

Society Matters Newsletter

Winter Edition : Jan 2026



Happy New Year from our CEO, Simon Eccleston

Looking forward to a busy and exciting year ahead.

As 2026 begins, I would like to wish you a Happy New Year and thank you for your continued support of the Newark & Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society. The year ahead promises to both important and exciting for the Society as we continue to build on the progress and momentum we have already achieved.



Within this issue of Society Matters, you will find a wide range of articles that highlight the breadth of our work – from our flagship events and charitable activity, to the many events hosted at the Showground. Together, they provide a snapshot of a Society that continues to evolve while staying true to its purpose of celebrating and supporting agriculture and our rural communities.

The past year has also brought a number of changes behind the scenes. We have said goodbye to some valued colleagues, at the same time, we have welcomed new members to the team as we look ahead to the future.

There is much to look forward to at the Showground itself, with a busy events calendar and the start of major projects that will further enhance the site. These developments will help ensure the Showground continues to grow as a leading venue across the region.

Our office has reopened, and we are back with renewed vigour to continue preparing for a busy and exciting year ahead. Please keep an eye out for our Farm Safety event on 21 January.

Kind regards,

Simon Eccleston
CEO

In this issue:

NNAS Memberships 2026

[See page 2](#)

Vintage Tractor Show Stories

[See page 3](#)

Farm Safety Event

[See page 4](#)

Midlands Machinery Show Recap

[See page 5](#)

Showground Update

[See page 7](#)



Get your NNAS 2026 Membership today with Early Bird Rates

It's a great time to be an NNAS member – why not renew your membership today for 2026!

Early bird pricing ends 31/01/2026

As we look back on a hugely successful year for the Newark & Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society (NNAS), we're eager to carry that momentum forward into what promises to be an exciting 2026.

Which means there is no better time than now to renew your annual membership, especially if you take up our 'Early Bird' offer and pay our discount price. Not only will you save money, but you get to enjoy a wealth of benefits, too. It's a win win!

But you need to hurry, our **Early Bird offer ends on Saturday 31 January** with prices reverting to standard rates from February 1 onwards. So renew your membership today to take advantage of this offer.

Benefits of being a member:

- Free entry to the 2026 Nottinghamshire County Show and Vintage Tractor & Heritage Show
- Exclusive access to the Members' Pavilion & Marquee at the County Show, offering prime views of the Main Ring
- Access to the Members' Lounge and free refreshments at the Tractor Show, plus 3 nights of complimentary exhibitor camping
- Discounted admission at a variety of Showground events throughout the year
- Get priority access to Newark Showground's 2026 Christmas Party bookings
- Regular newsletters with updates and events happening at the Showground
- Stay connected with updates on local agricultural events, seminars and workshops
- Help the Society fulfil our charitable purpose and support young people studying and working in agriculture by way of grants and bursaries
- Members can vote, attend meetings and join committees to help shape the Society's future

Renewing your membership is quick and simple! Remember, Direct Debit is available for membership, so sign up and we'll renew automatically for you every year!



Newark & Notts Agri Society

Membership

Early bird offer ends 31st January.

- **2026 Young Person's Membership (one person) – £30**
- **2026 Single Membership (one person) – £48**
£50.00 after 31/01/26
- **2026 Joint Membership (two people) – £69**
£75.00 after 31/01/26
- **2026 Friends & Family Membership (for up to four friends or family) – £126**
£35.00 after 31/01/26
- **2026 Corporate Membership (for up to six people) – £289**
£310.00 after 31/01/26
- **2026 Life Membership (one person) – £750**





Worthy Winners at The Vintage Tractor & Heritage Show

Around 10,000 people turned out to celebrate the history of farm machinery and implements through the ages at this year's Newark Vintage Tractor & Heritage Show, held under bright skies at Newark Showground.

The two-day event once again proved why it remains one of the highlights of the vintage calendar, with visitors travelling from across the UK – some from more than 400 miles away – to share in a weekend that mixed nostalgia, engineering excellence and community spirit.

Exhibits spanned everything from pre-First World War tractors and classic combines to potato handling equipment, steam engines and restored diggers, with every era of British farming represented.



One of the standout attractions was the spectacular Caterpillar display, where 89 exhibits ranging from the smallest crawlers to the largest dozers filled the showground.

The show was as much a social occasion as it was a competitive one. Enthusiasts gathered to share stories, catch up with old friends and admire each other's handiwork, while awards were handed out following the judging of more than 1,000 exhibits across dozens of classes.

Persistence paid off for Hampshire's John Burfield and his partner Sally Ennor of Winchfield Court Farm, Hampshire, who were rewarded with a hat-trick of prizes for their remarkable collection of Massey Fergusons. Their 1964 Massey 65 Multipower Half Track took Best Restored Tractor, with a tandem Massey 35 also impressing judges. Their 13-machine display won Best Collection.



Nottinghamshire's James Wood claimed Best Fordson Derivative with his unrestored yet fully working 1960 Whitlock Dinkum Digger – a quirky, five-tonne machine powered by a Fordson Power Major engine that still earns its keep at home.



The Fordson theme continued elsewhere with wartime and post-war machines taking pride of place. John Redfern from Claypole won Best Unrestored Tractor with his 1940s Fordson N, while Dan Bartle's 1918 Fordson F was runner-up in the pre-1930 class, both earning applause on a weekend that coincided with national remembrance events. A rare Irish-built 1931 Ford Model N from Retford's Nicholas Kitchen added further fascination for enthusiasts.

Nottinghamshire engineer James Ragsdale brought along his Garrett steam engine, called Invincible, which took him and his family 12 years to rebuild. Once little more than a discarded boiler, the fully restored engine now tours shows nationwide.



Visitors were also drawn to James Hardstaff's engaging display charting 120 years of potato machinery, from horse-drawn equipment to 1980s spinners and planters. His working potato clamp and historic riddles offered a hands-on glimpse of how Britain's staple crop was once handled and stored.

Away from the judging rings, the showground buzzed with activity. A packed auction of parts and machinery ran for more than three hours on Saturday, while Sunday's 'Sort Out' saw thousands of items traded among collectors and enthusiasts. The weekend also included a well-attended service of remembrance on Sunday morning, which provided a reflective pause amid the celebrations of heritage and craftsmanship.

The Newark Vintage Tractor and Heritage Show will return on 7–8 November 2026.



You're invited
to our

Farm Safety Event

21 January 2026
@ Newark Showground

Interactive demonstrations and
talks to help you boost safety and
security on your farm



Generously
sponsored by



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities



NASC is once again hosting our Farm Safety Event

Farm safety will be in the spotlight on Wednesday 21st January at a special free event, delivered in partnership with NFU and Nottinghamshire Police.

Starting at 8.30am in the Lady Eastwood Centre at Newark Showground, the event is open to anyone involved in agriculture.

It will feature interactive drone training and surveillance measure demonstrations and talks to help boost safety and security on your farm, as well as support employee training and competence.



Registration is essential –
please scan the QR code to
register, or contact the NFU
Midlands Hub on email:
nfu_midlands@nfu.org.uk or
call 02476 939402.

NFU Nottinghamshire County Adviser Gabriella Gregory said:

"There is nothing more important than keeping you and those around you safe on farm, so we are delighted to be able to team up with our partners to bring farm safety and security under one roof."

"Join us on 21 January to get the best practical advice on boosting your farm's safety and security."

Newark & Notts Agricultural Society Events and Development Manager Elizabeth Halsall said:

"Too many lives are lost to preventable accidents, and every farmer and worker should finish their day and get home safely."

"That's why the Newark & Notts Agricultural Society, a charity dedicated to supporting farmers, is proud to support the Farm Safety Event. We hope you will join us and help make safety the standard."



Session timetable

- 9am | Session 1: Safer farms, safer communities, with Richard Bate, President elect, IOSH
- 9.20am | Session 2: Engaging with Notts Fire Service, with Damien West, Chief Fire Officer
- 10.30am | Session 3: Best practice on farm, with Phillip Smith, Risk Management Services
- 11.15am | Session 4: Rural crime discussion panel, with Gary Godden, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner; Andrew Huddleston, National Rural Crime Unit and Sam Durham, NFU National Rural Crime Lead.
- 11.45am | Session 5: Transportation, with Notts Police Transport Team

BASIS and NRoSO points have been applied for and there will be E-certificates for every delegate.



Midlands Machinery Show Recap

Up-beat Midlands Machinery Show finds farmers still wanting clarity and confidence to invest

Farmers need more confidence in the industry before they can plan their next business investments.

That was the sentiment of exhibitors at the new-look Midlands Machinery Show which took place at Newark Showground in November.

Redesigned into a one-day format, thousands arrived at a chilly – but dry – show to talk to suppliers, gain CPD points, and socialise with their peers.

NFU President sets out the challenge

One of the draws to the show was the NFU's Midlands Environment Conference.

Tom Bradshaw, NFU President, opened by stressing how high the stakes have become for farm businesses trying to navigate environmental policy.

He warned that Defra's environmental schemes remain in a state of flux, with SFI and Countryside Stewardship decisions creating clear winners and losers at a time when farmers need certainty. He called for transparency around the remaining ELMS budget and a clear plan for how farmers will be prioritised as more than 10,000 agreements expire in 2026.



Sentiment on the stands

Sharmans Agricultural, which took first prize in the Best Agricultural Trade Stand class, brought a broad range of machines to the show, including a Krone BiG Pack baler, Amazone Pantera self-propelled sprayer, and JCB telehandler.

Group Marketing Director Sally-Ann Hazard said the show is on the "home patch" for the Sharmans' Grantham depot and was an opportunity to meet customers with the next 12 months in mind.



"Footfall was stronger than expected and conversations were upbeat. We understand why people are cautious but engaged, and the show offered a rare moment where the industry felt forward-looking again."

David Musson Fencing took the best allied trade stand with a display that showed why the business has become a key fixture at the Midlands Machinery Show.

The company's Kerry Smith, who oversees purchasing, said agriculture remains a core market alongside equestrian, domestic and commercial work, and that the past year has seen strong demand for their products, underpinned by capital grants for fencing.

Kerry said the show is one of the best opportunities they have to see both long-standing customers and new faces.

"Footfall was good and the conversations were productive, with visitors willing to spend time talking through projects in a way that is impossible when they come to collect products from the yard or going to a job" she said.

Strategic pause for Midlands Machinery Show
After taking on board the views of exhibitors, visitors and our show advisory committee, the Midlands Machinery Show will be taking a rest year in 2026, and returning when the farming industry has more clarity about its future, and renewed confidence to invest.

A break now gives the show the best chance of coming back stronger with the goal of delivering an even better event for visitors, and an improved return on investment for our exhibitors.

To provide continued support for exhibitors, NNAS will also offer those who took part in last year's Midlands Machinery Show a complimentary stand at the Nottinghamshire County Show on Saturday 9 May 2026, joining a growing line-up of machinery dealers who see the increasing benefit of being there.

NNAS will continue to organise the Midlands Engineering Apprenticeship Awards, and more information will be released in September.



Brown & co. breakfast meetings 2026

Brown & Co will be hosting several breakfast meetings in 2026.

There will be the opportunity to discuss pressing topics, as well as a free complimentary breakfast.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to the below address with the required information.



BREAKFAST MEETINGS 2026

Focused discussions on pressing topics; including business strategy, policy updates, rural planning and land ownership matters.

There will also be the opportunity to meet your local team and discuss any issues raised.

8:00am for 8:30am start with an estimated finishing time of 10:00am

Complimentary Full English Breakfast

To book your place please RSVP: 5 Oakwood Road, Lincoln LN6 3LH
Or email lincolnevents@brown-co.com



Name:

Address:

Email:

Tel:

Dietary Requirements:

- 06.02.26 The Boathouse at Farndon, 5 North End, Farndon, Newark NG24 3SX
- 06.02.26 The Leigate Inn, Leigate Road, Coningsby LN4 4RS
- 13.02.26 The Griffin Inn, 15 Bulby Road, Irnham NG33 4JG
- 20.02.26 Lincoln Zoo, Newball, Lincoln LN3 5DQ
- 20.02.26 Ye Olde Bell, Barnby Moor, Retford DN22 8QS
- 27.02.26 The Ship Inn, Fosdyke Bridge PE12 6LH
- 27.02.26 The Livesey Arms, Livesey Road, Ludborough DN36 5SF
- 06.03.26 Mountain's Farm Shop, Parks Farm, East Heckington PE20 3QF
- 06.03.26 Coxmoor Golf Club, Coxmoor House, Sutton-in-Ashfield NG17 5LF
- 13.03.26 The Chequers Inn, Main Street, Woolsthorpe, Grantham NG32 1LU
- 20.03.26 The George of Stamford, 71 High Street, St Martins, Stamford PE9 2LB

I/we wish to be added to your mailing list to be contacted about rural updates and future events



20th Anniversary of Open Farm Sunday

Celebrating 20 years of connecting people with sustainable farming

For 20 years, Open Farm Sunday has introduced people of all ages to the amazing farmers who produce the great food we all love to eat.

This landmark year celebrates the rich heritage of this flagship event, which is organised nationally by the global sustainable farming charity LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming).

This summer, hundreds of farms across Britain will open their gates, giving visitors the opportunity to discover how sustainable farming nurtures wildlife, protects the environment and supports thriving communities.



Open Farm Sunday's Proven Impact

Since 2006, Open Farm Sunday has highlighted the value of connecting with the public and showcasing the positive impact of modern farming.

Last year saw a 20% increase in the number of host farms which welcomed 200,197 people. As a result, 92% of visitors said they felt greater trust in British food and farming, 94% left with a better understanding of how farmers work with nature, and 87% reported feeling more connected to the people producing their food.

Speaking at the launch, David Webster, Chief Executive of Leaf, said:

"Open Farm Sunday is more than an annual fun day out – it is a catalyst for change. Its 20th anniversary is our moment, as a sector, to step forward together and show how farming with nature is shaping the future of our global food system. We want as many farmers as possible to open their gates, welcome visitors and showcase the passion and professionalism at the heart of their work."



Showground Update



Our Showground winter round-up

Wow! What a year we have had and, as our autumn calendar of events closed and moved into our winter schedule, the Showground remained busy with a wide range of events keeping our calendar packed and varied.

Highlights included the Newark International Antiques & Collectors Fair, offering a treasure trove of unique finds, Truck Fest, which showcased an impressive array of vehicles, and the Normous Newark Car and Motorcycle Autojumble, one of the UK's largest automotive swap meets where classic car enthusiasts hunted for rare parts and bargains. Families and visitors of all ages enjoyed a range of other favourites, including the Midlands Machinery Show, Vintage Tractor & Heritage Show, and Cupid's Wedding Show. It is fair to say that our events calendar really does have something for everyone!



The festive season was packed with celebrations. Christmas cheer was a plenty with The Newark Festive Gift & Food Show, run by Aztec Events kicking off the festivities. Visitors attended in bumper numbers many wearing their Christmas jumpers, and they were thrilled to start their Christmas shopping with unique gifts, local produce, and a wide selection of food and drink.

Christmas just isn't Christmas without a Christmas party and we hosted two! Our Christmas Casino Party Nights, organised by the team here at the Showground, provided a fun evening of festive entertainment, friendly competition, and classic simulated casino games.



Looking ahead to the new year

January through to March promises plenty of excitement at the Showground. The Classic Bike Guide 'Winter Classic' will kick off the year for motorcycle enthusiasts with bikes, suppliers, and demonstrations. The Normous Newark Car and Motorcycle Autojumble returns for collectors and automotive fans seeking a wide range of parts and bargains. For those with New Years Eve resolutions of health and lifestyle, the Wellbeing Show will feature exhibitors, workshops, and expert advice to inspire a healthier, happier year ahead. Sci-fi fans can also look forward to the Festival of the Force, a Star Wars celebration packed with themed activities, celebrity appearances, and immersive experiences.



For more information on upcoming events at the Showground, you can find our 'Diary Dates' on page 10.



Nine apprentices win a £500 bursary to support agricultural engineers

Nine agricultural engineering apprentices were recognised at last year's Midlands Machinery Show after being named winners of the 2026 Midlands Apprentice Engineering Award.

Each receives £500, paid in two instalments across their first and second year, to support their development.

The initiative is run by the Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society, part of the legacy of former President Geoffrey Bond.



Among the three first-year recipients were two apprentices from Sharmans Agricultural.

Edward Moisey, 19, is based at the company's Pytchley depot, joining in August 2022. He did not grow up on a farm, although his grandfather worked in agriculture, and came into the industry with a fresh eye.

He says the size, power and variety of the machinery, along with the appeal of a job that changes every day, drew him to the role.

He said: *"I've always been hands on and really into engines and machines. Tractors are big, they look cool and I wanted to do something different. I thought I'd give it a go and it has just grown from there."*

Ed is already being steered towards working more with implements and attachments, an area he is excited to develop.

"I'd love to specialise in balers. There are so many different types and everything works differently, so there's a lot to learn. That's what makes it interesting," he said.

He plans to put the first-year award of £250 straight back into his toolbox.

Midlands Agricultural Engineering Apprenticeship Awards

midlandsmachineryshow.com



Midlands Agricultural Engineering Apprenticeship Awards

midlandsmachineryshow.com



"It will all go on tools. I've got the basics but I need more specialist stuff like torque wrenches. They're not cheap so this really helps," he said.

Tobin Royalls, 20, also collected a first-year award. He joined Sharmans straight after finishing his GCSEs in 2021. He recently became the sole engineer at the Loudham depot, which means he handles all manner of servicing and repairs across the dealer's livery.

Tobin said: *"Agricultural technicians like us work hard in this industry. The hours can be long, and the work can be hard in all weathers, especially in winter."*

"Winning this award genuinely gives you a lift. It shows people notice the effort you're putting in and it helps keep you pushing forward."

Tobin said most of the money will go towards new tools.

Sir Mark Spencer, incoming President of the Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society, praised the winners and the commitment they have shown.

He said: *"Congratulations to all the winners of the apprenticeship award. The career path you have chosen is going to be challenging but rewarding. We need the brightest and the best in young engineering talent and it is fantastic to see the enthusiasm and commitment that you are showing for our industry."*

The awards ceremony took place at the Midlands Machinery Show, held at Newark Showground on Wednesday 19 November 2025.





<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/sausage-kale-gnocchi-one-pot>

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 6 pork sausages
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- 1 tsp fennel seeds (optional)
- 500g fresh gnocchi
- 500ml chicken stock (fresh if you can get it)
- 100g chopped kale
- 40g parmesan finely grated

Sausage, kale & gnocchi one-pot

Plate up this delicious one-pot of sausage, kale and gnocchi in just 20 minutes, with just five minutes prep. Midweek suppers never got so easy – or tasty!

Prep 5 mins **Cook** 15 mins

Serves 4

Method

① Heat the oil in a large high-sided frying pan over a medium heat. Squeeze the sausages straight from their skins into the pan, then use the back of a wooden spoon to break the meat up. Sprinkle in the chilli flakes and fennel seeds, if using, then fry until the sausagemeat is crisp around the edges. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon.

② Tip the gnocchi into the pan, fry for a minute or so, then pour in the chicken stock. Once bubbling, cover the pan with a lid and cook for 3 mins, then stir in the kale. Cook for 2 mins more or until the gnocchi is tender and the kale has wilted. Stir in the parmesan, then season with black pepper and scatter the crisp sausagemeat over the top.



Diary Dates

10-11 Jan	Classic Bike Guide Winter Classic
16-17 Jan	Newark Quilting & Sewing Show
24 Jan	'Normous Newark Autojumble
25 Jan	Antique Arms, Medal & Militaria Fair
31 Jan	Festival of the Force
31 Jan	Newark Disco 2026 Party Night
5-6 Feb	Newark International Antiques & Collectors Fair
8 Feb	The Newark & Notts County Wedding Show
14-15 Feb	Newark Well Being Show
16 Feb	Runway Monday Antiques Fair
28 Feb	Hammerhead

For more event information in January and February go to:
www.newarkshowground.com/whats-on

NNAS



Save the date!

9 MAY 2026

Experience the best of farming & rural life from your county
nottinghamshirecountyshow.com

Newark Showground
 NG24 2NY



Staff updates at the Showground!

Saying Goodbye



After four years with us, Harriet has moved on to her next venture. We thank Harriet for everything she has brought to the society – including the newsletter – and wish her every success.

Harriet Canovan



Ellie joined us at the start of last year in a maternity cover position and has now moved on. During her time with us, she was a valued member of the sales team, and we are grateful for her contribution.

Ellie Simpson

Returning Faces



Re-joining us after her maternity leave, and the birth of her beautiful baby girl Celene. Jodie is back in the office, taking over from Ellie, leading our Sales team.

Jodie Heap

Sales Office Manager

Role Changes



Francesca has been with the Society since 2022, joining us as Trade & Sponsorship Officer. In December, she took on a new role and is now our Competitions & Membership Officer. We're delighted to see her step into this position!

Francesca Hayes

Competitions & Membership Officer

New Starters



Ethan joined the showground at the end of November. Previously working as an apprentice cold store engineer, he also has a background working with livestock and tractor experience.

In Ethan's spare time he helps out on his family friend's farm.

Ethan Armstrong

Grounds, Maintenance & Events Support Assistant



Franky Harper has joined our Sales team. Franky brings a wealth of event experience and is looking forward to attracting events for the coming years calendar.

Outside of work, Franky is a keen golfer.

Franky Harper

Sales Executive



Kaitlyn joined the Show team at the very end of 2025, bringing with her a background in Fashion and Retail Marketing as well as Social Media.

She has a keen interest in photography and theatre, and is excited for the busy year ahead!

Kaitlyn Bilton

Marketing & Communications Officer