

# EPSOM RDA NEWSLETTER

Summer 2020

## COVID 19 - Preparing to return to riding

### Key Points

- Keep 2m social distancing
- Wash hands frequently
- All tack and equipment to be sanitised before and after each use

As we have been preparing our facilities for a phased return to riding we have put in place a number of measures to provide a COVID 19 safe environment. These follow the guidelines advised by the Government and RDA National.

A series of videos to explain the new routines are being posted on the website

[www.epsomrda.org.uk](http://www.epsomrda.org.uk) and our Facebook page @EpsomRDA

While the social distancing requirements currently in place mean the Group cannot return to full riding sessions, we aim to phase in a re-introduction of activities for a limited number of participants from August 2020.

Subject to the COVID 19 Risk Assessment being approved by National RDA, riding will be available for Epsom RDA participants who can mount/dismount their pony unaided, adjust girths and stirrups without assistance from a Coach or volunteer, and ride independently. Pony Care or Pony Visits will

be available for Epsom RDA participants who are not able to ride independently, but are able to understand instructions and follow the COVID19 protocols

Ray Lee, Epsom RDA Chair said "We are delighted to be able to take these first steps towards getting back to what we do best: providing disabled people with the opportunity to ride to benefit their health and well-being.

This has been made possible by the commitment of our volunteers and we are grateful for their continuing support.

*We are looking forward to seeing our participants once again enjoying our facilities and renewing their partnerships with their pony partners."*



### Inside this issue:

It Must Be Love	2
Pony Fitness Programme	2
New Car Park	3
Investing in the Future	3
Resurfacing the Outdoor School	3
Call for new Members	4

*Wonderful Epsom.  
What a brilliant  
innovative team  
you are. Loving the  
watering can solo  
- RDA South East  
Region*

*Oh my goodness  
this is brilliant  
what a lovely way  
to reach out to all  
the riders and vol-  
unteers.....*

*So honoured to be  
part of this. Love  
you all!*

*This is just brilliant.  
Great choice of  
song. Well done  
everyone. We are  
really missing see-  
ing you.....*

## It Must Be Love

How to keep our 300 riders and those volunteers unable to be at the yard connected with the Group has been one of the challenges of the last few months. The Sessions have used **tremendous ingenuity and creativity** to overcome this challenge.

The Saturday Afternoon session thought they could share some Makaton signs and seeing a video by

“Singing Hands” to **It Must Be Love** the Makaton video seed was sown!

Zoe and Kate planned the song and videoed all the signs to send out to sessions, but after that it was up to each session. The choreography and locations were all individually inspired and after the magic of editing (thanks Marcus!) we had

our final video. But that wasn't all, as leading up to it's launch we published on our social media channels **two Makaton signs each day**, so have a bank of Makaton signs, available to use.

To date the video has been seen over **19,000 times**. If you haven't had a chance to see the video yet just click on the link below.

## With Love to all our Riders and Volunteers



[www.justgiving.com/epsomrda](http://www.justgiving.com/epsomrda)

## Pony Fitness Programme

Suspending our riding activities in March due to COVID 19 has meant an **unexpected summer holiday for our ponies**.

Although the ponies continued with some light daily exercise in hand with weekly lunge sessions a **full fitness programme was introduced in June to prepare the ponies for a return to work**.

A considerable amount of planning has been involved to ensure that the small team of volunteers who are carrying out the training are able to

observe social distancing requirements with all the tack being sanitised after each use. With that in place the first stage of the fitness programme saw all the ponies being **visited by the farrier and the chiropractor**.

The ponies then moved onto being ridden with the aim of building up their ridden work gradually week by week to add to the in hand and lunge work.

The initial ridden work consisted of **short**

**period of basic schooling work** three times a week. After three weeks one of the schooling sessions was replaced by a short hack. A visit from the saddler has followed.

The ridden work has now been stepped up further with the Sessions being encouraged to include ridden work each day if possible. This includes a **reintroduction to the games equipment** the ponies haven't seen since March.

## Resurfacing

After many years of service the outdoor school surface has reached the end of its' useful life and is in need of replacing.

Although this is a major item of expenditure, in the region of £13,000 ,the Trustees agreed it is a priority to **invest in a new surface** to ensure the riders and ponies have the **best possible conditions** to ride in as

we gradually return to riding.

After a tendering process carried out with three potential suppliers, locally based [Richard Field Groundworks](#) have been selected to supply and install the new surface.

They will be removing the old surface before laying a new membrane and finishing off with **160**

**tonnes of Rygate Fines** silica sand and synthetic stablising fibre mix.

The work is planned to start during w/c 3 August and will take between 3 and 4 days to complete.

## Investing in the Future

Aside from caring for our ponies our **next biggest expense is maintaining and investing in our site.**

As part of our programme of works in 2019/20 we made some significant investments to improve our grounds

- a new path to give better access to the fields
- installed "Mud Slabs" in front of the field shelters
- added further field shelters

We have also been modernising our systems to helps us run better as a charity and support the Trustees to make informed investment decisions.

**Although the COVID 19 pandemic will have an negative impact on our income going into 2020/21,** we will continue to look at ways of improving our grounds and buildings. This will ensure we are able to provide our riders and volunteers with the best possible environment to

enjoy in the years ahead.

Full details on our income and expenditure during 2019/20 will be in our **Annual Report**. This will be available shortly on our website [www.epsomrda.org.uk](http://www.epsomrda.org.uk)

## New Indoor School Build—First Phase is Go

The first phase of the new indoor school project is planned to get underway this Autumn with the **building of the new car park** in Northside field.

By building the car park at this point we are meeting the timeline stipulations of the planning permission. This will enable us to build the new school, when

funds are available. It also give us the **opportunity to start separating cars from horses and visitors**, making the site safer for all.

More details of the plans showing the layout of the new car park will be put on display in the coffee room and on our website soon.

The start date for the car park build is to be confirmed but all the **work will be contained within Northside** and only commence once the Park Lane ponies have returned home.

## Epsom Riding for the Disabled Association

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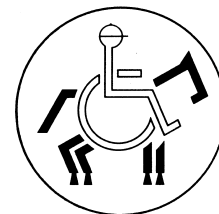
Epsom RDA



@epsomrda



Epsom RDA



## Call for New Members

Last year Epsom RDA became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, or 'CIO'. This is a legal model which helps to protect charities, its' organisers and Members. It makes it much easier to proceed with major projects such as the new indoor school, because it is the type of structure that funders and grant-awards expect to see.

As part of last years' changes we had a drive for stakeholders to become Members, we had a great response and 73 people signed up.

**We're now reissuing the invitation so if you didn't sign up last year, we'd love you to do so now.**

### Who Can Become a Member?

We welcome applications from

- Volunteer community including coaches, session volunteers, physiotherapists, maintenance team, gardening team, administrative team. Note you must be over 18.
- Riders over 18 and with legal competence and their parents and carers
- Organisations who ride with us (e.g. schools), with one vote per institution.

**All Trustees need to be a Member and we strongly encourage Session Leaders to become one too.** If Trustees are Session Leaders we would like another deputy from the Session to become a Member.

### Advantages of Membership

Membership means you can participate fully in the Groups' governance. You can vote in meetings such as the AGM, nominate Trustees or other officers. Basically, you can become

more involved in a more formal way, **a good way for your voice to be heard.**

A wider group of Members means we have a **wide range of people to help us grow and flourish** in the way that you would like us to.

### Any Downside?

Not really, there's no cost, Membership does not impose any liability or responsibility other than to act responsibly in the best interest. Of the Group/

One thing we'd really like is for you to **attend the Annual General Meeting** as we need at least 10% to be present to form a quorum. **This year there will be an option to join the AGM virtually.**

### How to Join

Simply click here or copy into your browser and complete the application form. **Please complete and return the form by Sunday 9 August.**

