

Trustees Report October 2024

Since the last AGM in November 2023, we have had a successful 7 months. The Trustees decided to bring the AGM forward to July, as it is closer to the financial end of year and it should ease the focus on the year we in, rather than from the perspective of looking back after the long summer break

We have continued to work with Furzedown School (Winslow) and Walnuts School (Bletchley). Both schools report positive differences in the behaviours they see whilst the children are riding on the ponies, from being more calm, being able to sit still for more than a few minutes, to relaxing and smiling! Clear evidence of the immediate benefits the children get during the sessions. We also can see how some of the children have gained confidence when riding and in themselves.

It was disappointing to have to cancel a few sessions in January and February 2024 because of very bad or cold weather. We are aware that it is extremely cold in the barn at Mursley Hall Farm and we didn't feel it was fair to let the children get too cold, or indeed our volunteers. Since then, however, we have had a good attendance and have seen new children joining the riding sessions from both schools.

This Summer Term the children from Furzedown are working towards achieving more independence on their ponies. They are aware of long and short diagonals, and happily respond to the coaches questions about where to go next, or which rein is needed. Over the last few weeks they have been 'steering' their ponies between the cones and have progressed from being on a lead rein, to being on a loose lead rein, to having only Jenny or Sarah walk with them. Most of them have said they want to be able to do this totally alone in their last session.

The children from Walnuts School have very different individual needs. We have been working closely with the teaching staff to establish the best ways to deal with each child. Some need little or no eye-contact, some are non-verbal and most need support in balance when they are placing items on the cones. They have been working well in holding then placing rings, cups and balls on the cones.

We continue to be aware of how important our volunteers are in making the sessions run smoothly. It feels that our volunteers are all contributing to sessions and are so helpful in undertaking tasks, such as moving the mounting block or replacing the equipment for the coaches. We have been joined by two new volunteers in 2024. All have completed their initial training and we are trying to ensure that those wishing to lead ponies as well as walk as side-helpers will be given training and experience.

Our two coaches, Jenny Bonham and Sarah Bradbury have continued to demonstrate good awareness of the children's individual abilities and develop appropriate activities for them. We are particularly grateful to Jenny for her

thoughtfulness in providing suitable ponies each week, and that they are all tacked up and ready for us. We were very pleased that Sarah had successfully completed her second RDA coach assessment and now has three years before being re-assessed.

We have also had a couple of visits from Irene Purse, the Buckinghamshire County Chair, who has noted the enthusiasm and caring nature of our group. Indeed, on one occasion Irene even lead a pony for us. Irene continues to stay in touch and is keen to continue to liaise with all groups in the County. It is good to have a local point of contact and who can feed views back to Regional and National levels.

On a social level, we were given a warm welcome into Jenny's home for an enjoyable Christmas Lunch. It was a good opportunity to talk together in a much warmer environment than our usual coffee gatherings in the barn or yard. This reminds me that I should also thank Libby Wass for the fantastic job she does each week in providing tea/coffee and biscuits for us all. This is much appreciated at the end of a busy morning.

We are currently preparing for the Wing RDA stall at the Winslow Show. Over the next few weeks Libby and Denise will be creating and circulating lists of items for the raffle; people willing to cook cakes, savouries and produce to sell; as well as volunteers to man the stall on show-day. Last years Winslow Show raised a considerable sum and we would hope to replicate this in August 2024.

While it is good to reflect on the past few months, it leads us to think about the next school year and to start thinking about new children likely to be selected by the schools.

Anne Hampton,
Chair, Wing Group RDA

3rd July 2024

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION, WING GROUP - CHARITY NO. 1195853
REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

Cash Summary		Start of Financial Year	4/1/2023	End of Financial Year	3/31/2024	Balance Business Account	£ 1,635.69	Balance Deposit Account	£27,044.50
Income Business Account				Note					
Donations	£	258.00		1					
Winslow Show	£	753.60		2					
Events	£	1,288.50		3					
Gift Aid	£	-							
Total	£	2,300.10							
Income Deposit Account									
Interest	£	309.98		4					
Total	£	2,610.08							
Expenditure									
Pony Hire	£	1,120.00							
Certs Badges and Rosettes	£	-							
Insurance	£	230.00							
Printing Postage & Stationary	£	-							
Training	£	-							
Equipment	£	81.02		5					
Sundries	£	435.50		6					
Total	£	1,866.52							
Excess income over expenditure	£	743.56							