

Newsletter

March 2019

# Elisabeth Curtis Centre Riding for the Disabled

Charity No. 1137217; Company No. 7302917



“Mmmm we do love our hay” Photo by Anna Gillespie

**facebook.**

DONATE

A Member  
Group of

**RDA**



**It's what you can  
do that counts**

# From the Chairman...



Things have continued to be busy at the Centre. A second team from Santander came to the Centre in January, and spent the day painting the kicking boards and other woodwork around the school. We have also been lucky enough to receive a number of pieces of furniture from

Santander, saving the Centre having to purchase them, so my thanks to **Kyle Palmer** and everyone else involved in making this happen. I would also like to thank **Dave Temperley** for all he has done recently in terms of maintenance work around the Centre: We really appreciate your help.

While Anna and Alyesha, with the help of a number of coaches and volunteers, have done a great job covering the groom role, it was time to advertise for permanent cover. The vacancies closed recently, so we are in the process of drawing up a shortlist and then conducting interviews. I do want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has stepped in to help.

Keeping the Centre running is a huge undertaking, and I do want to say a huge thank you to the members of

## **From the Chairman...**

the Management Committee, Riding Committee and Fundraising group. A lot of work is done behind the scenes by a relatively small group of people to keep up with emails, enquiries from potential riders or volunteers, keeping up with DBS checks, keeping on top of our finances, making sure that the ponies have everything they need, keeping on top of the maintenance work and many other jobs too. This is in addition to helping at, or coaching our riding sessions.

If anyone is able to spare a little bit more time to help with the work of our Committees, or any of the other day to day work at the Centre, please do let us know. We are also still looking for a new Treasurer. Allan Bennett is still kindly providing support with the Centre's finances, with Pearl and Ros covering the bulk of the day to day work, but longer term we do desperately need to find someone who would be happy to take on the role. If you know anyone who may be able to help, please do get in touch.

This year, RDA celebrates it's 50-year anniversary. A number of events are being planned both Regionally and Nationally to celebrate. RDA have a special rosette to celebrate too, as a Centre we are happy to put in a group order, but ask that if anyone would like one, they contribute the £1 it will cost us per rosette. A

## **From the Chairman...**

sign-up sheet will be put up after Easter to collect names of those interested in ordering one. In addition, the Centre will be launching a fundraising appeal, collecting 50p pieces in recognition of this anniversary. Collecting boxes will be available soon, or you can bring your 50p's to the Centre.

Sadly, we recently received the news that **Ken Flynn**, one of our volunteers who helped on a Monday morning, had passed away. Ken will be very much missed at the Centre, and our thoughts are with his family and friends.

**Victoria Liston**, Chairman

### **The Elisabeth Curtis Centre Needs You!**

#### **Would you like to become more involved?**

- ⇒ Does helping with the Newsletter appeal to you? How about writing an article for the newsletter, or helping to produce the newsletter?
- ⇒ Perhaps fund-raising appeals to you? New suggestions are always welcome, as is help at our events.
- ⇒ There are plenty of other opportunities. Including becoming our next treasurer. Any help, in whatever form, will be greatly appreciated!

**If you can give us any help, please contact a member of the Management Committee**

# Money Matters...

An important reminder first: **We really do need a Treasurer**, to replace Allan Bennett, who has retired and has given the Centre such superb service whilst he has been in that position. We have been told every year, by our accountant, how very lucky we were to have him and don't we know it?

We are all aware and perhaps affected by the present state of austerity. Many people are finding it difficult and it is no different for the Centre. The last year and before were challenging for us, which is why we had to increase fees, after no rise in the preceding 10 years. Our finances are not as healthy as they should be - we have not received the same level of donations as before and costs continue to rise. We cannot stint on the care of our ponies, nor avoid essential bills, so currently we are not covering our running costs. In the past year a lot of capital has been spent on the infrastructure, safety and security of the Centre – all essential, but draining on the bank account.

This is why we are unable to cover the costs of the RDA Regional or National championships and have asked participating riders to contribute. I am also very sorry to say that fees are likely to increase again from

## **Money Matters...**

the start of the next school year. If so, you will be informed during the Summer term.

**In the summer, we need to replace the surface in the school.** We know that it becomes very dusty during dry weather, affecting ponies, riders and helpers and also “tracks up” making it difficult for all to walk, without regular harrowing. A safety survey also highlighted other potential problems. The new surface will be based on waxed sand and will greatly improve the conditions – but it comes at a cost, of course – **about £20,000**. The Management Committee and Fund Raising Group are working hard to get funds to cover this. To date, we have been promised **£7,000, by the Harpur Trust**, for which we are immensely grateful, but need to raise the remainder. We now have a donation button on our FaceBook page, if anyone would like to donate in a quick, simple way. We’d really appreciate it, if you could ask any charitable groups, business, or anyone else that you may think of, for donations towards this improvement, please – **but do check with us first**, as we’d hate to approach the same organisation twice – or get a duplicate donation. Many thanks.

**Management Committee**

# Parklands - Our Neighbourhood Estate...

Last December, we joined with some of our neighbours from Parklands and some members of the



“Moonlighters” choir, plus Jim Barham and his brass playing colleagues to once again sing Christmas carols around Parklands. The event was enjoyed by all who

took part and raised about £800 for our charity – a wonderful amount for one evening. David and Margaret Cooper, of no 1 Chestnut Avenue generously provided us with a cheerful place to enjoy some festive refreshments afterwards.

We also sent out flyers to hopefully make residents more aware of our work and our charity. This resulted in some very kind donations and offers of help, which we hope to take forward and build on. It also made us aware that our neighbours would like to see what we actually do here, so we are arranging a coffee morning on Sunday April 28th, to let a limited number of people

## Parklands - Our Neighbourhood Estate...

visit the Centre to meet the ponies and watch a short demonstration by our riders, before enjoying coffee and cakes. We do hope that our volunteers and riders can help with this small event, please.

Pearl Farr and Ros Ward would be grateful for offers – if you can't make the date, perhaps you could make a cake?

We do try to be good neighbours, wherever possible and look

forward to more co-operation with our Parklands supporters.



## Can you help us?

We are looking for new volunteers to help us in a number of ways including admin, D.I.Y., fundraising, finance, leading and side helping with our ponies and riders during sessions. The minimum age to volunteer is 14yrs and training is provided.

If you'd like to know more you can contact us on  
01234 824469 or email  
[elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com](mailto:elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com)  
[www.elisabethcurtiscentre.co.uk](http://www.elisabethcurtiscentre.co.uk)



# Santanders help for the centre continues...

Employees from Santander's Grafton Gate Head Office in Milton Keynes and its Carlton Park Head Office in Leicester attended in January to re-paint and re-fresh the school.

The activity, which was part of the bank's Discovery Days scheme, saw 16 volunteers from Santander Digital Team help repaint all the kicking boards and associated woodwork around the school. Santander contributed to the cost of the refurbishment and it was a great day had by all.

I would like to extend my **thanks to Abbie Temperley** (Saturday AM coach and Santander Employee) for organising the day! The School looks totally transformed and now matches the new colour scheme of the waiting area and offices. THANK YOU!

Santander continues its support with the ongoing donation of furniture to the centre.



*Kyle Palmer*

**Project Manager, Santander / Trustee, ECC**

# A Message from Ann and Gayl...



As promised, Ann and Gayl updated us on how they spent their leaving gift.

They and their dogs had a weekend at a Christmas show at Rugby, during which they had put together a routine for the “Glitter Ball Trophy”, for 2 dogs and

handlers. Despite feeling very nervous when they saw the quality of the other competitors, they entered AND WON! Well done both and our good wishes for the future and more successful Doggy Dancing!



# A Fundraising Update...

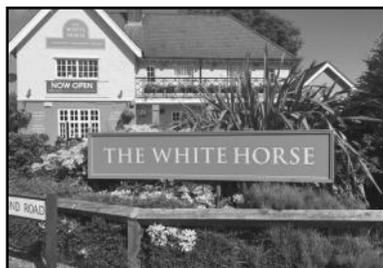
Our small, Fund-Raising Group (FRG) continues to regularly distribute our distinctive, green collecting boxes in local shops and establishments. Many carers and helpers take our small plastic collecting boxes and return them to us brimming full of mainly 1p, 2p and 5p coins, but as the saying goes, 'Every little helps!' We are **truly grateful for these collections** and are amazed at how much a small box can hold!



We had a clash of dates in December as the 8th saw a collection at Budgen's in Bromham and also a stall at

Biddenham Fair. Between the two events, we made almost £200. Especially, when we have a store collection, we really need help. We put a list up in the Viewing Area asking for help (just 1 hour of your time), please put your name down as it is a real help to the FRG! We've already contacted Budgen's for a date in December 2019! Your help at a single event would be much appreciated.

**Thursday, February 28th 2019** – Smartphone Quiz at the 'White Horse,' Newnham Avenue. This turned out to be a success, with us making £180. **Thanks to Ros** for making the arrangements for this. We hope to arrange another one, when we will be more familiar with the format. Ros says: Just



## **A Fundraising Update...**

to let you all know, the Quiz Night on 28th February at The White Horse in Newnham Ave was a great success and such fun! I must admit, I was a bit unsure of this type of quiz, but all was explained and it was a fast paced, most enjoyable and sociable evening and we raised £180 for the Centre! I will be certainly going there again -they have regular Quiz Nights and do lovely food too!

**Thank you so much to Steve, Lucie and the team** for making us welcome, kindly donating a prize for our raffle and putting so much thought into the questions, (including a horsey round!).

Easter. We have a raffle for two hampers in the Office. Tickets £1. There is also a 'Lions Club' Big Easter Egg for which we sell tickets each year. The 'Lions' have the money, the winner has the Egg, and we are regularly given a donation from the 'Lions'. We will shortly be submitting an application for a grant from them. So it all works both ways!



**Sunday, April 28th 2019, 10am – 12.00pm**. We are arranging an informal Coffee Morning for 'Parkland' residents. This will include a small demonstration by some of our riders. A raffle and tombola will be used for fund-raising.

**Sunday, June 23rd 2019**. Our Summer Fair. Keep this date free, please! Our ponies will be giving rides; this is always the main attraction, but we will have many stalls, competitions, and the jewellery workshop. What little girl can resist making themselves a pretty necklace? Or just sit down and enjoy a cuppa and a slice of home-made cake. The third option? - Lend a hand on one of the stalls!

## A Fundraising Update...

### Bromham Show July 14th 2019.

A **BIG 'Thank You' to Julie** (the lady who makes the lovely handmade greetings cards for us to sell to raise funds), for contacting



the Bromham Show Committee on our behalf to negotiate rates for our attendance at the Bromham Show this year, which is on Sunday 14th July. We have received a kind donation from The Bromham Show of £150. Also, many **thanks, Julie**, for the Easter Cards, which are selling well.

During the summer months, the FRG go to local shows. Tombola is ALWAYS popular, and we usually sell out. If you have any goods that can be used, we are always grateful for contributions! Again, any help would be appreciated, PLEASE. Help us carry on the good work!

Just a little **'Thank You' to Owen Ward** for the Horse Prints. His orders have now raised just over £100 for the Centre! Well done and thanks Owen.

**RDA celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year; we will have small cardboard collecting boxes for 50p pieces.** 50 years and 50p collection – help us with this fund-raising initiative, please! RDA is putting on some events during the year, so we'll



see what we can do!

The Fund Raising Group comprises Ros, Pearl, Audrey, Pippa and Caroline. If you'd like to join, please speak to any of us!

**Ros Ward/Pearl Farr**

FRG, March 2019

# Future objectives...

An important future objective is to refresh and update our website, so that we can take money online. This would mean we might be able to have a pony sponsorship scheme, Centre supporter's facility, and Centre clothing, etc. online. As always, we would need volunteers to run the scheme(s) – hopefully with just a few hours work a term.

Other items on our “wish-list” (and some essential, so we currently taking forward) are a Fire Alarm & fireproof cupboard, new heaters for the office and tack room, renew/update our electric fencing and batteries, a new isolation stable, new Centre leaflets, a new sound system for the school and we'd love a Henry wet/dry vacuum cleaner (doesn't need to be new, if in good condition). We are always open to offers and grateful for donations.

## Make A Difference



# Special 90th Birthday Treat for Daphne!



A few weeks ago, a lady called Sue contacted us to ask if it was possible to bring her mother, Daphne Kitchen to the Centre as a surprise for part of her 90th Birthday celebrations on 15th March. Daphne makes lots of the knitted items we have been

selling for the Centre to raise funds.

Pearl and I were pleased to welcome them both to the Centre on that Friday. Daphne met Lolly and Sammy in the stables, was shown round the Centre and our sensory garden, then on leaving saw our other ponies happily grazing in the field. They couldn't stay long as they were on their way to Milton Ernest Garden Centre for an Afternoon Tea.

We hope we helped make Daphne's 90th Birthday special!

Ps- Daphne is busy making more knitted cuddlies for us, she is always needing wool, if anyone has any spare/unwanted wool, could they let the fundraising team know!

# Pony Welfare Officer

## Update...



The ponies enjoyed their break over the Christmas period, and they much appreciated the extra carrots and apples kindly donated as Christmas treats. During the break, we took the opportunity to give the ponies a second clip.

In January, the ponies had their annual dental check, and 3 ponies had their annual vaccinations.

February brought an outbreak of Equine Influenza. Because our ponies rarely have contact with ponies from other yards, our main risk of contamination was via people having contact with other equines. We therefore introduced some bio-security measures to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Following veterinary advice regarding the outbreak, 5 of our ponies required additional flu vaccinations. The vet duly arrived on a Monday afternoon to give the vaccinations. The ponies were brought in from the field to prepare for Tuesday evening rides, and Lolly was clearly unwell and quickly deteriorated. After examining Lolly, the vet announced that Lolly had reacted to the vaccination. Lolly was

## **Pony Welfare Officer Update...**

treated, and after a few days' medication and rest, she was thankfully back to good health.

The ponies are now shedding their winter coats. Grooming the ponies during this process, leads to many of us getting covered in hairs, but the ponies thoroughly enjoy some help with the removal of excess hair.

Our ponies continue to enjoy the additional exercise they receive from some of our volunteers. Giving them more varied exercise, including hacking, provides the ponies with additional stimulation, and contributes to their general wellbeing. We would welcome more volunteers to help with the ridden exercise. If you are an experienced rider, able to ride within our maximum riding weight of 10.5 stones in boots, hat and coat, and are interested in helping with this additional exercise, then please contact me or your coach of the day.

As we approach the end of term, I wish everyone a very Happy Easter.

Gina Dunn

**Pony Welfare Officer**



# The Search for a Pony continues...

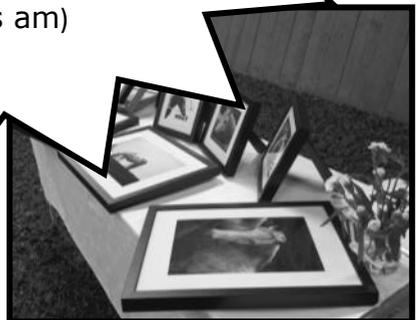
I'm afraid that this has been delayed again, but the current outbreak of equine flu – we simply can't risk infecting our own lovely herd – what would we do without them?

Fingers crossed for the Summer term.



Framed Print of our Horses available now! **All proceeds go to the Centre.**

Please complete the order form from the folder in the gallery. Any Queries? Speak to Ros (Tues am)



# Dates for your Diary



<b>4th April</b>	Centre End of term
<b>24th April</b>	Centre start of summer term
<b>28th April</b>	Parkland's Coffee Morning
<b>19 May</b>	RDA Regional Qualifier
<b>25 May</b>	Centre half-term
<b>3 June</b>	Riding Restarts
<b>23 June</b>	<u>Summer Fair</u>
<b>12th - 14th July</b>	RDA National Championships
<b>14 July</b>	Bromham show
<b>22 July</b>	End of School Year.

## **CAN YOU HELP US?**

⇒ We are in need of help for a number of tasks including:

- Fundraising
- Admin work
- Finance/Treasurer
- Help needed on all riding sessions for leading and side helping.
- And much more

**If you have any spare time to give please contact a member of the Management Committee.**

**[elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com](mailto:elisabethcurtiscentre@gmail.com)**



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