

Trustees Annual Report

Brentford Riding for the Disabled Group 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

Charity Number NIC 104625

The Charity exists to provide therapeutic riding and associated activities for children with special needs attending special needs schools in the Belfast area and has been providing rides to pupils of Fleming Fulton School for many years. Rides take place at Lusks Riding School in Carryduff. Improved core strength, balance and co-ordination are some of the physical benefits as well as the sense of achievement and enjoyment provided for the riders through contact with a horse, even by children initially nervous or unwilling to take part.

The principal contact for the Charity Commission is Mrs Kathy Stewart of 81 Ballykeel Road, Moneyreagh, Newtownards, BT23 6BW.

The period under review is the first full year of activity after 20 months of closure due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Out of a possible 28 weeks to April-March 2023, rides went ahead on 25 weeks which compared favourably to only 14 weeks in the period April-March 2022. The three weeks cancelled were due to transport issues, lack of physiotherapist cover and icy weather.

Fleming Fulton provides a dedicated physiotherapist contact and at the start of each school year a pool of potential riders is identified. We were able to accommodate up to four riders at each session and a total of 96 rides were provided to 8 children during the 12 months under review. As most of the children were with us for an extended period, pleasing progress was made. Very positive unsolicited feedback was received from the school's physiotherapist reinforcing this view.

The move to Lusks Riding School at Carryduff in 2022 has proved to be very successful with good availability of suitable riding school ponies and the use of a large indoor school. A quiet lane enables rides to also go for occasional short hacks in the good weather which both the children and volunteers enjoy.

While all facilities including the ponies are provided free of charge, donations are made each term to help towards riding school overheads including the upkeep of ponies. We would like to formally record our thanks to the proprietor of Lusks Riding School, Denise Neill and her staff for all their assistance to us.

We are fortunate in having a very loyal group of volunteers and during the year under review we were fortunate to welcome 5 new recruits bringing our volunteer numbers to 26 (including our two coaches). We would like to formally acknowledge the contribution made by all our volunteers, who faithfully turn up week after week and without whom we would be unable to carry out any activity.

The Trustees met regularly throughout the year to enable planning and management of on-going activity and to ensure completion of all necessary reporting and compliance paperwork. Every effort is made by the Trustees to ensure that sessions are conducted safely by using suitably qualified coaches and trained volunteers, and a qualified First Aider is always in attendance. The Group has a safeguarding policy, and all volunteers are required to have an enhanced Access NI check as well as providing references. Thanks are due to all the Trustees for their hard work and completion of training as required.

In the financial year to March 2023, donations received from Fleming Fulton towards riding school costs exceeded payments made to Lusks due to timing issues around receipts and

payments. As a result, after insurance and other minor miscellaneous expenditure including training, a small surplus was recorded. The donations from Fleming Fulton have put the Group's finances on a more secure footing and current reserves should therefore cover insurance costs and other small items of expenditure for more than 10 years. We therefore look forward to the future with confidence but with the knowledge that should reserves fall to an unsustainable level, further donations and/or fundraising will be required to continue to operate.

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

Signed K. G. Stewart

Mrs Kathy Stewart on behalf of the Trustees of the Group