

TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Riding for the Disabled Association, Newtownards
Group

Charity No NI 104189

The Charity exists to provide disabled people in the Newtownards and North Down area with the opportunity to ride and interact with horses to benefit their physical and emotional wellbeing. The Charity exists under the auspices of RDA National Office to whose policies and guidelines we adhere.

The principal address for the Charity and contact for the Charity Commission is Mrs Celia McMorran, 51 Earlswood Road, Belfast BT4 3EA

The Group meets at Birr House Riding Centre, Craigtantlet where it has exclusive use of the indoor school on Tuesday mornings, by kind permission of the proprietor, Caroline McVeigh. A payment of £15 per horse hired is paid, In a normal session four horses are used with each horse being ridden by up to three different riders, Each rider contributes £4. The group held 25 sessions in the past year with a few sessions having to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Our normal number of 10 -13 riders includes four pupils from Tor Bank School, Dundonald. The remaining riders are adults who come from various care homes and private addresses in the area. Proficiency tests as prescribed by the RDA parent body were undertaken successfully

by a number of the Tor Bank riders. The older riders took part in a number of categories of the Virtual Championships, again with great success. Two of our riders qualified to attend the National Championships at Hartpury and were able to attend with great success and the support of three of our volunteers .

All of the Group's qualified coaches and trained helpers are volunteers. The Group currently has 28 volunteers, 3 of whom joined this year. In addition to weekly rides the Group keeps in touch by WhatsApp. We also have one coach in training. The Group is managed by its trustees, all of whom volunteer 'on the ground 'as either coaches or helpers. A new Chairman was appointed this year; the previous chair resigned and is no longer a trustee. The new chair will become a trustee along with another volunteer. The AGM was held on 11 June 2024.

The Group's funds remain healthy with a year end sum of £8,798.77. The main outgoings are horse hire and insurance, Christmas cards, equipment, prizes and gifts were also purchased. Income was derived from the Easyfundraising donation scheme, HMRC Gift Aid and fund-raising by members/supporters of our group, for its benefit. There were two fundraising events - a pub quiz and Doggy Santa's Grotto .

The public benefit delivered by the Group is reflected in the achievements of its riders, It delivers them the opportunity to ride and learn about horse management to the level of their ability, choice and ambition within a safe structured and enjoyable environment. The

improvement in confidence, physical ability, wellbeing and education derived from the experience of our riders extends beyond the arena. This demonstrated by all those who ride with our Group.

The Group ensures that each session is conducted safely under the direction of qualified coaches whose skills are regularly reviewed. Volunteers are trained on joining and receive ongoing guidance on a regular basis. All volunteers, coaches and helpers, are required to satisfy an Enhanced Access NI check. Before acceptance of an application to join the Group two references are sought and taken up. The Group adheres to the RDA parent policy with regard to safeguarding, which policy is regularly reviewed. A qualified first aider attends all sessions.

We consider that we have had regard to the Commission's guidance on public benefit and have fulfilled our obligations in this respect.

Signed

Mrs Helena Strong, Chair

And on behalf of the Newtownards Group Trustees
Mrs Celia McMorran, Secretary/Organiser
Mr Christopher McMorran, Treasurer
Mrs Caroline Twemlow
Mrs Penelope Rawlings
Mrs Sarah Furney
Mrs Valerie Campbell
Mrs Sally McVeigh
Ms Emily McKenna