

NEWSLETTER



Welcome Back!

Welcome to the start of a new academic year at Erme Valley RDA!

We hope everyone has had a lovely summer and is looking forward to getting back into the usual routine. A particularly warm welcome to all the new participants and volunteers who have joined us over the summer months – we hope you will quickly feel part of the Erme Valley community.

As usual at the beginning of term, everyone needs to check that their details are up to date in the office, particularly contact and medical information.

We also need an up-to-date weight for every rider. This is an important part of monitoring the workload and welfare of our horses, so please make sure this is completed at the start of term.

Fundraising Update

A huge thank you to everyone who continues to support our fundraising efforts.

Our recent Ukulele Afternoon raised an excellent £650. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event. It was a shame that more of our members weren't able to come along, as these events are vital in helping us continue to provide our services.

Thank you also to Bethany, Georgina and Louis, who have already returned their 'Fill the Jar with Pennies' collections. We look forward to receiving more jars over the coming weeks. If you would like to take part, jars are available to collect from the viewing gallery.

An Important Financial Update

Those who attended our AGM will have heard in the Treasurer's report that we have experienced a significant increase in our running costs.

Throughout the summer, the Directors have been holding meetings looking at both our plans to replace Jack, our mechanical horse, and how we can increase our income to meet our current expenditure.

We know we will find a way forward, but we need your help.

Inevitably, we will also need to review the amount we charge for the services we provide. This will be discussed further at our next Directors' meeting in September, and we will keep everyone informed. The more we can achieve through fundraising, donations and community support, the more we can continue to make our activities accessible to everyone.

Mechanical Horse Appeal – Freedom to Ride

Our major fundraising project to replace Jack, our 17-year-old mechanical horse, continues. The total target for the project is approximately £80,000.

Jack has been invaluable to Erme Valley, supporting therapy, assessments, education, confidence building and participants who may not be able to access a live horse.

We continue to look for donations, sponsors, grants and fundraising ideas to help make his replacement possible.



RDA National Championships 2026 – What a Nationals!

In July we took 21 riders and seven horses to Hartpury for four extremely hot days at the RDA National Championships.

There were some fantastic performances and results across the ridden classes, and our Arts & Crafts entries also did brilliantly.

Getting 21 riders, seven horses, equipment and everything else needed to Hartpury is a huge undertaking. A massive thank you must go to everyone who supported the trip – particularly those who answered some very last-minute calls for help and made it possible.

We are incredibly proud of everyone who represented Erme Valley.

AGM, Awards & Our Directors

Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM, BBQ and annual presentations in July.

There were lots of positive reports covering everything that Erme Valley achieved during the previous year, and we were delighted to recognise some very deserving members with our annual awards:

Ann Baker – Outstanding Service as a Director

Martha – Young Volunteer of the Year

Dee Hind – New Volunteer Award

Patrick Pearce – Stable Management Award

Sienna – Marmite Award

Rachel Britton – Sean Du Bro Award

Aleena – Art Award

Sarah Chambers – Steve Bryant Award

Congratulations to you all!

Directors for 2026/27

Our Directors are:

Peggy Douglas – Chairman

Jane Lankester – Vice Chairman

Sue Johns – Treasurer

Jane van Goethem – Secretary

Ginny Crawley

Cathy Pearce

Ian Smith

Janice Olinsky

Katherine Woods

Sophie Douglas

Thank you to everyone who gives their time to help with the management and future of the group.

Summer Working Parties

It has certainly not been a quiet summer at The Brook!

Lots of maintenance, organising and pole painting has taken place to get everything ready for the new academic year.

A huge thank you, as always, to Ann Baker for organising our small but dedicated team of pole painters.

Particular thanks must also go to our yard girls and the B & D team, who have worked incredibly hard throughout the summer.

There is always more maintenance to do, but the centre is looking much smarter thanks to everyone's efforts.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service

We were extremely proud to welcome Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, David Fursdon, to The Brook for the presentation of our King's Award for Voluntary Service.

During his visit, he was able to see a typical Monday at Erme Valley, including riding, education and horse care activities.

We were also joined by some specially invited members who have been involved with Erme Valley for more than 30 years, alongside our Directors.

The occasion culminated in a wonderful parade of ten of our horses – a very special moment and a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the volunteers, past and present, who have made Erme Valley what it is today.



Virtual Championships

The RDA Virtual Championships are coming up again.

If you would like to take part this year, please let us know so that we can begin organising entries and practices.

Emergency Phone – Important Change

Please note that the emergency phone is no longer kept in the stable block.

When the office is not manned, the phone will be located outside the office.

This phone is for emergencies only. Please make sure everyone knows where it can be found.

Education Sessions – Mobile Phones & Photography

A reminder for everyone attending our education sessions that mobile phones need to be put away in bags during the day.

This helps everyone remain engaged, focused and involved in the activities taking place.

Please also remember that photos or videos must not be taken during sessions without permission from Peggy. This is particularly important for safeguarding and respecting the privacy of everyone attending The Brook.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and supportive environment.

Remembering Brian

Our thoughts are very much with Kelly Pritchard and her family following the sudden passing of Brian.

Brian supported both Kelly and Erme Valley for more than 25 years, through weekly riding and a huge amount of fundraising and support for the group.

We are incredibly grateful for everything he contributed over so many years, and he will be very much missed by everyone at Erme Valley.

We send our love and condolences to Kelly and all the family.

Here's to a New Term!

We have another busy year ahead, with education, riding, competitions, clubs, training and plenty of fundraising.

Thank you to every rider, volunteer, coach, parent, carer and supporter who plays a part in making Erme Valley RDA what it is.

Welcome back – here's to a fantastic Autumn Term!



Fundraising – We Need Everyone's Help

Sarah Chambers – London to Brighton Bike Ride

Sarah will be taking on the 55-mile London to Brighton bike ride to raise funds for Erme Valley. Good luck Sarah!

London Marathon

A huge thank you to Simon, who will be taking on the London Marathon and raising funds for Erme Valley.

What Could YOU Do?

Fundraising doesn't have to mean organising a huge event. Small efforts across our large community can make an enormous difference.

Could you:

- Set up a small monthly Direct Debit?
- Take part in a sponsored challenge?
- Hold a cake stall or coffee morning?
- Fill one of our penny jars?
- Ask your workplace to support us?
- Suggest that a school holds a mufti/non-uniform day for Erme Valley?
- Nominate us as a Charity of the Year?
- Organise your own small fundraiser?

Or perhaps you have another idea we haven't thought of!

Please talk to us. All of these efforts help us to help you.

Dates

5th September Kingsbridge Show

7th September Start of term

8th September Accessible Social Club

10th September Community service day (Calor gas)

13th September Sarah Chambers London to Brighton Cycle ride

14th September Happy Hoof Bowling - Patricks 30th

21st Committee meeting

22nd September ASC – Sarahs Birthday!

28th September Driving

29th September - Tea with a Pony 3pm

3rd October Barn Dance (NO RIDING)

5th October RDA CEO Visit

6th October ASC

17th October 12 Hour Challenge

19th October Happy Hoof

20th October ASC

24th October – 31st October Half Term

1st November Ukulele Ugborough village hall



★ THE ERME VALLEY ★

BARN DANCE

3RD OCTOBER 2026

Higher Bowcombe Farm, Ugborough

5.30PM START

Join us for a fantastic evening!



SINGERS:
RICK THE STICK, UNSHUFFLED,
OLLIE WHITFIELD



LINE DANCING



RODEO BULL



FOOD – HOG ROAST,
RAM ROAST & VEGGIE OPTION



GAMES & PHOTO BOOTHS



FULLY STOCKED BAR



BIG RAFFLE

TICKETS:

£25
ADULTS

£12.50
UNDER 15s



★ *Entry and Food included in the ticket price.* ★

★ ALL TICKETS TO BE PURCHASED THROUGH **eventbrite** ★

SCAN TO
BOOK NOW!



ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SUPPORT

ERME VALLEY RDA

CHARITY NO: 1145441