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*Storm Arwen wrought havoc on the Scottish riding therapy centre, and they're still in desperate need of help*

At the end of November 2021, riding charity HorseBack UK was hit hard by Storm Arwen. The high winds caused dozens of trees to fall all around the county of Aberdeenshire, pulling powerlines with them. This left the charity without power, light, heat, hot water, or internet connection for six days. Founders Emma and Jock Hutchison were cast back into the dark ages, in a freezing house, with a herd of thirty-three horses to look after.

After 18 months of the pandemic preventing them from being able to deliver the work the charity is known for – providing therapy through horses – it was just starting to get back on its feet until the storm hit. Emma, Jock and the rest of their team had re-started delivering their life changing courses to veterans and vulnerable young people, especially those suffering with mental health challenges – many of whom had had a particularly tough lockdown. A huge amount of work had been done on logistics and installing strict safety protocols and course sizes had been reduced, limiting the number of people the team could work with and help.

However, there was light at the end of the tunnel because the entire team, including

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“After a tough 18 months, we were thoroughly enjoying getting back to work, so to be thwarted again really tested our resilience,” said co-founder Emma Hutchinson. “The storm’s done a lot of damage and we desperately need to repair or replace the field shelters for the horses. The herd’s pretty tough and can cope with quite a lot, but the relentless rain and wind we get can wear them down and have a negative impact on their health. And when it snows, they really do need a place to shelter. These horses are part of our family and we’re pulling out all the stops to get them the shelter they need as fast as possible. We desperately need donations to help pay for the materials to build and repair the shelters.”

The arrival of Arwen has also shown Emma that storms can take many forms, and that contingencies need to be put in place.

“We realised we needed to build a Storm Fund, to keep us going when the unexpected strikes. We get no government or council funding, so are completely reliant on donations. If we could gather a new fund, it would help us to build new field shelters for the horses to protect them against wind and weather and invest in a generator to keep the lights on. But it would also act as a bulwark against unheralded events, like pandemics or shifts in the economy. Whatever the literal or metaphorical weather, we need to be able to go on helping veterans with life-changing injuries, as well as the young people we work with in the local community. We want to ensure that our future is stable, however unstable the external world can sometimes seem. And that is our next, dedicated mission.”

To find out more about Horseback UK and to donate to support their work and the rebuilding of the field shelters

visit: [www.horseback.org.uk](http://www.horseback.org.uk) and <https://www.justgiving.com/horseback>

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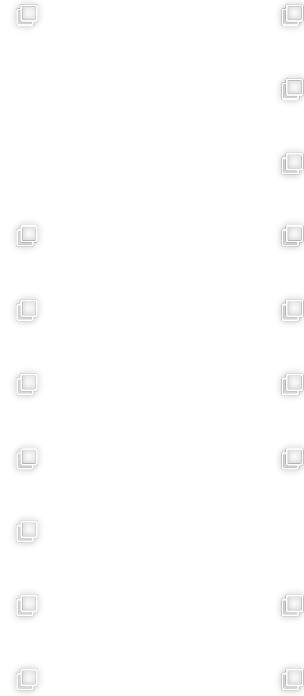
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