



# Hope in the Valley RDA Group



## Annual Review 2023/24 **CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT**

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1074384



Hope in the Valley is run entirely by volunteers. Our aim is to give physically disabled children from the ages of 3 to 16 the opportunity to experience the pleasure, independence and therapeutic benefits of riding a horse.

## In the year up to 31 August 2024

### Patron:

Dane Rawlins

### Trustees & Management Committee:

Lesley Morrill (Chairman & Senior Coach)

Tony Pannett (Treasurer)

Liz Mills (Hon Secretary)

Sheila Camilleri (Group Organiser, Coach & Child Protection Officer)

Nicola Cramond (Pony Transport Manager/Adviser on Horse Matters)

Margaret Fogg (Adviser on Horse Matters)

Karen Potter (Training)

Miranda Dart (Publicity & Fundraising)

Carol Plater (DBS & Trainee Coach)

Juliet Turner\* (Waiting List Co-ordinator)

### Bankers:

National Westminster Bank plc

11 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2ZX

### Independent Examiner:

Tracy Rhys-Williams, 7 Rosebarn Close, Burgess Hill, RH15 0HN

### Governing Documents:

Group Constitution

Membership Agreement with RDA National

### Contact Address

The Hon Secretary – Liz Mills

End Cottage, High Street, Barcombe, BN8 5BA

Email: [info@hopeinthevalley.org](mailto:info@hopeinthevalley.org)

### Website

[www.hopeinthevalley.org](http://www.hopeinthevalley.org)

Hope in the Valley is a member group of the Riding for the Disabled Association, incorporating Carriage Driving. Reg. Charity No. 244108. Company limited by guarantee No. 5010395.

\*Co-opted onto Management Committee



# Enriching lives through horses

# CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS...



We can look back over the past 12 months with pride with all that we as a Group have achieved.

With huge gratitude to Alistage and Dane Rawlins, who gave their time and expertise freely, we started the year being able to use our hydraulic ramp once again. The ramp had required some modifications to suit the new arena surface at Plumpton College.

Sheila Camilleri and I made a presentation at the South East Regional Conference on all that is wonderful about taking riders to Clwyd Special Riding Centre. As a result, we have now welcomed Val Eyres and her ride and drive pony Ossie into our Group, along with the return of Helen Waters with her established RDA pony Coco. We have been fortunate to welcome more volunteers too.

Also, during the Autumn Term a coach in training came to observe our sessions, instruction on safely using the hydraulic ramp was undertaken, and we encouraged our riders to enter the RDA National Creative Writing Competition. Izzy, one of our riders did and came 7<sup>th</sup> nationally. We congratulated Nicola Cramond on 25 years of volunteering with our Group. As is customary we ended with another wonderful Christmas Party with rosettes and, of course, cake by Jenny Brown.

2024 began with erratic weather – cold, then high winds, rain, interspersed with some fine weather. These conditions did not dampen the spirits of our riders and volunteers and the Spring Term saw fantastic riding achievements at every level. With nearly 100 years of volunteering between us Margaret Fogg and I enjoyed a small celebration in recognition of this feat. We arrived at Easter with a modernised website up and running, with thanks to Trustee Miranda Dart.

Summer Term kicked off with enthusiastic training for the Countryside Challenge competition that was to be held in May at Hickstead's hallowed showground.

We took three ponies and six riders. Our associate rider William Harris also competed on his own horse Ballysimon.

Our riders did extremely well, all gaining rosettes, with both Rhys and William Harris qualifying to compete at the National Championships at Hartpury College, Gloucestershire in July. The Trustees thank the South East Region team who organised this competition at Hickstead which gives riders this great opportunity to compete and widen their horizons.

Although the term had finished, there was still the National Championships. William and Ballysimon had four events over Friday and Saturday, and Rhys with Coco competed on Sunday.

All results can be found in this review.

Hartpury was special this year for me personally. I received the President's Award from HRH Princess Royal. This was the

first time Princess Anne had taken on a public engagement since her accident and hospitalisation. It was a real honour for all of us at RDA that she should choose to make us her first public engagement, and a very special honour for all of us who were to receive an award.

Sadly, we were not able to attend Clwyd Special Riding Centre this year due to damage to the kitchen and clubhouse, but we are booked in for 2025.

We have a long-standing supporter in the form of Plumpton College who welcome us each week onto their campus. We have previously raised money to build the ground floor rooms by the arena- our clothing room, class room and tack room, and later the Sheila Blair Gallery and lift. Trustees have recently had meetings with Jeremy Kerswell, the Principal of Plumpton College, and his colleagues on how we can cement this partnership for the future.

As we require a larger equine to enable our growing riders to continue riding with us, without weight or height becoming a reason to leave, the Group is looking to purchase a horse that would live at the College for the use of Plumpton students during term time. This equine would be available to Hope in the Valley every Wednesday and for competitions when we needed it. This is an arrangement we have had in the past, which worked well for both the Group and the College. We are looking to raise money to support this vision so as not to dip into our reserves too much beyond what is earmarked.

We are also hoping to work more closely with the students who wish to enter the world of coaching and broaden their outlooks to include the requirements of coaching people with special needs.

Supporters of the Group have been kind throughout the year and we have been fortunate to receive donations of saddles and assorted tack for resale, a rug for Rose, generous financial gifts and money raised from other fund-raising efforts.

Over the year we have seen riders come and go. Some have only stayed a few weeks and some a little longer. We can feel disappointed that these young people choose to move on, but we can pride ourselves in the knowledge we enriched their lives during the time they rode with us.

In the past year all our riders have grown in their confidence and ability.

When we recognise achievement, it is there in many forms. Yes, it is the rosettes and certificates gained by riders and volunteers, but it is also our weekly joy of seeing riders smiling and appreciating the pony.

Let us Celebrate Achievement!

*Lesley*

# PHOTO GALLERY

Here is a reflection of a wonderful year of riding!





# PONY NEWS

This year we have been joined by two lovely new ponies; Coco and Ossie.

Coco, had previously been a valued member of the Eastbourne RDA group. She has settled in to Hope in the Valley very quickly and has become a much loved member of the team. In her first year with us she has achieved tremendous results at Hickstead and Hartpury in both Countryside Challenge and Dressage. Thanks to Helen Waters giving so much of her time to make this possible.

Ossie's background is mostly in driven work - he is a regular at Kipling County Driving Group - and taken a bit longer to settle into RDA ridden work although he is forever looking to please. His owner Val Eyres, ably assisted by volunteer Claire Gosling, have persevered with his education and he is now showing great generosity to our riders which is a credit to them both.

Polly and Billy were also at Hickstead and each made valuable contributions to the Group's success, and whilst Rose has been keeping a lower profile this year we are always happy to see her. Lady has had to have some time off due to injury but we very much look forward to seeing her soon.

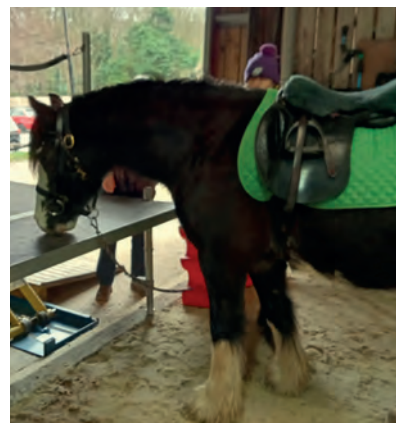
Whilst it has been fabulous to celebrate achievement this year, it must be stressed that without our unsung heroes and heroines - Billy, Polly, Rose, Ru, Coco, Ossie, Lady and their owners - none of this would be possible.

A special mention must be given to Ru, who has a busy life outside RDA. He is our go to mount for first timers and nervous riders. Without ponies like him our achievements would not be possible.

When we celebrate our achievements we must not lose sight of the needs and sensibilities of our equine partners, who I would imagine, do not give a flying fetlock for trophies and rosettes, just so long as they are treated with kindness and respect.

A final bit of news regarding Heineken. He was a long serving, rather opinionated group pony, who was retired in 2017 due to his failing eyesight. He has enjoyed a lovely retirement with Lesley, but over the summer his eyesight declined further and so it was decided that the kindest thing was to let him go and kick on those pearly gates. RIP Heineken 1989 -2024. Probably the best lager lout in the world!

*Nicola Cramond  
Pony Transport Manager*



## FINANCE: APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024

Hope in the Valley receives no external funding and is reliant on the generosity of its supporters.

We are now back up and running and in the second year after the enforced break due to the pandemic. We are grateful to the companies, societies and individuals who helped the Group in 2023-24. We had the benefit of significant donations from longstanding supporters and we continue to receive donations in place of riding fees from the parents of our child riders. We thank them all for their support.

We endeavour to spend our funds wisely and keep overheads to a minimum. Most of the Group expenditure was on the keep, care and transport of horses. We spent 83% on direct charitable expenses, 5% on income generation and 12% on administration.

During our financial year, we continued our recovery from past challenges which had curtailed our ability to provide the activities of which we are so proud. We came through 2023-24 stronger than ever and look forward to a bright future with new partnerships - which we hope will include a new group-owned horse, as well as cherishing our established relationships.

We continue to celebrate the achievement of all our riders and look forward to continuing to do so in 2024-25.

*Tony Pannett – Treasurer*

# COMPETITION NEWS & RESULTS

We had a very busy and successful time at the **RDA South East Region Combined Countryside Challenge and Dressage Competition** at Hickstead Showground on 15th May 2024. Six riders and three ponies attended, as well as our Associate rider William with his pony Ballysimon, aka Ben.

## Here are the results:

Dressage Led Test Walk Only

Izzy on Billy – 3rd

Idris on Billy – 5th

Dressage Led Test Walk and Trot

Indi on Polly – 1st

Kezia on Polly – 3rd

Rhys on Coco – 4th

Zane on Coco – 5th

William on Ballysimon – 1st in both Dressage Qualifying Tests Grade 6 & 7

Countryside Challenge Qualifying Class

Rhys on Coco – 2nd

Zane on Coco – 4th

Countryside Challenge Non-Qualifying Class

Indi on Polly – 4th

Kezia on Polly – 8th



We also encouraged our riders to enter the **RDA National Creative Writing Competition**. Izzy did and won 7th place nationally writing about a lesson with Ru.

## The RDA National Championships, Hartpury College, Gloucestershire 12th-14th July 2024.

It was a wonderful weekend with sunny weather and some fabulous results from our two riders who had qualified at Hickstead.

Rhys on Coco

2nd Countryside Challenge Led with One Sidewalker

William on Ballysimon

4th Performance Showing

4th Costume Freestyle

2nd Grade 6 Championship Dressage

1st Freestyle to Music Dressage

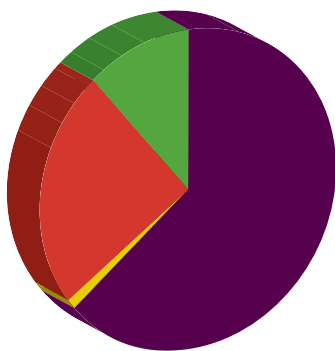
Congratulations to all our riders.

*Sheila Camilleri*

*Group Organiser, Coach & Child Protection*



## INCOMING RESOURCES



Donations, sponsorship & bequests **64%**  
 Gift Aid **1%**  
 Other income **24%**  
 Investment income **11%**  
 Fund raising **0%**  
 Grants **0%**  
**TOTAL INCOME**  
**£5,888**

**Total expenditure**

£7,253

Of which:

**Direct charitable expenditure**

£6,043

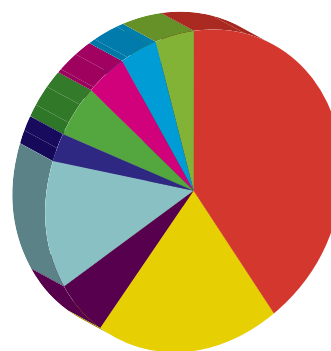
**Income generation**

£336

**Admin**

£874

## APPLICATION OF FUNDS



Horses **41%**  
 Riding sessions **20%**  
 Other riding activities **6%**  
 Equipment **13%**  
 RDA Membership **3%**  
 Fundraising, Publicity & Website **5%**  
 Legal Requirements **4%**  
 Communications & PR **4%**  
 Sundries **4%**

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE**  
**£7,253**

# GROUP NEWS

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Terry Morrill was awarded Volunteer of the Year and was presented with the Bronze Horse Trophy at our Christmas Party at Plumpton College by Sheila Camilleri. Terry helps Lesley bring two ponies every week and turns his hand to anything that needs doing on a Wednesday afternoon whether that be side-walking, photography, tidying the hydraulic ramp at the end of the afternoon or undertaking vehicle repairs! Terry, we thank you.



## VOLUNTEER AWARDS-MORE THAN A CENTURY OF DEDICATION

Lesley Morrill's dedication to Hope in the Valley and the South East Region RDA has been recognised by the RDA national organisation with Lesley receiving the prestigious President's Award from HRH Princess Anne at a ceremony at the National Championships in July. Everyone who knows Lesley agree that she is a truly worthy recipient of this distinguished award

Earlier in the year the Group celebrated Lesly Morrill's 50 years of volunteering as a trustee, chair, group coach, regional coach and much more.

Margaret Fogg was recognised for her 40 years of service as a trustee, pony volunteer owner, advisor on all horse matters as well as her family's generosity to our Group.

Nicola Cramond was also in the spotlight for her 25 years of volunteering. Nicola is a trustee as well as our pony organiser, a role which is crucial to ensure we have an appropriate pony ready for the needs of each rider every week.



## RIDER AWARDS

End of year awards were made to the following riders: -  
Izzy: Sarah Baverstock award for Personal Achievement  
Kip: Pam Hazell award for the Joy of Riding,  
Indie: Senior riding trophy,  
Zane: Mary Gethin Improvement cup  
Rhys: Fred Clark Trophy for Progress and Endeavour

