

NEWSBRIEF

CHRISTMAS 2023



Wolverley & District
Carriage Driving Club

COMMITTEE 2023

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES DECEMBER 2023

Here we are again – hairy ponies, rain, snow, mud and more mud!



Reports coming in tell me that the indoor season has begun and that a number of our members are enjoying the competition. I hope you all qualify and get to go to the Finals.

It was a pity that the Poppy Drive was postponed – but with a poor weather forecast and with only four entries, it was the best decision. Hopefully, the drive can be run in the spring and a donation sent to the

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal then.

The Natter & Noggin evening at The Queen's Head on 13th November was a jovial affair with pub games and good beer. The Jenga tower was demolished eventually by Tony Bache, and there were some keen ladies' domino games! Thanks to all who brought along their games.

Those present thought it was worth repeating.

Looking back on the year, it is good to note that there was more help forthcoming in setting up events. Thank you to all those who helped – we hope that the beginners amongst you learned something.

Your committee has been planning ahead, and as may be seen below, there is something for everyone month by month. The Wyre Forest Walk and the Dinner and Awards night will be social affairs and will require your support to make them viable. **PLEASE ensure you have returned your trophy to Linda!!!**

There will be plenty of training available, both with equines and without. Later, three mini driving trials are being planned with a one day trial at the end of the season. Please give your committee the support they need.

Your committee has been discussing:

- First aid cover
- The Events programme for 2024 – see below
- Training – with ponies, without ponies and for back-steppers
- Possibility of organising monthly fitness drives
- Annual General Meeting
- Venue for Annual Dinner

During my year as chairman I have been attending meetings with British Carriagedriving Affiliated Club representatives by Zoom.

The main topics of discussion have been:

- First Aid cover at events. The Council is reviewing the level of cover required, and at the very least, we will need to keep a register of members holding a current First Aid certificate. **Please pass any relevant details of your qualifications to Linda.**
- Horse welfare (referred to as 'Social Licence'). There has been much discussion, both with BC and all the other equine disciplines regarding warming up before competition. This applies to our particular sport when driving obstacles. Looking forward to next season, event organisers should be arranging for a drive of approximately 2km before an obstacle is driven.
- There is a major change to the BC Rule Book for 2024. It is much more user friendly at only 26 pages for competitors, but remains a larger tome for TDs, Course Builders, Officials, etc. Embodied in the new Rule Book are the details for organising and participating in the VSE competition. Recommended distance & speeds are quoted. The Rule Book is available to download from the BC website or you can purchase a hard copy from the office.
- There is to be a minimum age of 5 years for equines on the marathon or obstacles. 4 year olds may take part in other sections of the competition.
- Spot checks on passports – Your horse's passport should be with you when travelling him/her. It is a legal requirement. Event organisers are advised to make spot checks.

The next meeting of the committee is on Monday 8th January 2024. Please contact Linda or a committee member if you have anything to contribute to the better running of the Club.

This will be the last time I write as Chairman, and I send Season's Greetings to all members, and hope that everyone has a safe and enjoyable 2024 Season.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

Saturday 6th January	Wyre Forest Walk & pub lunch 11.00 a.m. See attached schedule.
Friday 26th January	AGM, meal and presentation of awards, Bewdley Pines Golf Club 7.15 for 7.30. See attached details.
Saturday 17th February	Indoor Training Day, Wolverley Church Hall. Schedule to follow.
Saturday 23 rd March.) Saturday 30 th March.)	“Get Fit and Ready to Drive” training at the Cavalier Centre Much Wenlock. TF13 6PE , 9.30am – 12.30pm & 2.00pm – 5.00pm on both days.
April (date tbc)	Skittles at The Squirrel, Alveley.

Details will be posted on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/115478011949590> and on the Club website <https://www.wolverleydriving.co.uk/>

GET FIT AND READY TO DRIVE

FOR THE 2024 SEASON

The WDDC committee is keen to provide members with training. We want you and your horse or pony to progress with your driving. After a long winter, we'll be looking forward to getting fit and ready for events and to avoid any problems on the way, we need to put the work in early. The winter months are a good time to learn the rules of competition and any rule changes for the new season, to learn new dressage tests and generally get confident with everything that is needed. WDDC have planned a programme to help members get ready for the season ahead. It starts with un-mounted stuff so that as soon as the weather turns favourable again, we will all be good to go.

An 'on foot session' will be held in Wolverley Church Hall on 17th February to polish up our knowledge and understanding of all things carriage driving. From harness fitting to carriage balance and from driver equipment to back-stepping, there will be answers to your questions. There will also be some activities to sharpen up your reaction times and help with rein-handling.

Next, to re-introduce the ponies and horses to a work schedule, there will be fittening road drives, and to give a sociable element to the work, there will be tea and cakes at the end. The drives will become gradually more demanding in terms of distance and gradients; it will be progressive so the ponies build up their stamina and endurance.

Alongside the exercise programme there will be training on 23rd and 30th March at The Cavalier Centre, Much Wenlock. This is a magnificent venue for carriage driving with a huge indoor arena, an excellent surface to drive on, and a large car park. Our trainer will be Ann Connolly. Ann has a lifetime's experience of carriage driving and has trained and competed many different horses. Her style is kind, quiet and encouraging and she will match the level of training to the level of expertise of each participant, so everyone progresses at their own pace.

On each training day, the participants will have a morning and afternoon session. Over the two days they will cover these four skills:

- 1) Long reining and lungeing for straightness and suppleness.
- 2) Driving shapes and figures, including a cones course.
- 3) How to assess and walk an obstacle.
- 4) Driving obstacles.

This block of training has been organised as a progressive series and we hope that the same participants will attend both days. The numbers are limited to a maximum of 8 per day so get your entry in as early as possible.

WDDC always welcomes new drivers and back-steppers to the sport and we want 2024 to be a year when we encourage new members to join us. There is an open invitation to anyone interested to join training as spectators. We also intend to arrange An' Introduction to Driving' to offer a taster day for prospective new members. There is the possibility of grant funding from British Carriagedriving to cover the cost of this. Details will follow.

Carolin Gibbs