

grassroots



Welcoming
Back Iconic
Ayrshire Herd

2



College
Triumphs at
Skills Contest

9



Celebrating
Life on
The Farm

18



Successes Shared at Presentation of Awards



Revival of an Iconic Herd

After more than half a century, pedigree Ayrshire cattle have returned to campus – a landmark moment that ended a 57-year absence following the loss of Reaseheath's original herd to foot and mouth disease in 1967.

Founded in 1919, the college built its early reputation on a celebrated Ayrshire herd, renowned for its superior genetics and lasting contribution to the Cheshire dairy industry. The cattle supported both local agriculture and Reaseheath's educational mission, but despite their legacy, the herd was never replaced – until now.

In March, 62 pedigree Ayrshire cattle arrived from Scotland, hand-selected from two of the world's oldest herds, including one

directly from Ayrshire. Students and staff gathered to welcome the newcomers, marking the first time since 1967 that an Ayrshire had set foot on Reaseheath soil.

Famed for their high milk yields and exceptional butterfat and protein levels, the Ayrshires complement the college's elite Holstein herd and expand student access to high-quality, real-world experience within Reaseheath's progressive dairy enterprise.

Advanced Technology Transforms Farm-Based Learning

A £3.3 million investment in partnership with the Cheshire and Warrington Institute of Technology has transformed Reaseheath's farm into a model of modern agriculture, combining innovation with hands-on learning.

New additions include the Lely Vector Smart Feeding System, which autonomously prepares and distributes feed. Precision machinery – such as Kuhn minimal tillage seed drills and John Deere tractors – has also been integrated into teaching. These tools mirror those used by leading agricultural businesses, allowing students to gain experience with the technologies shaping the future of farming.

The investment also includes a new agri-food facility, where students analyse forage, slurry and water samples within an arable data centre. This prepares them for the science-led decisions required in modern, sustainable food production.

By combining state-of-the-art infrastructure with real-world application, the IoT offers a unique learning environment where students build confidence, adaptability and advanced skills to meet the evolving demands of the agricultural sector.



Building for Tomorrow

Reaseheath College and University Centre continues to invest in its vision of industry-focused, career-ready education, with over £15 million committed to capital projects that are reshaping the campus and enhancing student experience.

In addition to the new Institute of Technology building and robotic feeding systems (highlighted left), more efficient and sustainable operations are being brought in across campus.

Sustainability is a major focus, with air source heat pumps installed in key buildings, projected to save up to 80 tonnes of carbon annually. Planned developments include a solar array and energy ring main to help decarbonise and future-proof the campus infrastructure.

Further improvements funded through the FE Transformational Fund include the upgraded animal enclosures, new roofing, and refurbished classrooms and lecture theatres. Learning spaces now feature retractable seating, advanced AV systems and flexible layouts to support collaboration and active learning.

Looking ahead, plans are under way to transform the Lord Woolley Centre into a flagship teaching hub, and to create a new fitness and health centre to enhance student wellbeing – reinforcing Reaseheath's commitment to holistic, high-quality education facilities.

Enhanced Facilities for Animal Care Education

This year has seen major improvements to Reaseheath's Animal Management and zoo facilities, enhancing animal welfare while strengthening the quality of student learning.

Completed projects include a new otter enclosure, a redesigned meerkat habitat with improved visitor viewing areas, and a rebuilt space for porcupines – each providing more naturalistic, enriching environments. These upgrades allow students to observe animal behaviour more effectively and support their development across animal care and science pathways.

A newly built pygmy marmoset enclosure now offers improved space and environmental features for the small primates, including a trio of emperor tamarins named Blossom, Buttercup and Bubbles. It allows students to conduct detailed behavioural observations while learning about the ethical standards of exotic animal care.

One of the year's standout developments is a bespoke aviary which now houses a striking blue-and-gold macaw called Marley, donated to the zoo by Reaseheath receptionist Kirsty Parry. The aviary

incorporates secure handling areas, improved hygiene facilities, and space designed to support natural behaviours. Crucially, it allows bird-related learning to continue during avian flu restrictions, providing an invaluable resource for those pursuing careers in zoo and wildlife management.



Veterinary Nurses Graduate

The second cohort of BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing students graduated at Chester Cathedral, marking the programme's continuing success.



Fully accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), this degree enables graduates to achieve Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) status without further training.

Developed by the University Centre's specialist team, the course combines academic study with hands-on training in modern laboratories, the new Veterinary Nursing Centre, and extensive clinical placements. These graduates are now well-equipped to enter the profession, helping to shape the future of animal health and veterinary care.



Future Land-based Leaders Honoured at Graduation

Chester Cathedral provided a stunning backdrop as graduates celebrated their academic achievements across a range of disciplines, including agricultural science, animal management, equine science, veterinary nursing, and more.

This diverse group of graduates included those who balanced full-time study with work commitments, reflecting the institution's commitment to providing flexible, accessible higher education.

Professor Eunice Simmons, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Chester, praised the importance of land-based education in addressing today's environmental challenges.

The ceremony also saw the presentation of the Dean's Awards,

recognising exceptional achievements. Among the winners were Sydney Smith (Meredydd David Award), Ben Powell (Outstanding Achievement and Personal Progression), and Natasha Aldcroft (Outstanding Achievement in Undergraduate Research).

Scan here to watch the graduation celebrations at Chester Cathedral.



Outstanding Trio Earn Dean's Award

Academic excellence, personal progress, and impact in their fields earned three inspiring graduates the prestigious Dean's Award, celebrating those who have shown exceptional dedication and achievement during their studies.

This year's winners demonstrated resilience, passion, and commitment, and are now making their mark in animal and land-based industries.



Natasha Aldcroft – Outstanding Achievement in Undergraduate Research

Animal Management graduate Natasha impressed with her high-scoring dissertation on canine separation anxiety.

Her study, based on live webcam observations, was praised for its ethical approach and strong analysis.

"I never imagined I could achieve something like this," said Natasha.

"There were times I struggled, but my passion for animals and drive to succeed helped me push through."



Sydney Smith – Academic and Technical Excellence

Zoo Management (Top-Up) graduate Sydney stood out for her dedication to learning and peer support.

She collaborated with Knowsley Safari Park on her dissertation and presented her research at the British Conference of Undergraduate Research (BCUR).

"This award reflects the hard work I've put in," said Sydney. "I want to keep making a difference in how people understand and value conservation."



Ben Powell – Outstanding Achievement and Personal Progression

Ben began his journey in 2019 on a Level 2 Equine course.

Now a graduate of the BSc (Hons) Equestrian Sports Performance degree, he has overcome challenges related to autism and dyspraxia to achieve a remarkable academic transformation. His grades soared from the 40s to over 70% in his final year, and he maintained a 98.9% attendance record.

"Being recognised like this means the world," said Ben. "I hope it shows others on the spectrum that you can succeed with the right support and determination."





Canine Students Lead the Pack at National Research Conference

Final-year Canine Behaviour students earned recognition at the prestigious British Conference of Undergraduate Research (BCUR) at the University of Newcastle.

Lauren Beckingham, Erin Bourne, and Niamh MacLoughlin were selected to present alongside students from universities across the UK and internationally.

Their research covered a variety of topics, including public perceptions of muzzled dogs, the use of immersive technology to understand canine body language, and strategies for reducing dog bite incidents.

Niamh's study explored how immersive technology impacts people's perceptions of canine body language, Lauren's research focused on how different coloured muzzles influence assumptions about a dog's temperament, and Erin examined rising dog bite incidents and prevention strategies.

The opportunity to present at BCUR boosted their confidence and solidified their passion for pursuing careers in canine behaviour and prepared them well to present at the Canine Conference hosted on Campus the following month.

New Dean Brings Fresh Vision

Just over a year into her role, Jane Nickisson, Dean of Higher Education and Assistant Principal, has introduced a fresh vision for the future of land-based education.

With an impressive background in tourism and higher education, Jane is committed to shaping the next generation of professionals by aligning the curriculum with the needs of the industry.

Her leadership focuses on providing students with hands-on, career-ready education, ensuring they graduate with both academic knowledge and practical skills. Jane's vision includes the introduction of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), which will further enhance the learning experience and prepare students for the workforce. She also values the close-knit, supportive

environment, enabling students to grow and thrive from Level 1 through to degree level all on one campus.



Public Lecture Series Relaunch

The relaunch of the University Centre Reaseheath Public Lecture series has offered local audiences thought-provoking topics and diverse subjects, providing accessible learning opportunities for the wider community.

Highlights included *My Life with Sharks*, where marine expert Donovan Lewis shared insights into ocean predators, and *The Science of Hyenas*, which explored these misunderstood creatures' biology and ecology. Other sessions included *Dog Training Myths and Facts*, *The Micro World and the World Wide Web*, and *Sustainability on the Farm: Mission Impossible?*, which discussed the future of agriculture.

Other captivating topics included *Growing for Gold: How to Get RHS Tatton Best in Show*, offering horticultural tips, and *My Strangest Vet Nursing Stories*, where veterinary professionals' real-life tales were shared.

All lectures were free to attend, available both in person and online, ensuring accessibility for all.

Scan here to watch these public lectures



At University Centre Reaseheath, learning extends far beyond the lecture theatre.

Students are regularly immersed in experiences that deepen their knowledge, build confidence, and enhance employability. These opportunities are integrated into courses across subjects, offering students a genuine taste of the careers they are working towards.

Into The Field

Study tours and fieldwork are highlights of many students' academic journeys.

Wildlife Conservation and Ecology undergraduates joined Natural England to help conserve the rare floating peat bog at Wybunbury Moss, home to the endangered ten-spotted pot beetle. Others surveyed rocky shores on Anglesey, collecting biodiversity data and encountering everything from nudibranchs to the critically endangered European eel.

Animal Behaviour and Welfare students visited Manchester Museum, exploring evolutionary biology. They examined amphibians, reptiles, and artefacts, sparking big questions about our place on a changing planet.

Equine Science and Veterinary Physiotherapy students studied the behaviour of the semi-feral Carneddau ponies in North Wales, while a cross-discipline study tour to Pembrokeshire gave students from Animal Science and Conservation the chance to explore sustainability in action.

Agriculture students also visited progressive beef farms, learning about genetics, welfare, and sustainability in livestock production.

Industry Insights

Throughout the year, students benefited from a schedule of guest speakers, specialist sessions, and employer-led projects.



Canine Behaviour and Training students welcomed PC Stephanie Allinson from Cheshire Police for an introduction to dog handling careers in the force. Agriculture undergraduates gained insights into marketing and digital strategy during a visit to rural business experts Hillsgreen.

Landscape Architecture students contributed to a live restoration project at Gwrych Castle, combining their learning with real conservation work.

These are just a taster of the many industry insights students experience over the academic year.

Learning That Travels

International study experiences extend real-world learning even further.

Animal Science undergraduates returned from a study trip to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya, where they saw African wildlife in its natural environment. They observed endangered Grevy's zebras, a lion pride, and supported environmental clean-up efforts, gaining experience that will shape their future careers.

Canine and Veterinary Nursing students also travelled to Cyprus with Underdog International, supporting shelter work and learning about global adoption processes – gaining valuable experience in international animal welfare.

Whether surveying marine species, restoring landscapes, or coasteering, University Centre Reaseheath students are gaining the knowledge and experience needed to succeed in their chosen fields.



Celebrating Student Success

Over 1,100 Further Education students took centre stage during the annual Presentation of Awards ceremonies, where their achievements in technical qualifications and personal development were recognised. The two-day event celebrated the Class of 2024's remarkable accomplishments.

Principal and CEO Marcus Clinton praised students for their resilience, technical expertise, and readiness for industry, highlighting that 95% progress into employment or higher education, many continuing at University Centre Reaseheath.

Guest speakers included former forestry and arboriculture student Twm Tegid Brunton, who now balances an opera career with running a forestry business; Belle Farebrother, a business and events alumna; and equine graduate Samantha Stevens, now working in equestrian marketing and media.

Cross College Award winners included:

EC COLLINS TROPHY

Student making the best contribution to college life

■ Ollie Wilson

NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK CUP

Student making the best all round contribution

■ Sophie Connor

JK LAMBERTON TROPHY

For personal qualities

■ Elle Baldwin

GJ ENGLAND TROPHY

Student who contributed most to sporting activities

■ Sebastian Muszynski

The Students' Union was also celebrated for raising £20,000 for the British Heart Foundation through RAG fundraising.



Ollie Wilson



Elle Baldwin and Sophie Connor



Sebastian Muszynski

Public Service Careers and Training Experience

Uniformed Public Services students gained invaluable career insights through real-life training opportunities, including collaboration with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service for water safety campaign training.

This was complemented by the annual Uniformed Public Services Conference, where students engaged with alumni working in careers such as policing, paramedics, and



firefighting. The event featured an interactive tabletop exercise, providing essential knowledge on transitioning from college to successful careers in public services.



College Triumphs in Skills Competition

Talented learners earned impressive results at the Cheshire and Warrington Skills Competition, where students from four colleges showcased their abilities in Business and Construction.

In Business, Joe Bland-McKenzie, Brooke Goldstraw, Will Brimsom, and Sam Holroyd secured second place with their Seven Wonders of the West concept – a food box offering Western cuisines in Japan. In Construction, Ryan Whitlow claimed first in Junior Bricklaying, while Sam James triumphed in Senior Joinery.

Design Brought to Life in Bungalow Build

A partnership involving construction students, industry professionals, and military veterans led to the creation of a student-designed accessible bungalow on campus.

The build, based on a winning design by former T Level Design student Pippa Jones, showcased accessibility, sustainability, and practicality. T Level Construction students gained hands-on experience, working alongside participants from Building Heroes, a programme supporting military veterans in construction careers.



Industry partners Ibstock and Ash and Lacy supplied materials, including MechSlip, an innovative cladding system offering improved sustainability and ease of installation.



Top Honours at National Land-Based Awards

Reaseheath students brought home two prestigious titles from the LANDEX/Lantra Land-Based Learner of the Year Awards 2024.

Floristry student Charlotte Briggs won Floristry FE/HE Learner of the Year for her creativity, determination, and commitment to sustainability. Charlotte, a mature learner, returned to education after a career in hospitality and has since become an advocate for nature-based learning.

Charlotte's classmate, James Jones, also reached the finals, gaining industry experience at National Florist Day and aspiring to launch his business, Flurron.

Kristiaan James Hughes, awarded Apprentice of the Year for Land-Based Engineering, was recognised for excellence in technical and creative sectors. The awards, hosted by TV gardener Danny Clarke, celebrated talent across floristry, engineering, agriculture, and more.



Grit, Gears, and a St Bernard

Stereotypes are being smashed and others inspired through the talent and resilience of Motor Vehicle student Faith Windsor and her companion – Ember, her assistance dog.

Faith, a Level 2 learner, has made her mark far beyond the workshop. She was recently crowned Young Person of the Year at Crufts 2025 and is a competitive street dancer with experience performing on global stages. She's also been recognised with a Student of the Term award for her positivity, determination, and transformation during her time at college.

Her passion for mechanics started at home, working on cars with her brother. Since starting her course, her confidence has soared, and she now hopes to inspire other young women and people with additional needs to pursue engineering careers.



Faith's journey is supported every step of the way by St Bernard, Ember, who helps manage her autism and even prevents fainting episodes.

With plans to open her own garage and keep dancing and showing dogs, Faith is a bold reminder that no dream is out of reach with the right support, drive, and belief.

Going Galactic for Star Wars Day

A galaxy far, far away came to Reaseheath Mini Zoo as Foundation students brought Star Wars Day to life with a creative, learner-led enrichment project.



As part of a themed enrichment session, students designed and built enrichment toys inspired by iconic Star Wars vehicles, including the Super AT-AT and classic starfighters. The toys were a hit with residents including the meerkats, bush dogs, tamarins, and pygmy marmosets.

The project combined animal welfare with creativity, giving students the chance to develop their planning, teamwork, and animal care skills. The session also included a collaborative element, with students working alongside Digital Learning and Marketing teams to produce social media content.

Bake Box Wraps Up a Successful Year

Bake Box, the refreshed Reaseheath Food Centre shop, has gone from strength-to-strength, offering freshly made treats whilst giving Level 2 and Level 3 Bakery students valuable, real-world experience.



Supported by the Food Centre team, students haven't just been baking – they've taken charge of running the shop, gaining skills in everything from product organisation and allergen checking to sales, customer service, and profit tracking.

Open four days a week during term time, Bake Box quickly became a go-to spot for staff and students looking for delicious and affordable bakes, with prices starting at just 50p.

The year has been a fantastic opportunity for learners to build confidence and develop business know-how, and the success of the shop is a real credit to their hard work and creativity.

Equine Students Ride High at HOYS

Forty equine students gained industry experience at the prestigious Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) 2024 – the event's 75th anniversary.

Students supported course designers in the international arena and helped deliver competitions such as dressage, mounted games, and harness scurry classes. Their professionalism earned praise from organisers, underscoring the college's commitment to industry-led training.

As part of the partnership with HOYS, students also received health and safety training, further developing their skills for future careers in equine event management.



Adventurers Reach New Heights

Adventure Sport students and staff climbed the equivalent height of Mont Blanc – around 4,800 metres – raising £260 for Climbers Against Cancer.

Eighty-five climbers participated in 600 climbs over five-and-a-half hours. The event, part of the Level 3 Sport and Outdoor Activities course, was led by Thomas Brodie, Isla Bruno-Bamford, Rosie Kaye, and Harry Higson.

Their efforts and the generous donations made the event a success, supporting cancer research within the climbing community.



Outstanding Talent at Apprenticeship Awards 2025

Rising stars from the UK’s land-based and technical industries were honoured at the Reaseheath Apprenticeship Awards 2025, the flagship event of National Apprenticeship Week.

The ceremony celebrated exceptional apprentices and the employers who champion their development.

The evening highlighted the commitment and vision driving these vital sectors forward. Reaseheath College, supporting over 1,000 apprentices annually across the UK, plays a significant role in workforce development from Cornwall to Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Jason Wyatt, Global Technical and Aftersales Training Manager at JCB, was the guest speaker, delivering an inspiring address on the value of apprenticeships and sharing insights from his career.

Award winners included:

- **Anita Galezewska** (Wyke Farms) – Food and Drink Apprentice of the Year
- **Robert Ball** (Beechwood Industries) – Land and Environment Apprentice of the Year
- **Ollie Long** (HSS Hire) – Land-Based Engineering Apprentice of the Year
- **Chloe Maybury** (Guy Machinery Ltd) – Professional Services Apprentice of the Year
- **Daniel McDill** (First Bus) – Transport Engineering Apprentice of the Year and Principal’s Award winner
- **Luke Hindley** (Pod-Trak Ltd) – Functional Skills Apprentice of the Year
- **Thomas Tunncliffe** (Persimmon Homes) – Construction Apprentice of the Year

Employer recognition went to **Peter Cliff and Sons Ltd** (SME category) and **HSS Hire Ltd** (Large employer category), with **Ashley Platt** (AT Plant Hire) awarded Mentor of the Year.



Peter Cliff and Sons Ltd



HSS Hire Ltd



Ashley Platt (AT Plant Hire)



Anita Galezewska



Chloe Maybury

Robert Ball



Daniel McDill



Luke Hindley



Thomas Tunncliffe

Apprenticeships Go from Strength to Strength

Reaseheath College has delivered another exceptional year for apprenticeship provision, with both achievement rates and learner participation at record levels.

The college achieved an impressive 72% Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) for 2023-24, outperforming many land-based providers across the country. Additionally, apprenticeship enrolments rose by 13%, with 361 new learners beginning their professional development during the academic year.

Each apprenticeship programme directly addresses industry needs in sectors such as agriculture, animal care, bakery, butchery, construction, equine, food technology, horticulture, land-based engineering, plant and



vehicle engineering, and veterinary nursing. By combining workplace experience with academic rigour, apprentices are equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in their careers.

With over 1,000 apprentices supported across the UK, the college operates a flexible, roll-on, roll-off delivery system, offering adaptable start dates that align with both learner and employer schedules.

Excellence in Animal Care

The inaugural cohort of Animal Care and Welfare Assistant apprentices achieved outstanding results in their End Point Assessments (EPA) this year, completing their programme through a partnership with VetSkill.

The apprenticeship emphasises hands-on experience, providing real-world skills for animal care careers. Successful graduates included:

- **Josie Robinson** (Vets4Pets Northwich)
- **Katie Stratford-Hawkesford** and **Penny Boyle** (Small Animal Teaching Hospital, University of Liverpool)
- **Mollie Greatbatch** (Moorlands Veterinary Centre)
- **Marni Perrins** and **Sunia Tuck**.

This workplace-focused learning approach, alongside Reaseheath’s academic framework, ensures that apprentices can immediately apply their skills in the field, building both competence and confidence. Many graduates are now planning to advance to the Level 3 Veterinary Nursing qualification.

As a VetSkill-approved centre since 2020, Reaseheath provides comprehensive qualifications supporting veterinary and animal care careers, including veterinary nursing, animal first aid, veterinary reception, and the Level 2 Certificate in Veterinary Care Support. This gives apprentices practical entry routes into the profession.

The cohort’s 100% success rate is a testament to the effectiveness of Reaseheath’s training partnerships and its commitment to delivering accessible pathways into the veterinary sector.



Mollie Greatbatch



Butchery Students Serve Up Farm to Fork Excellence

Christmas 2024 saw Reaseheath staff enjoy a true taste of campus excellence through the innovative Farm to Fork programme.

Over 100 festive hampers, containing premium meat and dairy products, were reared, prepared, and packaged entirely on-site by the college’s Food Centre students and staff. This initiative highlights Reaseheath’s commitment to sustainability, traceability, and the highest quality standards.

Second-year butchery apprentices Lewis Gilray and Mateus Sa played pivotal roles in this process. Lewis, who works at Hogan’s Butchers in Liverpool, serves high-end restaurants throughout the North West and aims to specialise as a larder butcher.

Mateus, pictured above, employed by H Davidson Butchers in Holmes Chapel, also volunteered for additional sessions to meet demand, demonstrating his dedication to his craft.

Farm to Fork creates meaningful connections between education and real-world food production, providing a direct pathway from classroom learning to consumer delivery.

Find out more at: reaseheath.ac.uk/farm-to-fork

Industry Week Connects Equine Students to Careers

Equine students gained invaluable professional exposure during Industry Week, participating in workshops, facility visits, and expert-led discussions.

They visited Kelsall Hill Equestrian Centre to learn about managing elite competition venues, followed by a British Horse Society session on Body Condition Scoring and equine weight management. Visits to Oliver Hall Racing and Michael Owen's facility provided insights into thoroughbred training and equine performance enhancement.

The week also featured fitness sessions led by personal trainer Chris Nicklin, and performance strategies shared by international dressage rider Sarah Rao. Students explored equine safety through a visit to Charles Owen Headquarters, learning about the development of advanced equestrian safety equipment.



Farm to Fork and the Future of Food

Reaseheath has launched its National Agri-Food Strategy, a cross-sector initiative aimed at addressing key challenges in the UK's food supply chain, including sustainability, food security, and emerging workforce needs.

This strategy brings together experts from farming, food production, policy, and retail. It takes advantage of Reaseheath's position in education, land use, and agri-tech, connecting farming with other processes to encourage innovation. This will help the sector meet future demand in a sustainable way.

A scoping event at the college gathered representatives from Arla, NFU, AHDB, Oscar Mayer, Bidlea, Grosvenor, and the Environment Agency, among others. Key topics

included food resilience, skills development, traceability, and future policy. These discussions set the stage for a long-term strategy that aims to influence curriculum development, strategic partnerships, and national policy.

Increased collaboration with DEFRA, major retailers, and food manufacturers will drive progress, creating a strong platform for thought leadership and transformative impact across the agri-food sector.

Bosch ProCollege Scheme Equips Construction Students

Construction students are enhancing their practical skills thanks to a partnership with Bosch Professional, via the ProCollege scheme.

This collaboration has delivered over £2,000 worth of professional equipment to the college, including sanders, grinders, drills, and planers.

The partnership goes beyond equipment provision, offering technical training, live demonstrations, and interactive

TechTalks by Bosch specialists. Students gain hands-on experience with industry-standard tools and receive exposure to best practices in the construction sector.



Timberwolf Powers Tree Recycling Initiative

Forestry and Arboriculture students gained practical experience and contributed to a meaningful community project through a Christmas tree recycling campaign supporting St Luke's Cheshire Hospice.

Students processed over 3,200 trees using an 8-inch tracked chipper, provided by Timberwolf. The operation covered all stages of the recycling process, offering students valuable skills with advanced arboriculture equipment, including the Timberwolf chipper.

This project not only developed students' technical skills but also gave them the chance to make a positive impact on the local community, supporting healthcare services in the process.

Farm Safety Awareness Day

Helping students understand the key risks associated with working in agriculture was the focus of a Farm Safety Awareness Day.

Run in partnership with NFU Cheshire, SP Energy Networks, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Cheshire Farm Machinery, the event featured demonstrations covering fire safety, risk assessments, and safe equipment use. Students also learned about the dangers of

working with livestock and heavy machinery.

The day gave students practical experience and vital knowledge to help them stay safe in their future careers. It also reinforced the importance of taking a proactive approach to farm safety from the start.



Food Centre Achieves Premier AA+ Rating

Reaseheath's Food Centre has achieved an exceptional AA+ rating from BRCCS (Brand Reputation Compliance Global Standard) following its inaugural unannounced audit.



This prestigious rating recognises the centre's dedication to food safety and quality standards, highlighting its operational excellence. The college has maintained AA status since 2013, and the new AA+ rating marks a significant step up, demonstrating a commitment to the highest industry benchmarks.

BRCCS audits are rigorous two-day evaluations covering all aspects of food safety. By opting for an unannounced audit, Reaseheath has underscored its commitment to maintaining top-tier standards while preparing students for careers in the food sector.

A Year of Growth

As the academic year comes to a close, Summer Lakin, Reaseheath Students' Union President, reflects on a year of growth, leadership, and unforgettable moments. From hosting large-scale events to raising funds for mental health charity Mid-Cheshire Mind, Summer looks back on the challenges and triumphs of the role, highlighting the dedication, energy, and fun that Reaseheath students have contributed along the way.

“It's hard to believe the year is already coming to an end – it's gone by so quickly. Looking back, it's been a challenging, rewarding, and truly memorable experience. I've gained valuable skills, learned a lot about myself, and grown in ways that I know will personally and professionally benefit me in the future.

“When I was elected Student President, I felt a mix of excitement, nerves, and a strong sense of responsibility. It was a great privilege to take on the role, and although it came with its fair share of challenges, it's been an incredibly enriching journey that I'll always be proud of.

“The main thing I have learned this year would be leadership. Overseeing Reaseheath Students' Union, I have gained lots of confidence, and I'm extremely grateful to the Student Life team for supporting me and working hard this year.

“I have also gained so much confidence in this role – collating feedback from students regularly and passing it along to the Principal, Student Council and Governors. Hosting meetings and discussion skills in Governing Board meetings and other committees has made me more confident in public speaking. I feel very motivated being heard in rooms full of important people to the college and having a true influence on student life and the student experience.

“The main achievements from the SU this year would be Winter Ball. We had a live band, karaoke, a DJ and all the students were dressed to the nines! They also worked hard on our Campus Chase, where we set up different activities around campus and each team who took part had to do each activity in the fastest time. It was a beautiful day – especially because we had inflatables and a BBQ on the main lawn too!



“RAG (Raising and Giving) has been a big part of this year for me. We've spent the year raising money for Mid-Cheshire Mind, and I'm so proud that we have raised a total of £18,174.20! We have done so many events and activities throughout the past year to raise this.

“In December, we ran 12 Days of Reaseheath – a festive fundraising campaign where highlights included 'Take a Pic with a Cow', free sports massages from the Personal Training students, car checks from the Motor Vehicle students, a Christmas Carol Service, a Winter Dog Walk hosted by the Canine Society, and a raffle at the annual Equine Show. And that was just the beginning! We also hosted the Mental Elf Fun Run, which alone raised over £3,000.

“In March, RAG Week brought even more excitement – from 'Splat the Staff' and a mystery box auction to a silent disco and bird-feeder-making workshops run by the Wildlife, Conservation Society – it was a huge success. Departments across campus, including the Library and Floristry, even ran their own creative fundraising events.

“And that's not all – a group of brave 10 staff and students took part in a tandem skydive from 13,000 feet in the air. They all raised over £400 each! Then a group of 16 staff and students took part in a 34-mile hike from Frodsham to Whitchurch, where they all raised over £100 each.

“I have also really enjoyed working the annual Family Festival and Lambing Weekends. At Family Festival, we had a stall where we raised money for RAG and Reaseheath Students' Union by selling slushies and doing face painting. And at Lambing, we had a team of students helping with parking cars and printing off photos of the public with lambs!

“We have had so many awesome events this year, but I think my favourites were the Bavarian and Halloween Ball. I was taking photos of all the students at Bavarian, and I still ended up dancing on the tables! And I love to see what people dress up as on Halloween, which is why it's another favourite.

“Thank you to all students and staff for trusting me, supporting me, and getting involved – you've helped shape this journey into something truly special. This year has filled me with fun, chaos and growth.

“I hope whoever takes over from me has as much fun as I did and will work just as hard to enrich the student experience.”



Community Celebrations Herald Life on the Farm

Throughout the spring months, Reaseheath has served as a vibrant community hub, hosting an array of beloved events that brought thousands together to celebrate agriculture, education, and shared experiences on campus.

Lambing and Mini Zoo Weekend

March launched the event season with a heartwarming celebration of new life. Thousands of visitors witnessed the wonder of 65 live lamb births, including numerous twins and triplets. The Mini Zoo captivated guests with expanded animal enclosures featuring pygmy marmosets, porcupines, and otters. A bustling farmers' market offered delicious local produce and unique handcrafted items, while charities including Mid-Cheshire Mind – the RAG charity of the year – engaged attendees with their vital community work.

Reaseheath Family Festival

Following last year's weather-related cancellation, the eagerly awaited Family Festival returned triumphantly in May, welcoming over 10,000 visitors to campus for an exceptional day of entertainment, learning, and community connection.

Guests enjoyed spectacular performances from BMX stunt riders, Circus Avago, and musical entertainment from local choirs, while younger visitors took part in a whole host of science-focused activities at the University Centre Reaseheath stand. Students and staff delivered diverse demonstrations spanning showjumping and polocrosse to tree climbing and remote-controlled car races.

The festival highlighted the popular Farm to Fork experience, where visitors enjoyed food reared and prepared on campus.

This remarkable success demonstrated the passion and community spirit that defines Reaseheath, with students and staff collaborating to create unforgettable memories for all attendees.

Open Farm Sunday

June saw Reaseheath take part in the national Open Farm Sunday campaign, giving visitors a behind-the-scenes look at working the campus farm.

Families enjoyed guided tours led by students and staff, meeting livestock and learning how the land is managed sustainably. The free event highlighted modern farming practices, while the the Farm to Fork demos helped the public understand where their food comes from.



Multiply Project Celebrates Adult Numeracy Success

A series of celebration events took place recognising the outstanding achievements of the Multiply project across Cheshire East – a Government-funded initiative dedicated to enhancing adult numeracy capabilities.

Delivered in partnership with Cheshire East Council and Springboard, the project successfully engaged over 500 learners through 120 courses throughout its duration.

Celebratory events took place at The Welcome in Knutsford, Reaseheath College, and The Space in Congleton, bringing together learners, staff, and partners to acknowledge the programme's significant impact.

Multiply's comprehensive course offerings, delivered through collaboration with 12 organisations and four employers, enhanced financial inclusion, employment opportunities, and overall participant wellbeing.



The project's innovative courses, including cookery classes, sewing workshops, computer programming sessions and flower arranging lessons helped participants to develop numeracy skills through engaging, hands-on approaches that made learning both enjoyable and practical.

Skills Bootcamps Target Critical Industry Gaps

Reaseheath is helping people into land-based careers with two new Skills Bootcamps, funded by the Government.

The Forestry and Arboriculture Bootcamp offers training in tree inspection, chainsaw use, and woodland management. Learners get hands-on experience, safety gear, and industry certification, plus a guaranteed interview at the end. It's a great opportunity for career changers, nature lovers, and those seeking green jobs.

Meanwhile, the Farm Diversification Bootcamp helps people grow agri-businesses, with training in food safety, butchery, dairy and meat production, and business planning. Learners gain valuable skills and connect with employers in the food sector.



Building Heroes Programme Reaches New Heights

Almost 500 learners have now successfully completed Reaseheath's Building Heroes programme, which supports former members of the Armed Forces as they transition into civilian life.



The five-week course offers hands-on training in a variety of construction trades, alongside essential health and safety qualifications, employability support, and links to industry employers. Since its launch in 2017, the programme has helped service leavers, veterans, reservists and military family members gain practical skills and confidence to start new careers.

Delivered in partnership with national charity Building Heroes, the training is making a real difference to the lives of those who've served, and Reaseheath is proud to continue supporting this life-changing initiative.

Staff Excellence Honoured at PRIDE Awards

Outstanding dedication and professional excellence took centre stage at the annual PRIDE Awards and Long Service ceremony, where colleagues were recognised for embodying the college’s core values – People, Responsibility, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellence.

Tributes were paid to long-serving colleagues, celebrating individuals who reached significant milestones of 20 and 40 years of service. College Plumber Geoff Chesters received a standing ovation for his remarkable four decades of commitment to the college.

The PRIDE Awards ceremony followed, with Alan Mottram, Advanced Practitioner in Forest and Arboriculture, earning the prestigious Principal’s Award. Team recognition went to the Apprenticeships Team and the Exam Access Arrangements Team for their exceptional contributions to student success.

Individual award recipients included:

- **Katie Jones**, Advanced Practitioner, Engagement Specialist
- **Anna Harvey**, Head of Industry Partnerships and Business Growth
- **Paul Malbon**, Learning Technologist
- **Susan Poole**, HR Leadership and Development Business Partner
- **Jack Armstrong**, Sports Lecturer and Course Manager
- **Kate Butler**, Equine Yard Manager
- **Darren Keen**, Bricklaying Course Manager and Lecturer
- **Louise Badjie**, Foundation Programme Leader
- **Lynne Lomax**, Press Officer.



Long Service



Geoff Chesters and Estates Team



Alan Mottram



Exam Access Arrangements Team

Lecturers Achieve Advance HE Fellowships

Three University Centre Reaseheath lecturers have earned prestigious Advance HE Fellowships, recognising their commitment to innovative teaching practices and enhanced student experiences.

Lis Morris, Sarah Armstrong, and Bethany Greenshields completed the rigorous Fellowship process, which required critical reflection on teaching methodologies and professional development. Sarah, an Animal Science lecturer, embraced reflective writing techniques to strengthen her pedagogical approach. Lis, a Teaching and Learning Coach, used the process to refine her educational philosophy, and Bethany, an Equine Science lecturer, concentrated on aligning assessment strategies with authentic industry scenarios.



Lecturer Reaches Animal Sector Awards Final

University Centre Reaseheath’s Canine Behaviour and Training Lecturer Megan O’Connell reached the finals of the 2025 iAwards, organised by the iPet Network.

The awards were to celebrate educational excellence and achievement within the pet industry. Megan secured her finalist position in the competitive Animal Science Sector Tutor of the Year category following nominations from both students and colleagues.

The awards ceremony took place at Blakemere Village, where finalists and winners gathered alongside industry professionals for networking and recognition. This achievement reflects Megan’s exceptional dedication to canine education and her positive impact on student learning experiences.



Digital Innovation Recognised

Paul Malbon from the Learning and Professional Development Team has earned Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert (MIEE) status for the 2024-2025 academic year.



This distinguished recognition places Paul alongside colleagues Simon Warman and Louise Gibson, forming a team committed to embedding technology within teaching practices. The MIEE programme celebrates educators who use technology to enhance student engagement, encourage creativity, and promote collaborative learning environments.

Achieving MIEE status requires completing comprehensive learning paths on Microsoft Learn, demonstrating expertise with Microsoft tools including Teams and OneNote, while evidencing the positive impact of technology-enhanced teaching practices on student outcomes.

Tom Tunnicliffe

- Building and Construction Apprenticeship
- Builder, Persimmon Homes

Tom Tunnicliffe completed his apprenticeship with Persimmon Homes in 2024 and has since continued with the company as a full-time site operative.

Joining Persimmon in 2022, Tom quickly distinguished himself through his exceptional work ethic, attention to detail, and consistently high standards – from groundwork to final finishes.

In 2025, Tom was named Construction Apprentice of the Year at the Reaseheath Apprenticeships Awards, recognising his outstanding development and contribution to the industry.

Tom also represented Reaseheath and Persimmon Homes at the SkillBuild National Finals, having won his regional heat in Preston. He was one of only eight finalists selected from over 250 entrants – a first for the college and a major achievement.

Reflecting on his experience at Reaseheath, Tom said:

“My apprenticeship at Reaseheath gave me the skills, confidence, and real-world experience I needed to succeed in the industry. The support from my tutors and the opportunities I had with Persimmon Homes have been brilliant.



Alice Cork

- Extended Diploma in Agriculture, 2019
- Foundation Degree in Agriculture, 2020
- Technical Sales Nutritionist, HJ Lea Oakes

Having grown up on a farm, Alice always knew she wanted to work in the industry, but university wasn't originally part of her plan.

“I always wanted to go into farming, so choosing Reaseheath as a college was a natural decision. But I had no intention of staying after I finished my diploma, I wanted to go back to the farm and start working,” she explains.

However, during her time at University Centre Reaseheath, Alice saw the value of gaining a qualification that would set her apart in the job market.

Freya Markham

- National Extended Diploma in Uniformed Protective Service, 2023
- Special Constable, Cheshire Constabulary

Freya's passion for policing and public service began at a young age. Initially planning to join the Army, she later realised she wasn't ready to move away from home and instead explored a career in policing. After attending a police open evening, she was inspired to join as a Special Constable – a decision she describes as “the best I've ever made.”

Freya chose to study Uniformed Protective Services at Reaseheath College after hearing about the course from a friend. “As soon as I visited the campus, I knew it was the right place for me,” she says. “The facilities stood out, and I was excited to study something I was genuinely passionate about.”



“Higher Education wasn't always part of my plan, but meeting the different people who visited our farm, learning about the different roles available, plus looking at job adverts made me realise how many roles required a degree – especially in farm advisory, which is where I saw my future.”

Alice now works at HJ Lea Oakes, an independent British miller of livestock feed. “My degree definitely opened doors. Having that qualification not only helped me secure my role but also gave me the skills to thrive in it.”

Her advice?

“Higher education is an investment in your future – you'll never regret learning something new.



Her time at Reaseheath was transformative. She credits the course with preparing her for the demands of policing, from leadership and teamwork to physical fitness and mental resilience. Now serving as a Special Constable with Cheshire Constabulary, Freya balances her volunteer role with a full-time job.

Reflecting on her journey, she says:

“Joining Cheshire Police was the best decision I've ever made. There will be bad days, but the good always outweigh the bad in this job.

Chelsea Williams

- Equine Behaviour and Welfare (Top-Up) BSc Hons, 2024
- Animal Crew, The Children's Adventure Farm Trust

Chelsea never planned to attend university, but after hearing about University Centre Reaseheath, she realised it was the right path. “From starting as a ‘nervous newbie’ to graduating with levels of confidence I didn't know I had been hiding! I can confidently say that my years at Reaseheath were some of the best years of my life.”

Chelsea began with an FdSc in Equine Training and Rehabilitation before progressing onto the BSc (Top-Up) in Equine Behaviour and Welfare. “I had a particular interest in improving the welfare of equines and learning their behaviour.”



Since graduating, Chelsea has been working as Animal Crew at The Children's Adventure Farm Trust, caring for a variety of animals. “My university degree has allowed me to teach others how to better enrich the lives of our donkeys, how to notice the signs of illness and behavioural changes, and the feedback has been really rewarding as ‘the donkeys look the best they ever have’.”

Her advice?

“Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone because you never know what amazing opportunities you could have if you just believe in yourself!

Emma Steele

- Level 3 Adventure Sports
- Trainee Instructor, Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre

Emma Steele has always had a passion for the outdoors and a love for adventurous activities, so studying Adventure Sports at Reaseheath College was a natural choice. “Reaseheath offered me everything I wanted and more,” she says. “The practicals were by far the best part – learning new skills and exploring new places was exactly what I was looking for.”

Emma thrived in the college's vibrant campus environment, but it was the support and enthusiasm of her lecturers that made the biggest impact. The staff were amazing – kind, knowledgeable, and always happy to help.

Outside of lessons, Emma enjoyed the social side of campus life, often spending time in the college lounges.

“They were great places to relax,

study, or just change your scenery – with free Wi-Fi and even a Starbucks!”

Graduating with a D*DD, Emma's proudest achievement was securing her current role as a Trainee Instructor at Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre in Wales.

“The course gave me the knowledge, confidence, and values I needed to succeed. It was 100% worth the time and effort – and I'm proud to be a former Reaseheath student.



Stay connected!

We love to keep in touch with former students through our growing alumni community.

Whether you're continuing your studies, entering employment or progressing in your career, please let us know how you're getting on at:

www.reaseheath.ac.uk/alumni

Reaseheath at a glance...

SUBJECT AREAS

Further and Higher Education and Apprenticeships

- Adventure Sports
- Agriculture
- Agricultural Engineering
- Animal Management
- Bakery, Pâtisserie and Confectionery
- Business
- Environmental Conservation
- Construction Trades
- Design, Surveying and Planning
- Engineering
- Equine
- Floristry
- Food Technology
- Forestry and Arboriculture
- Foundation Learning
- Horticulture and Landscape
- Motor Vehicle
- Personal Training
- Public Services
- Sport
- Veterinary Nursing

STUDENTS

Further Education: 2,172
Higher Education: 502
Apprenticeships: 1,017
Adult learners: 330
International: 25
Residential: 422
Students using college transport between home and campus: 1,237
Students supported with bursaries: 739

STAFF

Total Staff: 684

INCOME

Academic year 2022/23: £40.23 million

FACILITIES

On-site accommodation for up to 1,000, seven catering outlets; student lounge/bar; learning resource centre/library; dedicated HE classrooms, lecture theatres and study pods; HE lounge and bar; sports hall, pitch and multi-use gym; equestrian centre; campus farm; mini zoo; licenced food centre; vertical farm; Institute of Technology.

Come and see us!

There are plenty of opportunities to visit Reaseheath College and University Centre throughout the year and experience the vibrant campus in action.

Join us at popular public events like the **Reaseheath Family Festival** or our **Lambing and Mini Zoo Weekends**, where you can meet our animals and explore our BIAZA-licensed zoo and specialist livestock collections.

Our **Mini Zoo** is also open during most weekends and school holidays, with exciting holiday activities like **Zoo School** and **Zoo Academy** – perfect for aspiring young zookeepers! We also host regular competitions at our **Equine Centre** and offer sports facility hire.

Keep an eye out for our **Reaseheath College and University Centre Open Days**, school **taster sessions**, and a wide range of **adult learning courses**, from hobby classes to professional qualifications.

Find out more at:

reaseheath.ac.uk

reaseheath.ac.uk/zoo

reaseheath.ac.uk/adult-learners

grassroots



www.reaseheath.ac.uk

Reaseheath College, Nantwich
Cheshire CW5 6DF | 01270 613242



University Centre
Reaseheath



Reaseheath
College

