

THE PEMBROKE CENTRE

IMPACT REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2025

In 2025 there were:

- **3723** riding sessions for **229** people
- **181 volunteers** who gave over **25000 hours of their time**, which equates to over **£300,000** based on the **minimum wage in 2025**
- **9 Tea with a Pony** sessions for **90** people
- **23 sessions of Yoga with Horses**



INTRODUCTION

The year 2025 has been a testament to the extraordinary strength and dedication of the Pembroke Centre community. We have faced significant challenges: ill health and bereavement for some of our volunteers, the heartbreaking loss of a respected Coach and of two of our beloved horses. Our volunteers have responded with remarkable compassion, stepping up to support each other and maintain the exceptional standard of care our participants deserve.

Therapeutic riding is always in great demand while non-riding activities continue to be popular and to bring more people to the Centre. We are proud of the positive impact we make on the lives of our participants, whose progress and joy remain at the heart of everything we do.

We have been active in the local community promoting what we do and encouraging groups and individuals to make use of the excellent facilities we can offer.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors and we are especially grateful to Tesco and the Rotary Club of Wilton for their continued support.

VOLUNTEERS

We have 181 volunteers (as recorded at the AGM in November). These volunteers have given up over 25000 hours of their time. This equates to over £300,000 based on the minimum wage in 2025 and demonstrates that it would be prohibitively expensive to provide services at the Centre without this volunteer support.

Twenty-seven new volunteers have joined us and a further three have expressed interest. Some volunteers have moved on because of health concerns or working hours but some of these remain in contact and continue to promote activities at the centre.



Our young volunteers are crucial to the delivery of services on Saturdays. They have become an effective and mutually supportive team, skilled in working with horses and with riders.

All volunteers have an induction training and take part in the regular refresher training in September but this year we also had a training event that focussed on autism. Our key speaker gave a presentation that was based on her personal experience as well as her professional expertise and her contribution had a profound effect on all of us.

We have only two paid members of staff at the Centre, our Centre Manager and our Riding Co-ordinator, who has now taken on the bookkeeping role. They are both excellent and both give far more time to the Centre than they are paid to do. Despite this we simply could not manage without our volunteers who give up so much time and work so hard at every aspect of life at the Centre. There is much that is done behind the scenes by the Board of Trustees to ensure that the Centre is a safe place and that it is financially viable. The Trustees also give their time voluntarily.



This year we were able to present awards to long serving volunteers and several received certificates for twenty-five, forty and, in one case, fifty years of volunteering.

RIDERS



During the year we provided 3723 riding sessions for 229 people.

Each rider attends for a block of six weeks riding and their progress is monitored throughout. This means that rider development from an original profile is measured and that it is possible to adapt teaching styles to individuals.

Riders come from special schools, day care centres or as individuals with a parent or carer.

We stress that the riding we offer is essentially beginner riding and this is more than enough for many of our riders. The majority will have at least two volunteers with them, one to lead the pony and the other one or two walking alongside the pony to provide support. Basic riding allows them to develop musculature and confidence and to acquire the balance they need to ride effectively. Some riders, however, have gone on to take part in national competitions and to ride independently.

The impact on riders is demonstrated not just during their riding session but through progress, physically and mentally in their lives away from the Centre. One parent commented that her son was much calmer at home after he had been riding.

Catering for the different needs and abilities of the riders can be challenging and we are fortunate in having a team of skilled and imaginative Coaches who can provide sessions in which riders will learn and progress but will also have fun. Riders are invariably positive about their experiences and parents who watch the rides are equally pleased with what they see.



"I cannot believe the difference you have made to my son"

"I paid £80 an hour for some therapeutic riding and here he is with 4 people helping him and you only ask for £10 a session."

This year, for the first time, we offered a Silver Saddles experience. This was open to elderly riders who wanted to get back in the saddle. Two riders came to the session. One aged eighty-eight and the other ninety-two. They had a short ride and then joined the volunteers for tea. The son of one of the riders said:

"She will live on these memories for weeks"

OWN A PONY DAYS



There were two Own a Pony days this year. As always these provide a valuable experience, encouraging riders to understand what is needed to look after a horse or pony. The young people who took part thoroughly enjoyed their day.

YOGA WITH HORSES

There were 23 sessions this year and these were very much enjoyed by all the participants as well as raising some funds for the Centre. Some of the participants have been involved for some time and have realised how much yoga can help with both flexibility and balance

TEA WITH A PONY

This year there were 9 Tea with a Pony sessions attended by 90 people. Visitors came from local care homes, support groups and surgeries. We encouraged individuals to attend at the same time as other groups so that they could enjoy a more sociable experience. Our oldest guest was 101 years old and she was delighted when one of the ponies came to her wheelchair for a fuss. The responses from guests are always positive and they clearly feel better for being with the ponies. One guest so much enjoyed her visit that she decided to donate a rocking horse to us. When her daughter brought her back to the Centre to deliver it she said:



"I had no idea what you did here. This is really impressive."

Guests are always delighted to see the ponies and to talk to the volunteers but the Centre itself is always admired. As one guest commented "What a beautiful place."

It is not possible for everyone who would benefit from Tea with a Pony sessions to come on a Friday afternoon but we have been able to offer an informal session to one visitor who was referred from a GP surgery. She had always worked with horses but a car accident had meant that this was no longer possible. She was able to come for a short time each week just to groom one of the horses. She said:

"You can't know what a difference this makes to me."

ADOPT A PONY



The Adopt a Pony scheme helps to raise funds and adopters receive news and photographs of their pony to enjoy. This year we held a special event so that adopters could come and meet their pony as well as having a look around the Centre and joining some of the volunteers for refreshments. Everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed spending time with their pony and those who had not visited before said that they were very impressed by the facilities and by the work that we do here.

PART OF THE COMMUNITY

We want very much to be seen as part of the local community and to make a contribution to it. Some local clubs and community groups already use our facilities for events and meetings and we positively encourage other groups to do this. We had a stall in St Thomas Church, Salisbury as part of their "Cakes and Connections" event and we were also in the Salisbury Guildhall for the Eye-Can Exhibition. We were "at the seaside" for the Wilton carnival, where our float won first prize in the adult section.

PART OF THE COMMUNITY



We attended the Wilton Town meeting to give a presentation and spent a morning at the Tesco store as part of their Community Information days.

We had stalls and collections at Salisbury Racecourse and at Tesco. We have also been one of the charities attracting tokens to raise funds at Tesco and we are very grateful for their support for this and throughout the year.

Community support was very much in evidence at the Berwick St James Fete where the silent auction raised well over £1000 for us.

There were also visits to the Centre. Michael Bishop, the recently appointed Chief Executive of RDA UK visited with Fields Wicker-Miurin, Chair of British Equestrian. It was an excellent opportunity for them to meet some riders and volunteers. We also had a visit from representatives of local W.I groups.

We hosted a fun regional show for other RDA groups in the County. The visiting riders very much enjoyed the event and it highlighted that we are especially fortunate in the Centre and its facilities. The walk through the woods was a highlight for many of the visitors. We have become more actively involved with RDA across the region and regular meetings provide an opportunity to share good practice and exchange ideas.

The Wilton Walk in April was a great success. This is an opportunity to enjoy a stroll across some of the beautiful Wilton Estate. It was a fine day and the experience was very much enjoyed by all the visitors, especially the many dogs who enjoyed both the walk and a great deal of fuss and attention.

A local photographer made several visits to take photographs for his portfolio. This was made up of images of people working in different workplaces. Several volunteers now have a professional photograph to record their hard work at the Centre.

As always the annual Carol Service and Nativity was a delight. It was extremely well attended and many people commented that it was the best ever. Costumes, catering and stalls were all very much appreciated and the cast of riders and ponies behaved beautifully.



SOCIAL MEDIA

The pembrokecentre.com website is well established and provides news and information on all the activities undertaken at the Pembroke Centre. We have added training resources for our volunteers to support training days and to act as a refresher on some of the basic aspects of horse care.

Our social media Facebook page, where we promote events and share stories of local interest, has over 1.3k followers.

FUNDRAISING

Raising funds is always a priority for us and it is becoming even more so. This is not just because of rising costs but also because we will need to replace the roof of the indoor school in the coming year and will face a number of major capital costs within the next five years.

We received a very generous donation from BIFFA and an equally generous donation from a private donor who wanted to make a donation as a 90th birthday present for his brother. This is the first contribution to the "Raise the Roof" campaign which kicks off in 2026.

The collections at the Racecourse, Tesco and our Nativity have demonstrated how very generous people can be.



Our 200 Club, Adopt a Pony and the Stash Your Cash campaign have all raised significant sums and our volunteers have also made extra efforts to raise funds. The Pony Pledge at the start of the year encouraged volunteers to take on fund raising activities and these included a superb cream tea and the White Horse Walk which alone raised over £6000 for us.



The Rotary Club of Wilton has always been a most generous and valued supporter. Year on year they help us in many ways but this year their support has been exceptional. When they read of the death of our much-loved horse, Puzzle, they immediately decided that all the funds raised from their Gala Dinner would be donated to us to buy a new horse. Thanks to their amazing effort we now have Dexter who has joined our team of horses and ponies. It is an exceptional demonstration of their support.

This year we are also very much indebted to Andy Rhind-Tutt who donated funds raised by his veteran car London to Brighton run.

In a year when there was sadness and loss at the Centre we have seen so many examples of support and concern for our riders, our ponies and for each other.

At the Pembroke Centre equine therapy in all its forms continues to be of profound benefit to so many people. It would not be possible without the help and commitment of our supporters, our Trustees, our Centre Manager and Rider Co-ordinator, our volunteers and, of course, our very special horses and ponies.

