

RHET Volunteer Newsletter

A newsletter for all the volunteers supporting RHET across Scotland

Introduction



Welcome to our latest RHET volunteer newsletter.

We're delighted to share some excellent news with you! On Thursday 1st October, RHET was announced as the winner of the Education Award at Scottish Land & Estates' Helping It Happen Awards held in Edinburgh. We were shortlisted in the same category as: Border Union Agricultural Society - Learning day for all p5 pupils in the Scottish Borders; Inclusive Farm Scotland at MacRobert and Countryside Learning Scotland - Pathways to Rural Work.

This recognition is a fantastic reflection of the year of passion and commitment from our whole RHET network. A huge thank you to our past and present volunteers, coordinators, staff and supporters who give their time and enthusiasm to help bring learning about food, farming and the countryside to life for young people across Scotland - this award belongs to all of you!

We are working on a plan for the trophy to go on tour, to visit each region to create a series of stories and celebration to say 'thank you' and to help raise awareness of our amazing charity.

The award was collected on behalf of RHET by Sonia Watson (RHET Lothian), Carole Brunton (RHET Fife) and Katrina Barclay (RHET Executive Officer). Photograph attached from the evening with Sarah-Jane Laing (SLE Chief Executive) and Merle Boyd from Terra Magna who sponsored the category and will soon be joining a RHET event to see our work in action.

This newsletter is a chance to share what's been happening across RHET, celebrate some of the great work taking place, and keep you connected with what's coming next. I hope you enjoy catching up.

Katrina Barclay

Katrina Barclay
Executive Officer

Journey of Food

Prize Winners' Celebrate a successful Story of Vegetables year with Vegetable Tasting Session.

To mark the end of the Journey of Food - The Story of Vegetables RHET offered the chance to win a vegetable tasting session. The names of all teachers that completed a feedback form after taking part in Talk To A Farmer 2026 with their class were put into a draw and the lucky winners were St Rose Of Lima Primary School in Glasgow.

The day was delivered by RHET Clyde Project Co-ordinator Kris Paterson and Assistant Project Co-ordinator Julie-Anne Leggate, supported by the Story of Vegetables Co-ordinator Carol Littlewood from RHET ACI.

We spent all day at the school, delivering 7 sessions to just under 200 pupils in the school's P5-7 classes.

Each session started with a short talk about the vegetables we can produce in Scotland and more widely in the UK and then went on to a tasting session, where on offer there was everything from pickled beetroot & parsnip crisps, popcorn & hummus and raw carrots & peas in the pod.

After everyone had had a chance to taste everything there was a discussion about seasonality and ways in which we can preserve food so we can have it out of season and then a poll was taken of what was the pupils' favourite. The results of the poll varied greatly with raw mushroom topping the list in one class and fresh peas going down as favourite with some of the others.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the day and we were really pleased with how enthusiastically the pupils tried things they had never had before.



RHET Local Area Updates



Who Wants To "Be A Farmer"

RHET Angus Countryside Initiative (ACI) was asked to participate in a LANTRA organised event called "Be A Farmer". The venue was Dundee & Angus College's Kingsway Campus and the event was open to S3s from Secondary schools in Tayside. It took place shortly before the summer holidays, just as pupils were starting out on their new courses.

This was an all-day event with groups rotating around about 10 different sets delivered by partner organisations, one of which being RHET ACI. Each set was given a name suggesting a clue to what the jobs available in that sector might be, but which could also be construed in a number of ways. We took along the RHET ACI Countryside Classroom On Wheels and used this as a base for our set, with RHET ACI's title being "Be A Producer" - as none of our volunteer farmers are budding Stephen Spielberg we settled on covering what we know best - being food producers!

Each group that came round was about 15 pupils, so we split them in 3 and they spent about 8 minutes with each of us, so it was short and sharp sessions. We took them through some of the jobs involved in growing cereals, oilseed rape and potatoes, stressing the links to the STEM subjects involved in the jobs and the technical nature of food production on farms today.

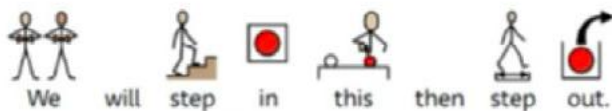
There were schools in attendance from Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross and over 200 pupils were registered to attend.

There was a second day to the event, which was open to pupils and adults looking to follow or change to a career path in the rural sector. For this we had an indoor stall with our careers display and we had more one to one discussions with those that attended about what it is to "Be A Producer".

RHET Ayrshire Supporting ASN Pupils (Additional Support Needs)

With funding from Hugh Fraser Foundation, RHET Ayrshire and Arran were able to support a group of ASN learners from Dreghorn Primary School, North Ayrshire to make a visit to a local dairy farm in May 2026.

The teacher made a short film of the farm at the pre-visit to show pupils what to expect. Jane, RHET project coordinator, supplied photos of the required hygiene measures - such as the blue disinfectant boot wash. She visited the school in advance and pupils enjoyed grinding wheat grain to make flour. The teacher prepared a visual social story to prepare the pupils (see below). This preparation was important in familiarising the pupils with their upcoming experience and provided reassurance for them.



At the start of the visit, some pupils were a little nervous of the animals and the farm surroundings; they were happy just to stand at the entrance to the cattle barn at the beginning. However, by the end of the trip they were asking questions to the farmers about milking the cows, enjoying meeting the calves and enthusiastically sitting in the tractor and quad bike. This is feedback from Nicola Reid, Class Teacher, Dreghorn PS:

"Our recent trip to Fortacres Farm was an amazing experience for the group of learners with ASN from Dreghorn Primary SLR base. None of our learners had ever set foot on a farm, been close to livestock, or sat in a tractor, this opportunity was truly outstanding!

We are immensely grateful for the grant funding that RHET secured to make this excursion possible. By funding the essential coach transport, which was a thrilling first-time coach journey for some of our learners,



RHET made the day completely accessible to everyone. Immersing the learners in a hands-on, sensory-rich environment deepened their understanding of agriculture in a way the classroom never could, leaving a lasting impact on their education while providing unforgettable memories.

A massive thank you to Jane from RHET, and Dorothy and her family from Fortacres Farm for their incredible guidance and dedication. You both ensured our visit was safe, welcoming, and seamless, making every single learner and adult feel fully supported throughout the day".

RHET Success at Scotsheep

RHET Borders recently welcomed 250 local students from seven local schools to the NSA Scotsheep event at Wedderlie Farm. Children ranging from P1 to S4 enjoyed a fun-filled morning of agricultural demonstrations and hands-on activities, celebrating the region's farming heritage.

The action-packed morning featured a wide variety of interactive learning stations within the RHET Farm Discovery Hub. Students tested their skills in a mini stockjudging competition and learned about sheep welfare using RHET's lambing simulator. Expert demonstrations included lamb dressing by James Goldie and

Michael Neill, wool crafting by Fresaichigo, and insight into British Wool. Further activities were generously provided by QMS, Forsyths the Butchers, Borders College, The Tweed Guild of spinners and weavers, and the Tweeddale Crookmakers.

Alongside the demonstrations, students toured breed and trade stands, collecting educational goodies for their NSA bags.

"We are incredibly grateful to the NSA for inviting us to be part of their showcase event," said Ann Redpath for RHET Borders. "A huge thank you goes to all who welcomed the children around the site, as well as to our 50 volunteers and providers who made this a truly unforgettable day of education."



Left: Angela Mill (RHET Fife) demonstrating correct lambing presentation.

Below: Ann Redpath and Bill Brown (RHET Borders).



RHET Forth Valley Moo Maths project

Following a series of farm visits to Plean Farm, Cowie primary school teacher, Donna Bulivant, developed the RHET Moo Maths resource which connects a dairy farm's data with classroom maths lessons. The hands-on, interdisciplinary approach can enhance learners' mathematical skills and build understanding of data literacy and the practical applications of maths in everyday life.

Plean Farmer and RHET Forth Valley chair Lynne Reid, worked with Donna, giving her farm facts, data from the dairy cows pedometers, nutritional inputs and milk output. This was brought together to form Level one and Two Moo Maths and was followed a year later with the RHET Forth Valley funded Level 3 Dairy Data resource.

Project co Ordinator Katie Brisbane, promoted the resource round Stirling, Clackmannan and Falkirk Council primary schools with a Moo Tour. Using Forth Vallerie the life size fibre glass milking cow she told the story of grass to glass and demonstrated how the numbers involved in milk production can be used to teach maths.



From September to November 2025 Katie, Vallerie and RHET Forth Valley volunteers visited 23 schools and spoke to 1766 pupils from P2–P7. The Moo Tour was very well received; we are about to embark on a second Moo Tour for P3 and 4 shortly. If you would like to find out more become a Moo Tour volunteer, please visit the RHET website Moo Maths [HERE](#) and Volunteer [HERE](#).

Summer Shows Shine for RHET

July and August were full of energy and enthusiasm as RHET Argyll & Bute joined a series of agricultural shows and community events across the region.

We began at the **Bute Junior Agricultural Club Children's Gala Day**, where sunshine and smiles set the tone. Visitors explored all things dairy and enjoyed making seed bombs – a fun, hands-on way to learn about growing and sustainability.





Millie the milking cow, kindly on loan from RHET DLR, joined us for her summer holidays, starting at the ever-popular **Lorn Show**, where she was a big hit with families and young learners alike.

Even the rain couldn't dampen spirits at the **Mid Argyll Show**, where we were greatly supported by the community of Lochgilphead and beyond. Delighted to also welcome **Jenni Minto MSP** to the RHET tent for a chat about our educational work.

The season rounded off with a lively and well-attended **Appin Show**, Lochaber Lola, the milking cow helped bring together volunteers, teachers, and farmers to share the joy of farm-based learning. Visitors could take home a soup pack and recipe card or take a few moments to enjoy the crafts on offer.

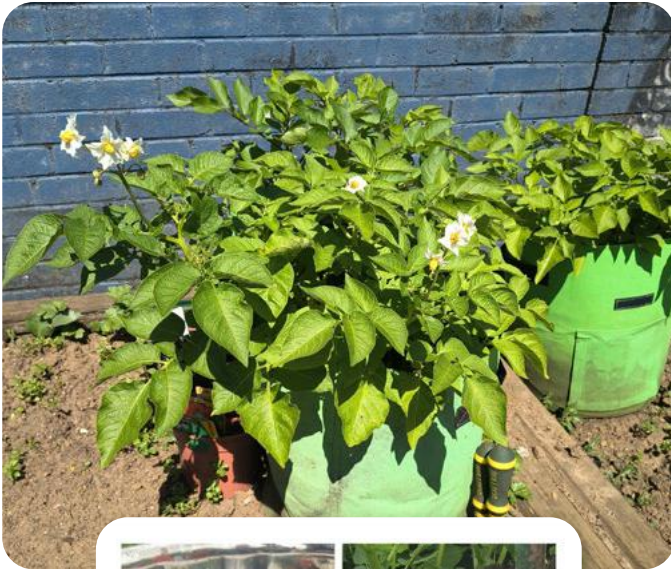
A heartfelt thank-you to all our volunteers who helped make these events such a success – your enthusiasm and teamwork continue to inspire children and communities across Argyll & Bute. If you'd like to get involved in future shows or classroom visits, please reach out – we'd love to have you join the team!

RHET Ayrshire Potato Growing Project

In Spring 2026, RHET AACI launched our first primary school potato growing project. Partly with the RHET Year of Vegetables and partly because Ayrshire has a heritage of potato growing, such as Ayrshire Rocket and Epicure potatoes.

We were grateful to the Wilson family of Low Boydston Farm, North Ayrshire for donating Epicure seed potatoes which enabled us to provide 3 free seed potatoes to 50 primary schools. We sourced bags of vegetable growing compost at a generous discount thanks to Gemmell Garden Centre, Stair, East Ayrshire. Schools also receive the RHET Project Potato Teachers Pack. Our competition was to see which school could produce the heaviest total crop yield from their 3 seed potatoes. Some used the compost bags to cultivate their potatoes and others used old tyres, grow bags, large plant pots or planters.





Pupils carefully tended their potato plants although the variable Spring weather showed them the challenges faced by arable farmers. Even the commercial growers reported that the harvest of some Ayrshire new potatoes might be slightly late. However, the pupils showed patience and resilience and we received lots of photos of happy pupils weighing their potato crop.

The winners were West Kilbride Primary School. Their potato plants produced an amazing 5kg of potatoes, what a great yield. The school has an active outdoor vegetable project and were delighted to receive a gift voucher from Gemmells Garden Centre to continue their vegetable growing.

Over 1,000 Ayrshire primary pupils participated in this activity and feedback from teachers was very positive. Learning outcomes supported food and health, sciences, physical activity and food-technology. RHET AACI aims to repeat this Project in Spring 2027 – hopefully with better weather.

RHET Clyde

RHET Clyde were very lucky in receiving funding from the Sir Hugh Fraser Foundation to allow youngsters to head out on farm visits or attend food and farming days. One such day was the food and farming day at the Museum of Rural Life in East Kilbride where children worked around a series of workshops on tractors, dairy farming and sheep and sheepdog trials. On top of that many children headed out on farm visits to look at food production. A total of 245 children in total had some form of agricultural education thanks to this funding.

Similarly at Lanark Market we were able to run another food and farming day with over 280 children showcasing Scottish produce. This day, funded by the Scottish Government, allowed us to look at dairy production, vegetables, auctioneering, sheep, and tractors. We could not run either of these events



Left: Graham Knox from Gordons explaining how a tractor works.



Below: Rab Leggate shearing at Lanark Market.

without our trusted volunteers who turn up in hordes to help us, not forgetting the RBS agri volunteers who are such a great asset working for a charity such as ours. Feedback from schools was 'Very informative and packed lots into a short time. The pupils then had a good knowledge of the things they learned.'

Due to the continuing success of these two events, where they are consistently oversubscribed, we have introduced another regular food and farming event, this time at a farm each year, and on a separate farm, a new event which we hope to run annually aimed at schools with ASN pupils. This links in nicely with our new development from Julie-Anne, our assistant, who has put together an ASN resource box which can be loaned out to schools fortnightly to work through teaching farming themselves in school.

We are all looking forward to our AGM in October where John Harvie From East Kilbride will come off as chairman and be replaced by Murray Brown from Carnwath. Many thanks to John for taking the position over the last few years. Fiona Trainer from Lanark will become the new vice chair.

RHET Highland

"I wasn't really sure what to expect..." That's what farmer and RHET host George said after welcoming children from Halkirk Primary School onto the farm – but he was genuinely surprised by just how engaged the children were!

From asking questions to getting a closer look at farming and finding out where their food comes from, the children were curious, enthusiastic, and keen to learn.

For our host farmers, it's a chance to share a little bit of everyday farming life with the next generation – and for the children, it's an opportunity to experience first-hand where food comes from and what happens on a working farm.

George summed it up perfectly: "It was great to see them enjoying themselves and learning about farming. I'd definitely do it again."

A huge thank you to George and the team at Stemster for opening the farm gates and helping bring farming to life for our local children. If you would like to host a farm visit, please do get in touch.



Above: The ASN resource box

RHET Fife - A Year of Growth, Learning and Inspiration

RHET Fife is celebrating an exceptionally busy and successful academic year. Demand for our educational programmes continues to grow across the region, and we are delighted to have inspired thousands of young people through engaging, hands-on experiences that connect them with farming, food production and the countryside.

Making a Difference Across Fife

Over the past year, the RHET Fife team has worked with almost 15,450 young people across Fife through a wide range of educational activities, including farm visits, groups attending Food & Farming Days, classroom talks and a variety of special projects, including the Reindeer Dust, Porridge Oat and Pea Project, alongside online sessions such as Talk to a Farmer and Meet the Veg.

Our work extends beyond pupils. This year, we also welcomed 1,298 adults—including teachers, parents and classroom helpers – who joined our sessions, further highlighting the positive impact RHET has within schools and local communities.

Everything we achieve is made possible by our incredible team of volunteers. From farmers who generously open their gates for school visits, to volunteers delivering classroom talks, supporting Food & Farming Days and stewarding events, your enthusiasm, expertise and commitment are at the heart of RHET Fife.

We are extremely grateful to the many businesses and organisations that continue to support our work. Their generosity helps us deliver memorable learning experiences for children across Fife.

Our sincere thanks go to:

QMS, Quaker Oats, Kettle Produce, Fife & West Fife Beekeepers, Fife & Kinross Young Farmers, ESG, Growers Garden, Frontier, SOYL, GWCT, Fife Bloodhounds, Tesco, Agricar, Scottish Agronomy, The Woodland Trust, Collessie Clydesdales, Nelsons of Culross, Balmalcolm

Clydesdales, and the many farmers who so generously welcome local pupils onto their farms.

We would also like to extend special thanks to Balgove Larder, Lindores, Pratis Barns, The Den @ Culross, Bowhouse, 4 Front Farming, The Rhynd and Droverhall for hosting our Food & Farming Days and providing young people with unforgettable opportunities to learn about food production, farming and rural life.

Take the Leap for RHET!

Fancy taking on a challenge with a difference? RHET has purchased six spaces for Stadium Soar at Barclays Hampden in Glasgow taking place on Friday 26 February 2027 and we're looking for people who would like to take part and help raise funds for RHET.

Stadium Soar gives you the chance to experience Scotland's National Stadium like never before. Launching from high above the pitch, you'll soar across the iconic stadium on a thrilling zipline, taking in incredible views and enjoying a truly unique experience.

We're inviting RHET supporters, volunteers, staff and friends to take the leap, get sponsored and raise money for RHET. It's a fantastic opportunity to challenge yourself



while helping support RHET's work inspiring young people to learn more about food, farming and the rural environment.

We have six spaces available, so if this sounds like something you'd be up for, we'd love to hear from you.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact rhinfo@rhass.org.uk

RHET Network People

Dumbarton, Lomond & Renfrew Countryside Initiative

David Scott Park – Chair



David, his wife Freda and son Chris run an organic pasture-fed beef suckler herd on the south shores of Loch Lomond. The farm has diversified to include boat moorings, holiday accommodation, farm tours, and water sports. Portnellan has been chosen to be a host farm for the Loch Lomond National Park Resilient Farm Network (RFN) and has also hosted a recent Integrating Trees Network (ITN) event.

David likes having projects on the farm, enjoys welding and fabricating and can happily spend many hours in the workshop. He has installed several heating systems connected to our biomass boiler and is currently working on the farm Wi-Fi network system to include security cameras and a webcam.

Outside the farm he is Chair of RHET DLR (Dumbarton, Lomond and Renfrew), Chair of the local branch of the NFUS and he sits on the Gartocharn Community Council.

His hobbies & interests include hill walking, and he still does some climbing. He also plays the Highland Pipes & Scottish Small Pipes. This summer he completed the Great Wilderness Challenge, a 25-mile sponsored walk in the hills around Poolewe.



Sheila Bannerman – Dumbarton, Lomond & Renfrew Project Coordinator

Sheila has been in the post of Project Coordinator for Dumbarton, Lomond & Renfrew since March 2008, which covers 6 Local Authorities (West Dunbartonshire, East Dumbarton, Renfrew, East Renfrew, Inverclyde and Lomond & Helensburgh catchment of Argyll & Bute).

"I live on the eastside of Loch Lomond in Balmaha on the family farm with my husband and teenage daughter. We have around 1500 ewes mainly Blackfaces with a few Mules and some pedigree Blueface Leicester's and 80 cows which are Highland & Cross Highlands, over two units we rent. We have also recently started a small flock of Hebridean Sheep. Currently we are setting up a pod camping business on the farm and have recently taken on an apprentice.

I previously worked for The Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park for 24 years having a wide variety of roles whilst there and have been involved in other Food Education Projects.

I enjoy good food, eating out and going for walks with Seoras, my Border terrier pup!"

Forth Valley Countryside Initiative

Lynne Reid - Forth Valley Chair

I was born in Ayrshire grew up in the countryside. Joined Mauchline Young Farmers took part in all activities played netball and Hockey, took part in the concerts doing the plays, dance troop, singing group, Root and Industrial competitions etc and Stock judging.



When I left school I went to hairdressing college and had my own salon for a few years until my first daughter was born.

We moved to Stirling in 1993 bringing our Dairy Herd and followers with us.

I have bred horses for many years, showing them with the help of my daughters, many have gone on to successful careers in showjumping, eventing with their owners.

I still have some youngsters at home, and my Grand Daughter has two ponies which she competes with.

I started volunteering for Rhet Forth Valley in 2001 and I am passionate about what we deliver in the classroom, outdoors at our food and farming days, Estate days, health events, and career days.



Katie Brisbane - Forth Valley Project Coordinator

I was born on a 100-acre small mixed farm in rural Stirlingshire, and from an early age helped with the soft fruit, dairy and sheep, giving me a passion for Scottish grown food. I studied leisure management at Auchincruive, then teamed up with my Mum and brother to set up one of Scotland's first open farms. I married an arable and beef farmer in 1996 and have 4 grown up children and 3 grandchildren. I joined RHET Forth Valley in 2016 and absolutely love telling the story of Scottish Food, the highlights so far have been creating the Reindeer Dust project, working with an enthusiastic teacher to develop Moo maths and being Awesome Oat in the journey of food ..seeds and grains.

Aside from the farm and family, I love cycling, walking and horse riding.



Bethany Nicholls – Forth Valley Coordinator

I joined RHET Forth Valley as the area's second Project Coordinator earlier in 2026. However, longtime volunteers might recognise me from elsewhere first: I've been volunteering with RHET for the past eight years.

Before this role, I spent ten years in veterinary research, including time at the Roslin Institute working on chickens, before I moved into the charity sector as an Area Manager for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Farming and animals have been a constant throughout it all. I used to keep my own smallholding with sheep and pigs, and I still work as a gundog trainer and clinical animal behaviourist. I've got three Springer spaniels at home, and you'll usually find us out beating on shoots somewhere through the season.

Coming into this role after eight years as a volunteer means I already know how much work goes on behind the scenes, and how much difference it makes to the children we reach. I'm looking forward to putting that experience, and a fair bit of animal and countryside know-how, to good use for Forth Valley. If you spot me at a Farm Visit, a training session, or a social, come and say hello.

Royal Highland Show Round Up

The Royal Highland Show 2026 was another fantastic opportunity for RHET to connect young people and families with Scotland's food, farming and rural environment.

Over the four days of the Show, the RHET Discovery Centre provided a hands-on learning space where children could get involved, ask questions and discover more about where their food comes from and how our countryside is cared for.

This year, an amazing 7,000 school pupils from 250 school groups attended the Royal Highland Show through RHET, which is the largest number we have welcomed in recent years. This has given thousands of young people the opportunity to experience the sights, sounds and activities of Scotland's biggest celebration of agriculture and rural life.

Inside the Discovery Centre, there was plenty to see, do and discover. Visitors could get hands-on planting peas, exploring peat,

discovering seafood, becoming Detective Foodies, learning about energy networks and finding out more about red meat. And, of course, there were the much-loved favourites - scone baking, crafting and milking Mabel the cow!

Behind every successful day at the Discovery Centre was a huge team effort. RHET volunteers, Project Coordinators, staff and partner organisations worked together to welcome school groups and members of the public, deliver activities and create a positive learning experience for thousands of visitors.

The Royal Highland Show remains a special opportunity for RHET to reach such a large and diverse audience in one place. The enthusiasm and curiosity of the children who visited the Discovery Centre this year demonstrated just how powerful hands-on learning is. A huge thank you goes to everyone who helped make the 2026 Discovery Centre such a success!