



**The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution**

**Strategy 2019-2022**

## **Our Vision**

No member of the farming community will ever have to face adversity alone.

## **Our Mission**

We exist to provide guidance, practical care and financial support to those in need within the farming community.

## **Our Values**

- **Caring** – We are committed to treating everyone with empathy and compassion.
- **Trust** - We won't let people down, working with honesty and openness to achieve what we have promised.
- **Fair** – We strive to treat everyone equally and reasonably.
- **Stewardship** – We take great care of the resources entrusted to us and act with integrity to maximise their use.
- **Respect** – We value the contribution made by all and treat others as we would like to be treated, with sensitivity and without prejudice.

## The Foundations for Change

From the formation of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution ('R.A.B.I') back in 1860, through to the present day, we have remained steadfast in our duty to support the most vulnerable members of the farming community. Initially founded by a group of Essex farmers under the leadership of Alderman John Mechi for 'the relief of farmers, their widows and orphans,' the work of R.A.B.I remains as relevant today as it has ever been during its 160 year history.

Against a backdrop of continuing fundamental uncertainties for the farming community, including the as yet undefined impacts of Brexit and the new Agricultural Bill, those working in farming today face increased pressure to maintain high standards during a period of significant instability. R.A.B.I believes it has a crucial role to play now and into the future to support the well-being of this community.

R.A.B.I continues to apply the guiding principles of our Royal Charter; to provide relief to those who are, or have been employed in the farming industry and their families. To ensure we continue to maximise the impact of our support, during 2019 we are launching an ambitious strategy that looks ahead, asking some fundamental questions about what the future could look like and how we can best help.

During this review we expect to redefine some of our internal structures and frameworks whilst building on our existing support packages. We must consider how we continue developing; delivering transformational programmes that evolve to meet the changing needs of the community we support.

Developing on the strategic and operational objectives established in our 2017 strategic plan, the 2019 strategy sets out a clear and effective vision: to support the farming community; developing new approaches that deliver accessible and flexible solutions to address immediate needs and provide longer-term support packages.

## Our Strategic Aims

We understand that sometimes dealing with life's challenges can be tough. R.A.B.I is here to help identify and develop solutions that provide the farming community with tools to help them get through difficult times. In addition to continuing to provide our existing programmes of support, to meet this enduring ambition, during 2019-2022 we will:

1. Evidence our understanding of how life's challenges affect those who farm; using this knowledge to develop and deliver flexible and accessible programmes of support that reach more people.
2. Continue to increase awareness of our work and support programmes within the farming community.
3. Strengthen existing relationships and develop new ways to engage with our supporters.
4. Manage our charity as effectively and efficiently as possible.

## **1. Evidence our understanding of how life's challenges affect those who farm; using this knowledge to develop and deliver flexible and accessible programmes of support that reach more people**

### **To achieve this we will:**

- Strengthen our engagement programmes with partner support organisations
- Consider impact and need across all members of the farming family
- Develop new methods to measure and report the social value of our work
- Build new partnerships to develop the availability of services and choice
- Introduce new support initiatives

### **Some of the things we plan to do:**

#### **Stakeholder engagement**

We will work to increase awareness of R.A.B.I and highlight the opportunities to collaborate with us to help shape the future. To maximise flexibility for our stakeholders to connect with us we plan to initially focus on increasing our digital content and reach.

#### **Create a social impact framework**

With support from external specialists, we plan to invest in developing a progressive impact framework to reliably inform future strategic direction and shape the most effective operational targeting of our future support programmes.

#### **Build an evidence library**

We will seek to collate research to provide a strong evidence base of quantitative and qualitative data which can be used to better understand and improve our support; ensuring we reach those who most need our help.

#### **Develop more accessible confidential support**

We understand that sometimes the little things pile up and life can quickly become too much for anyone to deal with alone. To ensure any perceived stigma associated with seeking support is removed, we plan to design confidential proactive support that can be accessed as it is needed, fitting around the applicant's commitments.

#### **Support the development of integrated assistance**

We will explore the potential to introduce new processes that allow R.A.B.I to facilitate a holistic package of support to applicants. These will seek to provide an applicant with a consistent coordinator throughout the process, even where assistance is obtained via several partner organisations. We will forge enduring relationships with local communities, relevant government agencies, local and national providers to facilitate these comprehensive support packages.

## **2. Continue to increase awareness of our work and support programmes within the farming community**

### **To achieve this we will:**

- Make sure our support is flexible, accessible and easily understandable
- Develop and promote the value of the R.A.B.I brand
- Strengthen and develop the scope of our digital media
- Build on existing local and national partnerships with corporate, service and support organisations who work with the farming community

### **Some of the things we plan to do:**

#### **Invest in Information Systems**

We will invest in our staff, data management and digital infrastructure to ensure we can communicate effectively with everyone who would like to be involved with R.A.B.I, or could benefit from our support. We will continue to develop our website to provide straightforward guidance and interactive informative access to R.A.B.I.

#### **Increase brand awareness**

We understand the value of the R.A.B.I brand and will review how we can continue to develop and utilise this to promote our work. Following necessary investment in our information systems, we will initiate programmes to increase the volume of our proactive and reactive media relations work to raise the profile of R.A.B.I and expand the reach of our work and messages.

#### **Simplify our support processes**

We will focus on providing a suite of simple, tailored application forms and guidance sheets for all our programmes of support.

#### **Develop Partnership Programmes**

We will focus on extending our links with farming support organisations. Building on the already strong levels of local and regional support, we will seek to build lasting relationships with targeted corporate and service organisations who work with the farming community, establishing a network of R.A.B.I advocates across the UK.

#### **Develop and deliver core messaging**

We will continue to work with our network of Trustees, staff and volunteers to maximise our understanding of R.A.B.I's response to local and national issues, providing clear and consistent core messaging. We will develop our understanding of key events and opportunities to promote R.A.B.I's work and increase the availability of appropriately media trained R.A.B.I advocates.

### 3. **Strengthen existing relationships and develop new ways to engage with our supporters**

#### **To achieve this we will:**

- Enhance and develop the depth of our core fundraising resources
- Strengthen our engagement programmes with partner support organisations
- Develop new volunteer assistance initiatives
- Ensure we understand our supporters and create engaging long-term connections

#### **Some of the things we plan to do:**

##### **Develop our supporter stewardship plan**

We will invest in our data management systems to ensure we really understand who our supporters are. Following the implementation of necessary enhancements to our information systems, we will develop tailored communication packages that engage with our supporters throughout their journey with R.A.B.I.

##### **Invest in our volunteers**

We will invest in our regional volunteers, who epitomise the spirit of R.A.B.I across England and Wales. We will work to better demonstrate our recognition of the value of our volunteer committees by improving how we communicate, provide training and share best practice and core messaging.

##### **Expand our story**

We understand that the impact of our work lies at the heart of everything we do and is therefore the most powerful message we can provide. Respecting the right to confidentiality, we will work to develop our library of feedback and stories from those we have supported.

##### **Evaluate our fundraising resources**

We will complete a review of the current fundraising and communications resources to ensure we have the most appropriate and robust structures going forwards to develop and implement evolving strategies that keep our supporter feeling valued and engaged with R.A.B.I.

##### **Develop Partnership Programmes**

We plan to concentrate on building long-lasting relationships with corporate supporters. Focussing initially on ensuring those operating within the farming industry understand our impact, we will seek to identify and extend our reach to other commercial organisations we believe will engage with our work.

## **4. Manage our charity as effectively and efficiently as possible**

### **To achieve this we will:**

- Value our people and support them to do their jobs well
- Develop and diversify our income streams to make sure our resources match our ambitions
- Manage our funds to enable us to provide support now and in the future
- Demonstrate best practice in the governance of R.A.B.I and management of our regulatory responsibilities
- Explore options to maximise the use of our properties

### **Some of the things we plan to do:**

#### **Safeguard long-term sustainability**

We will continue to maintain robust and effective financial planning, controls and management; investing funds appropriately to meet current and future needs. We will continue to strive to maximise value for money in everything we do.

#### **Consolidate our people programmes**

We will involve our staff in embedding our values and objectives throughout R.A.B.I, seeking regular feedback, listening, responding and acting where necessary. We will initially focus on completing the review and development of a resilient structure within R.A.B.I that will continue to evolve to support our long-term aims.

#### **Investment Asset Management**

We will continue to consider options to best manage the responsibilities and risks associated with our investment and property assets. We will consider the realisation of worth from our assets where this is identified as providing appropriate maximisation of value to R.A.B.I.

#### **Develop fundraising and funding initiatives**

We will build relationships with trusts, corporates and charities to grow the number and value of funding partnerships. We will research and consider potential new funding initiatives, including lottery and legacy campaigns.

#### **Regulatory support services**

We will continue to review our structures and processes that identify and manage key risks. We will complete a full review of our existing internal and external risk management frameworks and will research options for external outsourcing of support services where these are indicated as appropriate and providing longer-term efficiencies.