

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER



## In this edition...

### Welcome

A welcome message from our Managing Director, Sam Cribb. Sam outlines her recent areas of focus and what's to follow in the coming months.

### Performance, Membership and Services

Top line report on business performance amidst the COVID hangover and making the most of your HBS Ring Membership.

### Meet the team

Following some internal changes and further recruitment, we've included a brief profile on each of the team.

 [Email](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

## Welcome Message from our Managing Director, Sam Cribb

A warm welcome to our latest edition newsletter. I hope this finds you well and like me you are enjoying greater normality that Covid vaccinations and lifted restrictions are allowing. Long may it continue to improve.



4 months as MD here at HBS and boy has it been a busy and very interesting time getting to know the team, meeting with the HBS Board, partners & suppliers, learning more about the business, our systems and processes and addressing some essential business management and service matters.

With a focus on strengthening the foundations on which to further grow and develop your co-operative we have made some changes and further recruitment within the team. To keep you up to date we've included a brief profile on each of us to put a face to the names and voices that you hear on the phone. See section [Meet The Team](#) below.

We have also begun to take steps to digitalise and simplify internal processes and have started to assess IT solutions to help deliver efficiency with the aim of improving customer service delivery particularly how we manage stock and sales from our store at Tore.

With many critical matters now complete and others in-hand I am delighted to be turning my attention to learning what HBS Ring means to you, our members. To hear about the challenges you face and understand how HBS may best help.

I was drawn to HBS because it is a member owned cooperative, built on an ethos of 'us' not 'me', the opportunity to benefit from collaboration across our local community. My motivation is to ensure that as members of HBS Ring you get real value from it, that the products and services at your disposal provide true benefit and that you receive the best customer service along the way.

In order that I along with the Board of Directors and HBS team continue to work in your best interests we are keen to understand what it is you value about HBS products and services and what you feel we could do better to serve your needs. My intention over the next couple of months is to hopefully meet (*COVID restrictions permitting*) a cross section of the membership to hear and get feedback from you first-hand.

It is not going to be possible to personally talk with everyone in that time, it is important however that you all have your say and input into the Ring. We will therefore be providing the opportunity for you to do so via a [member survey](#). More on this to follow in September.

I thank you for your continued support and custom. HBS is here for you so please do continue to Ring... or email... the Ring.

Best wishes, Sam.

## Business is on the Up



Current business performance shows promise, up year to date around 10% on 2020. Activity in June was similar to pre-covid levels. However, like many businesses the economic impact of the pandemic 18 months in is very real. Difficulties within the supply chain,

mixed with the unchartered waters of Brexit means much of the sector faces continued challenge and uncertainty. We've seen prices rise, delivery times extended and availability of some essential commodities scarce.

By shopping about, buying early and in larger quantities we are doing what we can to help limit the impact on our member's and our own business.

Core member to member business remains strong with the movement of straw, machinery hire and labour sharing and it's great to see our Training Services ramping up as many customers catch up on 2020 ticket extensions.



## Are you making the most of your HBS Ring Membership?

Whether you are a Farmer, Crofter, Contractor, Business, or Domestic member you have access to a broad range of products, services, and benefits through your HBS Ring membership.



**Have you changed your mobile number or email address?** Send an email to us [hbs@hbsring.co.uk](mailto:hbs@hbsring.co.uk) with the changes. We rely on having up-to-date contact details to send you the latest news, information and offers. Thank you.

## The Power of Cooperation

The rising prices of utilities can be one of the major variable costs for businesses and homeowners and with the recent increase in the energy cap many will pay far more than they need to. HBS offers the opportunity for members to become part of a 'Basket Deal' to save money on electricity bills.



Energy is one of the biggest variable costs facing businesses; yet many companies remain unaware of the benefits of switching supplier, cautious about switching or find the process of comparison confusing.

The concept of moving supplier is even more daunting for those with multiple energy meters or multiple sites, who might find that they have numerous deals to renew each year.

The "Basket Deal" concept is designed to make the whole process of managing energy contracts as fuss-free as possible. Designed to simplify the whole process by offering uniform pricing across all meters and consolidating the contract end dates. In partnership with Direct Business Solutions, we are in the process of seeking renewals for our existing electricity customers from the 1st of October.

We are seeing some great savings due to our buying power as a collective. If you currently have your electricity with us, and it is due to renew this year we will be in touch in the coming months with details of your renewal deal.

**Interested in benefitting from our switching service? Call or email Miriam.**

## Harvest Time



One of the busiest times of year on the farm is now underway. With Winter Barley almost complete, some members starting OSR, and Spring Barley imminent.

We experienced terrific yields of straw during 2020 and yet due to the extended winter and demand from the south there is very little carry over stock. Due to the increased prices of

fertiliser arable farmers have been looking closely at the value of chopping straw for soil health as we become more influenced by environmental matters.

As your cooperative we can play an instrumental role in securing deals for hay and straw and are active in meeting member needs for forage. No two years are the same, due to the weather dictating forage availability. Yields of silage have seen a decline over the year and we will soon find out how this season has affected straw yields. Your timely requests for straw and hay help secure supply over the coming winter.

### Fuel – We've got you covered.

Don't run out of fuel! Whether it's diesel for the tractor or diesel/kero for the dryer, contact the Ring to secure supply at the best price. Don't forget the fuel additives, we have a good supply of 1000LTR IBC tanks and 205LTR drums of Ad-blue available at our tote store.



### It's a Wrap

Quality silage is essential to any livestock enterprise, obtaining this quality feed is paramount, and securing packaging this year has been somewhat of a challenge. We have plenty of stock of quality silage wrap - both 750mm and 500mm - available from both Tore and Rosskeen at very competitive prices. We also have good stocks of net wrap and twine.

## Animal Health Advice

**Blowfly Strike** is a serious disease thought to affect over 80% of farms in the UK. Over the past few weeks strike risk has been increasing with the onset of warmer weather, particularly if interspersed with regular rain showers.



Flocks should be carefully checked at least once a day throughout the blowfly season to look for any signs of strike. It is often necessary to handle animals and part the fleece to fully appreciate the extent of disease

### Early Warning Signs

IRRITATION

NIBBLING AT TAIL AND HEAD

INCREASED SWISHING OF TAIL

RUBBING

### Signs of Severe Strike

DISCOLOURED/DAMP FLEECE

FLEECE LOSS

SEPERATION FROM FLEECE

SICK ANIMALS

DEATH (due to septicaemia from secondary bacterial infection and release of toxins)

Although **Sheep Scab** can occur at any time of the year most cases arise between September and April and particularly on full fleeced lambs and the ridges of longer fleece on poorly shorn sheep. As it is one of the most contagious parasitic diseases of sheep in the UK and a serious threat to sheep welfare it is a legal requirement that any case is reported to your local Animal & Health Plant Agency (APHA) office.

**OP Dips** are a vital tool when it comes to scab control as infestations can lead to a significant loss of condition, secondary infections, hypothermia and eventually death. However, the dips must be used responsibly to ensure they work effectively and a resistance to the mites does not develop – they are not suitable for use in showers, jets or sprayers. Not only are OP dips approved for the control of sheep scab but also for fly strike, lice, ticks and keds in one treatment with a 49-day meat withdrawal period.

**Ring for more information and options available – note you will be required to provide a copy of your dipping license number to buy this product.**

## Our Quality Land-Based Training Services

As a Lantra Approved training provider we organise and deliver all your training needs to ensure both you and your staff stay safe and operate within the current legislation. With a strong network of professional and experienced trainers our mission is to assist you produce a more productive and well-informed workforce through our appropriate training and assessments, providing nationally recognised qualifications and certificates.

TO BOOK A COURSE OR ASSESSMENT CONTACT  
OUR TRAINING MANAGER, SUE CRERAR  
Email: [train@hbs.co.uk](mailto:train@hbs.co.uk)  
Tel: 01463 811603  
VISIT: [www.hbsring.co.uk/training](http://www.hbsring.co.uk/training)

We provide Training Courses and Assessments across a broad range of land-based activities including...



Forestry



Health &amp; Safety

Forklift, Trailers,  
Tractors & 4 x4'sPesticides and  
Spraying

Horticulture

Transporting  
Animals

Training is provided through our services company, Highland Agricultural Labour Services (HALS)

### Here is what our training customers say about our service...

*"Everyone was very friendly, easy to get hold of and provided a covid-safe & high standard of training and assessment".*

*"One of the best First Aid courses I have attended and well explained. I would thoroughly recommend."*

*"Sue was so helpful and welcoming on training days".*



**100%**  
OF OUR TRAINING  
CUSTOMERS ARE  
VERY SATISFIED WITH  
OUR SERVICE



**100%**  
OF OUR TRAINING  
CUSTOMERS WOULD  
RECOMMEND OUR  
SERVICES TO FRIENDS  
AND COLLEAGUES



**150 +**  
TRAINING COURSES /  
ASSESSMENTS  
CARRIED OUT  
PER YEAR



**700+**  
CANDIDATES USE  
OUR SERVICE  
PER YEAR

## HBS Backs Young Talent in 2021

It has been a record year for the number of applications received for the **Pre-apprenticeship Programme**. Following a thorough application and interview process, HBS in conjunction with Ringlink Scotland has secured positions for 4 strong local candidates who started the programme this summer.

SRUC Aberdeen campus had the pleasure of welcoming the class of 2021 on 21<sup>st</sup> June, the



largest group to-date. Unlike last year they were able to offer a 4-day block induction and allow the 29 pre-apprentices to meet other like-minded peers, all excited for a career in the rural sector.

We wish the best of luck to everyone taking part.

### How does it work?

Working in partnership with Scottish Rural College (SRUC) the Pre-Apprenticeship offers an upfront 3-week training induction followed by 6 months full-time employment with a mentor business. The programme offers a qualification level of SCQF4 on completion. Providing practical work-based learning, gaining work experience and skills that rural employers need.

### Skills Necessity for the Future -

Skilled labour within Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing shrank in the period 2019 to 2020 according to a recent report from Skills Development Scotland\*. Challenges and caution concerning Covid recovery most certainly having an impact. Encouraging new enthusiastic entrants to the labour market is critical to fill future demand, replacing workers leaving the industry due to retirement, health, and other reasons.

Critical to the success of the programme is having a supply of suitable Mentor businesses who can offer 6 months employment to a young person and willing to share skills and experience to develop the next generation workforce.

### Benefits for the mentor business -

Mentors can bring people through their business, offering training and development with scope to retain individuals, if the placement is successful for both parties.

**Interested in becoming a future Mentor? Contact us for more information.**

*Land-based Pre-apprenticeship*

**DO YOU...**

- Want to support the industries future workforce?
- Want to share your knowledge with others?
- Want to benefit from mentoring to meet your own workplace requirements?

## Meet The Team



### Sam Cribb, Managing Director

Sam's primary role is to work in the best interest of the membership, directing and controlling the operations of HBS Ring and HALS Ltd and to work with the Board of Directors to develop, implement and review business plans.

#### Member Services:

Responsible for arranging member to member transactions and the sourcing and sales of supplies direct to members and through our on-site store.



**Kenny Bain**  
Member Services  
Manager



**Bob Grigor**  
Member Services  
Assistant Manager



**Sarah Clingan**  
Member Services  
Assistant & Animal  
Health specialist



**Sue Crerar**  
**Training Manager**  
Training events, individual  
courses and assessments.



**Miriam Blain**  
**Customer Services Manager**  
General customer enquiries,  
electricity buying and switch.



**Jean Gray**  
**Accounts Manager**  
Manages the financial  
admin team & our business  
and member accounts.



**Carol MacKay**  
**Admin Assistant**  
Customer service  
enquiries, payroll  
services and stock  
management.



**Angela MacGregor**  
**Admin Assistant**  
Customer service  
enquiries, financial  
admin and invoicing.



**Joanna Keith**  
**Admin Assistant**  
Customer service  
enquiries, admin  
support.

**HIGHLAND BUSINESS SERVICES  
RING LTD  
GLAIKMORE  
NORTH KESSOCK  
INVERNESS  
IV1 3UD  
TEL: 01463 811603**

 [Email](#)

 [Facebook](#)

 [Twitter](#)

 [LinkedIn](#)

 [Website](#)

