NEWSLETTER

Welcome to December!

As another incredibly busy year draws to a close, thank you to all our riders, volunteers, coaches, families and supporters for everything you've contributed throughout 2026.

It's been a year of achievements, new opportunities, friendships and fundraising. With Christmas just around the corner, there is still plenty happening at The Brook before our festive break.

A Special Thank You to Lara – and Our New Website

Some of you may already have seen our new website! Before we look forward, we want to say an enormous **THANK YOU to Lara**, who has looked after the Erme Valley website for so many years.

We are truly grateful for the many hours, care and commitment Lara has given to keeping everyone informed and sharing the work of our group. Thank you, Lara, for everything you have done.

November Round-Up

Happy Hoof Club – Finlake Weekend

Eleven members joined B and Peggy for another brilliant Finlake trip. There was walking, talking, cooking, games and plenty of fun – with important life skills woven into everything we did.

It was particularly lovely to see how much participants' independence has grown since last year's visit. **We have already booked for next year**, so please put your name down early if you'd like to come!



Finlake: enjoying time together



Finlake: games and life skills

Accessible Social Club

Our Accessible Social Club continues to bring people together for friendship, confidence and new experiences. At our latest gathering, the group enjoyed grooming the horses. We're looking forward to our Christmas get-togethers!



Accessible Social Club – spending time with one of our horses

NEWSLETTER

Congratulations to Sue and Jane!

Huge congratulations to **Sue Johns and Jane Lankester**, who received their **RDA President's Awards** at the RDA Annual Gathering and Conference in Coventry. These awards recognise their exceptional dedication and service over so many years. We are very proud of them both.



President's Award presentation



President's Award presentation

RDA Virtual National Championships 2026

What a fantastic achievement for Team Erme Valley! We have had **13 riders achieve top-three placings** in this year's Virtual Championships.

Congratulations to everyone who competed, and thank you to our coaches, horses, volunteers and families. **Our final riders feature in the 28th November livestream** – please tune in! We will share a full results round-up on our social media and website afterwards.

Fundraising – Thank You for Your Support

As we approach the end of the year, we want to recognise the extraordinary effort involved in raising funds for Erme Valley. Our sincere thanks for these recent donations and promises of support:

Recent donations	Donations pledged
Hannah Rogers – £500	**Claire Milne – £20,000 pledged**
Anonymous donor – £500	**Gibbons Trust – £1,000 pledged**
George Welch – £500	These promised gifts are listed separately from donations already received.
Ivybridge Town Council – £1,500	
Masonic Hall, Exeter – £500	

Thank you so much to every donor. We still have a long way to go, and several further grant applications are in the pipeline. **Please keep helping us spread the word!**

The George Inn – Charity of the Year

We are delighted to be working with **The George Inn in Plympton** as their chosen charity for 2026/27. Every pint served contributes **20p to Erme Valley**, so why not pop in and support them? Thank you to everyone who voted for us and supported the campaign on social media.

NEWSLETTER

KETCHUP: OUR NEW MECHANICAL HORSE

THE DIFFERENCE IS LIFE-CHANGING.

Our campaign to replace Jack with Ketchup continues. The project aims to raise **£92,000** for a new mechanical horse and improvements to the space where he will be used.

£27,000 raised!

Next milestone: £30,000
Just £3,000 to go.

We continue to work on funding applications and to approach businesses, organisations and individuals who may be able to support the appeal. Keep an eye on the fundraising thermometers around the yard, and please continue sharing our appeal, telling others about the project and suggesting potential supporters.

Donate or share: www.justgiving.com/campaign/ketchup

Passing the reins from Jack to Ketchup means riders can continue building strength, gaining confidence and becoming more independent.

Monthly Direct Debits

The cost of caring for our horses and providing sessions continues to rise. If you would like to support Erme Valley through a **monthly Direct Debit**, please contact the office for details. Every regular donation, whatever the amount, makes a difference.

Thinking of Our Erme Valley Family

We know that several of our members are going through a difficult time at the moment. We want you all to know that **you are very much in our thoughts**, and we send our warmest wishes for a speedy recovery to those who are unwell.

A heartfelt **thank you to everyone who has stepped up to help**, often at short notice, ensuring that our sessions can continue to run as normal. It is at times like these that we are reminded just how special our Erme Valley community is. Thank you for looking after one another and always being there when needed.

NEWSLETTER

Christmas Fair – Saturday 5th December, 11am–3pm

We really need EVERYONE to get behind our Christmas Fair at The Brook!

This is one of our important fundraising events, and it can only be a success if our members help and visitors come through the gates.

Please help us set up, run stalls, donate raffle prizes, welcome visitors and clear away. Just as importantly, **invite your friends, family, neighbours, workmates and anyone you know!** Come along for festive activities, refreshments and a chance to see what Erme Valley is all about.

We need helpers AND visitors. If everyone supports the fair, we can make it a wonderful day and raise much-needed funds. Please speak to Peggy if you can help.

Wreath-Making Fundraiser – Saturday 5th December

Our supporters are also hosting their **fifth annual charity wreath-making event** in aid of Erme Valley at **Hall Farm, Cornwood**. There are two sessions: **10.30am–12pm** and **12.30pm–2pm**. Tickets are **£20**, booking is essential, and refreshments and children's crafts are available. Both events take place on the same day.

See the original posters below for full details and booking contacts.



Christmas Fair – The Brook



Wreath Making – Hall Farm, Cornwood

Carols & More Christmas Celebrations

Tuesday 1st December: Tea with a Pony
Friday 4th December: Carols at Exeter
Sunday 6th December: Carols by Candlelight at North Huish
Tuesday 15th December: Christmas Lunch – please sign up.

Coaching, Safeguarding & Training

Congratulations to **Bev, our new coach**! Well done also to **Sophie, Leah and Amy** on completing their annual coaching reviews, with the assessor encouraging them to work towards the next level.

A reminder that all Directors and Coaches must complete the **RDA online safeguarding course**, delivered via Zoom, and that outstanding coaching reviews and safeguarding training should be completed before Christmas. Other volunteers are strongly encouraged to undertake safeguarding and Prevent training through GOV.UK.

Thank you to everyone who attended **Mandy Frost's CPD evening on Goal Setting**. There were brilliant discussions, with coaches from both inside and outside RDA sharing ideas and leaving inspired. A huge thank you to Mandy for another excellent talk – we hope to run more sessions soon.

Looking After Our Horses This Winter

Winter brings additional feed, forage, bedding and daily care for our horses. A huge thank you to our yard staff and volunteers who look after them, whatever the weather. These essential costs continue to rise and donations remain vital.

Winter centre reminder: Please do not switch on heaters or lights without asking, and **KEEP THE DOORS SHUT!** Keep an eye on Facebook for any changes to sessions due to the weather. If you are unsure, please contact Peggy before travelling.

Important Dates for Your Diary

1st December	Tea with a Pony
4th December	Carols at Exeter
5th December	Christmas Fair, The Brook, 11am–3pm
5th December	Wreath-making, Hall Farm, Cornwood; 10.30am–12pm & 12.30pm–2pm
6th December	Carols by Candlelight, North Huish
15th December	Christmas Lunch – please sign up
19th December	Last day of regular sessions
21st December	Work experience only
4th January 2027	Work experience only
6th January 2027	Regular sessions resume

Please let the office know if you will be absent from any remaining sessions.

A Christmas Thank You from Erme Valley

Every ride, every horse cared for, every event and every new opportunity depends on the dedication of our volunteers, supporters and wider community. Thank you to everyone who has made 2026 so special.

Wishing our riders, volunteers, families and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming you back in January for another year of offering opportunity and opening doors.