

# Muskerry Pony Club

## Who are we?

We are a voluntary club, operating as a local branch of the Irish Pony Club. We are run by a committee of parents, headed by our D.C. (District Commissioner is the traditional term for the Chairperson of local branches), Linda Daly. The Committee usually meets once a month from September to June. Officers are usually chosen from the committee and serve for three years approx. An AGM is held in November which an adult representing each family is asked to attend. Muskerry Hunt P.C. and eight other County Cork clubs form Area 5 of the Irish Pony Club.

## Where do I get information?

The Muskerry Pony Club website [www.muskerryponyclub.com](http://www.muskerryponyclub.com) will give you lots of background information and keep you up to date with Club activities. We also have very active facebook and Instagram pages. All new members will be added to our Whatsapp group and will receive regular updates about events so please ensure that we have your phone no and email address. The Irish Pony Club website [www.irishponyclub.com](http://www.irishponyclub.com) describes the aims and activities of the Pony Club, and also provides essential information on tests, competitions, safety (e.g. which hat/back protector is allowed etc), tack sheets for all disciplines, codes of conduct for members and parents

Bookings for rallies are processed via our payment portal [www.itsplainsailing.com/org/musk](http://www.itsplainsailing.com/org/musk)

Of course one of the best places to get information is from other members or Committee members, so please just ask

## What is a rally?

Rallies are the heart of the pony club. This is where our members meet and get to know each other. A rally is usually a lesson of one hour's duration held in a member's or instructor's facilities or other equestrian venue. As well as rallies to prepare you for the various tests, we also organise rallies in lots of disciplines from flatwork to cross country to show jumping to pony games. There is a charge for each rally which is paid on the day, usually ranging from €20 - €35, depending on costs. When members kindly offer their facilities we only have to cover the cost of the instructor, but often we have to pay for the venue and for the instructor which increases the cost.

**Members must have attended a minimum of five mounted rallies since the previous Summer Camp to be eligible to attend Summer Camp.** This is not negotiable, as the Committee need to know you and your pony well for safety reasons! Some competitions or other events (e.g. the Christmas party, Jumps Ahead) count as rallies, but tests and competitions run by the I.P.C. or by other branches do not.

Please book in for rallies with the organiser as early as possible, and by Wednesday at the latest for weekend rallies, as organisers have to organise the rides before notifying everyone

of their rally time. If you have booked in but cannot attend, please let the organiser know as soon as possible. **If you cancel within 24 hours of the event, you will still be liable for the rally fee in order to cover costs.**

### **What should I wear?**

When riding you should always wear jodhs, boots or chaps, hat and back protector, (no hoodies for safety reasons), but there is no need to dress formally for rallies. For competitions and tests members usually wear Club uniform which consists of a Muskerry jersey, white jodhs, black and white hat cover (Hat covers are available from Saddles and Styles or O'Briens Saddlery), and Muskerry jersey available from the Committee. For those who prefer formal attire, a Pony Club tie is also available from the Irish Pony Club shop. **For competitions, remember to consult the relevant tack sheet on the I.P.C. website, as there will usually be a tack inspection, and you will not be allowed to compete if you are not in compliance.**

### **Do I have to do tests?**

Tests are not obligatory, but we do encourage all members to do them. You'll learn a lot, but equally importantly, you'll get to know the other members your age and you'll have lots of fun!

### **When can I do tests?**

You have to be considered ready by our D.C.'s in order to take a test. There is also a minimum age for each test. You can take the D test in the calendar year you turn 8, the D+ the year you turn 10, the C test the year you turn 12, then Riding and Road Safety is mandatory before you take C+. You may take the C+ test the year you turn 14, and then the B test the year you turn 16, followed by B+ Test from age 18, which qualifies you to instruct. After that you may consider taking the H and A tests. Please see information sheet on all of the Pony Club Tests available & what they entail.

### **What other events will I be able to participate in?**

You will be able to take part in One Day Event, Hunter Trial, Mounted Games, Minimus and Tetrathlon competitions organised by other local branches and by the I.P.C. Details on I.P.C. website. We run a Jumps Ahead league in October/November and of course the highlight of the year is Summer Camp in July.

### **What is Summer Camp?**

**You must have attended five mounted rallies since last July to be eligible for Summer Camp. This rule is not negotiable!**

To stay at Camp overnight (in a caravan or tent provided by you), you must be over 12. Your pony may stay too, in a field or stable where possible with the other ponies. Recent members and the under 12's attend with their ponies on a daily basis. Camp usually costs €240/280 approx.

There will be a meeting to discuss the organisation of Camp in early June. It is very important that each family who is sending a member to camp attend this meeting. **Every family is expected to help prepare the grounds over a couple of weekends/evenings before Camp. During Camp, the family of each participant is expected to do a couple of supervision duties (which can be overnight, mornings, afternoons or evenings) or to help cook and serve meals etc.** There is no shortage of jobs, and everyone has something to contribute – and parents and members alike usually enjoy themselves hugely.

### **Parental/Family Involvement**

Riding is a risk sport, and a parent/carer/or other designated adult must be present at all rallies and mounted activities in case of any misadventure befalling the rider. If other children (especially very small ones!) are present at rallies, **parents/carers must supervise them at all times, especially when animals are being loaded or unloaded.**

Every family is also expected to steward or fence judge at one other Area 5 event at least during the year. These events cannot take place without lots of volunteers to help them run smoothly and keep our children safe.

### **Important Safety Information**

Safety is our primary concern. **At rallies, please don't mount until asked to do so by your instructor.** Our insurance only covers members, so no other person is allowed to ride at rallies or Pony Club events. Members are asked to lunge ponies at home before attending an event if this is necessary. No lunging is permitted at the rally venue. Your tack and riding gear must conform to Pony Club standards. See I.P.C. website for details, or ask your instructor.

**Should any member or parent have any problem with, or concerns about, any other member/ parent/ instructor/officer etc., they should discuss their concerns with our Children's Officer or our D.C.'s.**

### **Consideration & Courtesy**

Rallies are usually held at venues provided by friends of the Club. Please make sure you respect their property by leaving no litter, disposing of droppings, and being careful not to damage gates or fences, or allow children to climb on bales of fodder etc. Please do not bring dogs to rallies, as they may not always be welcomed by the resident canines. We think we have the best instructors around, and we like them to know how much we appreciate their input, so don't forget to thank them after your rally! Parents are asked not to interfere while rallies are in progress. Our instructors have lots of experience and are well able to handle most situations! **However, if you do have comments please discuss them with the Committee member or rally organiser rather than with the instructor.**

### **Responsibility**

We hope that involvement in Pony Club will teach children to be kind to and to take proper care of their animals. Likewise, we hope they will learn to help and support each other. We encourage the older members to help the younger ones, and to take increasing responsibility for all the workings of the Club as they advance through their teens.

**Finally....**

**The main thing is that it should be FUN! We want you and your pony to make great friends and have a fantastic time as a member of Muskerry Pony Club!**