
Watershed RDA

It's what you can do that counts

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter 2021 for Watershed Riding for Disabled.

We have had another challenging but successful year and have at last returned to full capacity following a couple of previous attempts.

Sadly, two local RDA's have closed increasing the demand for our services, but we were delighted to welcome the riders, coaches, and volunteers from Minchinhampton RDA into the Watershed fold. This has enabled us to operate on Wednesday afternoons with an increase of 16 riders per week.

Watershed was also approached by a specialist school – Churchward – in Swindon and we are now taking 8 of their pupils each week.



Our riders continue to excel, and the new endurance awards have proved popular with a large number of riders achieving the 5k and 10K distance rosettes. Emma and Coco both passed their stage 1 pony care and proficiency tests recently.



North Wilts Saddle Club kindly invited us to their dressage competition in Minety. Lily, Ellie, Natalie and Chloe entered riding Siwan and Jessie. They were placed 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th and received compliments from the Judges and beautiful rosettes.



Last but not least Amy, Karen, Fiona, Penny and Louise entered the virtual Regional Dressage competitions organised by National RDA and all were placed in their classes.



Fiona, Penny and Louise went on to qualify for the Nationals with Penny placed 6th in her class on Copper, Fiona 2nd on Smartie and Louise won her class riding Jessie and became a National Champion within her section.



We are incredibly proud of all our riders and very appreciative of the volunteers who made this possible.

This was a first for Watershed and our ponies and facilities looked amazing on video.

There is no change in our ponies, and all are fit and well, but they are getting older and have an increased workload. We are therefore actively looking for another pony to add to the team.



Bernie Tidmarsh continues as their farrier with Waterlane Vets providing veterinary care. We would also like to thank Stuart Philpott – equine dentist, Steph Targett - equine chiropractor and Maurice Emtage – master saddler for donating their services during the year. We have also welcomed Stacey Pearson who has recently joined the team as a groom.

Watershed is also pleased to announce that our Trustee and Volunteer Kathy Mottershead has been appointed as the new County Chair for Gloucestershire. This entails overseeing and visiting all the Groups in the County. Watershed aims to use this knowledge to benefit our Group.

Three of our new Coaches were assessed recently with Paul Turner becoming a Green Coach and Maddy Crew and Emma Cope gaining their Pink Coach award.

Congratulations to all.

Watershed very much appreciated the donation of a tracker by ATVTrac for our replacement trailer following the theft of our original new trailer last year. Our local rural crime prevention officer PC Ashley Weller assisted with this.



The installation of the arena lights is proving a huge benefit now that winter is here and as a result, we are able to provide an extra 3 after school rides on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of 12 riders in total that would previously been unable to ride during the winter months.

The sensory garden continues to flourish under the care of a capable volunteer and the wildlife garden is now finished complete with a hedgehog house and bug hotel. A welcome garden is next in the pipeline.



The most recent development at Watershed was the installation of mirrors in the arena and one for the sensory trail.

They are providing much amusement, are very useful for the more advanced riders and were just a little scary for Smartie!

Our thanks go to a generous local Trust enabling the purchase of these.



The next major project for Watershed is the creation of a sensory trail.

Three large boxes have been made and these will have various items attached. There is already a beautifully made box with 4 different openings and coloured doors. These were all built by volunteers.

The main trail will be constructed at the bottom of the site and will incorporate a bridge, a water splash, a music wall, a mirror, and several other objects.

Phase 2 will be the construction of a road of different surfaces to access the trail. Quotes for the fencing and groundwork are being obtained and funding is well under way.

Our events and fundraising outings were severely curtailed in 2021 with none of our usual social activities.

However, we are having our Christmas Lunch in Daglingworth Village Hall on 17th December, and we are taking Ben the pony to Cirencester on 18th December for our annual promotion and street collection.



We did however attend the blessing of statues in Cirencester as part of Project Blackjack along with several other local Charities. We took Ben with us as usual, and he enjoyed meeting people again after his lockdown.

In conclusion Watershed RDA continues to flourish due to the huge effort put in by our volunteers.

Volunteers not only assist with lessons but care for our ponies 365 days a year.

Volunteers pick up muck, they tidy up and sort out rugs and tack. Volunteers maintain the site and garden, mow the grass, remove ivy from the walls and prune the arena.

They act as Coaches and Trustees ensuring financial stability and good governance. Watershed RDA is truly indebted to every volunteer, supporter, and the owners of loan ponies.

Together we run as a happy and well organised team – The Watershed Family.

Thank you

