

# HAPPY LANDINGS DRIVING GROUP RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION INCORPORATING CARRIAGE DRIVING

Annual Report and Accounts

for year ended

31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

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## OUR AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

Happy Landings Carriage Driving Group's (the Group) objective is to promote the objects of the Riding for the Disabled Association incorporating Carriage Driving (RDA) by providing disabled people with the opportunity to carriage drive to benefit their health and well-being in the West Sussex and neighbouring area.

The Group's activities enable our disabled driver participants to live more fulfilling lives and provides them with direct and indirect benefits some of which can be life changing. All participants that can are able to learn new skills in a safe environment including horsemanship, carriage driving and communication as well as improving their personal well-being through activity and social interaction. For the more disabled we take them out to experience the pleasure of carriage driving along quiet lanes while the more ambitious are able to progress to participation in local or even national competitions with other groups.

Many of the disabled people we seek to help are in urban residential care and, by reason of mental or physical disability, are socially isolated without access to external stimulus and activity. They include, for example, people with acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy, challenging behaviour and epilepsy. For many, carriage driving in specially adapted vehicles, supported by trained coaches and helpers, is the only activity they are able to do.

The Trustees confirm that they have taken regard of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

## Achievement and Performance

The RDA with which we are affiliated, has clearly shown the benefits of association with horses. Carriage driving, in specially adapted vehicles, offers the same therapy for those unable to sit on a horse. Many of the disabled drivers (those that are able enough) have shown their desire for improvement by taking and passing approved proficiency tests.

Benefits to our participants include:

- social interaction at regular meetings
- physical improvement
- better communication and relationships
- development of horsemanship skills
- increased motivation and personal satisfaction
- enhanced personal confidence and independence.

Equestrian activities are physically demanding, and our disabled drivers are given the opportunity to participate to their fullest ability. We help both our disabled members and volunteers lead healthier and active outdoor lives.

We receive a lot of feedback from the disabled drivers, their relatives and carers as to how much they look forward to our regular sessions. The disabled drivers remain with the Group for many years usually until they are unable to attend our sessions.

## Volunteer Members

The Group enjoys strong support from a committed team of volunteer members, several of whom have been trained as qualified coaches that are needed to accompany the disabled participants. All volunteers are required to complete basic training before being able to help with our activities to ensure safe delivery of our activities. Records of training and skills acquired are maintained in accordance with RDA National guidelines. All volunteers are required to be cleared to work with vulnerable adults and children.

There are also many supporters assisting with fund raising and increasing community awareness to the needs of the disabled.

## Location and Facilities

The Group operates from a country estate at Tismans Common, near Rudgwick, West Sussex, where we drive from April to October each year on Wednesday mornings. Our facilities and the use of the grounds of the estate are kindly provided by the owner at no expense to the Group. We also use RDA Cranleigh indoor school on Monday afternoons in the winter months to provide extra sessions.

Our horses are kept stabled or loaned to us by our volunteers who ensure their welfare. They are brought to the venue for each session. The Group also owns a number of specially adapted horse drawn carriages that will take wheelchairs and ambulant disabled drivers.

## PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

This Report and Accounts relate to the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

## Financial performance

Income for the year was £7,179, reflecting significantly lower receipts from cash donations. These had been particularly high in the previous period due to a large legacy. An operating loss of £5,494 was recorded compared to a surplus of £8,741 for the prior year. We were fortunate, however, to be given a suitably experienced pony by our President along with a custom carriage and trailer. The value of this gift is not reflected in the financial statement but has enabled the Group to avoid the previously expected cost of acquisition of a new pony.

Operating expenditure was higher by 14% due mainly to a 25% increase in horse welfare costs and additional travelling expenses. Costs have increased by 120% over the past 4 years, a trend which seems likely to continue.

Cash reserves remain healthy and should be sufficient to meet the Group's needs for the foreseeable future.

The Group is operated entirely by our dedicated volunteers.

## Outlook

The number of driving sessions that can be offered is expected to remain similar to the previous year given the number of ponies that we have. Personal development of our volunteer helpers and coaches will continue and new volunteers will be welcomed.

## Risk Management

The Trustees have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that systems or procedures are established in order to manage those risks.

This report was approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf.

***John Massey OBE – Chairman***

## ORGANISERS REPORT

Last year's driving went well. Sadly, we had to have our pony, Misty, put to sleep in the summer due to her chronic breathing issues. Leighton, one of our volunteers, continued to bring his pony, Jake, for training each week. Jake was assessed and passed with flying colours in September 2024. In December we were fortunate to be given pony Goldie by our president Ann Sheldrake, his owner, along with his carriage driving equipment. Goldie is a very experienced driving pony and is a perfect replacement for Misty.

In September, our volunteer, Amanda, passed her RDA coach assessment and is now a very valued member of our coaching team. There were 30 volunteers in total, five of whom are RDA coaches. We had one new volunteer who has fitted in really well.

A total of 127 participant sessions were held with 12 participants driving fortnightly. This was down on 2023/2024 as we started the year with only two ponies, Misty and Rocky.

Our 30th Anniversary party at our venue, Tismans, was a great success. As well as the delicious food, we were entertained to a very good driving demo given by Dick Lane and Andy. We were also pleased to welcome our President and Founder who cut the anniversary cake.

One of our participants competed in the RDA South-East Region's carriage driving show. Deirdre, a long-standing volunteer and coach, was the deserving winner of the National RDA Tora Bray award for her dedication and commitment to the Group and her care of Misty.

Driving finished for the season on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

Socially, we enjoyed another very successful lunch and croquet match for our volunteers which was hosted by our Chairman and his wife. Fund raising continued with a well-supported skittles evening, the 100 Club and our Christmas raffle.

***Carol Porter -Trustee and Group Organiser***

## STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Group is a CIO affiliated with the RDA and is governed in accordance with its founding constitution which is in accordance with RDA requirements.

The board of five Trustees is responsible for governance and oversight of the charity's activities. The board aims to meet at least quarterly. Trustees are nominated and elected by the membership.

Membership is open to anyone wishing to assist in furthering the purpose of the Group and who agrees to exercise their powers as a member in good faith. Membership is subject to approval by the Trustees to ensure that they are suitable and meet the safeguarding requirements. All volunteers are required to be "Green Carded" to show they meet the required standard of training before being allowed to participate in driver session

An operations committee, chaired by the Group Organiser and Trustee, comprises a number of members who meet frequently to plan all participant sessions, events and review performance.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2025

<b>RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Receipts</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Donations	<b>1,801</b>	27,621
Fundraising (Note 2)	<b>2,863</b>	2,939
Drivers Donations	<b>1,615</b>	2,500
Goods sold	<b>0</b>	0
	<b>6,279</b>	33,060
Assets sold	<b>900</b>	400
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>7,179</b>	33,460
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Operating expenses (Note 3)	<b>12,073</b>	10,551
Assets purchased	<b>600</b>	14,169
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,673</b>	24,720
<b>Surplus for the period</b>	<b>-5,494</b>	8,741
<b>ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31st MARCH 2024</b>		
Bank balance	<b>26,672</b>	32,166
Equipment	<b>7,160</b>	7,356
Carriages	<b>21,098</b>	24,342
Horses	<b>2,500</b>	2,500
<b>Total Assets (Note 4)</b>	<b>57,431</b>	66,365

## NOTES TO ACCOUNTS

1. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with UK charities Financial Reporting Standard (FRS102 - 2019) on a receipts and payment basis.

2. Fundraising

	2025	2024
	£	£
Events	1,888	1,773
Raffles	605	536
100 Club Net	370	380
Other	0	250
	<b>2,863</b>	<b>2,939</b>

3. Operating expenses

	2025	2024
	£	£
Fundraising Events	1,599	1,516
Facility Hire	395	540
Insurances	2,467	2,543
Admin	477	201
Volunteer Expenses	869	446
Equipment maintenance	0	280
Horse welfare	6,267	5,025
	<b>12,073</b>	<b>10,551</b>

4. Fixed assets (except horses) are valued at cost less 10% annual depreciation. Horse valuations are estimated at the year-end based on likely resale value.

	2024	2025
	£	£
Equipment		
Equipment at 31 March 2024	7,356	
Additions	600	
Less 10%	796	
		<b>7,160</b>
Carriages at 31st March 2024	24,342	
Less disposals	900	
Less 10%	2,344	
		<b>21,098</b>

## REFERENCE INFORMATION

Charity name Happy Landings Driving Group Riding for the Disabled  
Association Incorporating Carriage Driving

Charity number 1196839

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Trustees	
Chairman	John Massey OBE
Secretary	Angela Figgis
Treasurer	Susan Underhill
RDA Representative	Janice Massey
Organiser	Carol Porter