

At the end of November, registered charity [HorseBack UK \(https://horseback.org.uk/\)](https://horseback.org.uk/) was hit hard by Storm Arwen. Dozens of trees came down around the county, pulling powerlines with them, leaving the charity without power, light, heat, hot water, or phone connection for six days.

Founders Emma and Jock Hutchison were cast back into the pre-electric age, in a freezing house, with a herd of 33 horses to look after. Fortunately, the Hutchisons are pretty tough. One was a royal marine, and the other served in the police force. They tend not to complain. But even Emma, usually one of the most stoical people you could meet, said that her sense of humour was wearing pretty thin.

Storm Arwen could not have come at a worse time. After 18 months of pandemic and not being able to deliver the work the charity is known for, it was just getting back on its feet. Emma, Jock and the team had re-started delivering their life-changing courses to veterans and vulnerable young people, especially those suffering from mental health challenges

(<https://www.hobbsonlinenews.net/covid-19-mental-health-adolescents/>) – many of whom had had a particularly tough lockdown (<https://www.psychreg.org/lockdown-breakdown/>).

A huge amount of work had been done on logistics and installing strict safety protocols, and, of course, 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, and the entire team, including the 33 horses, were back to doing what they loved.

Until Storm Arwen roared in and stopped the charity in its tracks once again, not only did it pull down power lines, it also damaged buildings and, in particular, field shelters for the horses. The horses

(<https://www.hobbsonlinenews.net/horseman-country-diary/>) must have shelter from northern Scotland's cold, wet winds with winter here.

'After a tough 18 months, we were thoroughly enjoying getting back to work, so to be thwarted again really tested our resilience. The storm has done a lot of damage, and we desperately need to repair or replace the field shelters for the horses. The herd (<https://www.psychreg.org/rediscover-green-man-with-us/>) is 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 do need a place to shelter. These horses are part of our family (<https://www.hobbsonlinenews.net/war-horse-latitude/>), and we are 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.' said co-founder Emma Hutchison.

'The arrival of Arwen has also shown Emma that storms (<https://www.psychreg.org/2020-wellness-trend/>) can take many forms and that contingencies need to be put in place. We realised we need to build a Storm Fund to keep us going when the unexpected strikes. We get no government or council funding, so we are completely reliant on donations. It is the public's generosity that enables us to do our work.'

'If we could gather a new fund, it would help us do additional practical things, like building new field shelters (<https://www.hobbsonlinenews.net/furry-friends-lifesavers/>) for the horses to protect them against wind and weather and investing 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. We want to make sure that Horseback UK can rely on the sturdiest foundations. Whatever the literal or metaphorical weather, we need to be able to go on helping veterans with life-changing injuries (<https://www.hobbsonlinenews.net/families-covid-pandemic/>) and the young people we work with within 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 (<https://horseback.org.uk/>) and donate to support their work and rebuild the field shelters, visit here (<https://www.justgiving.com/horseback>).
