

**Trustees Report October 2022**

This is the first AGM of Wing Group RDA since we attained Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status on 20th September 2021. The decision to seek approval as a CIO was an important one in terms of the group moving forward positively. We have also strengthened our relationship with the RDA National Office and the local Regional representatives.

It has been a busy time for the Trustees since July 2021. Firstly, we gained approval from RDA National Office to resume operating riding sessions after being prevented from running at all during the various Covid restrictions. It was a major achievement to be given permission to restart under the RDA Road to Restart Scheme in September 2021, as many groups did not manage to do this. The process had involved 2 trustees attending a training session on how to operate under the guidelines issued by RDA National Office, and the completion of additional Covid Risk Assessments, as well as many other forms. We even followed the guidance to purchase sufficient lead reins for each volunteer to have their own, kept in individual plastic wallets! A training session was held in mid-July 2021 for all volunteers to ensure that everyone in the group understood the need for social distancing, the wearing of face masks, hand-sanitising and the use of wipes to sanitise touch points on tack.

We also followed RDA National Office guidance to start small when returning after the long break, and so the decision was taken to only operate on one morning each week rather than two mornings as prior to Covid. This proved to be wise, as both schools experienced difficulties in bringing four children each week, and sometimes one or other of the two schools were unable to attend at all. We all had to be flexible with last minute adjustments to the ride.

Both schools continued to experience illness and staffing issues until the end of the Spring Term. However, it was definitely good to continue where possible as the children were clearly enjoying riding and were beginning to become more confident.

However, in the Summer Term the regular attendance of both schools improved. From this point it became apparent that the children began to benefit more from regular weekly riding sessions. We were also able to welcome two “independent” children to join the first ride and have increased each ride from 4 to 5 riders.

There were a few special achievements for the children, such as a child that by the end of the term was remaining mounted for the whole session (having initially only managed to stay for 10-15 minutes); several children became more verbal over the term; but most notably the confidence gained by all in walking off the lead rein whilst “steering” through a series

of cones. Most of the children also enjoyed having a short trot on their ponies too.

Over the year we have been joined by five new volunteers. They have all completed their initial training, and have proven to be enthusiastic and committed to supporting the instructor and riders each week. We have held a number of informal training sessions and volunteers say they have found these useful. A Safeguarding Course was organised at Mursley Hall Farm in June 2022 and was run by Anne Coney (a long-standing RDA trainer). Attendance at this was excellent, with good participation, and many comments that volunteers had found it both interesting and helpful.

We could not have achieved such a successful year without the experience, enthusiasm and knowledge of our Instructor, Jenny Bonham. She has provided us with suitable ponies for the rides, prepared and delivered the riding sessions for the children, and has given them encouragement to try their best. In addition, Jenny has been key to the training of volunteers and in providing us all with a very welcome Christmas lunch in December 2021. We were pleased that Sarah Bradbury agreed to be re-assessed as an RDA instructor and were thrilled that she passed her assessment with flying colours in the Summer term. Sarah has already given our group good support and has developed an excellent rapport with the children.

What began as a challenging year has ended with a number of achievements:

- the children have benefited from riding and have made good individual progress
- the rides have increased from 4 to 5 children per ride
- two 'independent' children now join the first ride in alternate weeks
- new and enthusiastic volunteers have joined the group
- the majority of the volunteers attended the RDA Safeguarding Course
- the group has another instructor to lead the rides

And to top it all we had a very successful stall at the Winslow Show selling cakes, home produce and a raffle for a luxury hamper – raising £540 on the day!

Anne Hampton,  
Chair, Wing Group RDA

11<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION  
WING GROUP 1073728  
(New Charity No. from 21.9.2021  
1195853)**

**REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDS  
31 MARCH 2021  
20 SEPTEMBER 2021  
31 MARCH 2022**