



Patron: Andrew Hoy

PRESS RELEASE

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THE WOBBLEBERRY CHALLENGE IS EXTENDED TO 2018 AND CONFIRMED AS AN ANNUAL EVENT

As the eventing season draws to a close, The Wobbleberry Challenge, set up in August 2016 by Sally Barr and three other willing volunteers, has exceeded all expectations, with funds raised approaching £250,000 and more than 1,200 people signing up to take part.

The Challenge, set up exclusively to raise money for Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity, has captured the imagination of the equestrian world. The charity was established in 2016 by Hannah Francis, a young event rider, who lost her battle to osteosarcoma in August of that year at the age of just 18 years old. The Wobbleberry Challenge is a key fundraiser for the charity and encourages non-eventers to challenge themselves to compete in a British Eventing BE80(T) competition, whilst raising funds for the charity.

With so many people wanting to sign up for 2017/18 and some wanting to defer their Challenge, it has been necessary to consider the future of the Challenge going forwards. Following discussions with the Trustees of Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity, the Wobbleberry Challenge will continue to be a fundamental part of the Charity's fundraising activities and has now been established as an annual programme.

Sally explains, *"The Wobbleberry Challenge was set up because we were so inspired by Hannah's determination and we wanted to raise money for a fantastic charity. People who take part in this personal challenge aim to complete a BE80(T) event, having never completed one previously with their equine partner. Typically, people who participated in 2017 had never considered attempting a BE, but were inspired by Hannah to push themselves. This is such a fundamental part of the Wobbleberry Challenge, because Hannah herself was so inspired by her riding. How*

fitting indeed that her legacy continues in so many ways, not least in encouraging people into the saddle and proving to themselves that they can achieve something not previously thought possible.”

To sign up for the 2017/18 Wobbleberry Challenge, please log onto the Hannah’s Willberry Wonder Pony Charity’s website at www.willberrywonderpony.org and purchase a starter pack for £20 plus VAT, the funds for which go directly to the charity. The sign-up process is explained in the starter pack, but more information can be found on the website and at www.wobbleberries.com. If individuals wish to be more involved, they can also apply to be a representative within their area.

Ends.

Notes to Editors

About Hannah’s Willberry Wonder Pony Charity

Hannah’s Willberry Wonder Pony Charity was founded by Hannah Francis in March 2016. Hannah, a hugely talented young event rider, was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, in May 2015 at the age of just 17 years old. The prognosis was very poor indeed and Hannah subsequently endured many months of painful and debilitating treatment, fighting the disease with extraordinary courage and dignity. Hannah’s sheer determination was plain to see and she defied all medical opinion, continuing to ride right up until her tragically early passing at only 18 years of age on 1st August 2016.

Hannah founded her charity, Hannah’s Willberry Wonder Pony, in March 2016 to raise money to fulfil two principal objectives – to fund research into osteosarcoma and to provide equestrian experiences (“Willberry’s Wishes”) to seriously ill people. The charity made strong progress under Hannah’s leadership and has gone from strength to strength since her passing, raising more than £800,000 in its first 18 months. The charity is commencing a significant research programme as Hannah so dearly wished and is granting Willberry’s Wishes to seriously ill people in the hope that these experiences inspire others in the same way as they did Hannah, bringing a little happiness and hope during the darkest of times.

About The Wobbleberry Challenge

The Wobbleberry Challenge is aimed at people over 25 (post Pony Club), who would like to step up to BE and want to be involved supporting the charity. The 2017 Challenge was aimed at middle aged, wimpy riders – and this is still the core group. So far, our oldest Wobbleberry to complete was 76 years young!

There is no need to commit to completing the challenge within 12 months – it should be a sensible journey, incorporating a training programme that takes into consideration an individual’s current level.

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