

CEO UPDATE



Crikey, it seems like no time at all since my last update and yet the year is drawing to a close once again. Roll on 2026! It has certainly been a turbulent 2025, with Bluetongue wreaking havoc throughout the summer and a great deal of disjointed thinking and indifference from the various authorities charged with its control. The uncertainty undoubtedly affected Society sales, with both vendors and buyers unsure whether they could buy or sell at our four locations.

The disease has now made its way across the Irish Sea, with cases in Northern Ireland testing positive this month. Export from Northern Ireland was suspended just after our last female sales because of the outbreak, so those fixtures were fortunately unaffected. Schmallerberg managed to cross in the past, so it comes as little surprise that Bluetongue has now done the same.

Let's hope for a clearer run in 2026 as we head towards lambing time for our early-lambing breed. I hope it goes smoothly for each and every one of you.

COUNCIL MATTERS

These reports give me the chance to update you on Council discussions and share the direction we are taking to benefit you all and ensure that being part of the Society remains

Financially, we are in good shape. The 2024/2025 year-end accounts have been audited and show a surplus within our trading accounts for the second year running, after two years of negative figures. While that is encouraging, we are not here to make a profit. Council discussed several options to invest the surplus accrued over the last two years. We have agreed to form a subgroup to review these suggestions and bring forward new ideas to help drive the breed forward. This is an exciting prospect, and we aim to share our decisions with you in the first half of 2026. Our intention is to maintain the positive trajectory we are on, keeping a careful eye on spending while increasing income through wider activities rather than through higher fees.

MEMBERSHIP

We continue to work on ways to make the Society more inclusive to the wider sheep industry and bring more people into the fold, while protecting the value of full membership.

December 2025 has been a record breaker with twenty-five new members and flocks joining the Society. If that isn't a sign we are on the right path, I don't know what is—but we must not be complacent. Taking our foot off the gas is not an option.

EVENTS

For 2026, we have increased our presence at key events. We will be taking space at the Balmoral Show within the NSA Sheep Stand, a trade stand at the Sheep Breeders Round Table, and stands at the two major Sheep Events of 2025—both in the MV-accredited areas and, additionally, small representation in the non-MV sections. We will also be part of the Stratified Sheep Group under the new banner Native British Lamb 365.

**SOCIETY SALES
2026**

Society Sale dates were confirmed by Council and agreed by Branches involved.

Scottish Area Branch Sale, Lanark

- Inspection & Show: 15 July 2026
- Sale: 16 July 2026

NI Premier Export Sale, Ballymena

- Inspection: 17 July 2026
- Show & Sale: 18 July 2026

National Show and Sale, Shrewsbury

- Inspection & Show: 24 July 2026
- Sale: 25 July 2026

Northern Branch Sale, Carlisle

- Inspection & Show: 31 July 2026
- Sale: 1 August 2026

We have also begun expanding Society involvement with additional sales fixtures around the country. These are not Society sales, but Society-supported sales, designed to add value to your stock outside the four pedigree sales and deepen our connection with the non-MV Suffolk flocks and the commercial market using Suffolk genetics.

FEMALE SALES

Our female sale season has now concluded—and what a year it has been! Clearance rates were outstanding, and trade was strong at every sale without exception. High demand for females reflects a breed very much in growth, and we are working hard to keep that momentum going and ensure strong returns on your investment.

**YEARBOOK
2026**

Production of the Yearbook is well underway, and we hope to have it delivered by March 2026. Thank you for submitting advert artwork, photos, reports and content requests.

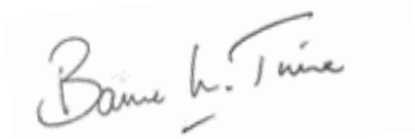
We are aiming for a strong balance of show and sale reports, technical articles, and knowledge-exchange content. We hope you enjoy it when it lands on your doorstep.

**GRASSROOTS
UPGRADE**

We are preparing to implement an upgrade to the Grassroots system, scheduled for February 2026. Moving to a Windows-based system should bring significant improvements in capability and allow us to develop more online resources for members. Once it is installed and settled, we will explore its full potential. Our key priority remains making the system simpler for you to use, with greater functionality at your fingertips.

There was much more discussed at Council—all very positive. The Suffolk Advantage message is spreading, with more producers recognising what Suffolk genetics can offer in both pedigree and commercial systems. The Suffolk Mule continues to grow in popularity, and Suffolk influence at any level is delivering real and noticeable benefits. Creating demand for the stock you work so hard to produce is central to our mission, and we are doing everything possible to strengthen that demand.

That just leaves me to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous New Year in 2026 on behalf of the Office Staff and Council.



Barrie L Turner
CEO