. Our complimentary shuttle bus service from Lisburn Train Station to the Show will be in operation to help you beat the queues.

To find out more please check the 'Getting to the Show' area of our website within the Visitors tab.



## Car Parking

Members arriving by car should use the public carpark. The daily charge is £10 per car which includes a traffic management levy.

You can purchase your parking tickets from our attendants upon arrival or when exiting Public Entrance 1 at the Show. All cars using the public carpark must purchase a parking ticket before leaving the premises.

Disabled parking is available on a **first come first served basis**.



## Members' Entrance

The main Members' Entrance is located at Public Entrance 1. Members arriving by public transport can enter through Public Entrance 2.

To gain quick and easy admission to the Show you will need to **present your valid membership card**. Unfortunately, members may experience a delay in gaining entry to the Show if they arrive without a valid membership card.



## Members' Stand and Pavilion

The membership stand will be located opposite Public Entrance 1. Here you can enter our member competition and access exclusive Show membership deals for any family and friends who would like to join the Society.

Posh Nosh Catering Company, proud members of both Taste of Ulster and Food NI, will once again be providing a delicious lunch offering in the Members' Pavilion this year.

Escape the hustle and bustle of the Show by popping in for a relaxing sit down two course meal.

The menu uses all local produce and includes slow cooked Ulster Beef in Guinness sauce, Cod Bites & Fries, Chicken Curry and a fresh salad bar. A selection of desserts is also available.

Food is served from 12noon until 3pm, and both cash and card are accepted.



## See you at the Show!

Membership Team

membership@ruas.org.uk 028 9068 6193



Ulster Bank



## Ulster Bank Welcome

By Mark Crimmins, Regional Managing Director,  
Corporate, Commercial and Business Banking, Ulster Bank  
Northern Ireland

It gives me huge pleasure to welcome you back to Balmoral Park for the 155th Balmoral Show in partnership with Ulster Bank.

This will be our 15th Show as principal sponsor and everyone at Ulster Bank feels honoured to be a proud partner of what is now a truly world-class event. This is of course largely thanks to the hard work and dedication of our partners at RUAS. Your vision and ambition for the Show has led to its growth and evolution without losing sight of the traditions which make the event so unique.

Ulster Bank recognises the immense contribution the agri-food industry makes to our wider economy and as such, remains committed to supporting it both through the funds we have available to lend and the expertise of our teams working across this vital sector. Given the very real problems associated with climate change, right now we are particularly focused on working with agri-food firms to make the transition to more environmentally friendly business practices and have introduced a number of propositions to help these companies fulfil their green ambitions. If you are interested in learning more about what help is available to you, come and talk to us at our stand where our teams will be based during the four days of the Show.

With so much to see and do across the Showgrounds, we understand visitors to Balmoral Park may welcome a rest and so I am pleased to invite you into the Ulster Bank marquee for a complimentary tea or coffee, a comfortable seat, and the chance to rest and recharge for a while. I would also encourage you to make use of this opportunity to speak with our dedicated Business Managers and skilled retail colleagues who will be available to showcase some of our new digital banking solutions; designed to bring better connectivity and convenience to you, your family, and your business.

Let me finish by wishing each of you a very enjoyable visit to the Balmoral Show and I hope to see some of you there.



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# Strategic Review of the Society

## A Message from Group Executive Director, Theresa Morrissey

Following a comprehensive review of the Society's governance, the Finance Committee has initiated a strategic review to create the Society's plan for the next five years.

This review will:

- set out our ambitions for the future and determine how we can best achieve them;
- ensure the Society's future sustainability, clarity of purpose and direction; and
- enhance its reputation and relevance.

Recently we started to engage with our members so that you can participate in this journey and help us to deliver a sustainable path for the Society.

You will receive further communications either by text message or email, inviting you to click the link provided to complete a quick survey and offering you the chance to WIN two tickets to the Royal Highland Show and £300 of travel vouchers.

Please let our Membership Team know if there have been any changes to your contact details.

We look forward to hearing your feedback.

Theresa Morrissey,  
Group Executive Director

Email: [membership@ruas.org.uk](mailto:membership@ruas.org.uk)

Telephone: 028 9068 6193



# Meet our Latest Corporate Member

In this issue, we'd like to introduce you to our latest corporate Society member, Neville from Barnabas Aid. We asked Neville to tell us a little more about the charity's work across the world. Here's what he had to say...

## Feeding Hungry Christians Around the World

For more than thirty years Barnabas Aid has supported suffering Christians worldwide, supplying aid to those facing poverty or persecution.

In June 2021 Barnabas launched its food.gives project. In some contexts, it is more practical to send food rather than money. We send dried food donated by our supporters around the world, with food.gives boxes filled with items such as rice, flour, dried lentils or beans and salt.

We have distributed to 23 countries to date. Recent destinations include Ukraine, which received two 40-foot containers in 2023, and a third in January 2024. Aid shipments sustained impoverished Christians in South Sudan, with 1,089 food.gives boxes and supplies of rice, flour and chickpeas. Fortified nutritious soup mix reached believers in Namibia. Around 2,000 Christian families in Jordan, including refugees from Yemen, Syria and Iraq, received food.gives boxes.

You share. We ship. They survive.



# RUAS Membership Benefits

## Dublin Horse Show

Are you planning to go to the Dublin Horse Show this year? As a member of the RUAS, you can have access to exclusive RDS Member's Club facilities throughout your visit to the Show from 14th - 18th August 2024.

To avail of this Society membership benefit and find out more, please contact the Membership Team before 5th August 2024 to receive your Letter of Introduction. Full terms and conditions for this RUAS membership benefit apply.

E: [membership@ruas.org.uk](mailto:membership@ruas.org.uk)

T: 028 9068 6193



# Annual Meeting Highlights

## Joint Winners of the Prestigious President's Plate

At the Society's Annual Meeting, held on Friday 8th March at the Eikon Exhibition Centre, the prestigious President's Plate was presented to Robert and Joanne McKibbin.

Traditionally awarded to an individual, this accolade has previously acknowledged individual Society members who have made a significant contribution over a period of years. This year, the Plate was awarded to joint winners Robert and Joanne in recognition of their commitment to the Poultry section of the Balmoral Show.

Following the outbreak of Avian Flu and the subsequent bird gathering restrictions in recent years, the McKibbins have provided their own poultry flocks to the Show, enabling thousands of visitors to learn about and see a variety of breeds at the busy four-day event.



## Council Members and Committee Chairs

Also at this year's Annual Meeting, the following 24 members were declared as members of the Council for a period of three years:

Edward Adamson FRAgS

A James C Allen

Barclay Bell NDA FRAgS

Vaughan Byrne

Dr Sam Campbell

Robin Cherry MBE FRAgS

Linda Davis

Pat Erwin

Ashley Fleming FRAgS

Desmond Gibson

Pauline Gibson

Jayne Harkness-Bones MSc,  
BA (Hons), ARAgS

Norma Hoy

Mary Hunter

Denise Kelso

Jay Lindsay

Richard Lyttle

Alistair McDonald

Adrian McGowan

Robert McKibbin

Geoffrey Ringland

Trevor Shields ARAgS

Gavin Walsh

Alexandra Woods

**Congratulations must also go to our confirmed Committee Chairmen for 2024/25:**

### Chairman

Gerard Kelly

Pat Erwin

John Martin

Vaughan Byrne

George Hamilton

Crosby Cleland

David Mark

Nigel Hamill

Barclay Bell

Myrtle Peak

Robert McKibbin

William McElroy

Norma Hoy

Alan Armstrong

John Martin

### Committee

Sheep Shearing

Horticulture

Finance/Nomination

Pig

Works

Show Safety

Trade Exhibits

Sheep

Council Show

Horse

Poultry

Cattle

Catering

Winter Fair

Show Dates



At the subsequent Council Meeting on Friday 29th March, we had the pleasure of welcoming David Cunningham as the Deputy President of the RUAS for the next two years. Congratulations David!