RDA It's what you can do that counts

President: HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL KG KT GCVO QSO

4th August 2016

Lee Pearson CBE
Springs Cottage Farm
Thorney Edge Road
Bagnall
Stoke on Trent
ST9 9LE

Dear Lee

Further to various conversations I am writing to give very strong support for your plans for an equestrian centre, on behalf of Riding for the Disabled Association.

As an organisation with over 500 centres across the UK we know that there is a critical lack of facilities for disabled people to ride; research that we have undertaken this year shows that 75% of our centres are not able to meet the level of demand that they experience – with many centres having waiting lists that are several years long. In addition to this we know that there are talented (and potentially talented) riders who are not getting the opportunity to develop their skills and attain higher competition level. These two issues are closely linked as the ability to move people through a pathway is key to freeing up more space "at the bottom of the ladder" for new riders. We are clear that your centre would help us give opportunities to those talented riders and help them move on to higher levels.

These riders are missing out because we do not have the facilities, horses or coaches to give them the higher level of support that they need. The success of the British Para-Equestrian team (of which you are a key part!) for many years has been underpinned by a depth of talent which ensures that GB stays on top. This has been made possible by the foresight of people who created and developed a system of training and support for the riders within the system. It is vital that we continue to develop such a system and we are clear that a core part of that plan must be the provision of more support to riders coming into the higher levels of competitive riding. By doing this the riders can be given access to better facilities and coaching, which will enable them to develop further and take their riding to a much higher level. As a broad based charity, with a number of objectives (and supporting 28,000 disabled riders), RDA does not have the capacity to do set up specific centre such as this; however, it is clear to us that your plan would enable this and are therefore passionate supporters.

It is also worth making absolutely clear that we do not see this as an issue which is specifically related to the immediate vicinity of your centre. Although we have many centres and riders in Staffordshire, we see

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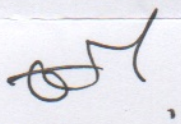
this plan as one which will benefit people from across the UK. These are disabled people who want to progress and we want to see centre such as this enable them to do so by offering the support and input they need.

In short we very strongly support this plan. It will enable more people to experience the benefit of riding and, importantly, it will enable more riders to achieve more and reach higher levels.

I therefore very much hope you get the support you need and good luck in Rio!

With best wishes



Ed Bracher
Chief Executive