

# Behind every rescued horse and donkey is someone like you

Do you sponsor a horse or donkey for yourself or a loved one?

If so, thank you! If not, maybe 2021 is the year to show how much you care by sponsoring one of our gorgeous Adoption Stars from just £15 a year.

Gemma Walpole, who has worked at Redwings for over 15 years, tells us why she'll be sponsoring Lily and Gulliver this year.

"My first introduction to Redwings was a gift from a childhood friend on my 6th birthday. I was pony-mad, but my family didn't have the time, knowledge or money for a horse of my own, so when my Redwings Adoption of Pepper (pictured below) arrived



Pepper

in the post, I was over the moon. I stuck his picture on my bedroom wall and took my adoption pack to the school Show & Tell.

"Reading his rescue story made me feel so sad, but also

taught me at a young age that not all animals have a loving home. That gift ignited an even deeper passion for horses, and it was one of the most memorable moments of my life when 16 years later I met Pepper in person.

"I know from experience how special it is to have a horse or donkey sponsored for you as a gift. Indeed, I sponsored Del Boy the donkey for my nan until she passed away in January 2020.



Lily

Despite her never having a real affinity with equines, she loved hearing from her donkey; I expect as much for the way he bonded us together as for his cheeky updates and gorgeous photos. This year I am going to sponsor Lily the pony for my niece who is her namesake and in so doing will keep a family tradition that has spanned over 30 years going for another generation. I'm also going to sponsor a horse for myself,

because in truth, the real gift in a Redwings Adoption is helping to give a safe forever home to your adopted friend. I'm choosing Gulliver because his bay coat reminds me of Pepper. Whatever your reason for adopting, thank you for caring about horses and donkeys as much as we do."

To sponsor a horse or donkey for yourself or a loved one today visit [redwings.org.uk](http://redwings.org.uk) or call **01508 481000**.

Thank you!



Gulliver



SCAN ME

The best way to support your adopted friend is to **spread your sponsorship across the year with a monthly Direct Debit of just £2.**

# Redwings

## Horse Sanctuary



NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2021

### And so it goes on...

Life at the Sanctuary during the Covid-19 pandemic...

### A huge thank you

...and how you are keeping us going!

### PLUS

### Breaking records

Our rescue and rehoming work continues at pace!

### Foaling around

Meet a very special group of youngsters and the dedicated team training them up

And much more inside...

The Charity's purpose is to provide and promote the welfare, care and protection of horses, ponies, donkeys and mules.



# Welcome to your Spring newsletter for 2021

In my 20+ years at Redwings, I have never known a year like 2020. And although of course the Covid-19 pandemic has been the focus, in what was a uniquely challenging year it was the kindness of people and the way our communities pulled together that for me served to produce the really extraordinary story.

Here at Redwings that has been equally true.

I am so proud of the way our staff have pulled together and supported each other in amazing ways throughout the pandemic so far. Despite the restrictions we managed to rescue 180 horses and ponies in need of our help and had a record-breaking year in terms of rehoming. You can meet some of our new arrivals on pages 4 and 5 and read about just one of the residents who found a happy home in 2020 on page 9.

Our teams around the UK cared for over 1,500 horses on a daily basis despite social distancing and many other requirements and changes to their work practices, not to mention the small matter of the flooding just before Christmas! Matilda (see left) is just one example of the impact that care makes on our residents. Our specialist behaviour work has continued apace to keep up with the sheer number of foals that arrived with us as you'll see on page 8 and our education and campaigns work has also had to adapt to new environments and ways of working (see pages 6 and 7).

It has been the staff's hard work of course but you make it possible. The incredible loyalty and kindness of you, our wonderful supporters, also deserves the headlines. You have stayed by our side and have astonished us repeatedly with your well wishes, kind gifts and continued financial support and I just can't thank you enough. Find out more about how you helped us throughout this newsletter – which I'd like to formally dedicate to you all in lieu of being able to thank you in person!

That's not to say it has been easy. We have had the constant challenge of keeping up with the changing restrictions and guidelines not just as a large-scale employer and keeper of horses but also in terms of our visitor centres too, which have opened and closed and reopened and closed on an almost weekly basis at times! Find out more of the news from our centres on pages 14 and 15.

We also have the constant worry of where our income will come from and as a charity entirely reliant on public donations that is a concern that we will be facing for several years to come. However, an overwhelming response to our appeals and even a huge increase in purchases from our online gift shop have helped put our minds at rest a little as we embark on a new year at the Sanctuary. Find out how you can continue to support us in 2021 at the end of this newsletter.

Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for keeping us going and keeping our spirits up – and here's to a hope-filled 2021!

Very best wishes,



Lynn Cutress  
Chief Executive and Secretary

Lynn pictured with Monica, before laying a wreath in our Hapton memorial garden for Remembrance Day.



In spring 2020, while the global coronavirus pandemic dominated news headlines, young pony Matilda was facing her own desperate struggle.

In the weeks and months after her rescue, our staff worked tirelessly to bring Matilda back from the neglect she suffered. And one year on, her life has been transformed.

Please support us today to help more ponies like Matilda in their time of need.

Turn to pages 18 and 19 to read Matilda's story.

Please donate today:

- 01508 481000
- [www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)
- Text MATILDA 20 to 70085 to donate £20

(You can also opt to give any amount – whole £s only – up to £20. All texts cost the donation amount plus a standard rate message.)



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Charity's purpose is to provide and promote the welfare, care and protection of horses, ponies, donkeys and mules.

## Key Contact Numbers

General Enquiries  
01508 481000 [info@redwings.co.uk](mailto:info@redwings.co.uk)

## News update...

### One amazing resident becomes a sensation...



With the nation in turmoil and none of our usual community events able to go ahead we wanted to find an innovative way to reach our supporters and new audiences too. Last autumn we worked with an agency based in Norwich called Immersive Studios to produce an animation that tells the incredible true story of our Redwings resident Boo, who was cruelly blinded but thanks to our intervention – and a happy twist of fate – now lives peacefully here at the Sanctuary. The film was kindly narrated by the incredible Stephen Fry who said he was 'delighted' to help us with this project. We released Boo's story just before Christmas and at the time of writing it had already been seen an incredible 150,000 times across all our social media platforms. Watch it on our YouTube channel or Facebook page or just go to [redwings.org.uk](http://redwings.org.uk) where you'll find it on the home page. Thank you for making Boo's rescue possible and for helping to fund his care!

### Another causes a stir!

It's not every day that a rare breed donkey arrives at one of the world's most renowned equestrian veterinary surgeries.

Adel, one of our rare-breed Poitou-cross donkeys who lives at Redwings Oxhill, was recently admitted to Rosssdales Equine Hospital near Newmarket for further investigation and treatment of a fractured cheek tooth after it proved rather a challenging case for our vets! She, of course, took along her best friend Leah for support!

Adel was sedated and Rosssdales partner and dental expert Mark Grant performed an oroscopy whereby a small rigid camera was used to examine her fractured tooth before successfully extracting it. She was discharged back into our care shortly after her dental procedure, returning home with a short course of anti-inflammatory painkillers. Thanks so much to Rosssdales for looking after our special girl so well!!



### And a third gets top marks!

Redwings Oxhill Rehoming team member Jade has been working hard training beautiful cob Estelle in the hope of finding her a new home as a ridden pony through our Rehoming Scheme.

So when Jade discovered an online dressage class back in November, she set her sights even higher for the lovely Estelle and entered her into the beginner's class.



## Contents

- 2-3 Welcome and News Update
- 4-5 Recent Rescues
- 6-7 Campaigns and Education
- 8 Foaling around - meet some stars from our Behaviour Centre
- 9 Rehoming Round Up
- 10-13 Special Feature – Coping in a crisis (continued)
- 14-15 'Your Redwings' – all the news from your local centre
- 16-17 Some important thank yous
- 18-19 Saving Matilda: One year on
- 20 Supporting Redwings - A very special way to help us

Our cover star is two-year-old Nickel, a member of our 'money group' rescued from an area near the M25 in 2019. The group also includes Dollar, Bob, Halfpenny and Florin! Read more about them on page 8.

The pair put plenty of hours of practice in, working hard on their walk and trot, to make sure they were ready for the big day.

Entries were submitted via video, and judged shortly after.

We're delighted to say that Jade and Estelle topped their class with an overall score of 69.54%! (That's really very good indeed in dressage terms!)

Estelle was part of a large group of cobs who were rescued from appalling conditions at a site in Wales. They had been found stranded deep in mud without enough food, and many were suffering from malnutrition, worms and had the infectious disease strangles.

Despite her sad start to life, Estelle is such a friendly girl, making her the perfect candidate for rehoming. We can't wait to see what Jade and Estelle do next, but we'll be there cheering them on!



# Redwings to the rescue!

News of our frontline work from around the UK



## Say hello to Howell and Huw!

You may remember in the last edition we told you about Heidi and Harvey, two ponies who were rescued from Gelligaer Common in South Wales last February.

Our Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Nic de Brauwere, made two further trips to the area last year and, as a result, we offered a safe new home to two more semi-feral ponies.

Howell, who was known locally as Picasso, was brought to our attention by local community group Hungry Herds who help



Howell

to provide extra food for the ponies, especially during the harsh conditions of winter. Howell had been discovered with an incredibly painful, untreated hoof abscess and was taken immediately into our care in August, in a joint operation between Redwings, the RSPCA, the British Horse Society and Caerphilly

Council. He was later found to have a deformed hoof which will require long-term care.

Later, in November, a struggling orphaned foal - now named Huw - was removed

from the common in another joint rescue operation. Very sadly, a grey stallion with a very serious eye condition was put to sleep on welfare grounds during this operation after a careful veterinary assessment.

Both Howell, 13, and Huw, now about nine months old, responded well to treatment and have settled into their new surroundings here at the Sanctuary.



Huw

## Justice for Summer and Elsa

In February 2020, we welcomed two Trakehner horses named Summer and Elsa who had been rescued by the RSPCA in an emaciated state.

Just before Christmas, their former owner was convicted of their neglect and banned from keeping horses for five years. They were also ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work and pay £1,000 costs.



Elsa

The horses were found to be living without adequate food and water after concerns were raised by members of the public.

At the Sanctuary, we helped Summer, 23, and Elsa, 21, slowly regain weight and manage stiffness in their legs. Both mares were pregnant when they arrived and Elsa gave birth to foal Bruni in March. Sadly, the following month Summer gave birth to a stillborn foal.

Thanks to the love of our vets and carers, and the companionship of Elsa, Summer overcame her loss and the group of three enjoyed the summer out in a field together.

Very sadly Summer was put to sleep in December after she came down with a severe infection in the pedal bone in her foot on top of her existing arthritis. We were so sad to lose her but look forward to giving Bruni and Elsa a lovely future in our care.



Bruni and Elsa during their recovery



Summer when she arrived

## Bright futures for once fearful horses

From being terrified of human touch to potentials for future rehoming, over 30 unhandled rescued horses have had their lives turned around thanks to the painstaking efforts of our behaviour specialists.

We've offered a home to 32 horses from a group of more than 130, who were removed in a multi-agency operation over several weeks from a site near the M25.

The group's owners were no longer able to cope with their care and signed over the horses into the ownership of a number of welfare charities.

Many were underweight and required veterinary help for worms and lameness. However, the biggest challenge was their behaviour - many had seemingly never been handled by humans before.

Through the use of positive

reinforcement such as clicker training, and a lot of patience, many are now happy to be approached in their fields, wear headcollars, be led and have their legs handled.

And the story doesn't end there! Over the course of last summer, seven foals were born to the group by mares who were pregnant when they came to the Sanctuary. The foals have also been undertaking some behaviour training and you can read all about their progress on [page 8](#).



Wonga!

## Supporting other sanctuaries

Last year we did our best to support fellow charities who were also feeling the effects of the coronavirus lockdowns.

In November, we offered a new home to 12 ponies from PACT animal sanctuary in Norfolk who decided to downsize their equine operations and requested help with their resident herd. Having spent some time at our specialist quarantine centre, the group - an adorable collection of predominantly Welsh ponies - will be integrated into our Sanctuary herds this spring.

One pony named Midget has already won the hearts of her new carers due to her extraordinarily long mane that almost sweeps the ground!



Midget

## Working together to help horses in need

In September and October last year, we were asked to assist two other charities during an operation to round-up and castrate 150 unhandled horses at a farm in Cambridgeshire. Breeding amongst the horses had grown out of control and the owner had asked for help.

Due to our extensive knowledge of working with feral horses, a team of Redwings staff travelled to the site seven times with our horse trailers and pen sections to round-up and handle 75 stallions who were then castrated by students from the Royal

Veterinary College. Our welfare vets were also on hand to offer assistance.

During the challenging operation, three horses were identified as needing extra veterinary attention and they were signed over into our care by the owner. Golden Girl, Houdini and Sassy have all settled well here at Redwings.





# Britain's Horse Problem

Redwings is one of seven charities behind a new report looking at long-standing issues affecting the wellbeing of thousands of horses across the UK. Published in December, Britain's Horse Problem reveals that many of the challenges which led to a 'horse crisis' being identified in 2012, are sadly still very much with us.

Overbreeding, lack of owner accountability and poor enforcement of welfare legislation are some of the main factors that mean charities like Redwings are constantly stretched to the limit of their capacity and resources. While we work hard to continue rescuing those most in need, and bringing about important changes, such as seeing the introduction of the Control of Horses Acts in 2014 and 2015, there are still more than 7,000 horses known to be close to the point of needing help around the country.

The Covid-19 pandemic has added huge financial pressure to charities, and puts even more horses at risk as we go into 2021. To help us reduce the continuous need for rescue by addressing more of the underlying problems which cause horses to be neglected or abused, we are asking as many people as possible to share the report with their MP and ask them to support its recommendations.

Go to [redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/britains-horse-problem](https://redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/britains-horse-problem) to read and share the report.



*Britain's Horse Problem outlines some of the underlying issues which contribute to the poor welfare experienced by thousands of horses in the UK*

# Five steps to better biosecurity

Did you know that many of the everyday behaviours we are using to reduce the spread of Covid-19 between humans can also be applied to protect horses from infectious diseases like strangles?



The Redwings Stamp Out Strangles campaign shares five top tips for horse health in 2021:

- Wash hands regularly
- Take horses' temperatures to check for fever
- Avoid horses sharing living areas and equipment
- Avoid direct contact between horses who don't live together
- Isolate as a precaution if a horse may have been exposed to disease

The good news is that strangles is caused by bacteria, not a virus, and it is not airborne. This makes it much easier to

stop strangles from spreading, if we use good biosecurity habits.

More than 1,500 horse owners, yard managers and equestrian professionals have already taken the pledge to Stamp Out Strangles and we look forward to welcoming even more pledgers this year.

Taking or sharing the pledge is easy and free at [redwings.org.uk/strangles/make-a-pledge](https://redwings.org.uk/strangles/make-a-pledge)

Alongside the vital Covid-19 vaccinations that are being given to protect people from infection, a new strangles vaccination for horses is also due to become available in Britain in 2021. We look forward to bringing you more details in our Autumn newsletter.

And after the success of last year's event, look out for Strangles Awareness Week 2021 coming up in May!



Participating in our campaigning work by taking the pledge to Stamp Out Strangles or engaging with our social media content all helps improve horse welfare by educating yourself and others. If you were one of over 8,000 people who liked or shared a post or tweet in 2020, thank you!



*Regularly washing or disinfecting our hands is a simple but effective way to help stop the spread of infectious disease*

# Working with farriers and saddlers

Last year, in partnership with The Horse Trust, we launched an online course for farriers. The need for horses to have regular hoof care means that farriers are usually regular visitors to a yard and can be an important source of advice for horse owners. The accredited course helps farriers understand more about how to raise awareness of welfare concerns they may have about a horse, the value of liaising with equine charities to offer information and support to owners, and how the legal system works to help resolve more serious welfare issues.

Following the launch of the farrier course,

we were delighted to be approached by the Society of Master Saddlers who are keen for us to adapt the course for their members. The professional fitting of saddles, bridles and harness is important for working equines and the new course is due to become available later this year!

Alongside these courses, Redwings' vets helped develop a welfare toolkit for equine vets with the British Equine Veterinary Association. We are proud to say that our supporters are helping many equine professionals make the most of opportunities to improve welfare of horses across the UK.



Farriers play a vital role in horse welfare. Find out about how Redwings' farriers Bob and Robbie Rush look after the hooves of one special resident in our short film at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt15f9bbPQ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt15f9bbPQ0)

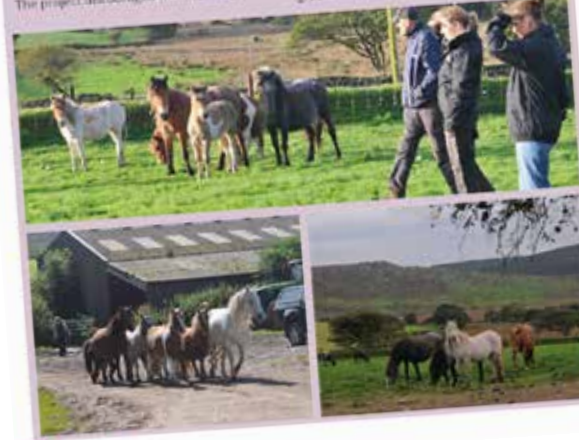
## Bodmin Moor Multi-Agency Rescue and Identification Operation

On Bodmin Moor in 2016, over the course of a five-day operation, over 160 semi-feral ponies were rounded-up for health checks and to be issued with passports and microchips. Overstocking and a lack of enforcement of equine identification laws made it possible for the annual occurrence of life-threatening welfare issues without any recourse or responsibility.

Of those equines rounded up, 76 unclaimed ponies required urgent veterinary attention. A further 46 equines were transported to safe boarding facilities and another 70 ponies were offered homes by other animal welfare organisations including Redwings, Boleyns Animal Sanctuary, Mare and Foal Sanctuary, Blue Cross, Bransby Horses and World Horse Welfare.

The project discouraged irresponsible

individuals who had often seen the Moor as "a dumping ground for unwanted ponies." "After ongoing welfare issues the APHA did not receive a single welfare complaint about the ponies on Bodmin Moor in the Winter of 2016/17 and the 2016 operation is still talked about on Bodmin Moor as a very positive intervention," reported APHA Veterinary Officer Lorna Stevenson. "The improvement across the other moorland areas continues with the Bodmin Moor Commons Council Pony Keepers Committee working to ensure all ponies continue to be microchipped and passported and to improve quality of stallions and reduce their overall numbers. The APHA confirms that the problems on Bodmin Moor in Winter 2019-20 were very disappointing but were more due to the actions of a small number of people, and do not reflect the rest of the Bodmin Moor graziers."



## Recommendations:

- **IMPROVE EASE OF UPDATES TO THE DIGITAL STABLE AND REDUCE THE 30-DAY GRACE PERIOD FOR NOTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP** The new Central Equine Database should be a critical tool for enforcement so it should be made easier for horse owners to keep their information up-to-date, such as to easily change details online on the digital stable itself rather than going through a passport issuing organisation which may not be able or willing to offer an alternative database is currently used, for the system to be truly effective. This is also the most likely way it would become a central tool with benefits for conscientious owners and equine businesses, with the potential to share information on disease outbreaks as well as public information campaigns e.g. Covid and measures yards should be taking.
- **LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED BY THEIR LEADERS TO CHECK COMPLIANCE** and issue civil sanctions including on-the-spot fines of up to £200 for not adhering to the identification regulations - especially in areas where equine are irresponsibly managed. The equine ID legislation should be reviewed to make this easier for authorities.
- **LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD USE BEST PRACTICE** to improve coordination between the enforcement agencies particularly for multiple-horse cases. Regional groups to facilitate this. Regional authority inspectors or a representative from the regional animal health meetings should attend.



**\* What is the difference between a statutory duty and a statutory power?**  
A **statutory duty** is something a local authority must do. Duties include provision of social care and education. A **statutory power** is something a local authority has the power to carry out if they choose to. Taking action under the Animal Welfare Act and enforcing Equine ID regulations are both statutory powers for local authorities.



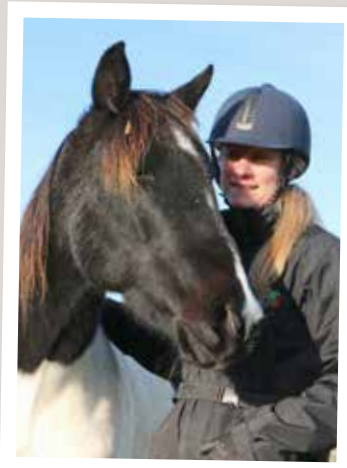
# Foaling around

During the summer of 2020, seven foals were born at the Sanctuary to a group of mares removed during a multi-agency operation from a site near the M25 (see pages 4-5).



**T**he group, all semi-feral when they first came to Redwings, were undergoing handling training at our specialist Behaviour Centre at the time, so our team were in prime position to ensure their foals grew up learning to be comfortable with humans from day one!

Sarah Hallsworth, Redwings' Behaviour Manager, said: "While our training schedule suddenly got that much busier, foals present a really lovely challenge. Because they have not experienced what their mothers have gone through, they do not have the same fears and we have an opportunity to start their handling at a very young age so we can give them the best chance possible of finding loving new Guardian homes outside the Sanctuary in the future."



Did you know? Any foals born at the Sanctuary usually begin attending 'handling school' at seven days old. We give the foal and mum time to bond alone before we start with any gentle interventions, but this can vary depending on the temperament of the mare. If mum is really unhappy with us going near her baby then we will wait longer to avoid causing either of them

stress. If the mare is friendly, then introducing handling is quite straightforward.

Sarah said: "As we're interacting with the mare, the foal is generally very inquisitive. As foals usually love a scratch, we normally make this our first interaction and then the foal associates us with something really nice. After a few times, they will actually seek us out for attention."

From there, their training will progress to the foal being happy to be touched all over, introducing them to a headcollar, learning basic responses such as 'park' (standing still), leg handling, preparation for routine procedures including worming and vaccinations, and introducing new environments and novel objects – the latter is particularly useful if they progress to our rehoming scheme in future.

When a foal is very young, a scratch and plenty of verbal praise make the perfect reward for reinforcing correct behaviours. When they reach four months old, training with a clicker and food as a reward are introduced as the foals tackle more demanding training asks, like leg handling.

**“We treat every horse at Redwings as an individual and will only progress their training at their own pace”**

Introducing food is usually a game changer for those foals who up until that point have been unwilling to interact!

Sarah added: "Many of our foals are really enjoying their training sessions, but some are much more wary than others. We treat every horse at Redwings as an individual and will only progress their training at their own pace. Whether they go on to find new homes or end up better suiting a life here at the Sanctuary, we'll make sure they remain safe and happy for the rest of their days."

You can watch a short film of our foals undertaking some of their training on our YouTube channel.

Last summer we asked you to donate towards the work of our specialist Behaviour Centre which as well as training these foals, also cares for ponies like Bella and Charlie who need help to trust again after their traumatic experiences. We can only run this life-changing facility and care for ponies who would otherwise have nowhere else to go thanks to your support. Your response was incredible, **raising over £190,000**, enough to run the centre for a whole year!



## Record breakers!

**W**e're delighted to say that 2020 saw us rehome more of our rescued horses than ever before.

Despite the challenges that Covid-19 sent our way, with lockdown pausing the scheme for two months, we saw a 75% increase in the number of horses finding new homes compared to 2019.

As lockdown restrictions eased, our teams turned to technology to innovate new ways to match ponies with potential Guardians, such as virtual home checks and trials.

One of the first ponies to be trained and rehomed in this way from our new rehoming centre at Redwings Oxhill was Redwings

Mocha, who is now living in Norfolk with his Guardian Debbie.

Inspired by a friend who was already a Redwings Guardian, Debbie fell in love with Mocha's profile on our website. She said: "The virtual process was fabulous and really easy. The Redwings Rehoming team emailed me lots of videos and photos of him and his training so far."

Mocha is a member of 'The Breakfast Club', a group of 23 horses who were rescued in 2011 from a site in Northern Ireland. They were found without food, water or clean bedding, and many of them were suffering with worm infestations, overgrown hooves and infectious diseases such as strangles.

Rehomed as an unbacked project, Debbie arranged for Mocha to be professionally trained to be ridden and now the pair enjoy hacking together.

She added: "I am so proud of him. He has learnt so much in such a short space of time. His trainer said he was by far the best horse she had ever backed which I'm sure is down to the groundwork done at Redwings. He's a little superstar!"



Mocha before

## Our virtual process explained

### Step One: Verbal Assessment

A member of the Rehoming team will contact you to discuss your application in more detail.

### Step Two: Virtual Home Check

Next, we ask potential Guardians to submit photos or videos of their facilities. These will be sent to our Field Officers to assess.

### Step Three: Trial

If restrictions mean applicants are unable to visit the pony for a trial we will send them photos and videos of potentially suitable ponies. These will include general handling scenarios, plus give you a feel for the pony's personality!

### Step Four: Handover

If the application is successful then the Rehoming team will arrange for the handover paperwork to be signed.

### Step Five: Happy New Home!

One thing that Covid-19 hasn't changed is our aim to find loving and responsible Guardians and long-term homes for our horses. Our Rehoming team are always on hand to offer advice to our Guardians and we love to receive updates about their new lives!



**Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are unable to rehome ridden horses at the moment, but we continue to be able to rehome our unbacked projects and companion horses through this virtual process.**

You don't have to own or ride a horse to support our Rehoming scheme. You can help train our horses and ponies for a new life from the comfort of your sofa by purchasing an item from our Amazon Wishlist which gets sent straight to the rehoming team. From bridles to grooming brushes, every purchase helps. Visit [redwings.org.uk/donate/other-ways-to-donate](https://redwings.org.uk/donate/other-ways-to-donate)



SCAN ME



2020 is behind us at last, but little did any of us suspect we would still be facing the challenge of a lifetime as the new year begins. Here's an update on what's been going on at the Sanctuary during the Covid-19 pandemic...

## The Corona Chronicles – what we did!

At the risk of saying the words 'unique' or 'challenging' again, 2020 was quite a year! But thanks to you we were still able to do our jobs – helping horses across the UK. Here are just a few of the things we achieved in 2020 despite the pandemic and of course thanks to your wonderful support.



Our Corona Chronicles author Steph Callen

For the first time in over 10 years we had to cancel the Redwings Show. Undeterred, we brought the show online and opened it up to all pets. We even hosted a second Christmas version in December with guest judge, best-selling author Elly Griffiths. Together, the shows attracted about **800 entries and raised more than £3,000!**



Despite having to suspend our Guardianship scheme for two months because of lockdown, we rehomed over 60 rescued horses last year – a new record! (See page 9)

With special thanks to the hard work of our Health & Safety and Maintenance teams, we were able to roll out a **phased reopening of our visitor centres from July** with new safety measures in place. It was wonderful to welcome people again, thank you to everyone who came along to see us! Our visitor centres closed again before Christmas when infection rates rose again and remain closed as we write but please keep an eye on our website for the latest updates.



While adhering to Government guidance throughout the year, we still brought almost **180 horses and donkeys into the Sanctuary**. This is one of our largest intakes in recent years! Our new residents include the lovely Matilda (see pages 18 and 19) and Huw, who was rescued from Gelligaer on the Welsh commons in November.



While our visitor centres were closed, we brought you as much of the **Redwings experience online** as we could. From the Young Reds at Home Academy and Summer Club Online for our young supporters, to daily images and videos of our rescued residents across the Sanctuary, we packed our social media with plenty of feel-good content to raise a smile. In particular, many of our supporters spoke to us about what it has meant to keep in touch with our Adoption Stars online during the Covid pandemic. This lovely quote from one adopter sums it up beautifully.

*"I adopt Rumpel, Wiggins and Wacko, seeing pictures of their beautiful faces, reading their stories through all of this and seeing how they just accept life and go on has helped me so much, I am a key worker and so many times I have just wanted to cry, but seeing the beautiful light they bring to this world, their unconditional love and happiness, has helped keep me smiling when everything has become too much."*

## The winner of our Happy Tails class from the Redwings Christmas Show

James Bond, by Oliver Klumpler, age 11

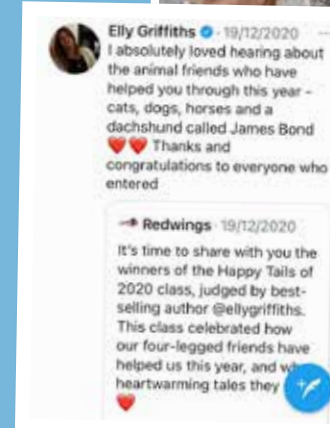
My dog, James Bond, is my best friend.

He is a red dog, a sausage long slinky dog, a tiny torpedo of a dog.

He is a bold brave lion dog, a sharp toothed yawning dog, a tongue flailing licking dog.

He is a snack sniffing snooting dog, a squirrel chasing wolfish dog, a waggy tailed happy dog. He is like a twisty turny pretzel, a floppy eared bouncing dog, a bone chewing digging dog.

He is a soft warm snuggly dog, a cuddle when I need him dog, a furry loving loyal dog. He makes my life better every day, and I can't imagine this year without him.



Earlier in the year we held the hilarious **Redwings Mane Event**, which raised over **£1,700** and attracted headlines across the country and even in the USA! You sent us pics of your 'lockdown locks' and donated the cost of a haircut and we matched you with your horsey twin from the Sanctuary!

Then in the Autumn we set up the **Redwings Feed Run fundraiser**, asking people to run, walk, jog, cycle or ride for Redwings. So far it has raised nearly **£3,500** including a matched

donation of feed from sponsors Spillers! Thank you to everyone who has already taken part... and it's not too late to enter, why not use your lockdown exercise quota to do something amazing for our horses and ponies?

Visit [redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/redwings-feed-run](https://redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/redwings-feed-run) to find out more. Or join in the Mane Event by searching for us on JustGiving!



SCAN ME





# Clapping for our very own key workers

*We couldn't talk about the Covid pandemic without giving a huge shout out to our extraordinary staff.*

Every single person at Redwings contributed hugely over the last 12 months to help the charity keep going, from our vet team and horse care staff who have been tirelessly caring for our horses in very difficult circumstances all while socially distanced and constantly disinfecting everything in sight, to our Health & Safety and Maintenance teams who have had to invent all kinds of creative solutions to help us adhere to the restrictions (including installing screens for our visitor centres and even finding bikes for the staff to ride so they didn't have to share cars!), right through to our fundraising and admin teams who have dealt with twice the number of online donations and enquiries as usual all thanks to your lovely kind support!

## Hollie Palmer, Ada Cole:

I'd like to thank my team for all their hard work and dedication during these difficult times. Being close to London and Harlow Hospital Covid-19 has always felt extremely close to us but every day they have given our equines the TLC they deserve.

Our lovely supporters have been regularly dropping off kind donations of apples and carrots at our front gates for our equines to enjoy.

## Lindsey Fraser, Horse Hospital:

As usual the team pulled together to ensure the horses received the best care, whilst consuming lots of pizza, chocolate, tea and coffee to get them through. A huge special thanks to the dedication of the nurses who gave up a lot of their time throughout this year. During such worrying times every nurse has turned up to work and remained positive and always had a smile on their face.

## Laura Starkey, Caldecott:

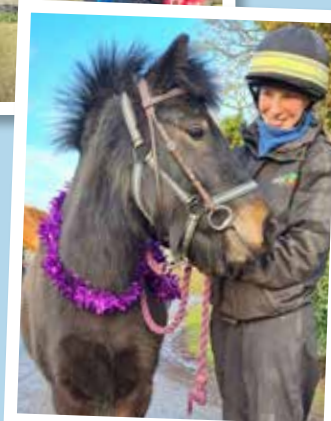
Last year seemed to fly by and we felt so lucky to be kept busy by caring for the horses during that strange time. The team has been strong and supported each other, baked treats for each other, talked, laughed and listened to each other. At times we've been short on the ground but we pulled together and worked as an amazing team.

*(Anyone spotted a food-related theme here?! Well done everyone <3 - Ed)*

## Talita Arantes, Hapton:

In some ways being able to come to work brought some sort of normality in times where nothing was normal. It was something that did not change, though new guidelines were put in place for the safety of our teams, we still had each other, we still had horses... and coming to work was the highlight of the day for many of us, because at the end of the day we all had to face what lockdown brought to us, separation from our family and loved ones.

We also saw that we were not forgotten by our supporters and kind donations arrived one after the other. Those used to really brighten my day, and the horses' days too, as they got a share of apples and carrots added to their feeds, enrichment for stabled horses in vet care... as I said, the horses would not know of any pandemic, only that they were safe and loved by us all.



# And thank you, our superheroes

- Your donations in response to our appeal mailings **raised over £1 million in 2020**



- You sent us over 68,000 letters and forms to donate or purchase a gift
- Your online donations and gift shop purchases more than doubled in 2020

## A special thank you to...

- the lovely supporters who dropped off apples, carrots and biscuits (for the staff and horses!) at the gates of our visitor centres during the closures.
- everyone who came to visit us when we reopened – your smiles and company were so welcome after lockdown.
- those who purchased cards, jigsaws and more from our web shop and catalogue – and to those who allowed us to keep their payment as a donation when items were out of stock.
- everyone who entered our Raffle, raising nearly £400,000!

Don't currently receive our raffle tickets but want the chance to win and help horses in need? Email, call or visit the website to request your raffle tickets today!

- our family of adopters who renewed their sponsorship of their horse or donkey – our residents need your support now more than ever.
- all of you who waited patiently as we opened the mountains of post, processed all those cheques, packed your generous gift shop purchases and stood in queues waiting to enter our centres. We are sorry if we kept you waiting, but we did our best.

This year we will be asking for your support again; whether you can give £1 or £1,000, it will make a real difference, so please continue to help horses however you can. We are so grateful to have your support.



*We got through 2020 by pulling together and know we can count on you this year too.*

## Following Redwings online



Social media has also been invaluable for keeping in touch and we've tried our best to keep our output as positive as possible as we know everyone needs a lift right now! You have all kept our spirits lifted too as we've had so many lovely messages and comments from you all, thank you so much! A few of our celebrity friends have even kept in touch too!

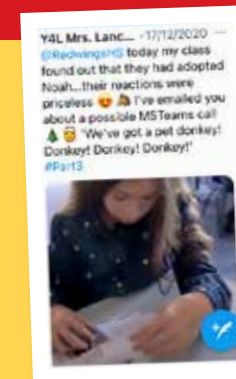
If you'd like to follow us on social media you can find us at the following places with the following usernames...

Facebook – [RedwingsHorseSanctuary](#)

Instagram – [redwingsuk](#)

YouTube – [Redwings Horse Sanctuary](#)

Twitter – [@RedwingsHS](#)

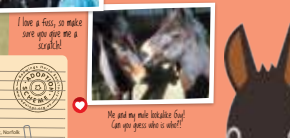


## Meet Noah...

Noah arrived at the Sanctuary in 2010 with his Shetland pony companion. Their owner had sadly been struggling to look after them, and could no longer provide them with the care they needed.

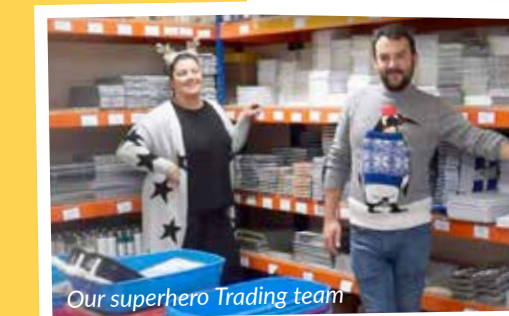
Before arriving at the Sanctuary, Noah had only ever lived with his pony companion. But when he arrived at Redwings, he settled in beautifully with the donkey and mule herd here at Redwings Caldecott, while his friend Sanchez went on to live in a loving Guardian home.

Noah is a mule, which means his mum was a horse or pony and his dad was a donkey and he's just one of four mules living at Redwings Caldecott. But do be sure to look out for his lookalike in the herd – mule Guy. The pair are the same height and age, and can often be spotted causing mischief in the paddock together, so make sure you keep an eye out for them today!

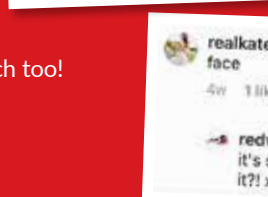


My daughters (5 & 3 years old) look forward to all of your updates every single morning! They have their breakfast and as soon as they've finished the first thing we do is open the @redwingsuk Instagram account to see what new posts have been put up. Thank you all! You're creating genuine love and respect for animals through your work!! ❤️❤️❤️❤️

One of the best day ever! Redwings Horse Sanctuary is such a wonderful place for horse lovers! We had such a great family day out. Lovely coffee and snacks, beautiful view while having our lunch and obviously even more amazing horses! From a tiniest pony to a gorgeous and graceful horse! I think Luca is just like his mummy in love with four legged, graceful animals. Highly recommend to visit them and help with any donations or adopt one of their cute tenants.



Our superhero Trading team



@realkate1 is none other than Kate Ford, aka Tracy Barlow from Coronation Street!



## News from around the Sanctuary –

## 'Your Redwings'



We missed you! With our centres shut for most of the year because of Covid-19, here is just a snapshot of what has been going on before lockdown and behind closed doors!

### Essex, EN9 2DH

REDWINGS

## Happy Retirement to Adoption Star Dolly

Back in October, we wished a happy retirement to adorable pony Dolly, who was one of Redwings' longest serving Adoption Stars!

Earlier in the year Dolly turned the wonderful age of 25, and so we felt it was the perfect time to allow her to enjoy a slower pace of life and retire from the Adoption Scheme.

Dolly has also been suffering with some ongoing lameness, which will require specialist attention from our team of vets

for the rest of her life. While this isn't causing her any problems at the moment, our vets recommended she put her hooves up!

Dolly arrived at the Sanctuary in 1998 after she was discovered in a ditch, where she'd been stuck for three whole days. In her attempts to get out, she had caused some serious wounds on her legs. Her owner was unable to afford the vet's bills and so a home was offered to Dolly at Redwings Ada Cole, where she could

be provided with the ongoing veterinary care that she needed.

While Dolly will no longer be available for new adopters, she will continue to keep in touch with her existing lovely sponsors and her supporters will still be able to visit when restrictions allow.



Dolly

### North Norfolk, NR11 6UE

REDWINGS

## Aylsham



## Virtual Talks become the new 'normal'!

You'll have read about how we've had to continuously adapt our way of working throughout the pandemic, and that includes our educational visits, talks and tours.

Since its opening in 2017, Red's Shed at Redwings Aylsham has been our main education hub, providing fascinating facts, interactive displays for all ages, as well as highlighting the work that we do

throughout the country – from rescue to rehoming.

We are passionate about educating



fellow charities, schools, colleges, community groups and those who wish to learn about horse welfare and the work we do. So while we're unable to accommodate meeting in person, we've launched virtual talks ('RED Talks') for those who wish to find out more about

Redwings. The talks can be carried out via MS Teams or Zoom, and are free of charge (although donations are gratefully received). You never know you might even have a surprise guest on your call!

If you would like some further information, email [education@redwings.co.uk](mailto:education@redwings.co.uk), or you can book on our website [redwings.org.uk/get-involved/visit/group-bookings](http://redwings.org.uk/get-involved/visit/group-bookings)



Elvis



### Gt. Yarmouth, NR31 9EY

REDWINGS

## Caldecott

## Upping our dinner game!

The amazing team at Gingerlily Catering have partnered with us to offer delicious meals (including yummy roast dinners) and weddings at Redwings Caldecott. Sam and his team are also helping us serve stone baked pizza at Redwings Aylsham so there is plenty to look forward to when you visit us in Norfolk this year!

Did you know you can now stay at Redwings Caldecott? We have beautiful accommodation in Caldecott Hall all ready for guests!



Find out more on our website!  
[redwings.org.uk/get-involved/visit/caldecott-visitor-centre](http://redwings.org.uk/get-involved/visit/caldecott-visitor-centre)

## Blooming Beautiful!

15

Charlecote Garden Store who have supported us for a number of years, recently donated over £100 worth of plants and planters to give the front of the visitor centre at Redwings Oxhill a bit of a facelift. LV Insurance also brought budding blooms to our door with a donation of £100 to fill the planters (old up-cycled water troughs!) at Redwings Aylsham. In 2020 we were unable to spend our precious funds on things like flowers, so we are very grateful to the companies that helped bring some colour to our centres.



### Scotland, DD8 3SQ

REDWINGS

## Community spirit at Redwings Mountains

Redwings Mountains experienced one of the most challenging years the team has ever encountered, but it's also been an uplifting time with everyone pulling together more than ever to support the residents and each other.

The local community has rallied around too by leaving gifts at the gate and purchasing items from the Mountains Amazon Wishlist which has been a big

boost to everyone. A huge thank you from us to you all!

Did you know? We have Amazon Wishlists set up for our sites, allowing you to buy specific items that our staff and horses need for the site of your choice. Head to [redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/amazon-wishlists](http://redwings.org.uk/news-and-views/amazon-wishlists) to find out more and view the lists. Thanks to everyone who has already

made a purchase!

Did you know? Howdens Joinery in Forfar **donated £250 this New Year** to help support our Mountains site.



Some Redwings fans with their Amazon Wishlist purchases

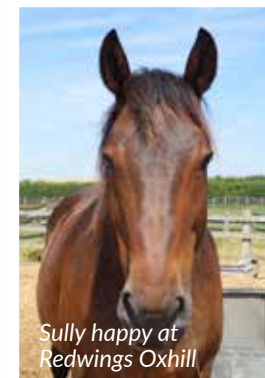
### Warwickshire, CV35 0RP

REDWINGS

## Goodbye dear friend

The end of September was a very sad time for the Oxhill team when much-loved resident Sullivan (known to many as Sully) passed away.

Sully retired to Redwings in 2014 from the South Wales Mounted Police division and after settling at the Sanctuary, the 17hh gentle giant - who was an unusual mix of Thoroughbred, Percheron and Suffolk Punch - became very popular with visitors and staff alike.



Sully happy at Redwings Oxhill

Sully came to us with ongoing lameness issues that were closely monitored and managed by his carers for six

years, but at the end of September he suddenly went very lame and an X-ray revealed that he'd fractured some cartilage and his arthritis had deteriorated.

No longer able to keep him comfortable, the devastating decision was made to put Sully to sleep to ensure that he

did not suffer any further. The team are incredibly saddened by his loss but were comforted by some beautiful tributes paid to him on social media by the South Wales Mounted Police in his honour. We will never forget this very special boy.



Sully (2nd from left) on duty at the London 2012 Olympics



# A very special thank you!

You may know our Chair of the Board of Trustees, Steve Clark. As a registered charity, Redwings is governed by an unpaid Board of Trustees, and, as Chair, Steve held the ultimate



volunteering role. Steve has now retired after an incredible 25 years of service!

We are thankful for his commitment to the charity, our supporters and staff and the horses we care for/rescue. It is thanks to his leadership of the Board that we have been able to make some major commitments, not least our move to Hapton farm, home to our Horse Hospital, rehoming and special care facilities, as well as our head office.

Under his leadership we saw mergers with other charities, welcoming Redwings Ada Cole, Redwings Mountains and recently Redwings SWHP to the Redwings family.

We wish Steve a long and happy retirement and thank him for his phenomenal support.

Our new Chair is Mark Little. Mark was Vice Chair and has served for many years on the Redwings Board, playing an

integral role in our successes and growth. We are delighted to have Mark now lead us to continued success with our new Vice Chair, Paul Fileman, who joined the Board in 2018.



Another long-serving Trustee, our much-valued Treasurer Andrew Fryer, will support Mark and Paul and the other Trustees throughout 2021 to steer us out of the pandemic.

Lynn Cutress, Chief Executive and Secretary.

## A helping hand through the winter

We want to give a special mention to the following businesses and organisations who have gone out of their way to support us over the last few months.

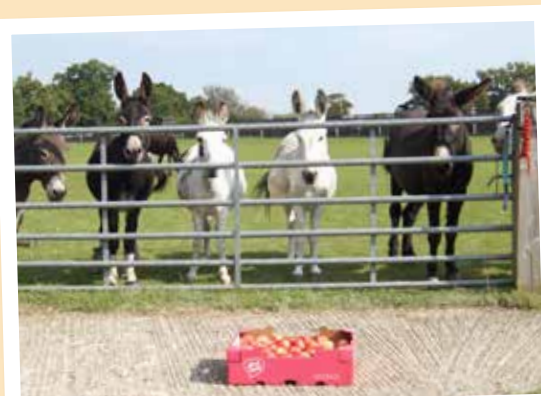
- Following their fabulous festive fundraising in 2019, our wonderful friends at Equilibrium Products once again designed a horsey advent calendar and Christmas cracker, full of tasty treats for our four-legged friends. Our very own Adoption Star Rumpel featured on the front cover! Thank you to all the team at Equilibrium for your amazing creative efforts!
- In November we collected a generous donation of straw from our friends at Pleasurewood Hills, which had been left over

from the theme park's half term holiday activities. Andrew Fuller, Marketing and Sales Manager said: "We love the great work Redwings do and are very happy to support them with this donation. It has been a very challenging year for businesses and charities, and we are proud to help how we can."

- In September, Pink Lady Apples kindly donated trays of their apples to our rescued horses and donkeys at Redwings Ada Cole, as well as making a monetary donation towards their care. The donation was inspired by a letter Pink Lady received from three little girls who explained that their pony,

Mac, loves snacking on the rosy fruit. Mac had been previously mistreated and now the girls lavish him with love! The team at Pink Lady were so impressed that they arranged a special delivery of apples for Mac and decided to make a donation to a local charity that helped other neglected horses and donkeys get back on their feet.

- And finally - a huge thanks to Spillers who have supported us this year with feed donations galore - we are so so thankful!



## Thank you for remembering Redwings

In what has been an incredibly tough year for everyone, we want to say a heartfelt thank you to those who have found a special place in their hearts for Redwings by pledging a gift in their Will or donating in memory of a loved one.

Now, more than ever, Redwings is relying on gifts in Wills to help us save ponies like little Matilda, whose story you can read over the page. These special gifts are at the heart of everything we do. They help to fund our rescues, pay for emergency treatments in our Horse Hospital, and feed hundreds of hungry mouths every day. Last year, 33 supporters made a pledge to support Redwings in their Wills, joining hundreds of other individuals who have chosen to support us in this extraordinary way. All those who have pledged to remember Redwings in their Wills are truly giving the most powerful gift possible to horses and donkeys in need.



## In my mother's memory

A supporter for nearly 30 years, Mrs Poustie had a particular love for donkeys, sponsoring first Redwings Tufty and then Esther. As well as being a loyal supporter in her lifetime, Mrs Poustie enabled her love for animals to go on after she passed away in 2020 by remembering Redwings in her Will. Mrs Poustie's son Mark



was keen for us to acknowledge his mother's gift in this newsletter so that her kindness and generosity could be shared with others. Like us, Mark hopes his mother's dedication will inspire you to consider following in her footsteps. If you would like to join Mrs Poustie by leaving a gift in your Will to Redwings, talk to your solicitor about making or updating your Will, or contact our Legacy Officer Katie for more information on **01508 481030** or [kfulcher@redwings.co.uk](mailto:kfulcher@redwings.co.uk)



In memory tributes are a special way to remember someone who loved horses, or even a treasured animal companion. A personalised plaque can

be placed in one of our memorial gardens at a centre of your choice, or for those wishing to make an extra special gift, we can help you choose a fitting tribute. From a memorial bench to a paddock, we can place your personalised plaque on a facility you fund in memory of a loved one.

Whatever you decide, you can feel proud that your loved one's memory has helped horses in need.

For more information about making a donation or purchasing a tribute to remember someone special, speak to a member of our team on **01508 481000** or visit [www.redwings.org.uk/get-involved/leave-a-legacy/remember-someone](http://www.redwings.org.uk/get-involved/leave-a-legacy/remember-someone). You can also set up a tribute page to collect donations or fundraise in memory of a loved one at [www.justgiving.com/redwingshs](http://www.justgiving.com/redwingshs).

In our new Memory Garden at Redwings Caldecott there is an array of beautiful, wildlife friendly planting, plenty of space to relax and reflect, and it's also home to an incredible unique sculpture by a local artist. For current information about visiting Redwings Caldecott, please visit [www.redwings.org.uk/visiting](http://www.redwings.org.uk/visiting)



The Memory Garden at Redwings Caldecott opened in 2020 and provides a welcoming, reflective space for our supporters to remember lost loved ones.



# Saving Matilda: one year on

**W**hile the global coronavirus pandemic dominated news headlines last spring, and just weeks before the UK entered its first lockdown, one young pony was facing her own desperate struggle.

At just a few months old, little Matilda was found worryingly weak and emaciated. She was riddled with worms, her hooves were overgrown, and her dull, dirty coat was matted and covered in lice. Without immediate help, this unloved pony would not have survived.

After several failed attempts to contact Matilda's alleged owner,

we brought her to the safety of our Sanctuary. At first, poor Matilda seemed dull and depressed, not wanting to interact with her carers. But with our unconditional love and care, she began to turn the corner. One year on, we look at how your donations have helped to transform Matilda's life since her rescue.

Will you help us save more ponies like Matilda? The first days and weeks after rescue are a critical time for a pony like Matilda. And in the months that follow, our care teams work tirelessly to help our arrivals find their feet and settle into Sanctuary life. Your donation today can help give ponies like Matilda their best chance.



## Where sanctuary begins



Our specialist quarantine centre is the place where sanctuary begins for every rescued horse or donkey in our care. Here, emergency care, thorough health checks and careful treatment from our vets and welfare team help ponies like Matilda begin their recuperation.

As well as being severely underweight, Matilda came to us with a prolific lice infestation and worms. Blood tests showed that she had very low protein levels in her blood and was anaemic. Under our watchful care, we started treating her cautiously with a wormer and steroids and put a feeding plan in place to help her safely gain weight. And after having her matted coat carefully clipped by her carers, and a visit from the farrier to trim her hooves, Matilda began to seem brighter.



Matilda is sadly a classic example of a pony we often see in our welfare work. The way she turned the corner quite quickly shows that if her owner had just given her the basic care she needed, such as worming, feeding and feet trimming, then she would never have got into the suffering state that she was in.

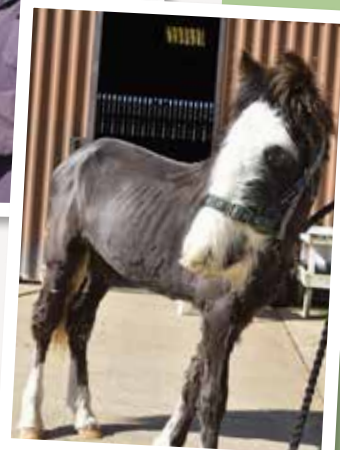
*Nicola, Matilda's vet*

## Life in lockdown

Around three weeks after Matilda's rescue, the UK entered its first lockdown of the coronavirus pandemic. With precautions taken to limit movements between our sites and keep our staff safe, Matilda remained at our quarantine centre to continue receiving dedicated care from our team, before being moved to our Norfolk headquarters in the summer.

Matilda was dull and listless when we found her. She wasn't used to being handled but with a little persuasion we were able to lead her across the deep mud and through a ditch to reach our horse ambulance. Despite the neglect she had suffered and being unused to being handled, she didn't put a hoof wrong through her clinical examination and treatments.

*Julie, Senior Field Officer*



## Next steps: meeting Mildred

Having nearly reached a healthy weight, Matilda was able to move to our headquarters to continue her recovery and begin adapting to life in our Sanctuary. Here, she was close to our Horse Hospital if needed and could begin integrating with other ponies. And it wasn't just our care teams who were on hand to help Matilda settle in. Much-loved Sanctuary resident Mildred was ready to lend a helping hoof too. With a strong and caring maternal instinct, Mildred is often called upon to be a surrogate mum to young ponies like Matilda who are still finding their feet and learning how to behave around other ponies and their carers. Just as she had been with little pony Fig – who you may remember from our New Year appeal last year – Mildred was by Matilda's side during her first few months at our headquarters, helping her to gain confidence in her new surroundings.

Once again, Mildred played the role of surrogate mum so well. She protected and looked after Matilda while we integrated her into a group of ponies, helping her to settle and get used to her new routine. Matilda now has lots of friends of her own age to play and interact with, including much-loved pony Fig.

*Holly, Hapton Farm Manager*



## Look at her now

From the moment our field officer led little Matilda onto our horse ambulance, your donations were at work to save her. Around the clock care, veterinary treatments, farrier visits, tests and daily check-ups were all part of the care Matilda received in her first year at Redwings. Thanks to our care teams, welfare staff, vets and our supporters, Matilda is now a brighter, happier and healthier pony

– with a home for life at Redwings.



## Please donate today to help more ponies like Matilda

- 01508 481000 • [www.redwings.org.uk](http://www.redwings.org.uk)
- Text MATILDA 20 to 70085 to donate £20

(You can also opt to give any amount – whole £s only – up to £20. All texts cost the donation amount plus a standard rate message).

\* Thank you for your gift. We will use your donation wherever it is needed the most including funding the daily care of our horse and donkey herds.



Thank you!