Newbury Riding for the Disabled Limited
Wyld Court Stud, Hampstead Norreys
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG18 OTN

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Newbury RDA Chairman's Report to the AGM 2025

It's been a busy, fun and rewarding year at Newbury RDA. Our participant numbers are gradually increasing – we started this term with 70 riders each week. We've added a group from Yattendon Primary and some more private riders. We have four coaches in training who are nearly qualified.

Yattendon Estates are proving to be a helpful and supportive landlord.

Danielle has had a tough year – the mud at the start of the year and the hot, dry weather meaning the grass didn't grow over the summer; Billy arriving in the middle of the holidays and taking a while to settle in; Wiggles had an eye infection and Inca was lame – all this meant she didn't get much of a break over the summer.

We currently have nine ponies – we bought Elvis in June and Billy in July and over the summer we sold Gen to Ella (Amanda Cook's daughter) and Bandit went to a retirement home.

So our herd consists of:
Inca, Wiggle, Rosie and Billy – all piebald cobs who can carry 68kg. Rio, Dougal, Ted, Goldie and Elvis.

Our biggest news since the last AGM was that we were honoured with being chosen for the **Kings Award for Voluntary Services** in November 2024. A group of volunteers (chosen for length of service and ensuring we had representatives of each session, plus me) went to Shaw House in February to receive the Award from the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire. Catherine Wilson and Clare Spencer represented the group at a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May. And more recently, on 10th October, Jamie Campbell Harris and I attended the High Sheriff's Service in Reading Minster.

Fundraising Events:
Since our last AGM, we've held the following events:

December 2024 - Carol Service – with Clare Balding. Raised just over £4,500

May – Plant and Cake Sale – Organised by Jo SH, Sally Sanderson, Georgie Woods, Penny Norris and their committee. Raised £3,622 (up from £2,766 the previous year)

September – Autumn Fair – raised £9,296 – great effort considering smaller and new venue.

Last Friday, 10th October – Rob Caskie talk in the Barn organised by Ursula Codrington – Raised approx. £5,500

Coming Up, we have:
Call My Wine Bluff – Saturday 8th November. A few spaces for 2 people to join 3 tables.

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Finally the Carol Service – Lady Carnarvon to speak, and Mari Durwent Akhurst – Paralympian to do a reading. Thanks to Catherine and Rachel for organising this.

Ideas for 2026 Fundraising Events will be discussed further on in the Agenda.

Grant Applications:
After a disappointing start to the year in terms of grant applications – we didn't get another Children in Need grant and were turned down by a few more - we have recently received £2,000 from the Colefax Trust and £5,000 from the Bothwell Trust (who gave us £2,000 last year for our new gates) and £2,000.00 from Greenham Trust Ltd for Pony Maintenance and Well Being. We are also hoping to get at least £5,000 from the Berkshire Community Fund and we're in the process of applying for £5,000 from the Childwick Trust and will apply to the Sir James Reckitt Charity.

Volunteer events:
In March we held a meeting with the Trustees and Coaches, followed by all the volunteers – with Martha Appleton-Davis as our visiting speaker who talked to us about neurodiversity.

April – Countryside Challenge Working Party

June – Coaches Meeting, and we've just held another one with the Class Organisers too last week.

17th June – Michael Bishop – the new RDA Chief Executive - visited NRDA and was very impressed by what he saw and enjoyed meeting some of our coaches, trustees and volunteers as well as Danielle and Lizzie, from Yattendon Estates.

In the Summer term we organised meetings at each of our partner schools, with their session's coaches – very useful to see their settings and have a good discussion about any new pupils for the next academic year.

RDA Competitions
For the first time in a few years, we entered the South Region Qualifier which was on 18th May. Peter Bucket (Jenny's group) and Emily Edwards (Carol's group) entered the Countryside Challenge and Emily also entered the Dressage on Gen. Albie and Clara from Cassilda's group entered the art competition and qualified for the RDA Champs. Peter and Emily both qualified for the RDA Champs in the Countryside Challenge.

Thanks to the help of Danielle, Sue, Jenny, Carol, Hilary and Jane Allen we headed off to the RDA Champs on 13th July. We hired two ponies from RDA HQ as Gen had had a few incidents and wasn't safe, and doesn't like indoor schools where the Countryside Challenge was to take place.

Albie came second in the Photography and the Collage classes and Clara came 10th in the painting class. Peter who came 3rd in his countryside challenge class and to Emily who came 4th in hers.

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Newbury RDA were represented at the following events:
7th May – Badminton RDA stand and 20th September – Blenheim RDA Stand. Many thanks to Coach Carol Steljes, we couldn't do that without a coach to enable the public to have rides on a mechanical horse.

I attended the RDA AGM at Saddlers Hal and went to a Governance Roadshow in October and an RDA Chair of Trustees induction day. This year's RDA AGM is on 27th November in Coventry.

In June I attended The Knowledge Event at Shaw House – a networking event for local charities held by the Berkshire Volunteer Centre.

In July Jane Vause and I had a stand at the Berkshire Animal Welfare event for the National Human Animal Bond Awareness Day.

In September I did an Assembly to Yattendon Primary School – we're their charity of the year, and then I did a Podcast for the West Berkshire Villages website.

Some of us will be attending the Greenham Trust Awards at the Corn Exchange as we've applied for their 'Fundraising Event' award, for the Golf Day which raised £27,000.

Corporate Volunteer Days:
Downe House
Vodafone
Edwards Lifesciences
Green Park

Plans for 2026

Identify volunteers to help with fundraising events, grant applications, social media
Identify volunteers to train up as coaches. Find a few more Trustees.

Tea with a Pony – for local elderly care homes and those with dementia. I need to train to become an Activity Leader and will be looking to form a committee to organise a few sessions next Summer term.

Lucy Atherton, October 2025