

Annual General Meeting of the Charlton Park Group RDA October 14th, 2022 - Chairman's Report

In my report for last year's AGM, I said that due to the ravages of the Covid pandemic, we were exempted like most other charitable organisations from holding an AGM in 2020. I went on to say that by 2021 we hoped to be getting to something resembling normal life and working again. Like most other RDA groups, we did gradually try to get back into the swing of things, as previously enjoyed. The Trustees met in deliberation, avoiding a suggestion that we might meet virtually. Enquiries from potential new volunteers started to pick up again. During this continuing difficult time the welfare of our equine heroes, Willow, Tiny Tim and Gypsy were always uppermost in our minds.

Our efforts to try to get back to that longed for normality was marvellously enhanced by the visit on 5 May 2021 of HRH The Princess Royal-President of the RDA, when Group long service certificates were presented by her Royal Highness. Despite some Covid restrictions still being in place the visit was a memorable and happy occasion enjoyed by all.

An invitation was extended to the Mayor of The Royal Borough of Greenwich - Cllr Linda Bird. I took the invitation as an opportune moment to set out for the record a resume of the Group's history and day-to-day working in Greenwich – a suggestion avidly taken up, received and applauded by the Royal Borough.

The legend read thus:

“The Group was started in 1974 by physio Liz McDermott for the nursery department in Charlton Park School on a Wednesday afternoon, one pony was borrowed to do this. Early on Eileen Usher helped with training the riders (she was 17 years old). Eileen is being presented on the day as a Group founding member and will also receive a long service certificate from her Majesty. Greenwich Council then gave the Group the present hut building which had been a playgroup, along with stabling in Maryon Wilson Park and said that it would be on a peppercorn rent. Nearly 50 years on they have never collected rent from us.

Charlton Park Group when running at capacity offers up to 12 rides for disabled children living or schooling in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, each weekday morning but presently we are only operating Monday to Thursday with 9 riders each day due to having to space each ride for Covid cleaning. We have 3 ponies owned and cared for by the Group which is run entirely by volunteers with the unstinting support of volunteers, donors and supporters. During Covid a few volunteers remained caring for the ponies. No revenue was lost as we don't charge for riding, and we didn't have a wage bill as we don't pay anyone.

We offer safe progressive riding sessions weekly. We enter regional dressage competitions and occasional site visits such as

The Kings Troop and were meant to go on a visit to Park Lane Group who came for a day trip to us, but Covid has postponed the visit.

Every year we take six children on a residential week's camp to Bradbourne in Kent, missed last year and this year, due to Covid.

The present arena riding surface was donated five years ago or so, by The Supporters Club of Charlton Athletic Football Club."

The process of agreeing a licence agreement - Service Level Agreement SLA-between The Royal Borough and our Group was still on the back burner due to Covid difficulties.

Notwithstanding, by taking up the opportunity of setting out the Group history to The Royal Borough it was hoped that it would both celebrate and confirm with the Borough our undoubted mission of enhancing the welfare of the local community in helping local disabled children to reach their true life potential.

Fundraising of necessity never ceases. The whole happy fundraising team, urged on by Carol and Kerry did remarkable things too innumerable to mention them all, both on and off site. At Christmas time we were joined by The Royal Borough Mayor-

Cllr Denise Hyland at one of our sumptuous Christmas Dinners expertly and deliciously prepared in house.

There was later some talk that the real Father Christmas who had flatly refused to leave his Grotto, was in fact Kevin Clarke, although this was doubted by many!

Funds raised are always gleefully received by our grateful and hardworking Treasurer James Hamilton in his marvellous balancing act! Grateful thanks go to James for his work.

Grateful thanks are also extended to our long-suffering Secretary Eleri Morgan, for her uncomplaining diligence in keeping the Group records up to speed.

In conclusion I am happy to repeat what I said last year: The unstinting loyalty and sheer hard work that the dedicated Charlton Park Group volunteers and helpers put into the everyday working of the Group remains a true wonder. Working together our happy family of volunteers, donors, supporters, parents and carers, whoever and wherever they are, ensure that we can continue to help local disabled children to reach their true life potential.

John Furlonger - Chairman of Trustees

**Charlton Park RDA 2021 Annual Accounts
(Receipts and Payments Method)**

	2021	2020
Receipts	Approved	Approved
Donations	8,054.50	5,897.89
Donation Head Office (2)		4,025.00
Just Giving	5,136.14	4,192.33
Fund Raising	5,436.49	1,135.77
Sales RDA Goods		
Holidays and Outings		
Sales of Equip		
Pony Sponsors	250.00	
Total	18,877.13	15,250.99
Payments	2021	2020
Fund Raising Expenses	709.62	564.38
Operating Expenses	1,719.20	761.23
Travel and Training	-	424.70
Holidays and Outings		-
New Ponies		
Ponies' Welfare (3)(4)(5)	6,787.14	6,806.59
Tack and Equipment	80.01	1,994.06
Insurance and Alarms	4,149.34	4,247.62
Maintenance and Décor	200.00	9.70
Total	13,645.31	14,808.28
Surplus (Deficit)	5,231.82	442.71

Notes:

- 1) 2021 figures reconcile exactly to the Bank Statements
- 2) The 2020 figure is net of the annual fees of £975
- 3) A cheque to Speedgate for £473.36 issued in Dec 2021 was not cashed till 2022
- 4) A Speedgate payment of £483.96 incurred in 2019 was paid in 2020
- 5) Also included in Ponies's Welfare are Ponies' Holidays
- 6) There are no serious incidents or other matters that trustees should have reported, but have not done so.