



# CLWYD SPECIAL RIDING CENTRE

# REOPENING UPDATE

## NOVEMBER 2021

## PHASED RE-OPENING

UPDATE BY  
ANN LAMBERT, TRUSTEE

When coronavirus swept into our lives on 21st March 2020, we had no alternative other than to temporarily close the Centre due to social distancing requirements.

All our participants have additional needs, and many have underlying health issues. The majority of participants have to be physically assisted to mount and dismount, and many require leaders and side walkers who cannot operate at a distance of two metres. Likewise, carriage driving and vaulting were curtailed due to social distancing. Added to this, many of our 100 plus volunteers are more mature and therefore vulnerable. Never did we imagine that the Centre would be closed for so long.

The decision taken by the Trustees to close was not taken lightly. The coronavirus affected every aspect of our income and has left the charity with a shortfall in income.

However, as I write this, I feel confident that the months ahead will be happier ones. The pandemic threatened the work of the Centre at a time when people's access to open air and exercise was more important than ever. I am sure that now people are able to mix again, our participants and volunteers will be keen to return.

## HOW DID THE TRUST REACT AT THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

We immediately reduced our costs and paused any projects that were planned.

All eleven staff were furloughed, with the exception of our Head Coach who lives on the premises and was responsible for caring for the horses with the help of her wonderful family as volunteers.

All twenty-four horses had their shoes removed and were turned out to grass. Six horses were sent off site to knowledgeable homes to be cared for, thus representing a saving.

The Centre was mothballed!



# HOW DID THE TRUST REACT AT THE START OF THE PANDEMIC? CONT...

Throughout the first year all our Trustee, Staffing Committee, Equine Committee and Finance Committee meetings took place via Zoom to conduct Centre business. Our Treasurer was seeking every grant available and his shrewd handling of our finances has enabled us to weather the storm and remain sustainable. We looked at different scenarios. We realised that we had to reduce our costs where possible in order to cope with the longer-term effects of social distancing and no participants.

Regrettably we agreed that we would have to reduce our payroll costs. Sadly, we had to lose some of our hard working and loyal staff. Six were made redundant. Two members of staff became self-employed - establishing *Partners in Equine* - and took up the offer to work in the Centre for Equine Learning and Therapy (CELT) unit offering support to people with multiple profound needs. This means that we have not lost the expertise of our Learning Coach and Therapy Coach.

Through the use of flexible furlough, our two office staff returned in October 2020 on reduced hours to sort out the office and catch up on the holiday bookings. In January, the Equine Manager and one groom returned, again on flexible furlough, to work on half their normal hours and were assisted by our Head Coach and several volunteers.

Navigating our way through the different lockdown periods between England and Wales was challenging to say the least. It left us juggling throughout the winter months and early summer offering horse care sessions and then a small number of riding sessions with a limited number of volunteers. A programme of assessment and training took place.



Horse care session

## CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It is with great sadness that we share the news that our President, Lady Rosamund Gladstone, died peacefully at home on 1st September, having served as Chairman of Trustees for a total of 20 years.

Two very long serving Trustees, Pat Green and Philip Gerrard Jones have retired. Alex Edwards and Jemima Ockleston have also retired due to work commitments. My colleague and Vice Chairman, Kath Hodgkinson, and I as Chairman have decided to step down after six years in post. We shall remain as Trustees and serve on two sub-committees. It has been a privilege to follow Lady Gladstone and to work with such hard working and committed, dedicated trustees and staff.

We have a new Trustee in Julie Cowley and hope to appoint two more trustees.

## STAFF CHANGES

There is at present no Centre Manager. It is hoped that we shall soon advertise for a Centre Operations Director. In the meantime, Kate Kerr becomes Centre Coordinator on a temporary contract for six months in addition to her Administrator role. Di Porter will continue her work with Finance Admin. Janette Edwards returns to give admin support one day per week and is also kindly working a half day voluntarily.

We have appointed Tracey Holliday as Volunteer Coordinator on a temporary contract which is funded by the Steve Morgan Foundation. Tracey has been getting to grips with the paperwork as a volunteer herself in order that we can welcome back our loyal volunteers and recruit new ones.

Sadly, our Equine Manager, Katryn Levens, left to take a promotion. She will be much missed.

Pam Jones has returned to her post of Head Coach having held the fort for so long looking after the horses and helping with the induction of our new Equine Manager, Ben Read, who took up his appointment on 1st October. We have two new grooms, Georgia Webb and Shelley Pierce, and Ashleigh Nicholls has requested part-time hours.

We were so sorry to hear that Christine Phoenix, one of our two cleaners, has decided to hang up her duster and retire. We thank her and her husband, Doug, who have kept the holiday accommodation in pristine condition for many years.

# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We now approach a crucial period as furlough has come to an end and we have had to 'bite the bullet' and move on. We have planned a phased return to reopening. A reduced number of sessions took place throughout July, August and September with riders who required the least support. There have also been some carriage driving sessions. We hope to gradually increase the number of sessions and participants but as staff return, a smaller number of participants means a smaller income. This becomes a balancing act as our expenditure increases.

No RDA holidays have taken place for 20 months with 2021 pre-booked holidays transferred over to 2022. One RDA holiday took place in October when we welcomed Buckenham House RDA. A working party has drawn up plans to rent out our 18-bed holiday accommodation, Ty Gwyliau, for non-RDA holidays. Hopefully this will enable the holiday accommodation to be used during the time that it is not required by RDA groups. We have wonderful facilities and we plan to utilise them to the full.

Our website is currently being updated and our presence on Facebook increased. Fundraising on our usual scale has been impossible but we do have some ideas in the pipeline and an active Fundraising Committee. It was apparent before the pandemic that the Centre needed a Fundraiser and moves are afoot to appoint one.

It will be apparent that much planning and discussion has taken place in the time that the Centre has been closed and there has been a great deal of activity behind the scenes since we began a phased reopening.

We look forward to welcoming back the RDA holiday groups, our volunteers and our participants whom we have most definitely missed, and the horses have missed them too! We now have all our horses back that have been so well looked after by volunteers.

The many messages of support and donations that we have received are heart-warming and serve to remind us of just how important CSRC is to so many people, making us even more determined to survive this extremely challenging period.

Everyone connected with the Centre is upbeat and positive and cannot wait to celebrate our 40th anniversary in 2022 by continuing to offer a service to those with additional needs.

*Ann Lambert*

Ann Lambert  
Trustee



## HEARING FROM US BY EMAIL OR POST - WHAT IS YOUR PREFERENCE?

If you are happy for us to share news of events and occasional updates via email, please confirm your email address by sending it to [info@clwydspecialridingcentre.co.uk](mailto:info@clwydspecialridingcentre.co.uk). Not only will this help us to keep in touch but it will also help us to do our bit for our carbon hoofprint and help to reduce costs.

# SUCCESS STORIES

## RDA HOLIDAY

Members of Buckenham House RDA Group came all the way from Norfolk for their annual holiday in October.

They are the first holiday CSRC has been able to welcome since the beginning of the pandemic.

*"It was lovely to be back after all the restrictions and even the Welsh weather was extra kind to us. Our riders and helpers all had such a wonderful time...we look forward to seeing you next time."* - Buckenham House RDA Group.



## GEORGIA WILSON'S PARALYMPIC SUCCESS

CSRC was delighted to witness Georgia Wilson's success at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Riding Sakura, Georgia won bronze medals in both the Dressage Individual Test - Grade II and the Dressage Individual Freestyle Test - Grade II.

Georgia joined the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) at Clwyd Special Riding Centre in 2003. During her time here she attended her first RDA National Championships before progressing to become a medal-winning grade II British para dressage rider.

Georgia is a great inspiration and role model for all our RDA participants and CSRC is so proud to have been part of her journey to dressage success.



## VIRTUAL RDA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

CSRC RDA Group riders, Angharad Owen and Bridget Seale, achieved fantastic results at this year's Virtual RDA National Championships.

Angharad (pictured top left) came second in the walk dressage class and Bridget (right and bottom) achieved fourth place in the Dressage Championships Grade ID Canter.

The RDA National Championships is an annual event where riders from RDA Groups across the country come together at Hartpury College to compete. This year, due to the pandemic, the event was held virtually with riders pre-recording their entries.

