



ROYAL NORFOLK
AGRICULTURAL
ASSOCIATION

The background of the cover is a collage of three images. The top image shows a musician on a stage at sunset, with a large crowd in the background. The middle image is a close-up of a field of wheat. The bottom image is an aerial view of a large festival with many tents and a large crowd.

STRATEGIC AIMS & IMPACT REPORT

2024

THIS REPORT SEEKS TO SET OUT THE ASSOCIATION'S STRATEGIC AIMS AND SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES WE DELIVER AND IMPACTS WE ACHIEVE. WE ARE IN THE EARLY STAGES OF A JOURNEY THAT WILL ENABLE A TRANSFORMATION IN THE LEVEL AND SCOPE OF THIS IMPACT ON NORFOLK'S ECONOMY, CULTURE AND PEOPLE OVER TIME. WE LOOK FORWARD TO REPORTING AND SHARING IN THE FUTURE AS WE MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS.

ROBERT ALSTON, CHAIRMAN
MARK NICHOLAS MBE DL, MANAGING DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association is about much more than the annual Royal Norfolk Show. Throughout the year, we run a vibrant programme of activities and events, with the overarching aim of supporting farming and food production in Norfolk. This aim is achieved across diverse workstreams, from facilitating cross-sector engagement, through resourcing personal and professional development to delivering education and learning opportunities to many thousands of children and families each year.

As a registered charity, we are able to maintain an independent approach, focusing on delivering benefits to our members and to the people of Norfolk and beyond. We promote and enable collaboration, bringing policymakers, scientists, researchers, academics, businesses and others together with farmers and food producers, creating a forum for knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practice.

Report Contents

- 01** Introduction & Summary
- 02** The RNAA
- 03** Resourcing the Future
- 05** A Place to do Business
- 07** The Royal Norfolk Show
- 09** Learning & Education
- 11** Culture & Leisure
- 12** Environment
- 13** Strategic Fit
- 14** The Future

IMPACT SUMMARY

£20M+

Contribution of
Royal Norfolk
Show to
Norfolk's
economy

450,000+

People coming
to Norfolk
Showground
each year

13,000+

Children
benefiting from
RNAA education
programmes

350

Acre strategic
site at the heart
of Norfolk

750+

Businesses
engaging with
the RNAA each
year

£250K+

Value of support
given to young
people and
charitable
organisations



FOR OVER 175 YEARS THE ROYAL NORFOLK AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN A CONSTANT IN OUR COUNTY'S BROAD AND DIVERSE HERITAGE. THROUGH ITS OBJECTIVE OF SUPPORTING FOOD, FARMING AND COUNTRYSIDE, IT CONTINUES TO LEVERAGE ITS UNIQUE ABILITY TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO PURSUE THE COMMON GOOD AND ACT AS A BASTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR – PROTECTING OUR SHARED INTERESTS AND INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE. WITH THE FABULOUS NORFOLK SHOWGROUND SITE THE ASSOCIATION REMAINS A LEADING INSTITUTION NOT ONLY IN NORFOLK BUT MUCH FURTHER AFIELD. I AM DELIGHTED THAT THIS REPORT SETS OUT THE RANGE OF THE RNAA'S REACH AND ACTIVITIES, THE ASSOCIATION'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF TRAVEL AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR COUNTY.

The Lady Dannatt MBE, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk

THE RNAA

The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association was established in 1847 to promote the image, understanding and prosperity of agriculture and the countryside. Bringing together a number of smaller groups established in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the aim from the start was to build an organisation of a size and stature to represent effectively the county's farming and food production industry and to share knowledge, innovation and best practice across the sector.

While the methods of achieving the Association's objectives change to meet the needs of the time, the RNAA has been a constant over 175 or more years. Stability in membership – some farms and farming families have been involved for well over a century – combines with proactive engagement to ensure an openness to change.

The Association's unique strengths include our ability to bring together sector leaders and policymakers locally, regionally, nationally and internationally; our relationships with and access to partners across science, academia, business and the voluntary sector; and our agility in responding to the needs of our members and the community.



After more than 100 years of travelling around the county, the RNAA found its home in Costessey, just southwest of Norwich, in 1954. A permanent site and physical presence gives the Association the space to meet our own needs and a resource to make available to organisations, communities and activities from across Norfolk and beyond.

Although the RNAA's highest public profile is achieved through the annual Royal Norfolk Show, the Association maintains a busy programme for the other 363 days of the year.

03

ROYAL NORFOLK
AGRICULTURAL
ASSOCIATION

RESOURCING THE FUTURE

STRATEGIC AIM

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ENABLE AND ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO GO ON TO CONTRIBUTE TO A THRIVING RURAL ECONOMY AND TO EQUIP THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE.

The RNAA seeks to support farming and food production now and into the future. The Association's profile and track record enable us to draw together leaders from across sectors, linking in with agriculture's current and next generation.



LEADING THE FIELD

Our 'Leading the Field' consultation brought together more than 60 sector leaders to explore the future of the Association, helping us to shape strategy and to identify practical steps to put this into practice. This collaborative approach ensures that the RNAA is able to represent and resource a broad spectrum of stakeholders linked to food, farming and the countryside.



FOOD, FARMING & ENVIRONMENT FORUM

Under the broad heading of the Food, Farming & Environment Forum, we are able to bring together leaders and key thinkers from across agriculture and related policy and practice sectors for consultation, knowledge transfer and exchange and to inform debate.



NORFOLK FARMING CONFERENCE

The Norfolk Farming Conference is a flagship event for the East of England. Bringing together 400 delegates active in agriculture, land management and associated sectors, the conference attracts nationally and internationally-recognised speakers from policy, practice and academia. As well as exploring current issues in food and farming, the event identifies and addresses future challenges and gives a forum for networking amongst farmers and land managers unparalleled outside the Royal Norfolk Show.

27

Tenant farmers brought together for a Defra consultation event

52

Leading farmers engaged to work with scientists at the John Innes Centre on practical on-farm problems that could benefit from science-based solutions

140

Young farmers and professionals brought together at Future of Farming panel event to explore and address the opportunities and issues facing agriculture in Norfolk



NORFOLK VOICES FOR NORFOLK FUTURES

Norfolk Voices for Norfolk Futures is a new initiative bringing together young people in the industry to explore a vision for agriculture in 2050. Launched at an oversubscribed event at the Royal Norfolk Show 2023, participants in the programme have gone on to contribute to other high profile events. With a growing pool of RNAA-supported young people to draw on, we anticipate Norfolk Voices playing an increasing role in future activities.



THE YIELD NETWORK

The YIELD (Young, Innovative, Enterprising, Learning and Developing) Network runs a range of member activities throughout the year as well as acting as a peer-to-peer support network. With an active membership of nearly 300 people aged under 45, YIELD provides a unique forum to explore issues around innovation and technology in farming as well as supporting succession and transition.



FARM & INDUSTRY VISITS

A programme of Farm and Industry Visits connects members and the broader sector with innovative and interesting developments across the farming and food production sector. Recent events have included automated root crop processing at Frederick Hiam Foods, Low Carbon Farming's tomato and cucumber greenhouses at Crown Point as well as machinery manufacturers, automated dairy systems and regenerative farming pilots.

05

ROYAL NORFOLK
AGRICULTURAL
ASSOCIATION

A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS



STRATEGIC AIM


TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES TO THRIVE AND GROW IN A SUPPORTIVE, COLLABORATIVE AND CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT.

Over the course of a year, we host a broad range of business events – agricultural demonstrations, meetings, conferences, B2B events, music festivals, trade shows and much more. All of these bring economic benefits to Norfolk as well as adding to the profile and vibrancy of the county.

We have invested significantly in the Norfolk Events Centre – the county’s largest uninterrupted indoor event and conference space. We also have a range of meeting rooms for groups of 6 to 500. The Showground is an increasingly popular venue for a wide range of activities and events across the full spectrum of Norfolk’s business sectors.


4,000 People capacity at Norfolk’s largest indoor event & conference space

3,000 m2 Space with kitchen, toilets and a breakout space

 Accommodating any scale or type of event

150 Acres of versatile outdoor event space

200 Acres of parking and ancillary facilities

 A flexible ‘can-do’ attitude from our events team

The Showground sits in a high-profile strategic location for the county and region. It is at the heart of the Food Enterprise Zone, and at the centre of a triangle made up of the Food Enterprise Park, the University of East Anglia and Norwich Research Park, and the Hethel Innovation Centre. Within an hour’s drive of Wisbech in the west and Great Yarmouth in the east, Wells-next-the-Sea in the north and Needham Market in the south, it is also easily accessible by public transport and sits on strategic cycling routes linking to Norwich and Wymondham.

Across the Showground, we have a number of commercial tenancies ranging from dog daycare to HGV driver training. The site has a range of units for commercial use - office space, commercial kitchens, barn storage as well as extensive parkland and a network of roadways. The Showground has become a popular base for early and mid-stage businesses, and we work with tenants to support them as they develop.

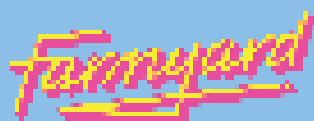
The RNAA has developed an Agricultural Hub, with Norfolk Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Norfolk Federation of Young Farmers’ Clubs, Norfolk Farm Machinery Club (NORMAC) and YANA (the regional rural mental health support charity) all based on site alongside our own offices.

Norfolk
young farmers.





We were delighted to provide space for Norfolk Community Foundation's nourishing Norfolk project from its inception.



Farmyard Pizzeria was established at the Showground, enabling the business to develop and grow before taking a unit at the Food Enterprise Park.



The catering operation of this social enterprise expanded from the city centre to a new base at the Showground, giving them space needed for their growing business.



The East of England Energy Group (EEEGR) annual conference brings together more than 1,000 delegates from across the globe for a two-day event promoting Norfolk and the region's £6bn energy sector.

LOVEDAY PARTNERS

Loveday & Partners held a Summer Festival event for 600 existing and potential clients, using the Norfolk Events Centre, taking advantage of the Showground's capacity, scalability and ample parking.

THE ENVIRONMENT, ACCESSIBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY OF THE SHOWGROUND MAKES IT AN IDEAL BASE FOR US. IT'S EASY FOR CLIENTS TO VISIT AND TO PARK, AND OUR STAFF CAN TRAVEL BY BUS OR CYCLE. IT'S GREAT TO HAVE EVENT SPACES AVAILABLE ON SITE TOO FOR TRAINING AND CONFERENCES.

Damen Chapman
Director of CyberScale





STRATEGIC AIM

TO DELIVER A MULTI-SECTOR HOWCASE EVENT, CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT, PROMOTING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE, AND SHOWCASING AGRICULTURE AND THE BEST OF NORFOLK FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTY AND THE WIDER REGION.



THIS WAS A THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE AND EDUCATIONAL DAY OUT FOR OUR CHILDREN. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE AT THE SHOWGROUND FOR WHAT WAS A TRULY MEMORABLE DAY. WE CANNOT WAIT TO ARRANGE OUR NEXT VISIT!

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER



THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR LETTING US JOIN THE SHOW - AS FIRST TIMERS WE DIDN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT BUT WE ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT. IT WAS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH THE PUBLIC - WE HAD SO MANY CONVERSATIONS AND SO MANY SIGN UPS ON THE ORGAN DONATION REGISTER! WE WILL DEFINITELY BE THERE NEXT YEAR!

NHS EXHIBITOR

TERRIFIC ENTHUSIASM AND PASSION FROM THE EXHIBITORS. UNBEATABLE!

STEMM VILLAGE VISITOR



The Royal Norfolk Show is a remarkable showcase for Norfolk. The country's largest two-day agricultural show, in 2023 we welcomed nearly 80,000 visitors over the two days including more than 10,000 schoolchildren. The Show makes a contribution in excess of £20 million to Norfolk's economy, attracting visitors from across the UK and beyond. As well as the traditional elements of a county show, the Royal Norfolk Show makes important contributions to the county's business, education, cultural and voluntary sectors. More than 600 trade stands cover everything from start-ups, working in partnership with Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, to major international businesses.

I HAD A GREAT SHOW, I REALLY ENJOYED IT - I WAS RUSHED OFF MY FEET WITH CUSTOMERS. THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE MAKES PEOPLE CAREFUL, BUT LOTS AND LOTS OF ENTHUSIASTIC INTEREST AND COMMITMENTS SO I'M REALLY CONFIDENT THEY WILL COME BACK TO ME OVER THE NEXT 6 MONTHS. I'M STILL DEVELOPING MY BRAND, AND ALL LAST YEAR'S HAPPY CUSTOMERS CAME BY TO SAY HELLO!

TRADE STAND HOLDER

WE WERE BEYOND IMPRESSED WITH THE SHOW – THE BEST WE HAVE BEEN TO THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE WHOLE EVENT SMELT OF SUCCESS. THANKS FOR ALL YOU DID FOR ME – EXCEPTIONAL AND BEYOND BELIEF. DELIGHTED TO SPONSOR AGAIN FOR 2024!

SPONSOR



650+
UNSUNG
HEROES IN
COMMUNITY
CHAMPIONS
TRIBUTE



1 GUINNESS
WORLD
RECORD
ACHIEVED



600+
BUSINESSES
EXHIBITING

100+
LIVE MUSICAL
PERFORMANCES



LEARNING & EDUCATION

STRATEGIC AIM

TO PROMOTE INTEREST IN AND UNDERSTANDING OF FOOD, FARMING AND THE COUNTRYSIDE AND LINKS TO THE WIDER SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND CLEAN ENERGY SECTORS.

The Food & Farming Discovery Trust, our sister charity, delivers a comprehensive programme aimed at children of school age and undergraduates. Over the past two years, the FFDT has directly engaged nearly 25,000 young people as well as making a range of curriculum-linked resources available online



As well as delivering the schools' programme at the Royal Norfolk Show, the FFDT goes out to schools and to events around the county, participating in the Norwich Science Festival, Aylsham Show, Open Farm Sunday and much more. Activities include:



Learn about Livestock

Offering 20 Norfolk schools the opportunity to look after a ewe and her lamb(s) for a week. Of particular interest to primary and special schools, the scheme partners with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and Chapelfield Veterinary Partnership to enable children to learn about animal husbandry and to engage with farmers and food producers in their area.

AgriTech Careers for a Sustainable Future

A one day course, working in partnership with Norwich Research Park and the John Innes Centre. This brings sixth form students together with leading researchers and industry experts to explore how science, technology and engineering combine to solve agricultural problems.



LEARNING AND EDUCATION ARE AT THE HEART OF THE RNAA'S CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES. AS WELL AS THE ROYAL NORFOLK SHOW, WITH ITS UNIQUE RANGE AND REACH OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, WE ARE PROUD TO DELIVER INITIATIVES TARGETING PARTICULAR GROUPS TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF – AND ENGAGEMENT WITH – FOOD, FARMING AND THE COUNTRYSIDE.



RNAA Opportunities Fund

A major new initiative is the RNAA Opportunities Fund, through which we are able to support an increasing number of young people seeking to enter or develop their career in agriculture. Funded through donations from our membership, from businesses and through grants from charitable trusts and foundations, the Opportunities Fund enables us to invest in the future of Norfolk's food and farming. Through the Opportunities Fund, we help young people to develop and enhance skills, to open up new opportunities, to celebrate success, and to raise awareness of the breadth of options available to those considering a career in agriculture.

The Opportunities Fund has also supported:

- £ BURSARIES ON RURAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COURSES
- £ YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING AgriTechE's REAP CONFERENCE
- £ NORFOLK FEDERATION OF YOUNG FARMERS CLUBS CORE COSTS
- £ STUDENT PLACEMENT FROM HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Scholarships

The RNAA has a proud history of supporting Nuffield Farming Scholarships, the internationally recognised personal and professional development opportunity for future leaders in the farming sector. More recently the Association has developed a partnership with the John Innes Foundation through which funded scholarships can be offered to undergraduates pursuing a degree in agriculture and related subjects.



NORFOLK SCHOLARS 2023-24



Norfolk Scholars

Each year, we are able to support Norfolk Scholars to complete the Oxford Scholars programme leading up to the Oxford Farming Conference, the premier national forum for the industry.

ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC AIM

TO OPERATE AS A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION, PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ASSETS AND PROACTIVELY IMPLEMENTING MEASURES TO MINIMISE ANY NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

Sustainability is at the core of the RNAA's activities and estate. Over the past year, we have commissioned a Sustainable Energy Audit & Action Plan, and Habitat Survey & Biodiversity Enhancement Plan. We are working to implement recommendations.

Recent achievements include:



Installation of a 240kw PV array on the Norfolk Events Centre building, delivering 102% of the site's energy requirements. We are exploring further options for building-mounted PV installations.



Sourcing our water from a borehole shared with a neighbouring landowner. Water is treated on site and meets our irrigation, consumer and other needs.



Working with a local business to move from zero to 62% recycling of all waste generated on site, including from third party events. Setting this as a baseline, we are confident of exceeding the government's 2035 target of 65% recycling over the next 12 months.



Converting the majority of lighting on site to LED. Outstanding works will be completed over the coming year, leading to a reduction in lighting energy usage of around 80%.



Use of the Showground site means that much of the site is closely managed and mown. Across the site, there are more than 2,000 individual trees in addition to areas of woodland, including two protected areas.

55 species of bird have been recorded at the Showground over the course of a year, 39 of which breed on site and a further 11 winter or feed. Ten bird species found on site have been identified as of conservation concern (British Trust for Ornithology).

In future, the grass cutting timetable in lesser-used areas of the Showground will be revised, additional grass margins will be allowed to develop, hedges will be managed through laying and a revised cutting regime, and ponds will be maintained – all with a view to promoting and supporting biodiversity.

We are working increasingly with the renewable energy sector to explore the potential of the Showground as a demonstration site for new and sustainable technologies

CULTURE & LEISURE



STRATEGIC AIM

TO PROMOTE, CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT DIVERSE CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF NORFOLK AND VISITORS TO THE COUNTY.

Aside from the diverse cultural programme of the Royal Norfolk Show, the RNAA is committed to supporting and enabling a broad range of activities and events for the people of Norfolk and beyond.



The importance of the Showground and its facilities as a cultural resource has been recognised through support from Arts Council England. We work with a growing number of local, regional and national cultural organisations to enable and promote a range of activities for all interests and tastes.

The Norfolk Events Centre has become a regular venue for the Norwich Philharmonic Orchestra, increasing their reach and engagement with a county-wide audience. From 2024, the Showground will be the venue for the Costessey Town Fete, welcoming our local community to make full use of the facilities on offer. Universal Live, one of the country's foremost promoters of large-scale events, brings Sundown – a three day live music festival – to the Showground each year. This gathering of more than 20,000 young people brings significant benefits to the local economy.

Throughout the year, we welcome a broad range of activities to the site – Scout jamborees, religious gatherings, motorhome shows, antiques fairs, concerts, conferences, balls, community gatherings, equestrian events, machinery demonstrations, trade shows and much more. Each contributes to raising the profile of the county, to boosting the tourism sector and related industry, and to enriching the cultural life of the region.

STRATEGIC FIT FOR THE FUTURE

The RNAA seeks to work with partners and stakeholders to ensure we make a positive contribution to the delivery of local, regional and national strategies. An important part of this is maintaining close contact with the county and district councils to ensure we are able to support development of new and emerging policies and priorities.

As an organisation, the RNAA's strengths include:

Recognition as a representative body of all sectors of the agricultural industry

Flexibility and agility to support regional policy development and implementation

Expertise in education, knowledge transfer and communication

Strong cross-sector partnerships

A physical presence at the heart of the Food Enterprise Zone and deep engagement with key partners within and beyond the wider Food Innovation Cluster

The ability to convene locally, regionally and nationally to benefit our members, partners and the wider community across Norfolk

Our ambitions for the future include:



Realising the potential of the showground site as a strategic regional asset



Providing capacity and support for business, culture and leisure sectors to thrive



Initiating and promoting exemplar projects supporting agriculture and land-based sectors



Delivering increased levels of education, skills and leadership development, and supporting opportunities for young people to play a part in the future of Norfolk's agriculture



Creating a destination and sense of place, meeting the needs of an increasing population in the Greater Norwich area



Continuing to engage with stakeholders across sectors to ensure we play a key part in Norfolk's prosperity and sustainability

THE FUTURE OF THE SHOWGROUND

The RNAA has ambitious plans to increase access to and engagement with the Showground as a resource for Norfolk. Since Covid, we have invested significantly in the infrastructure of the site, ensuring we have the capacity to meet the needs and expectations of all who come to us.

THE NORFOLK FOOD HALL

The next phase of development of the site will be construction of the Norfolk Food Hall. Celebrating and showcasing the diverse range of Norfolk’s farming and food, the Food Hall will give a route to market for hundreds of local producers. More than 20 new jobs will be created, and the Food Hall will engage thousands of consumers each year with the provenance of their food, developing an understanding and appreciation of all the county can offer.

At the main entrance of the Showground, the Food Hall will sit at the heart of the Food Enterprise Zone and will make a significant contribution to a number of the outcomes identified for the FEZ:

- 01** Maximising added value to agricultural products grown or reared within Norfolk
- 02** Showcasing Norfolk’s food and drink sector
- 03** Supporting new entrants to the market
- 04** Providing greater support to direct farm retailers and independent food sellers, enabling them to access markets more efficiently
- 05** Enhancing self-sufficiency within the sector
- 06** Creating long-term sustainable jobs
- 07** Enhancing agricultural productivity
- 08** Reduction in food miles



SURPLUSES GENERATED BY THE FOOD HALL WILL BE PASSED BACK TO THE RNAA, A REGISTERED CHARITY, ENABLING US TO INVEST FURTHER IN SUPPORTING FOOD, FARMING AND THE COUNTRYSIDE ACROSS NORFOLK.

THE FOOD HALL, SUPPORTED BY A RESTAURANT, WILL ALSO OPEN UP ACCESS TO THE SHOWGROUND FOR THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE LIVING NEARBY. THE GREEN SPACES AND WOODLAND WITHIN THE SITE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR LEISURE AND RECREATION, MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING.





**ROYAL NORFOLK
AGRICULTURAL
ASSOCIATION**



01603 748931



info@rnaa.org.uk



Norfolk Showground,
Dereham Road, Norwich NR5 0TT



www.rnaa.org.uk



THE ROYAL NORFOLK AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT. WE ARE PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE REPORT'S WRITING AND PRODUCTION.

RNAA REGISTERED OFFICE AS ABOVE
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE NO. 01817702
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 289581
NORFOLK SHOWGROUND LIMITED REGISTERED OFFICE AS ABOVE
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE NO. 02814458

