



STRATEGIC PLAN

'Working for the future of farming and rural England'

Introduction

1. Our Royal Charter¹ dated 1840, clearly articulates our objectives as:

"To promote and improve the science, technology, art and practice of agriculture, forestry, horticulture, kindred activities and the husbandry of livestock (including horses) and land and to promote the application of improved methods and processes connected therewith by demonstration and other appropriate means. To promote agricultural and environmental education, research and development and experimental work by maintaining and conducting a learned society and by publications, grants and other means. To advance religion by the promotion of religious activities and values amongst rural communities in such ways as the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine."

2. In a more modern context, the Society embraced these objectives in Strategic Plans dated 2006 and 2009. Much has happened in the last year and it is entirely appropriate to consider again a revision and update. The principles, integrity of our purpose and direction of travel remain exactly the same today as they did 170 years ago. However, it is important to recognise that *'constant change is here to stay'* and therefore the Society's Strategy must embrace change and be open to regular review and refinement.

3. Endorsed by the Society's Trustees, and set in the context of a very difficult economic climate, this Strategy continues the process of freshening and sharpening the previous statements on the purpose of our organisation, as well as updating our goals and priorities. It sets out to clarify the Society's broad intent and aspirations for the Executive to act on and deliver.

4. Without our flagship 'Royal Show' event, it continues to recognise that the Society's standing with farmers, landowners and the agricultural industry has diminished and that the re-establishment of its credentials and credibility within the farming sector remains an absolute priority. To support that purpose, it needs funding and hence the critical importance of a business model that drives commercial activity.

Vision

5. To realise our vision the Society must encourage excellence in farming and inspire all those with an interest in food, farming and rural matters to share a passion for viable long-term and sustainable food production. Never before has this been so relevant as we enter an era when sustainable and renewable energy, as well as global food security are very high on the political and indeed commercial agendas

6. Our vision is:

¹ Royal Agricultural Society of England Royal Charter dated March 1840 last amended May 2003

“A charitable organisation with an independent view of National and global standing, delivering Practice with Science, education and social needs to farmers, land managers, and rural communities’

and simplified, our ‘strap-line’ is:

‘Working for the future of farming and rural England’

Mission

7. Our *core purpose*, is to be a forward thinking, vibrant, independent, and apolitical charity that *aims to deliver relevance and value to the industry* specifically focusing on two essentials:

Primarily through the activities of the RASE:

Practice with Science in the Agricultural Sector: The national academic and practical lead, encouraging and stimulating agricultural innovation; knowledge and technology transfer; the application of good science and promoting best practice with emphasis on profitable and environmentally sound production and land management, as well as sustainability.

& delivered through the activities of our sister charities, namely The Arthur Rank Centre (ARC), and Farming and Countryside Education (FACE):

Wider Rural Education, Sustainability and Community Support: The national lead that actively contributes to the social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of our rural communities, the countryside in which they live and fostering a greater understanding of farming and countryside matters among the general public and in schools.

Realising our Vision

8. To realise this vision, we must embrace:

- Collaboration - acknowledge our finite area of expertise, work in partnerships and close association with those with better suited skills while acting as a catalyst and enabler with the public and private sectors both nationally and internationally to deliver our core purpose;
- Teamwork and communication - work closely together towards a common goal in order to deliver;
- Business development and income generation with considerable emphasis on joint ventures and partnerships, in order to minimise financial risk and fund the charitable activities to fulfil the Vision.
- Sustainable and renewable energy development of the Stoneleigh Park site;

Supporting Objectives

9. The vision will be achieved through supporting objectives:

1. Meeting the Society’s Charitable Objectives

The effective use of the Society’s resources to deliver a programme of work appropriate to the Society’s remit, which meets the needs of the industry and communities we serve and

generates income for the Society. This includes the work of the Practice with Science Advisory Group (PwS AG), the Society's technical events, exhibitions, conferences, Journal etc. and the work of ARC and FACE. In addition, re-vitalising the work, influence and profile of the Society. In the future we need greater emphasis on the English regions by engagement with our Council, our College of Honorary Fellows and our members, as well as the co-option of representatives with regional contacts and knowledge, including much closer affiliations and partnerships with other like-minded Societies and organisations.

We must strengthen our effective marketing of the Society's work programme and Stoneleigh Park to farmers and their industry, land managers, rural communities and all related organisations and businesses followed by comprehensive publicity of its achievements. This will include development of a PR programme and the channels associated with this, such as technical events, promotional material, learned papers, press releases, establishing press and media contacts at regional and national level, extensive use of the web and IT.

We must also support a publicly accessible National Agricultural/Rural Heritage facility or archive.

Priority 1. Provide an independent and respected voice for agriculture, land management and rural matters delivered through a focussed and coherent communication strategy. RASE

Priority 2. Provide an impartial and respected voice on wider educational, economic, social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of our rural communities. ARC/FACE

2. Protect our investment and ensure there are sustainable funding streams

Maximise the appropriate use of Stoneleigh Park and all its facilities to generate income and consolidate the site as the *venue of choice* for all matters rural through collaborative and beneficial partnerships and joint ventures. While safeguarding our reputation, wherever financially advantageous, using the expertise and skills of outside specialists including the management and delivery of:

- the marketing, promotion and sales of the site and its' facilities
- Stoneleigh Park Lodge, Blackdown, Camping and Caravan accommodation
- external events and exhibitions
- our own technical/agricultural and commercially focused events
- Stoneleigh Park's extensive property portfolio
- exploiting renewable energy and low carbon technology opportunities

In addition, initiating the transformation of the Stoneleigh Park site², in partnership with others, into a national and international focus for rural and equine activities, as well as the UK's leading destination for everyone with an interest in food production, farming, the countryside, sustainable and renewable energy, as well as low-carbon output technologies;

Priority 3. Create dynamic partnerships and joint ventures that provide access to additional expertise and resources, protect and manage our investments and maximise

² This was effectively put on hold in mid 2009 following the announcement that our RDA - Advantage West Midlands, had insufficient funds to support the development and build of a new A46 link road into the site.

income generation while operating under an umbrella of rigorous financial checks and controls.

3. Fostering a vibrant and active membership of the Society

Instigate a radical overhaul of the membership programme in order to better meet the future requirements of the agricultural sector and associated activities in a highly competitive market, focussing on like-minded organisation collaborations, greater emphasis on regional activity and recruiting a broader and especially younger age profile.

Priority 4 Deliver a beneficial, inclusive and exciting membership programme and plan.

4. Having effective internal processes

Under strong leadership and in a safe working environment, motivate the Society's staff based on a clear vision for the Society and direction of its work; good governance and management that empowers staff to grow, be confident, share responsibility and enjoy being part of a dynamic team that takes pride in the Society which they serve; recognition of personal achievement in the delivery of shared goals and objectives and Society values³; and encouraging staff development through provision of appropriate training and personal development.

Priority 5. Working through an efficient internal communication plan, recruit, train, motivate and retain our own people in order that they can work in a safe, businesslike and harmonious environment.

Priority 6. Maintain the integrity of the charitable status and strict governance under which the Society operates.

10. This Strategic Plan embraces and enhances the process of creating a Society that is well manned, fully equipped and ready to meet future challenges. The Executive will write detailed Action and Business plans that support the priorities above and conduct an organisational review to ensure the Society is optimised and fit for purpose. This is a dynamic and 'living' document and will be refined when appropriate; however, it should be formally reviewed in roughly 3 years.



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Brian Warren OBE FCIM
Chief Executive



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Henry G Cator OBE FRICS DL
Chairman of Trustees

³ The RASE is unequivocal in its belief that a flourishing, inclusive and accessible countryside can only be achieved if a profitable and sustainable agriculture is at its heart. To this end, RASE supports:

- the development and independence of rural communities and the promotion of social responsibility;
- an ethical, inclusive and collaborative approach to its commercial activities, acting as a fair trade customer and supplier and sourcing products from British businesses where possible;
- leadership in education, innovation and demonstration, underpinned by its motto, Practice with Science, and working with other industry stakeholders in and cross sector to promote knowledge and technology transfer;
- total social inclusion irrespective of race or creed and commits to activity, through its charitable activities, to help relieve rural stress, support rural families and mitigate any form of hardship in rural communities;
- a policy of high environmental care in the management of both its commercial and farmed estate;
- clarity and fairness in its dealings with its employees, customers, suppliers, tenants, partners and other stakeholders.