

Whilst 2021 has presented similar challenges to those in 2020, RDA Jersey Group is back up and running with ten rides per week from the summer term. We continue to operate our rides under Covid protocols, but the schools are happy to be back riding and more schools have asked to bring children who may benefit from our services at the stables. It is wonderful to see the children find the joys of being on and around ponies and they are loving the experience. Of course, our adult riders are also delighted to be back.

Demand for places continues to rise and we have a waiting list, however, without more ponies, coaches and volunteers we feel we are at capacity so we are on a recruitment drive for more volunteers.

RDA National and the Government of Jersey have been helpful in giving guidance on how we should operate safely as we came out of lockdown and we are grateful for the guidance and support. During the year, we have been able to continue the Continuing Professional Development training for all of our Coaches and volunteers and we have welcomed some wonderful new volunteers to our Group this September. We have had CPD training via Zoom with Becky and Mark, RDA instructors from Cornwall and have attended First Aid and Child protection courses to keep all our qualifications up to date.

Many thanks must be given to our long-standing Honorary Secretary, Carolyn Lee, who is retiring from Committee this year. Her invaluable support and great organisational skills have been greatly appreciated and we will all miss her enormously. We are so pleased that Carolyn will continue to be a volunteer for Thursday rides. We welcome Louise Ferns as our new Honorary Secretary and thank her for her time and look forward to working with her over the coming years. We also say goodbye to Lizzie Bois and Tanya Bates both of whom were coaches and Committee members, we thank both of them for all their time and energy which they gave to the Group over many years and wish them well for the future. Hopefully when circumstances change, they may come back into the RDA fold. Finally, we welcome Helen Dorey who is joining our Committee and our thanks must go to her for giving her time to help.

As with all charities, our normal fundraising activities were not possible during the COVID pandemic but we are now starting to arrange fund raising activities from 2022. Charities have found the pandemic extremely challenging but RDA have been very fortunate to have loyal supporters who have generously donated to us during the year and we are VERY grateful to them. This has enabled us to still offer our rides free of charge and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

We will be sending a group of children to the Calvert Trust in Exmoor during 2022 as this was also cancelled last year. A weekend in July has been booked for a group to travel and experience the wonderful riding activities on offer at this amazing venue. This adventure is kindly sponsored, and the children are already getting excited.

Having endured a torrid time over the last 18 months it is so pleasing to be back riding. All the children and adults have huge smiles on their faces whether they have ridden before or are facing this new enjoyable experience in their lives.

Lucy and I thank all our volunteers and supporters and look forward to a successful year.

Cathy Fricker and Lucy Johnson
December 2021