

Trustees Annual Report

Mid-Antrim Riding for the Disabled, 1st January 2022-31st December 2022

Charity No. NI 103831

The Charity exists to provide Therapeutic Riding and associated activities to children with Special Needs in the Ballymena and surrounding Area.

The Principal Address of the Charity and contact for the Charity Commission is:

Mrs Jane Hanna, 8 Carclinty Road, Cullybackey BT42 1PH.

The 2022 year continued to be impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic, with the group deciding to maintain the volunteer rota on a weekly basis. Due to the poor weather in February, the riders started in March and rode weekly during term time until the beginning of June. The riders came from Castle Tower School, who due to the reduced availability of buses and bus drivers were only able to send a single class of pupils each week. The 8 pupils were split into 2 groups with each group getting both a riding session and a session in the clubroom where they worked towards the theory part of their riding experience – stable management, horse care and other riding related information. Of the class, 6 pupils completed their Grade 1 Riding and Horse care and received their badges and certificates. The pupils ended their term of riding by taking part in a countryside challenge and BBQ at Galgorm Parks Riding School.

Following on from the success of the summer scheme in August 2021, the group operated a 4-week summer scheme for young people from both Castle Tower School and the local community. We had two sessions each morning, with nine riders overall who were accompanied by their parents and grandparents. This was a great opportunity for the families to see the progress their children made each week. At the end of the 4 weeks, the proud riders received rosettes. The group were delighted to increase the opportunity to ride to a larger number of young people and the development of not only their riding skills, but also their confidence, self-esteem and social skills was evident.

In September, we resumed our weekly Thursday morning rides for Castle Tower School and 2 external riders (who had attended the summer scheme). Unfortunately, again due to the impact of bus availability in school, we were restricted to one class of pupils (9 pupils), who came in their class bubble. We continued with our covid friendly protocols which resulted in two rides of 4-5 riders – while not riding the young people were once again taught stable management, horse care and other riding information mapped to the RDA Grade 1 Horse Care and Riding awards. This enhanced their understanding of their riding experience and the stable environment. One of the students did not want to ride but as a group they were encouraged to work with Geronimo (a miniature pony) and over the weeks developed their confidence around the pony and learnt stable management and horse care. In December, 6 riders were awarded Grade 1 Riding and Horse Care certificates and badges, 3 riders achieved Grade 2 Riding and 1 student their Endeavour certificate. As a group, we were delighted to see the young riders develop not only their riding skills but also their confidence, communication, and social skills. The final day was to be a Christmas party which unfortunately, was cancelled due to bad weather, but Santa made a visit to school instead.

The group continue to benefit from the hiring of the excellent riding facilities and equines, from Mrs Sara Kyle at Galgorm Parks Riding School, Sand Road, Ballymena. As well as exclusive use of all the facilities for £150-£175 per morning, Sara continues to support the group with advice to help provide the most beneficial experience for the pupils. The rent of the facilities is the main annual cost for the group as all support is

provided by volunteers, including Coaches, leaders and side walkers. Other operational costs included: RDA membership and insurance, and our annual BBQ/Countryside Challenge and Christmas Party.


The principal sources of income during the year included £1000 in a grant from the Education Authority. The group also received a number of generous donations: £800 from 1st Ballymena Presbyterian Church, £425 in lieu of flowers for Hilary Robinson, £250 from Ballymena Academy Charity Committee and £510 from other supporters of the charity. We also purchased a defibrillator using the funds received in memory of a longstanding volunteer. Due to the generous donations during the year, the group's funds remain in a more secure position however, applications for funding may be necessary in 2023, for example: Children in Need and Big Lottery.

The Public Benefit delivered by Mid-Antrim RDA is detailed above in terms of achievements of the riders. Less easy to quantify but equally beneficial is the opportunity provided by having close contact with a horse and the sense of achievement and enjoyment which can be observed in many of the young riders, especially those who were initially nervous or unwilling to take part. It is often the physical benefits of improved core strength, balance and co-ordination which are most apparent.

As a group, we make every effort to ensure that the sessions are conducted safely by using suitably qualified Coaches and trained volunteers. Ongoing training is provided for the volunteer leaders and side walkers, both by our group and attendance at sessions organised by RDA NI. During the year the group continued to update Access NI checks for existing volunteers meanwhile all new volunteers will complete an Access NI check and provide 2 references. The Group's Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually along with the Health and Safety, First Aid and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies. For health and safety, a qualified first aider is always in attendance, and during the year a number of volunteers renewed their first aid course.

We consider that we have had regard to the Commission's guidance on public benefit and have fulfilled our obligations in this respect.

Signed:



Lady Juliet Frazer

Chairman

On behalf of the following Trustees of the Group

Lady Juliet Frazer	Mrs Patsy Morrogh
Mrs Catherine Maybin	Mrs Emma Wells
Mrs Heather Robinson	Mrs Sally Glass
Miss Yvonne Parker	Mrs Madeline McIlroy
Mrs Sheelagh Canty	Mrs Jane Hanna

Attachments

1. Copy of the Accounts and List of Assets
2. Copy of Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees