



Cavalier Centre
Where horses make the difference

Impact Report 2021/22

Continuity, creativity and community





A note from our Chair

Hon. Selina Graham, Chair of Trustees

From the very first moment that I was involved with the Cavalier Centre – which was long before there was a name, let alone the custom built arena and facilities that we have today – I knew it was going to be a special place.

I knew it because from the very beginning, when it was only the inkling of an idea, it was based on such incredibly strong foundations of community, and goodwill. The community of trustees who took the idea from its conception to its inception, the wider community who supported years and years of fundraising efforts, and then the community of staff, volunteers and participants who make the Centre what it is today.

Constantly growing, evolving, changing. New programmes, new participants, new buildings and new staff and volunteers – but one constant – that bedrock of goodwill.

There is so much goodwill in the place that you almost feel you can touch it. At least that is how I feel every time I go there! This report puts that feeling into facts and figures much better than I can, it puts that feeling into words (the words of the participants) much better than I can.

I commend it to you as an informative and interesting read, and if you are not already part of this wonderful community, I encourage you to get involved, share the goodwill, help us to learn and grow, and be part of the community of the exciting future.

Selina Graham

On behalf of the Board of Trustees
Cavalier Centre

“
incredibly
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and goodwill

Our Year at a Glance

Facts, statistics and more



People

- 124 riders
- 12 carriage drivers
- 24 STEPS participants
- 10 Stable Relationship participants
- 4 regular hippotherapy clients
- 18 At Home With Horses participants
- 2,900 times someone took part in an activity at the Centre
- 9,147 volunteer hours donated

Place

- New corral built
- Planning permission and funding received for new learning barn
- Improved storage & automatic door openers installed
- 8 regular renters of our buildings
- 50 metres of hedge laid
- Sensory garden paved
- Each wheelbarrow travelled 400 miles

Ponies

- 15 equines
- 238 horseshoes fitted
- 8,000 grooming sessions
- 2,600 entries to the arena by horses
- Regular visits by the equine physio, dentist, saddle fitter and vets
- Rocky, Kenny and Mac arrived
- Over 800 bales of hay munched
- Over 100 tonnes of muck generated

Purpose

- New website launched
- BHS Approved Centre status received
- Launched partnership with Actio All-In
- BHS 'Changing Lives Through Horses' training completed
- Hosted six events for key partners
- Established network of referrers and supporters
- Launched At Home With Horses



Taking part

Empowering people with the magic of horses

Quiet Time with a Pony

Quiet time with a pony offers the chance for one to one connection with a pony. Peacefully standing or sitting, stroking and enjoying the sensory experience of being in the company of a calm, gentle animal. Quiet time with a Pony at the Centre encourages connection, gentle movement and emotional engagement.

Pony Care

Pony care sessions take place in the stables or our new learning barn, enable kids and young adults to learn about ponies and stable management. It's wonderful to see how 45 minutes of gentle activity can improve mobility, increase physical activity and develop speech and language. It's so much fun to watch as grooming becomes a favourite activity providing comfort and relaxation to both participant and pony!

At Home with Horses

At Home with Horses We've provided children with refugee backgrounds with opportunities to learn about equines, ride and play games over the course of three Saturday afternoons. It's helped them with trauma and loss as well as provide valuable family time.

RDA Riding

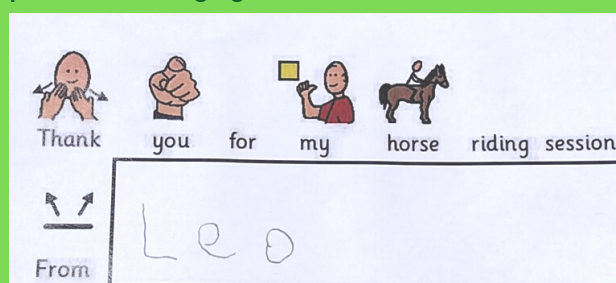
Our 30 minute riding sessions are suitable for all ages and abilities. We're continually seeing how riding improves communication, coordination, muscle strength as well as balance and fitness. All kind of people overcome all kinds of challenges at the Centre, whether riding for therapy, towards a goal or simply for fun!

RDA Carriage Driving

Every Monday and Wednesday our driving ponies are put to their wheelchair adapted carriages and work in our purpose-built indoor arena or around the outdoor track. Accompanied by a qualified coach at all times, our enthusiastic drivers all enjoy the freedom and thrill of carriage driving.

Stable Relationships

Designed for older children and young people who are struggling with their emotions or behaviours. A 1-1 equine facilitated learning programme which combines creative classroom activities with horse based tasks for two hours a week over twelve weeks. We've watched those to take part learn, engage and return to education



STEPS

STEPS is a funded programme for adults which takes place over the course of eight weeks for three hours a week. Working in small groups, participants are supported to develop the skills to connect with others, build confidence, improve wellbeing and learn about horses.

Tea with a Pony

Older people, people with dementia and others come for tea and cake, meet the ponies and spend time with our volunteers. It happens about once a month, and it's been amazing to watch memories come back and spark lovely conversations.



Our Participants

In Their Own Words

“

This place has given me the encouragement and hope I needed to keep going, no matter what life throws at me.

“

She rarely left the house and does not socialise, even with family due to her high levels of anxiety.

However, after the first session of Pony Care ... she looked calm and the smiles were amazing! We stood and watched her ... with tears in our eyes.



“

We talked about ways I can push through some difficulties to help me feel more self confident and improve my self esteem and about ways to reach my goals in life.

“

I've learned more adaptive techniques to accommodate motion/speed distortion and spatial awareness ... I progressed from learning how to canter, walking over a pole, hopping over a tiny cross pole with Star looking after me, to now jumping 60cm. The icing on the cake is qualifying for the RDA National Championships 2022 Level 3 show jumping.



Our Coaches

From the centre of the arena

Riding and carriage driving are all possible thanks to our team of passionate Riding for the Disabled Coaches. They continue to work hard in delivering lessons, mentoring for competition and encouraging our participants to do more and hone their skills and talents.

What we've been doing



RDA Riding

The riding coaches were glad to start back in earnest in April and numbers have really grown, we are busier than ever. Highlights have been the Summer Open Day when so many RDA Riders and Drivers dressed up in their finery to show off their abilities, the RDA Virtual Championships in September when 16 riders entered and 2 won trophies and taking part in a photo shoot for RDA UK.

The return of riders and coaching has reminded us of how riding and our ponies have the ability to bring people out of themselves and highlighted how coaches help bring about personal, social and equestrian progression. We all share the joy of working with riders who get so much from their time at the Centre.

RDA Carriage Driving

About a year on since commencing carriage driving (post lock down) we have been really busy. We have achieved our goal of increasing coaches, now a total of six (with more in the pipeline) and a bigger team of volunteer helpers.

Due to an increased number of driving participants' we have doubled our driving days from one to two to accommodate the interest which continues to grow and ensure the driving ponies have an appropriate workload.



Our Coaches

In Their Own Words



“

It's been such a joy to work with people to achieve their goals - whether it's simply about improving their riding, or entering a competition like the RDA Nationals. To be able to support them as a coach is such a honour and to see them succeed is just the best feeling in world!



“

I feel privileged to be part of such a great team – human and equine. The ability to be part of a team which encourages, facilitates and develops a whole range of driving participants is so rewarding. The opportunity to pass on knowledge and skill and see our participants and helpers grow is so rewarding and inspires us to continuously “up our game” which we strive to do.

“

It's been amazing to watch kids who haven't yet found a passion, meet our horses and fall in love with everything about the sport. It makes it all worthwhile and easy to come to work in the morning!

Our Volunteers

Richard's Story

"Where Horses Make The Difference" is the Cavalier Centre strap line. The immediate thought is that this refers to our participants and, of course, it does. However the Cavalier experience also impacts positively on our volunteers in so many ways. Asking volunteers to describe their experience at the Centre the following words are used the most... friendship, purpose, enjoyment, community, inspiring, humbling, belonging, fun, support, and worthwhile.

Our volunteers range in age from 14 to 80+ and come from different walks of life and have had very different life experiences. Here are just two stories to illustrate the many benefits of volunteering at the Cavalier Centre.



Finding a new home

RICHARD moved back to the UK in October 2021 after ten years living in Canada. He and his wife had been very happy there and taken full advantage of everything that wonderful country has to offer. However, the need to be closer to family meant that the move was the right thing to do.

Richard works from home, his wife works in Wolverhampton and so is out all day and he had no social network. After a few months of this he was, in his own words, "in need of people and community". A friend suggested the Cavalier Centre as something he could get involved with and so he volunteered.

Within a very short space of time Richard has become an integral part of the "Tuesday Team" and his cheerful personality and willingness to do anything asked of him makes him a pleasure to be around. His "proper job" in marketing communications has become invaluable as he also helps out with our website and social media.

Being a Cavalier Centre volunteer has given Richard PURPOSE, COMMUNITY, FRIENDSHIP, ENJOYMENT, BELONGING and FUN.



Our Volunteers

Charlotte's Story

Finding freedom

CHARLOTTE started Pony Care sessions when she was just 13 yrs old. She has high anxiety, mild autism and social anxiety and is unable to cope with mainstream school so is home schooled. She was painfully shy and mum Sam and dad Martin had to be nearby during these sessions. COVID intervened so sessions were put on hold until May 2021 and then, in addition to Pony Care, she started riding Sion.

Charlotte is tall for her age and so switched to riding Freddie and the pair have formed a real bond. They qualified for the RDA National Championships and were placed first in the RDA Regional Championships for dressage. Her confidence was growing by the day and she asked if she could do some voluntary work. This was a massive step for a young lady who less than a year previously was reluctant to make eye contact or talk.

Charlotte enjoyed this so much she now volunteers on three full days and is a much valued member of the team. She is quick to learn, very adaptable and helpful and always cheerful which makes her a joy to work with. She is now super chatty and clearly loves her time at the Centre. And she doesn't need mum and dad around anymore! When not working with us, Charlotte helps to coach a football team for children with disabilities. What a girl!

Being a Cavalier Centre volunteer has given Charlotte FRIENDSHIPS, PURPOSE, SUPPORT, ENJOYMENT, BELONGING and FUN.



These are just two examples of the benefits of volunteering with us but each of our wonderful volunteers have a story to tell. The Cavalier Centre Where Horses Make The Difference to participants and volunteers alike.

Sue Abrahams

Volunteer, Head of Day
Cavalier Centre

Our volunteers

In Their Own Words

“

I cannot put into words how rewarding I find the time that I spend there is. Becoming a volunteer there has been a decision that I do not regret for one minute.



“

The Cavalier Centre has become a central part of my life, and the place where I've found community, comradeship and calm.



“

I love it when we can see the difference in our drivers, a smile, laugh a shout. They delight in the wonder of the horses and everyone gains by being with different people. It is a wonderful way to help others.

“

I have received so much ... the trust of the riders and the conversations and stories shared. It's been wonderful.

“

Being a volunteer has been the best thing I have ever done. I have made lots of friends and the coaches are really helpful – always willing to help and explain everything. I can't imagine how I would feel if not able to take part.

Our Horses

Update on our ponies and what they've been up to

Our team now comprises 15 equines. Three new horses and ponies joined us during the year – Mac, Kenny and Rocky. Mac was a little tubby when he arrived so was put on a strict diet! He soon made friends with his look-alike Archie and has become a firm favourite with adults on our Steps in the Right Direction programme and with the children in Pony Care. Kenny travelled from his home on the Welsh coast to join us and passed his driving assessment with flying colours. Rocky is still in training and looking forward to being part of our regular team.

Our newcomers were joined by all the others for our Annual Open Day, where they behaved impeccably. We were very proud of them all.

Several took part in RDA competitions with their riders, including the virtual regional competition when 18 riders rode countryside challenge and dressage - all supported by an amazing team of volunteers. Our biggest horse Freddie and his riders were particularly successful, two were placed at the RDA National Championship where groups from across the UK compete against each other. In recognition of his achievements, Freddie was nominated for the RDA Awards!

In the autumn the horses took part in our Halloween competition and at Christmas a fancy dress dressage demonstration, where Sion and Star looked the part dressed as a Christmas cracker and Christmas pudding!

As spring arrived the driving ponies took part in the carriage driving taster day which was just other opportunity for them to be admired and adored!

Happy and healthy horses - all year round

To keep our equines happy and healthy they enjoy a varied diary of activities. RDA riding and driving, hacking, groundwork, vaulting, being groomed and adored as part of the STEPS and Stable Relationships programmes. They receive visits from an equine physio, the dentist and farrier.



What do our trustees do?

Trustees have a really key role at the Cavalier Centre

Trustees are the people who lead the Cavalier Centre and decide how it is run. They are all volunteers and use their skills and experience to support the Centre, helping us to achieve our aims. They are the people behind the scenes who deal with long term decisions, recruiting key members of staff, fundraising and promote the Centre to the wider community. They're also ultimately responsible for the finances and compliance with the Charity Commission. Here's a breakdown of what they do and how it impacts us all.

Empowering

Trustees help to empower people to ride, vault or carriage drive. Without staff, volunteers and our site we'd be in trouble. We have helped with recruitment, interviews and appraisals as well as new systems of working for staff and volunteers. They have obtained planning permission, tendered and project managed improvements to the premises – a new outdoor toilet and store, top paddock, Little Bradbury Arena, procurement of water engineer, hedge laying and removal of muck!

Educating

Trustees can assist with education, motivating and challenging participants, volunteers and their families. We have helped formulate new programmes, set objectives, and planning activities, co-opted a "voice of the coaches", "voice of the participants" and "voice of the volunteers" to board meetings, and established an improved support structure for coaches. They listen.

Engaging

Trustees are fully engaged with our local community. We have helped to plan and put on the summer open day and Christmas celebrations, helping with refreshments, MOC duties and entertaining, assisted with the procurement and development of the new website, engaged with other RDA centres and made many introductions to the Centre to establish new working relationships and partnerships

Enhancing

Trustees can enhance the health and wellbeing for participants and volunteers. We are responsible ultimately for health and safety, risk and good governance, they have reduced the risk of exposure for funds held in the bank, had safeguarding training updated, DBS checks, ensured systems in place to mitigate exposure to risk both operationally and in term of finance, complied with the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, held a "delivering the vision" workshop to ensure we stay on track and relevant, interviewed and appointed new trustees, and changed our charity objects to reflect the wider nature of our current activities.

Enriching

Trustees can help enrich lives with a wide variety of innovative, inspiring and inclusive equine related activities. None of which would be possible if the we did not produce budgets, cashflows, forecasts, accounts and the annual report and financial statements, they appoint auditors, carry out bookkeeping tasks, and fundraising. They have also considered a business mentoring scheme through the Cranfield Trust, met with the Community Foundation, drafted an investment strategy and had several meetings and discussions about VAT registration.



Riding for the Disabled

The programme that started it all

Programme

RDA activities include riding sessions, carriage driving and vaulting and range from just for fun sessions through to competition riding and driving. The Cavalier Centre provides the ideal combination of enjoyment and fulfilment that comes from being on a horse or a pony. Individual and group needs are catered for in the form of expert supervision, advice and care.

Participants

Our riders, vaulters and carriage drivers range in age from 3 to 72 and live with a variety of challenges that impact their physical and mental wellbeing.

Impact

We've seen our people grow in confidence, overcome physical challenge and achieve things they never thought possible through improved verbal and non-verbal communication, mobility and improved strength, coordination and balance.

In brief

- 124 regular RDA riders, taking part in 2,516 instances of participation
- 4 riders qualified and 2 placed at RDA National Championships
- 12 regular RDA carriage drivers
- 4 new RDA carriage driving coaches
- 3 new RDA riding coaches

Steps in the Right Direction

8 Week Employability and Skills Development Programme



Programme

Steps in the Right Direction gave participants (aged 16+) the skills and confidence to go into training, education or employment. The course offered a mix of practical experience, and the opportunity to develop skills and confidence based around classroom activities and practical horse-based tasks. We are grateful to Landau for funding Steps in the Right Direction in 2020/21 and pleased to offer an updated version of the programme from 2022-2025 thanks to the National Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund.

Participants

Our participants have been a real diverse mix of people, over the age of 16 who are not currently in education, employment or training and have been disadvantaged by circumstance.

Impact

One of the participants' parents said: "Opportunities like this make such a difference for you people like him. He is really beginning to believe in himself and feels that he has a pathway forward."

In brief

- 24 Participants engaged through 16 local support services
- Over 400 hours of learning
- RDA Qualifications achieved
- Programme adapted to meet the needs of a broad range of individuals



Stable Relationships

12-week one-to-one emotional intelligence course for young people

Programme

Stable Relationships is a 12 week one-to-one programme. Sessions combine non-ridden equine activities and creative classroom-based tasks, which aims to help young people to better understand and regulate their emotions.

Participants

Participants in Stable Relationships included looked after children, children who refuse to attend school and those with unsettled behaviour.

Impact

Through an improved understanding of emotions, boundaries, trust and relationships, participants have learned techniques which enable them to be calm, express their feelings appropriately, make realistic choices and understand the effect of their behaviour on others. They have improved relationships with peers and re-engaged with the education system.

In brief

- 10 young people completed a variety of horse related creative activities and practical tasks
- People around them said: "she looks forward to her sessions and is more positive"
- "they seem more calm and open and honest about feelings"
- "started to show an interest in others around her by asking questions"

At Home With Horses

Children with refugee experience



Programme

At Home With Horses is a pioneering programme for children with refugee backgrounds. For 3 consecutive Saturday afternoons, the children spend time with our horses and ponies, volunteers and the team in equine-related activities. The sessions create a space to help these little ones gain in confidence and spend time with horses in a beautiful countryside setting. The programme is made possible through Sport England's Tackling Inequalities Funding via Energize Telford & Wrekin

Participants

We worked with Shropshire Supports Refugees to reach children from 5 to 15 years old, who were originally from Syria. Their families had fled the fighting to find peace and safety in the UK.

Impact

Physical activity, social interaction and time spent with the horses can help bring a moment or two of peace through connection with the ponies. You see the difference in a child's face as they find comfort in the brushing a pony.

In brief

- 18 children participated
- 540 volunteer hours
- Over 80 hours of physical activity
- 27,000 calories burned
- 108 hours spent with 5 horses

Looking forward to 2022/23

Good times ahead ...

Gaining BHS Approval has enabled our team to undertake training to deliver Changing Lives Through Horses. The programme will be launched in September 2022 and work with young people to develop six key life skills through equestrian activity Communication and Confidence, Relationships, Teamwork, Responsibility and Personal Achievement.

Work on 'Little Bradbury' is underway to create a small learning barn which will provide a more intimate setting to work with the ponies, ideal for the Stable Relationships and Changing Lives Through Horses programmes. Learning from our Landau-funded Steps in the Right Direction programme has been used to create STEPS, a wellbeing and confidence building programme funded through Reaching Communities, National Lottery.

We look forward to developing our existing contacts, welcoming more and different organisations to work with us and getting out and about to tell people what we offer.



Thank You

To all our supporters

Together we are making the difference

The Cavalier Centre wouldn't and couldn't exist without the support of our community who give so generously of their time, funds and experience.



Time

Volunteers guide our work, support weekly RDA riding sessions, maintain the beautiful site, undertake office tasks and bring energy and enthusiasm to everything they do!

Funds

Grants and donations enable us to run the centre, subsidise sessions, care for our ponies, improve our facilities, develop innovative programmes and run activities.

Experience

Our diverse community of supporters and participants use their invaluable professional knowledge and lived experience to shape everything we do.

We are hugely grateful to our volunteers, funders, business sponsors, individual donors and fundraisers who together enable the Centre to be the setting for life changing experiences between horses and humans.

It is clear that our services have never been more needed and year on year we are able to provide a broader range of opportunities for more people.

We are ambitious to do more.





Cavalier Centre

Where horses make the difference

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Support Us:
Charity No. 1163030
Company No. 08737154

