April 2026

NEWSLETTER

We are now coming to the end of the spring term, and it's lovely to see longer days, a bit of sunshine, and lots of activity around the yard.

We are delighted to share some brilliant news — Jane Lankester and Sue Johns have both been awarded the President's Award, in recognition of their 40 years of dedicated service to Erme Valley RDA. This is a truly outstanding achievement, and the awards will be presented later this year by HRH Princess Anne. A huge congratulations and thank you to both Jane and Sue for their incredible commitment over the years.



Education Groups

Our education groups continue to go from strength to strength. All groups have been learning about the rules of feeding, gaining a better understanding of how to keep horses healthy and happy.

Please feel free to take a look at their new display in the classroom — including the bale cord, which represents the length of a horse's intestines!

It's fantastic to see the enthusiasm, learning and confidence growing week by week.

Fundraising

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support we have received this month:

- £1,000 from the F&H Williams Trust (Judy Williams)
- £3,000 from Devonport Dockyard Sports & Leisure, plus ongoing support — thank you to Katherine Owen for helping make this happen
- £1,500 from Ugfest — we truly appreciate our local support

A huge thank you to Bethany's sister for raising over £300 by having her hair cut — we are very grateful.

We are also delighted to be the Kingsbridge Show Chairman's Charity of the Year. We will be running a stand and would welcome any volunteers — please let us know if you can help.

Thank you to Carolyn Northmore (Cornwood 10K) and Sarah Chambers, who will be back fundraising on her bike later this year.#

We currently have two major projects:

- Sit-on weighing scales (already underway)
- New mechanical horse fund

We need to raise approximately £70,000 for the mechanical horse. This is a significant but vital investment for the future of our riders.

If you have any fundraising ideas, contacts or grant opportunities, please do get in touch.

Yard Reminders

- The main gate is easy to operate, but it continues to get damaged. Please ensure you unhook it properly — repairs are becoming costly.
- When driving up the road, keep to the left-hand side — do not pull into the lay-by
- Drivers coming down should use the lay-by
- Please keep left at all times — we have had some close calls recently

Thank you for helping keep everyone safe.

Driving Day

Thank you to Coach Rachel and the team for continuing to deliver such valuable sessions.
Briar the pony has recently had some individual input from Lily French, and when possible, she will be going to Mark Broadbent for two weeks of intensive training. This will be a great opportunity to further develop her skills.



Happy hoof Social Club

The last session was thoroughly enjoyable, with lots of fun games encouraging teamwork and communication throughout.
Looking ahead to next term, we have some exciting plans:

- A visit to Hazelmere for a game of rounders
- Two drumming/music sessions with Kathy Kenny (primary and older groups)

Dates can be found below.
We're also pleased to share that Anthony will be hosting again in August.

Accessible Social Group

We have enjoyed a lovely Easter session, making chocolates and taking part in some Easter crafting.
Next term, the group are looking forward to supporting Erme Valley riders at the Regionals, as well as trying candle making.
Dates can be found below.

Pony Club Rally – Easter Holidays

We are pleased to have a horse care team attending a mixed Pony Club rally during the Easter holidays.
The team taking part are: Ysabel, Janice, Martha, Bethany, Kirsty, Sarah, Lilly, Martin, Annabel and Patrick.
We wish them all the very best and hope they have a fantastic experience representing Erme Valley RDA.

Training Day

We had a fantastic CPD day at Chard Equestrian Centre with RDA South West, focusing on character-based coaching.
A huge thank you to our brilliant speakers, Mandy Frost and Nicky Fuller, for sharing their knowledge, insight and inspiration throughout the day.
Thank you as well to everyone who attended, made the journey, and engaged so thoughtfully — we hope you found it valuable and that it has given you plenty to reflect on as you begin putting these ideas into practice.
A special mention goes to our wonderful riders, who showed great bravery riding in front of everyone, and of course to the incredibly well-behaved horses who helped the day run so smoothly
It was a truly positive and inspiring day, and we are excited to see how this learning is carried forward into sessions across the region.

Safeguarding

A reminder to please ensure you have read the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Fire Evacuation Procedure, and signed to confirm in the office.
It is also very important that contact details are not shared without first checking with the Safeguarding Officers. This applies to volunteers, coaches, riders and carers.
This is in line with RDA National Guidelines, as well as good safeguarding practice. Please refer to the "Keeping Children Safe" guidance for further information.
These measures are the responsibility of the trustees and are in place to keep everyone, and Erme Valley RDA, safe.

Competitions

We have some exciting competitions coming up over the next few weeks.
The Inter-County British Dressage Show at Bicton Arena takes place on Saturday 2nd May, with our team:
Martha, Ysabel, Janice, Lilly, B, Patrick, Fliss and Skye — we wish them all the very best of luck!
We then look ahead to the Regional Competitions (dates below).
If you would like to take part in the regionals, please let Peggy know via email or WhatsApp by 10th April.
There will be specific practice days running on the following dates:

- 16th April (AM)
- 18th April (PM)
- 19th April
- 25th April

We will also need extra volunteers for the Regionals on 28th April at The Brook, both:

- The day before to help set up
- And on the day to help run the event

Any support would be very much appreciated.



DBS Checks

Please let us know if you are due a new DBS check — we believe we are now largely up to date, but would appreciate confirmation.
There are also a small number of people who still need to bring in their identity documents for verification. Please do this as soon as possible so we can complete the process.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Important

NO SMOKING OR VAPING ON SITE
There is strictly NO SMOKING or VAPING anywhere on the yard or surrounding areas.
This is essential for the safety of our riders, horses and all site users.







Dates

3rd April: 19th April – EASTER HOLIDAYS
9th April: Team quiz with pony club (invite only) 9.45am at the Brook back by 2pm.
16th April: Regional Practice
18th April, 19th April: Regional Practice
20th April : First Session back
26th April: Practice
28th April: Regionals at the Brook
28th April: Accessible social club meeting at the Brook to support RDA riders.
2nd May : ICC at Bicton (invite only)
4th May : No Riding sessions
19th May : Lakefield regionals
25th May : HALF TERM
31st May: Ukulele Ugborough village hall 3pm Tea and Cake (Help needed.)
15th June – 20th June: Helper training week (Details to follow)
15th June – Happy hoof Drumming sessions – 6pm -8pm
29th June – 4th July : coffee morning week
10th, 11th, 12th July : RDA NATIONALS at HARTPURY COLLEGE
16th July : AGM and BBQ
20th July: Happy hoof Drumming sessions – 6pm -8pm
20th JULY : Last day of Term