

RIDING for the DISABLED ASSOCIATION (ARMAGH) LIMITED

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives

At Longstone we aim to enrich the lives of disabled people through horses, in a safe and welcoming environment.

Constitutional Matters

We have undertaken the process of merging Longstone RDA with Moy RDA Group. Moy Group had been inactive since the pandemic in 2021, and had difficulty in finding a suitable venue to continue their operation. Following consideration by the Trustees, it was agreed that it would be of mutual benefit to merge the groups which would allow Moy Group to resume their activities. The new group will have the working title of Longstone Group incorporating Moy RDA.

Riding Activities

Riding sessions were held each week during school term on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Riders came from Christian Brothers PS, Armstrong PS, St Patricks PS and Lisanally Special School. A community ride took place each Wednesday evening for both adults and children.

Many riders took part in end of term exams and proficiency tests and it is always with great delight that they receive their certificates and endeavour awards.

As with all riding sessions, continued emphasis was placed on the need to operate fully in accordance with RDA Health and Safety Rules.

Membership and Insurance

Active membership total is around 70. Our administration system requires all new members to complete a Volunteer Application Form, Green card and apply for an Access NI check. This ensures that operating activities are covered by RDA insurance. As in previous years, the insurance premium makes up for a large proportion of our running costs.

Staffing and Volunteers

Debbie McKenna is yard manager and also cares for ponies throughout the year. On occasion we have to cancel riding sessions due to limited availability of coaches and helpers. A number of new volunteers have joined the ranks recently. We have 5 instructors at present and another 2 volunteers under the title of coach in training.

There is significant demand for additional riding sessions and the group is continually striving to recruit coaches and helpers. New volunteers are always welcome and anyone with an interest should contact the group through the contact details provided on social media.

Fundraising

We have had significant donations from individuals, clubs, organisations and businesses. Many of these donations have been initiated by our members or by friends of committee members. We appreciate the continued support from community, schools and parents.

Pony Welfare

We are working with 4 ponies, cared for by Debbie McKenna and ably assisted by a team of helpers who turn up during school holidays and weekends to feed and check on animals. Due to the fact that

some of our ponies are older, they tend to need more veterinary attention which inevitably leads to higher costs. Other pony expenses include farrier and winter feeding.

Maintenance

Maintenance expenditure included painting and repairs to stable doors, power washing and general tidying up. It has to be said that the arena, yard and stable block look immaculate and well maintained due in part to the diligent work of volunteers