



Hope in the Valley RDA Group



Annual Review 2022/23

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1074384



Hope in the Valley is run entirely by volunteers. Our aim is to give physically disabled children from the ages of 3 to 16 the opportunity to experience the pleasure, independence and therapeutic benefits of riding a horse.

In the year up to 31 August 2023

Patron:

Dane Rawlins

Trustees & Management Committee:

Lesley Morrill (Chairman/Senior Instructor)

Tony Pannett (Treasurer)

Liz Mills (Hon Secretary)

Sheila Camilleri (Group Organiser, Instructor & Child Protection Officer)

Nicola Cramond (Pony Transport Manager/Adviser on Horse Matters)

Margaret Fogg (Adviser on Horse Matters)

Karen Potter (Training)

Miranda Dart (Publicity & Fundraising)

John Jackson (DBS)

Bankers:

National Westminster Bank plc

11 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2ZX

Solicitors:

Griffiths Smith Farrington Webb, 47 Old Steine, Brighton, BN1 1NW

Independent Examiner:

Tracy Rhys-Williams, 7 Rosebarn Close, Burgess Hill, RH15 0HN

Governing Documents:

Group Constitution

Membership Agreement with RDA National

Contact Address

The Hon Secretary – Liz Mills

End Cottage, High Street, Barcombe, BN8 5BA

Email: info@hopeinthevalley.org

Web Site: www.hopeinthevalley.org

Hope in the Valley is a member group of the Riding for the Disabled Association, incorporating Carriage Driving. Reg. Charity No. 244108. Company limited by guarantee No. 5010395.



Enriching lives through horses



CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS...

The past year has certainly given us plenty of challenges to overcome....

Just as we thought things were returning to some form of normal the weather intervened. In early November a storm caused a massive amount of damage to Plumpton College stables and flooded the indoor school, making it unusable.

With the tenacity of a terrier the committee went about finding a new venue and Alder Lake Farm became our temporary home until February 2023. Alder Lake was lovely, but the move meant that we did not have Bruno the college horse, or the hydraulic ramp. These factors meant two riders could not ride with us during this period.

On returning to Plumpton College, whilst great to be back, there was, and still is, a glitch. Due to an extra lip holding the new arena surface in place the hydraulic ramp could not get close enough to mount riders.

Dane Rawlins and Alistage were contacted and have been fantastic. They have very generously spent time and money engineering and fitting an extra section to overcome this problem. We now have to get renewed Health & Safety certification as well as service the equipment, which has been out of use the best part of a year, before we can use it for our riders once again.

The weather continued to test us with a fall of snow and icy conditions, meaning another lost week. Sheila returned from travelling in NZ just in time to cover me when I was struck down with Covid!

Summer term began with the prospect of two riders competing at Felbridge. What a disappointment to riders and organizers, when due to lack of entries, it had to be cancelled. Not to be beaten, and with limited entries in the dressage competition, the SE Region rolled the two events into a one-day extravaganza so groups could enter either event on the same day. This worked well, and could prove to be the formula for future years.

The sudden loss of Toby following Hickstead and Bruno who is often kept busy with his college work, does just prove how reliant and eternally grateful we are to all the horse owners who loan us their equines.

This makes economic sense for the group as the alternative is to own ponies or horses, a costly option to be avoided if we possibly can.

July was busy throughout. Our final session was held indoors due to an inclement weather forecast. Guests and parents occupied the corner of the school to enjoy the obligatory supply of cake, rosettes and awards.

There was also a trip to Hartpury, a volunteer's social afternoon with a talk on autism and a training day in Leatherhead on the biomechanics of the horse focusing on the animals' back.

Sadly, there has not been a holiday in Clwyd this year-the fourth year running. We have, however, booked it for August 2024, so with luck we will be able to return to enjoy the immersive experience that Clwyd offers to our riders especially and also parents and volunteers.

As a committee, we are keen to increase our rider cohort, but must be practical and sensitive to what we can and cannot do. To that end, we would love someone to join the committee to work closely with Sheila in trying to recruit more riders. This is a key part of what we do, but due to the confidential nature, this person, who I am sure is out there somewhere, would have to be a committee member. Is this person you? Or someone you know?

Volunteers are the glue that holds everything together, regardless of the part played. Without our committee of trustees we would not exist, but without our regular teams of helpers we could not operate at all.

Our supporters, in all forms: financial, loaning equines and those that spread the word so that we might receive gifts for ponies or items to sell, are vital to us, as horses are not cheap to run. It is also clear how we have come to rely on the hydraulic ramp to enable us to mount those riders who are less mobile. We are grateful to Dane and Alistage for doing all they can to modify the ramp thereby allowing us to use it once again.

In conclusion, it is obvious to see, that what with the weather causing chaos, Covid, mechanical ramp issues, recruiting new riders and the sudden loss of a valuable member of the equine team, it has certainly given us many challenges to overcome.

Lesley

PHOTO GALLERY

Here is a reflection of a wonderful year of riding!





PONY NEWS

Sourcing good ponies and getting them to Plumpton is a constant challenge for Hope in the Valley. We do not have our own premises, only meet up once a week in term time and so largely rely on the goodwill of volunteer transporters and pony owners. The past year has seen a number of huge price rises, among them animal feed and fuel. This is significant as most of our ponies are boxed well over 10 miles to get to us. Every week as a rule, each pony does 2 or 3 sessions. Any more would be too much because RDA work is harder than it looks but any less would not make the best use of our funds or of the owners/transporters time. It is part of my job to tailor the pony roster to make good use of these 'pony miles' and knowing when a child is going to be absent is an important part of this puzzle.

A rather handsome black mare called Lady Violet has recently joined our equine team. Lady belongs to trustee Miranda who has, with volunteer Claire's help, persevered with Lady's education in order to ensure she is suitable for RDA work.

It does not seem that long ago that Margaret was doing similar things with a rather green Toblerone (AKA Toby), but it was in fact nearly 20 years ago. This May we were all devastated to learn that poor Toby had suffered a nasty bout of colic and had to be put to sleep. He has been a truly tremendous RDA pony for all these years and his passing has left us with a huge sense of loss but also one of gratitude for his outstanding contribution.

*Nicola Cramond
Pony Transport Manager*



FINANCE: APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023

This was our first full year after the enforced break. We are grateful to the companies, societies and individuals who helped the group in the 2022-23 financial year. We had the benefit of a large bequest this year from a longstanding friend of the group who very sadly passed away a while ago and is sorely missed. We had donations from new partners who have forged a link with us and donations from organisations who continue their regular support.

We endeavour to spend our funds wisely and keep overheads to a minimum. Most of the group expenditure was on keep, care and transport of horses. We spent 90% on direct charitable expenses, 3% on income generation and 7% on administration.

During the financial year we continued our recovery from the pandemic which did affect the group financially and which curtailed our ability to provide the activities of which we are so proud. We overcame the challenges and now the barriers are hopefully behind us although higher inflation is impacting some of our expenses. We came through the past year stronger than ever and look forward to the future and a new generation of riders.

Tony Pannett – Treasurer

COMPETITION NEWS & RESULTS

The group was thrilled to finally be able to take part in competitions again this year and the results were a credit to all our riders, ponies and volunteers.

South East Region combined Dressage & Countryside Challenge – Hickstead 18th May 2023

Dressage Led Test Walk Only

Izzy on Toby – 1st Kezia on Toby – 2nd

William, who is now an affiliated member of our group, competed in two Dressage tests riding his own pony Ballysimon 1 (Ben).

His results are as follows:

Grade 6 Championship Test – Walk & Trot Open Class – 1st

Grade 7 Championship Test – Walk & Trot Open Class – 1st

The results qualified the pair for RDA National Championships at Hartpury.

Countryside Challenge – Non-Qualifier

Kezia on Toby – 1st Izzy on Toby – 2nd

Toby, the riders and volunteers looked very smart and we received many compliments on our turnout.

RDA National Championships – Hartpury College, Gloucestershire 15th July 2023

Despite the very thundery and wet conditions William rode Ballysimon 1 very confidently and these were the results:

Grade 6 Walk & Trot Open Class – 2nd

Dressage – Costume Freestyle – 6th

William has also been invited to the British Dressage Para Dressage Championships at Hartpury in late August.

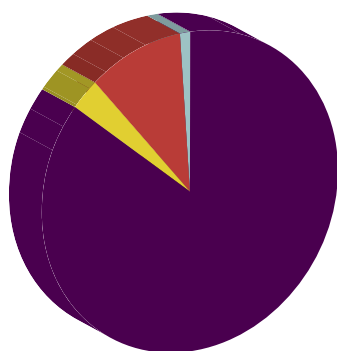
Congratulations to all our riders.

Sheila Camilleri

Group Organiser, Instructor & Child Protection Officer



INCOMING RESOURCES



- Donations, sponsorship & bequests **86%**
- Gift Aid **3%**
- Other income **10%**
- Investment income **1%**
- Fund raising **0%**
- Grants **0%**

TOTAL INCOME
£12,724

Total expenditure

£11,242

Of which:

Direct charitable expenditure

£10,066

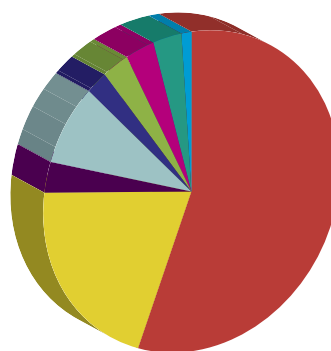
Income generation

£376

Admin

£800

APPLICATION OF FUNDS



- Horses **56%**
- Riding sessions **21%**
- Other riding activities **3%**
- Riders transport **0%**
- Equipment **8%**
- RDA Membership **2%**
- Fundraising, Publicity & Website **3%**
- Legal Requirements **3%**
- Communications & PR **3%**
- Sundries **1%**
- Plumpton Project **0%**

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
£11,242

GROUP NEWS

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Lorraine Seed was awarded Volunteer of the Year and was presented with the Bronze Horse Trophy at our Christmas Party held at Alder Lake Farm in December 2022. We were honoured that the presentation was made by Jane King, High Sherriff of East Sussex, herself a former volunteer with the Group.



VOLUNTEER LONG SERVICE AWARDS

10 Year awards were made to Jane Baigent, Juliet Turner, Miranda Dart and Nicky Jenkins.

A 20 Year award was presented to Terry Morrill, group photographer, pony handler, handyman, side walker, driver, mechanic and all-round great support to Lesley our chairman.



RIDER AWARDS AND NEWS

Izzy – Junior Riding Award.

Kezia – Senior Riding Award.

Ruby – Sarah Baverstock Award for Personal Achievement.

We are delighted that Willow, who rode with us for 10 years, has achieved a place on the Further Education Through Horsemanship Course at Fortune College in Hampshire.

TRAINING

Over the past year volunteers have had the opportunity to attend first aid training, a lecture on equine biomechanics with a focus on the horse's back, and a fascinating talk on autism delivered by trustee Karen Potter who is a teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator. In addition, the group is delighted to have a new coach in training-Carol Plater.