

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 well-being. 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 a Birr House Riding Centre, Craigantlet where it has exclusive use of the indoor school on Tuesday mornings, by kind permission of the proprietor, Mrs Caroline McVeigh. A payment of £15 per horse is paid. In a normal session three/four horses are used with each horse being ridden by up to three or four different riders. Each rider contributes £4.00. The group held 25 sessions in the past year. Our normal number of 11/12 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 successfully completed by a number of the Tor Bank riders and by three of the other young adult riders. One young adult rider has competed in the Virtual Championships and three others at the National Championships at Hartpury, accompanied by three of our volunteers, all successfully.

All of the Group's qualified coaches and trained helpers are volunteers. The Group currently has 25 volunteers. There are three qualified coaches. In addition to weekly rides we keep in touch by WhatsApp.

The Group is managed by its trustees, all of whom volunteer 'on the ground' either as coaches or helpers. The new Chair has taken on that role and she and another volunteer have become trustees. The AGM was held on 6 May 2025.

The Group's funds remain healthy with a year end sum of £5414.00. 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 and fundraising by members and supporters of our group. There were two fund raising 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 environment. The improvement in confidence, physical ability, wellbeing and education derived from the experience of our riders extends beyond the arena. This is 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 when they join and receive ongoing guidance on a regular basis. All volunteers, coaches and helpers are required to satisfy an Enhanced Access NI check. The routine review of these checks is ongoing this year. The Group adheres to the RDA 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 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