

East Antrim Branch of THE PONY CLUB



INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

About Pony Club

The Pony Club is an international voluntary youth organisation for young people interested in ponies and riding. Founded in England in 1929, and granted independent charitable status on 1st January 1997, there are around 345 Branches and 600 Centres in the UK alone. The Pony Club has been the starting point for a large majority of equestrian team members and medal winners.

The Pony Club is represented in no less than 27 countries with a worldwide membership exceeding 110,000 making it the largest association of young riders in the world.

Pony Club was established for ordinary kids with ordinary ponies.

Objectives

The objectives of The Pony Club are:

- to encourage young people to ride and to learn to enjoy all kinds of sport connected with horses and riding
- to give instruction in riding and horsemastership and to educate Members to look after and to take proper care of their animal
- to promote the highest ideals of sportsmanship, citizenship and loyalty to create strength of character and self-discipline

Where does East Antrim fit in?

Each geographical region within the UK has been given an **Area Number** within the structure of the Pony Club. There are 19 Areas within the UK.

Northern Ireland is Area 17 and within Area 17 there are **11 Branches**. These are Mid Antrim, North Down, East Down, Seskinore, Route Hunt, Iveagh, Tullylagan, North Derry, Killultagh, Fermanagh Harriers and ourselves at East Antrim Branch.

Each **Branch** has its own Committee headed up by the District Commissioner. Our District Commissioner is Hayley. Each committee makes the decisions for their own **Branch** only. Mrs Liz Lowry is the Pony Club Representative for **Area 17** as a whole (i.e. N.I.). Our branch has on average between 60-80 members aged from 4 years up to 25yrs! We run a full and varied programme throughout the year based around the working rally, which is the backbone of any branch.

Covid-19 General Principles

- 1 The health and safety of Pony Club Members, families and volunteers is the overriding priority for everyone to consider. (Pony Club Rule 1.11, 1.12)
- 2 Anyone attending a Pony Club activity must comply with Government guidelines, including local variations where applicable. (Pony Club Rule 1.8)
- 3 All training and competition organisers must complete a COVID-19 Risk Assessment in advance to manage risks and provide a safe, controlled and regulated environment for all involved. In addition, the usual event-specific risk assessments must also be completed.
- 4 Regular handwashing, cleaning and hygiene procedures are essential for all activities.
- 5 Social distancing of two metres should be maintained where possible; if this is not possible, individuals are advised to remain at least one metre apart, plus other mitigating measures, for example wearing facemasks for Showjumping course walks where you may pass other people closer than 2m. Cars/lorries to be parked 5-10 metres apart.
- 6 For activity to successfully resume, these principles must be complied with, in a spirit of understanding and support for the organisers and everyone involved.

Where applicable, competitions should be run according to the National Governing Body organiser guidance, for example that used by British Dressage, British Eventing or British Showjumping.



Pony Club Rallies

Rallies are open to members only.

Rallies provide a continuous means of instruction. These are held at various venues across the Branch Area.

The price is subsidised by the Club and is extremely good value.

The focus will always be on safety of the rider, safety of the pony, safety of others, riding skills and control, stable management and of course the social aspect of being a member of our Club. Lessons will include a variety of disciplines throughout the year, such as Show Jumping, Dressage, Cross Country, flat work and control.

At various times throughout the year we will offer more specialized instruction in Dressage, Show jumping, Cross Country, Games and Tetrathlon, which will help all members, advance their knowledge in these disciplines and prepare them for area competitions if they are selected.

Rallies: Code of Conduct

RIDERS

1. Girls must tie their hair back and wear a hair net. Boys also if hair is long.
2. Light coloured jodhpurs/dark coloured jodhpurs preferably NO multi coloured or bright.
3. Pony Club poloshirt with sweatshirts and or Pony Club jackets only. If you need to purchase poloshirt, sweatshirt or coat please contact Lavinia Ewing. Suitable riding boots, no muckers.
4. NO HOODIES at any Pony Club activities when mounted on a pony/horse. If coats have a hood it must be safely tucked into the collar. If the coat hood cannot be tucked in, it is not permissible. Jodhpurs are to be worn whilst taking part in ridden activities. Sweat pants, jogging trousers, jeans etc. are not be permitted.
5. Keep all areas tidy and remove all litter.
6. Riding hats must be tagged - Ask a committee member
7. Hat covers must be black or Navy. Coloured hat covers must only be used for Cross Country riding.
8. When waiting for an instructor ponies must be ridden in walk and only enter an arena once, you have been instructed to do so.
9. Please remember to say thank you to your instructors at the end of a rally and to anyone holding the gate open for you.

PARENTS

1. When arriving, please park as far forward in the car park and as close together as possible to leave room for more vehicles arriving.
2. Please remember to take all your belongings, including litter, away at the end of the day.
3. Remember to check your child's riding hat for wear and tear, it is your responsibility that the hat is a correct fit and is in good condition.
4. Also check that your child's stirrup irons are the correct size, a general guide is that you should be able to fit a finger width between the boot and the stirrup iron, if you are unsure please ask the instructor for guidance.
5. Other children / parents / visitors - have consideration for those in the ride and keep noise to a minimum.

6. **Additional COVID-19 regulations** to be adhered to at this time - note 2 metre rule for everyone where possible, parents stay in car where can and park 5-10 metres apart.

Pony Club Disciplines: Explained

Showjumping: takes place both indoors and outdoors and can be enjoyed all year round.

The courses are made up of coloured fences, which can be easily knocked down if they are hit. Competitors will get faults if they knock a fence down, stop at a fence (refuse) or run around a fence (run out). If you manage to jump a clear round, you will go through to the jump-off. This is a shortened course, which you have to jump as fast as you can as it is timed. The winner of a course is the horse and rider with the least faults and the fastest time in the jump-off.

Dressage: is about showing the judge that you can instruct your pony to do what you want him to do, when you want him to do it.

You and your pony have to follow a set of instructions laid out in the dressage test. A judge marks the test. They give you a mark out of ten for how well you carry out each instruction, as well as marks for your pony's paces, impulsion and submission, and the effectiveness of your own riding. At the end of the test, the marks are added up and the winner is the horse and rider with the highest score.

Mounted Games:

- Fun
- Fast
- Fantastic

If you like Gymkhana Games and want to have lots of fun then you and your pony will love The Pony Club Mounted Games where you and your team will get to play lots of fun and imaginative games on pony back.

Anyone who is under the age of 15 and likes to ride can join in the fun on any pony. Mounted Games are organised into two sections:

Junior Team: 11 years old or under on 1st January

Senior Team: 15 years old or under on 1st January

Assisted: Some assistance needed by Parent or Trainer

Lead Rein: Parent or Trainer keeps hold of the lead rope at the side of the pony at all times

Tetrathlon: provides Members with a challenging competition requiring sound practical horsemanship and general athletic ability. It comprises four elements:

- **Running:** Runners go off in small groups over a carefully measured course and each competitor's time is measured. The length of the run varies depending on the age group from 500m up to 3,000m.
- **Shooting:** This phase uses any make of single shot 4.5mm calibre air pistol and Pony Club Targets. Tadpole, Minimis and juniors shoot at a distance of 7 meters from the Target, Intermediate and Open at 10 meters.
- **Swimming:** Competitors will score points according to how far they can swim in a certain time:
 - Open Boys- 4 minutes
 - Open Girls- 3 minutes
 - All Intermediate and Junior Competitors- 3 minutes
 - Minimus- 2 minutes
 - Tadpole - 2 minutes
 - Beanie - 2 minutes (can be lengths or breaths)
 - Competitors should swim in heats, the number in each heat depending on the width of the pool.
- **Cross Country Riding:** The riding phase usually takes place over fixed cross-country fences however; Arena jumping can be used as a substitute. Where possible Tetrathlon Courses always include a gate to open and close while mounted, and a slip rail at which the competitor dismounts, takes down the rail, leads his pony or horse through, replaces the rail and remounts. Tetrathlon courses should test the ability of the rider rather than that of the pony.

Eventing: gives Pony Club Members a competition which needs courage, determination and all-round riding ability combined with careful and systematic training of the horse. Its aim is to encourage a higher standard of riding throughout the Pony Club and to give the young a greater interest in riding as both a sport and as a recreational activity.

Eventing could be termed an "equestrian triathlon". It is split into three phases - Dressage, Showjumping and Cross Country and involves working with your pony/horse both on the flat and over jumps. Today, the sport is most known for its cross-country phase where horse and rider gallop over an outside course of solid obstacles, which the horse has never seen before.

Pony Club Competitions

During the summer months there are various competitions which our Members can compete in:

AREA COMPETITIONS: Area Competitions take place across all Disciplines - Area Games, Area Showjumping, Area Dressage, Area Tetrathlon and Area Eventing. Each Branch selects teams to compete against all other Branches within Area 17 (N.I.). Members who are not selected for the team or who do not wish to be on a team can also compete as individuals. The winning teams/individuals from each discipline then

travel to the Finals (in UK Mainland or Republic of Ireland) to compete against all the other winning teams from each Area.

HOME CHAMPIONSHIPS: The Home Championships are open to members who do not compete at Area Trials. Again teams are selected on a specified night by an independent team selector who will have worked with the Members at Rallies throughout the year. The competition is held in one day and consists of three elements - Dressage, Showjumping and Cross Country. However, they are only held at local level (Area 17 only) and no winners travel on to the Mainland.

Spring Festival Competitions

The **Spring Festival Competition** is held across all Areas (we are Area 17). Qualifying rounds are held in various venues from July until February with the final of each Area being held shortly after that. Winners from this Area Final then travel to Scotland around April to compete against other Area winners in Area 1, 19 and 17. Each Branch determines when and where they will host their qualifiers and these will be advertised on Branch Newsletters and/or Branch websites and on the main PCUK website. Any member can compete at any qualifier - not only those arranged by their own club. However, each rider must compete at his or her own Area Final, for us this is the Area 17 final. To qualify, you must be placed in the top four clear round riders of that qualifying session. If a rider who has previously qualified should qualify a second time then their placing will be passed down to the next clear showjumping competitor.

In Northern Ireland (Area 17), we also host a junior '**12 and under 'Spring Festival Competition**. The same rules apply with only the first four clear round showjumpers qualifying at any competition. This competition is concluded at the Area 17 Final.

There is also a **Spring Festival Dressage Competition**, which follows the same guidelines as above with the top four highest scored rider pony combinations going forward to the Area 17 Final. The winners of this competition travel onto Scotland to compete against other Area Winners.

Our Show Jumping and Dressage coordinators will be able to give you a full explanation of the rules for these competitions. Rules and more information can also be found on our website.

Jumps Ahead

This is another competition where riders may qualify at participating competitions for the final. Fences will be approx. 90cm in the qualifying rounds, going up to 1-metre max. at the Final.

Riders must be 11 - 16 years old as at 1st January, must currently be a member of Pony Club and must have attended at least 3 Rallies. Ponies must be up to 148cm max and can be registered or unregistered.

There are six qualifying events with the top six riders on each day going through to the Final. A rider must have eight faults or less to qualify for the final. The final is usually held at National Balmoral Championship Show. Full details are available on our website.

Pony Club Camp

Pony Club Camp takes place once every year. Camp usually takes place over 4 days

Senior Camp (Leaving P7 and over depending on numbers and abilities) Involves Sleeping over at the venue and taking care of you own Horse / Pony Camp usually starts on the first Friday night after the School Summer Holidays.

Camp consists of Stable Management, lots of riding and pony care. It also incorporates a bit of yard management and a lot of socialising with a family BBQ (weather dependent) and prize giving on the last night of Camp. Instruction is provided every morning and afternoon and there is always plenty of parental supervision to cover mealtimes and to stay over with the children.

Junior Camp whilst also teaching the same basics as senior camp has more emphasis on FUN for the younger members. This is NON-residential with both children and ponies travelling in each morning.

Parents attend to be of assistance to their children and have time to meet others.

Badges and Achievements

Efficiency Tests: The Pony Club Training structure encourages Members to take tests which enable them to learn progressively about horse and pony care and riding. The tests are taken at recommended ages and are designed with certain objectives in mind. The scale is E through to A.

Achievement Badges: The Pony Club offers Mini Achievement Badges for younger Members' as well as both equine and non-equine Achievement Badges. Both types of achievement badge will help Members to learn a wide range of skills like first-aid, farming, map reading, saddlery, road safety and grooming.

For more information contact one of our PC badge/test coordinators or visit the official Pony Club Website: www.pcuk.org

Further Information

Facebook: Our Facebook page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/East-Antrim-Branch-of-the-Pony-Club-1702359966664782/>

On joining East Antrim you can join our “members only group”
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1758473634382906/>

Website: East Antrim has its own website: <http://branches.pcuk.org/eastantrim/> which contains lots of information on our own events, Members Achievements, upcoming events, photographs and contact details for event organisers. Please send all submissions to alanmckillen@btinternet.com

Pony Club Main Website: This really is loaded with a wealth of information. Go to www.pcuk.org

Anyone with any queries at all should feel free to speak to any Committee Member about any matter that they need clarity on or even just for more information.

This document is merely an overview of the activities of East Antrim Branch of the Pony Club and the various Disciplines, Achievements and Competitions open to our Members.

For full and further details, please go to www.pcuk.org