



WINTER 2025

# NEWSLETTER



Dear friend,

As 2025 draws to a close, it's been an incredible few months at Ride High. Our first-ever Charity Clay Shoot, a Golf Day, and our inspiring speaker evening have all brought our community together - and helped to raise both awareness and vital funds to support the children we work with. These events enable us to continue giving children the opportunities to grow in confidence, resilience and joy.

This Christmas, our members are busy creating handmade gifts and decorations for Beckett Care Home, putting their creativity and care into action - a beautiful reminder of the spirit of giving. There is also the opportunity to support our Big Give Christmas Appeal, where your donation can be doubled to help even more children in 2026.

From all of us at Ride High, we wish you a peaceful Christmas and a joyful New Year.

*Olivia Sugdon*

Olivia Sugdon,  
CEO Ride High



## A safe place

Stephanie, 15, joined Ride High following a period of mental health struggles and feelings of isolation. Having always loved horses, the opportunity to join the Ride High programme was a dream come true.

Over her time at Ride High not only did Stephanie learn to ride and care for the ponies but sessions became the perfect distraction from her worries, and a supportive environment that allowed her to open up about how she was feeling.

*"When here I'm with people who understand what I am going through. I can talk to everyone and be myself, not like other places where I put on a mask,"*

As Stephanie's confidence grew she began to push herself out of her comfort zone, trying new activities and developing friendships with her peers. Stephanie has transformed into a more confident young person and is leaving Ride High looking forward to the future. "I will miss the horses and riding every week. Ride High gave me the opportunity to try something I would never have had the chance to do."

Stephanie dreams of becoming a paediatrician, and her time at Ride High has provided her with the confidence, resilience, and self-belief to pursue her goals.



## Can you help more children like Stephanie?

We're taking part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge - the UK's biggest online match-funding campaign from **Midday Tuesday 2nd December - Midday Tuesday 9th December**.

This means every pound you donate will be doubled.

We're aiming to raise £12,000 in just one week to give 40 children like Stephanie the chance to start 2026 with new confidence and hope. To donate please scan the QR code.

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*"The horses are my friends. They make me feel happy and like I can do anything". - Ride High member.*



## They took the plunge for Ride High!

On a late September Sunday, after a touch-and-go start with the weather, the clouds cleared and the sun shone just in time for our five brave skydivers to take the leap from an incredible 13,000 feet at Hinton Skydiving Centre!

A huge congratulations and thank you to Kelly, Kevin, Greg, Chloe, and our very own Club Leader Mark for their courage and for supporting Ride High in such a thrilling way. Together their efforts raised funds to enable four new children to join the Ride High programme in January 2026.

Fancy an adrenaline rush for a great cause? Our next skydiving adventure is on Sunday 13th September 2026 – grab your spot now and take the leap for Ride High!



## From challenge to confidence

Grace first attended Ride High in 2024, seeking support after being diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), which had left her unable to attend college in person. Isolated and struggling with daily life, she found a safe and empowering space at Ride High.

Through learning to care for the horses, Grace rediscovered her love for animals and, most importantly, rebuilt her confidence and independence. Ride High became a place where she could socialise, learn, and feel herself again.



*"What Ride High helped me with the most was my confidence. It was more than just horse care - it was a safe space where I could build relationships, meet new people, and start to feel like myself again. It was a place where I didn't feel judged or restricted by my condition, and that made all the difference."*

Today, Grace is continuing her studies in Animal Studies, with plans to pursue a Zoology degree, and has returned to Ride High as a volunteer, supporting young people facing similar challenges. Last month, she shared her inspiring story at our Golf Day, showing how Ride High has truly transformed her life.

## Teeing off for a great day at Woburn Golf Club

Our annual charity golf day at the prestigious Woburn Golf Club was a spectacular celebration of golf, camaraderie, and generosity. Eighteen teams took to the stunning Duke's Course for a day of competition and fun. The morning started with a Q&A with pro coach Dan Grieve who inspired attendees with insights and stories from the world of golf. On-course energy was high with new games, including "Beat the Pro" challenges and a lively putting competition.



Dan Grieve PGA Master Coach (centre) with Joe Stockdale, Professional Showjumper (left) and Christian Matthews (right).

Thanks to the generosity of participants and supporters, the day raised enough to fund 10 new children to join Ride High in January - a remarkable achievement that will make a lasting difference. The success of the day was made possible by the support of our sponsors Able Plumbing, Avery Healthcare, Brian Currie, Geoffrey Leaver and LEDA Orthopaedics. A big congratulations to our winning team Concierge Golf Simulators.

With such a fantastic turnout, anticipation is already building for next year's Charity Golf Day, which will take place on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2026. Email: [events@ridehigh.org](mailto:events@ridehigh.org) to enter your team now.

## Charity clay shoot – a fantastic first event!

Our first-ever charity clay shoot took place in September at the stunning Courteenhall Estate, and what a day it was! We were thrilled to welcome 18 teams for a day of friendly competition, skill, and fun - all for a great cause. We raised enough funds to support 14 children on our programme.

A huge thank you to our sponsors for making the day possible: AF Group, Sytner Land Rover, and NFU Mutual Bedfordshire. Thanks also to Courteenhall for their unending support; Cranswick PLC for providing a delicious breakfast spread; Beerfly Bedford for keeping our guests refreshed with their ale; and to Imagine Events for adding the finishing touches. Congratulations to our winning teams: 1st – Sytner 6, 2nd – Linnell Brothers, and 3rd – Sytner 1.



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Olivia Sugdon, CEO, with Richard Villar

## An Inspiring start to our new speaker series

In November we hosted our first speaker event - An Exclusive Evening with Richard Villar: Broken Bones in Broken Lands at Chicheley Hall. Richard captivated the room with extraordinary stories from his life as a SAS medical officer, war surgeon and humanitarian. We're thrilled that our debut speaker event was such a success and want to say a huge thank you to Richard and to everyone who joined us. Our sincere thanks as well to Avail Financial Planning for kindly sponsoring the evening.

Richard will be an extremely hard act to follow, but we already have an exciting speaker lined up for our 2026 event. Details coming soon.



## Sharing kindness this Christmas

Every year, our members take on a special project that's all about giving back – showing them the joy of helping others and the impact a simple act of kindness can have. This month, the children are busy in their clubroom sessions designing and creating handmade gifts, decorations and cards for the residents of Beckett House Care Home in Loughton.

It's a project that teaches so much - empathy, thoughtfulness, teamwork and generosity - and the children take such pride in knowing their creations will brighten someone's day. Some of our members will be personally delivering their gifts to Beckett House, spreading festive cheer and sharing the true spirit of Christmas.



## Our Christmas decoration is here!

This year we are selling a beautifully engraved festive decoration featuring Ride High pony Mulberry.

All profits from the sale of our Christmas decorations will go towards supporting Ride High's charitable work.

A big thank you to SIS for sponsoring our Christmas tree decoration project.

We also have a limited number of Ride High Christmas cards available to purchase at £5 for a pack of 10.



£5 each

Both our cards and tree decoration are available to purchase from reception.

SIS

## Aim High: A new Alternative Education Provision launches

A new Alternative Education Provision (AEP) has launched at Ride High Equestrian Centre, offering young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) a unique opportunity to learn and grow through the therapeutic power of horses.

Aim High UK\* provides an inclusive and supportive environment for learners aged 14–25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and may struggle in traditional education settings due to SEND, social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs, or other challenges. Aim High combines practical equine-based learning with academic development, helping students build confidence, resilience and employable skills.

Developed in collaboration with Haddon Training, a leading provider of equine and animal care education, the programme enables students to work towards Level 1 and 2 Work-Based Horse Care qualifications, alongside Functional Skills in Maths and English for those who require additional academic support. For more information visit: [www.aimhighuk.co.uk](http://www.aimhighuk.co.uk).



\*Aim High UK is a trading name for Pegasus for Ride High Ltd.



## A brilliant trip to Blenheim

We would like to thank British Equestrian for kindly donating tickets for our members to attend Blenheim Horse Trials. Experiences such as these would not be possible without the generosity of local organisations. Our members had a fabulous day out, reunited with friends they made while on the programme and watching the professional riders compete.



## We're 'sew' grateful...

... to the Tove Quilters and Stitchers Group who have chosen Ride High as their charity this year, with their wonderful annual Christmas Fayre helping to raise vital funds for our work with vulnerable children.



## Our members get creative

We've been holding workshops for our members where they can put to use creative skills learnt in the clubroom. They've made some beautiful pebble art, mosaic coasters and keyrings. We will be selling some of these to raise funds to help more children like them on our programme.

If you would like a unique piece created by our members please get in contact: [admin@ridehigh.org](mailto:admin@ridehigh.org).



## Feeling Festive?



Join the Giocosso Concert Band at Sir Thomas Fremantle School, Winslow, on 5<sup>th</sup> December for an evening of festive music to kick off the party season.

Both Hannah and Mark, from our Children's team, will be performing! So if you would like to enjoy some festive cheer while also supporting Ride High you can secure your tickets by scanning the QR code.

All profits from the evening will go towards Ride High.



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Ride High MK



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## A BIG thank you to all our supporters

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### Private Donors

We would like to thank our private donors- it would be impossible to do as much as we do without you.





# UPCOMING EVENTS

We have some fantastic fundraising events planned! All our events also have sponsorship opportunities available to publicise your business whilst supporting our cause. All funds raised will help transform the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged children in Milton Keynes and surrounding areas.

If you cannot attend please consider donating a raffle or auction prize for an event.



## Las Vegas Charity Ball

31st January 2026 | Leonardo Hotel, MK9 2HP

Step into the sparkle of the strip and join us for a night of Vegas-style glamour. Includes drinks reception, three-course meal with wine, live entertainment including the amazing XO Party Band, plus live and silent auctions with exclusive items and experiences up for grabs!

## Cheltenham Preview Night

6th March 2026 | Horwood House, MK17 0PH

Join us for an evening of racing insight, fine dining, and great company at the elegant Horwood House 4\* Hotel– as we look ahead with excitement to the jump racing event of the year. Our expert panel will share their tips, predictions, and insider knowledge as they analyse the runners and riders. Includes drinks reception, three course meal and live auction.



**CHEL TENHAM  
PREVIEW NIGHT**



## MK Marathon Weekend

5th May 2026 | Stadium MK, MK1 1ST

Are you looking to challenge yourself in 2026? Grab your running trainers and run for Ride High. We have a limited number of free places available for and the full-, half-marathons routes. We will support you throughout your training and be there on the day to cheer you on!

## Charity Football Tournament

13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 | Sport Central, MK9 1EN

Gather your colleagues, lace up your boots and enter a team into our 7-a-side charity football tournament. Finish the day with a delicious BBQ, licensed bar, prize giving, and goody bags. This event is for all abilities and is the perfect opportunity to have fun and bond as a team.



## Ride MK Cycling Festival

14th June | Ride High, MK5 8EJ

Returning for its second year, Ride MK is back – recharged with new routes! This fundraising event invites riders of all ages and abilities to get involved and make a difference. Whether you're a seasoned cyclist or just starting out, there's a route for everyone. Choose from 100km or 50Km road routes, 25km Redway route, or 1.6km Ready Set Go route (under 8's). Enter as an individual, team or join a guided group. On finishing, all participants will receive a medal, a free beer or ice cream and enjoy a festival celebration.

**RIDE HIGH**

Registered charity No.: 1138260

# Have your donation doubled this Christmas

**We're taking part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge - the UK's biggest online match-funding campaign.**

That means every pound you donate will be doubled, thanks to the amazing support of Spillers, HG Recruitment and our Big Give Champion. Together, we're aiming to raise £12,000 in just one week to give 40 children like Lenny the chance to start 2026 with new confidence, friendship and hope through our 12-week riding programme.

**This Christmas, your kindness can go twice as far to change young lives.**

Nine-year-old Lenny is one of many children waiting for a place at Ride High. Lenny has been struggling with his confidence and mental health for several months, and often talks about wanting to harm himself. Following a family bereavement last year, he struggles to be away from home and worries about his family.

A place at Ride High would give Lenny a safe place to just be a child again- to laugh, to learn, and to heal through the power of horses.

## How to give

**Donate online:** [www.ridehigh.org/christmaschallenge](http://www.ridehigh.org/christmaschallenge)

**When:** Midday Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December - Midday Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

**Every donation will be matched - doubling your impact!**

Your £10 becomes £20

Your £25 becomes £50

Your generosity will last long after Christmas. With your help, children will discover confidence, joy and belonging - and carry those gifts for life.

[www.ridehigh.org/christmaschallenge](http://www.ridehigh.org/christmaschallenge)



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