

## The Brae

AGM 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Chairman's report for year April 2010 – March 2011

### 2 Cs – Challenges and Changes

In our third year of operations The Brae continued to provide over 100 riding sessions per week collecting achievements and successes along the way. However, as with all organisations, we also had to face and overcome some new challenges and changes.

#### Staffing

In April, we had our first member of staff leave us which created a vacancy for a yard manager/instructor. This post proved problematic to fill with the successful applicant deciding not to start and us having to re-advertise. The post was eventually filled in July but unfortunately this did not go according to plan and became vacant again in March. We are very grateful to Jessica Narsapur who covered the yard manager duties on a temporary basis, the instructors that stepped in to cover lessons and Mary, our Centre Manager who undertook a steep learning curve and oversaw that area during this time. This situation caused us to reconsider this post and our plans for the future which resulted in us splitting it into 2 part time posts, yard manager and head instructor.

In October, Alison Melville, our Volunteer Co-ordinator left and created another vacancy. We had an interesting range of applicants and were delighted when Kate Godfrey agreed to start with us in December. Kate brings a wide range of experience including horse knowledge which we feel is an added bonus for us.

During this time, our research Physiotherapist, Fiona Fummey was off work due to health reasons and eventually had to resign in November. As this post is funded by NHS Tayside Endowments for a 3 year period, we were aware that this work had to be covered as soon as possible and we are extremely grateful to Janet Parkinson, who gave up her 'only just began retirement' to step in and continue this important post.

I must mention our two stalwarts, Mary and Cindy, who saw us through this time with their usual positivity and enthusiasm, thank you, we couldn't have done it without you.

#### Horses

As with all RDA centres, there will be hellos and goodbyes in any year, but this year, saw us having to deal with the illness of one of our favourite horses, Paddy. We did everything we could to nurse him back to fitness, but unfortunately this was out with our control and we had to have Paddy put to sleep in

October. I don't think anyone of us would have realised the impact this would have on our volunteers, riders and staff. This was our first experience of this kind of situation and I would like to thank everyone for helping us through it, particularly Parkside Vets for their care, attention and support.

#### Carriage Driving

Unfortunately, due to Paddy's illness this was curtailed significantly. We did however begin to train O'Reilly and were delighted when he passed his tests and became our carriage driving pony. We would like to thank Alison Macintosh and Joan Jack for continuing to 'drive' this forward and a welcome to the volunteers who have joined the team, particularly Katie Horne and John Messiter who are undertaking their training at present.

#### Directors

Sue Rolfe, one of the original band of 5 to start The Brae, decided to swap her chaps for crystals and left us in January to set up a new venture, we wish her well and hope that she has time to visit us occasionally.

Whilst previously undertaking our Governance Review through Lloyds TSB, it was decided to allocate responsibilities to members of the Board and to invite people suitably qualified to ensure that The Brae had a Board of Directors with a full complement of the skills required to lead into the future .

We were delighted when Lesley Fullerton, who has been undertaking the role of Treasurer, agreed to join us along with Ian Longair who brings a wide range of experience including IT/Internet knowledge and Rob Whiteford, retired vet and inspector of riding establishments.

#### Volunteers

At the risk of repeating that said in the previous reports, we truly do have the best volunteers in the town. This was particularly apparent in November when the snow started to fall and did not know how to stop. Dundee was brought to a standstill, but our intrepid survivors continued to make the journey to feed and care for our horses which carried on well into January. Add this to the normal working week and it is no wonder that they achieved the Local Heroes Award from Radio Tay.

Our team has undertaken a vast range of training over this year with many receiving, MV (Millenium Volunteer) Awards, Asdan Community Volunteering Qualifications, First Aid and Makaton to name a few.

We also had the regional RDA Volunteer of the Year go to June Mitchell and 3 other volunteers received the RDA Over and Above Award. We would once again like to formally thank all our volunteers for all their hard work and support this year: The Brae could not function without them!

#### Highlights

There have been too many to mention them all but here are just a few

The Volunteer Forum was set up

The first editions of regular Newsletters for Volunteers and Riders & Supporters were published

The Brae got its own Facebook page

The Brae was awarded the Volunteer Friendly Award

New contacts made with local businesses including Alliance Trust, Women Ahead and BNI

We held our first ever RDA Dressage Competition

We took part in our first RDA Musical Ride Competition

The Brae was chosen to hold the regional heats for Hartbury

We won both the local and regional RBS votes and Norma McGovern became Dundee's poster girl

Harry Nunn and Lucy Moffat were both nominated for Dundee Sports Awards

A very successful year for Fundraising bringing in some new supporters and a wide variety of antics to attract even more attention

A more modern logo

A BT land line

Funding from The Post Code Lottery to provide a sound system for the arenas

And finally, the two seas!

It certainly felt as though we were swimming against the tide at times, but the indomitable Brae team kept their heads up and rallied their support. Yes it has been challenging and yes we have seen changes, but yes, we did it together.

On behalf of all the directors, a very big Thank You to everyone who has been part of our year.

Alison Doyle, Chairperson