

newsletter

MANE CHANCE SANCTUARY



MCS Winter Newsletter - December 2019

Welcome!

Welcome to our winter newsletter – already we are hurtling towards the end of another year and 2020 will soon be upon us.

It's been an interesting year for us all – surrounded by political uncertainty with seemingly endless squabbles in addition to a changing climate, for example. Already busy lives seem more complicated all round and I think we have all probably felt a little more weight on our shoulders in general. Maybe we could take a few leaves out of the instruction manuals

of our animals. Dogs that are always pleased to see you return home however long you have been away; chickens that are equally excited whether you give them a piece of corn or a whole lettuce leaf; and horses that will give so generously in response to your kindness whether you are young, old, able-bodied, tall, short etc.

So we wish you a very happy Christmas full of joy followed by a healthy and peaceful New Year – we hope that you can take a chance to sit back, relax, put the world's worries out of your mind and for a moment, live in the moment. Follow the example of our horses, who even on the coldest days, if the sun



appears, adjust their position so that they can sense that lovely feeling of warmth of the rays on their backs, however long it lasts!

Christmas Carols

As the festive season is now upon us, our favourite events of the year also pop up in our calendar.

Don't forget that it is our Christmas Carol Service this Sunday (8th December) at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Godalming. Starting at 5pm with our Shetlands walking up the aisle of the church (poop scoops at the ready), it is a really lovely start to the festive season amongst friends. We have a host of celebrity performers – joining Jenny are our wonderfully supportive Patrons, Hilary O'Neil, Sara Crowe and Beau

Dermott and we welcome back Damien Edwards who recorded the song for our new video. This year we are thrilled to also have Andrew Lancel (ex-Coronation Street) and his son, Isaac Lancel-Watkinson, who will also be performing. Beau's singing took the roof off last year, and between her and Isaac, I don't think there will be a dry eye in the house!

Tickets cost £10 for adults £5 for children (5-15 years) and seniors (over 60 years) – children under 5 come free.

Tickets are available on the door, so don't worry if you haven't booked in advance!

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Charity number: 1144144

New Year's Day walk

If that's not enough excitement, we are opening the gates of the Sanctuary on New Year's Day morning for walks, fun and refreshments.

Blow away the cobwebs of the Christmas excesses by strolling around our fields and tracks, meeting our rescued horses along the way. We have a children's quiz to keep little people (and bigger people) entertained around the route and you can partake in well-deserved refreshments in the barn at the end to reward you for your efforts – hot sarnies, mulled wine and more. We also have some fun and games for children in the barn as well. Dogs are welcome on leads too, so it is truly an event for all the family!

Tickets can be bought on the day costing £3 for adults, £1.50 for children and seniors – under 5s and dogs come free! There is a discount for tickets bought in advance of £2 for adults and £1 for children and seniors – please visit www.manechancesanctuary.org for details of how to book!

It would be lovely to see you at either or both events – they really are a lot of fun!

Christmas Cards and Gifts

Before we leave the festive season chatter, please remember that our Christmas Cards are on sale raising money for the Sanctuary and our work.

This year, we have a couple of new designs for you to choose from. Cards cost £5 for a pack of ten and are available via our website shop.

Featuring pictures of our horses and Sanctuary on every page, our 2020 calendar hanging on your wall is guaranteed to raise a smile every day of the year by reminding you of what you are supporting! Calendars cost just £5 each and are available in our website shop.

For the person who has everything... unique Christmas and birthday gifts from Mane Chance.

We are now offering the opportunity for you to buy a unique experience at the Sanctuary for any of your friends and family who love horses. In addition



to our ever-popular Share a Shettie experience, we are also now offering a voucher for a private tour of the Sanctuary to include a meet and greet of the horses (big or small depending on confidence!) with tea and cake to follow. The voucher is for a group of up to four people to spend a couple of hours with us and really learn about what we do, how we do it and also spend some private time with our horses! The voucher costs £35 and is a really lovely way to treat someone at Christmas, on their birthday, anniversary – or just because you can! You can buy these vouchers in our website shop and dates can be arranged at mutual convenience at any time of the year, particularly when the weather is warmer, of course!



Our New Website

We are very excited to announce that we have a new website due to be launched in the next week or so.

We have wished to update our current site for a little while - since it was designed, the charity has come on in leaps and bounds and there is so much to share about us now. The horses remain the centre of what we do of course, but our community work is now reaching a huge number of people and we are bringing such joy to so many. The new website is much more colourful, visual (with some lovely new pictures of the horses) and shows a lot about what our animals are doing alongside us to welcome and help our visitors – it also allows us to sell tickets for events online and for new sponsors and friends to sign up and pay too! Technology changes so quickly these days and it's important for us to try to keep up with the times – we hope that this new site goes some way to do that.

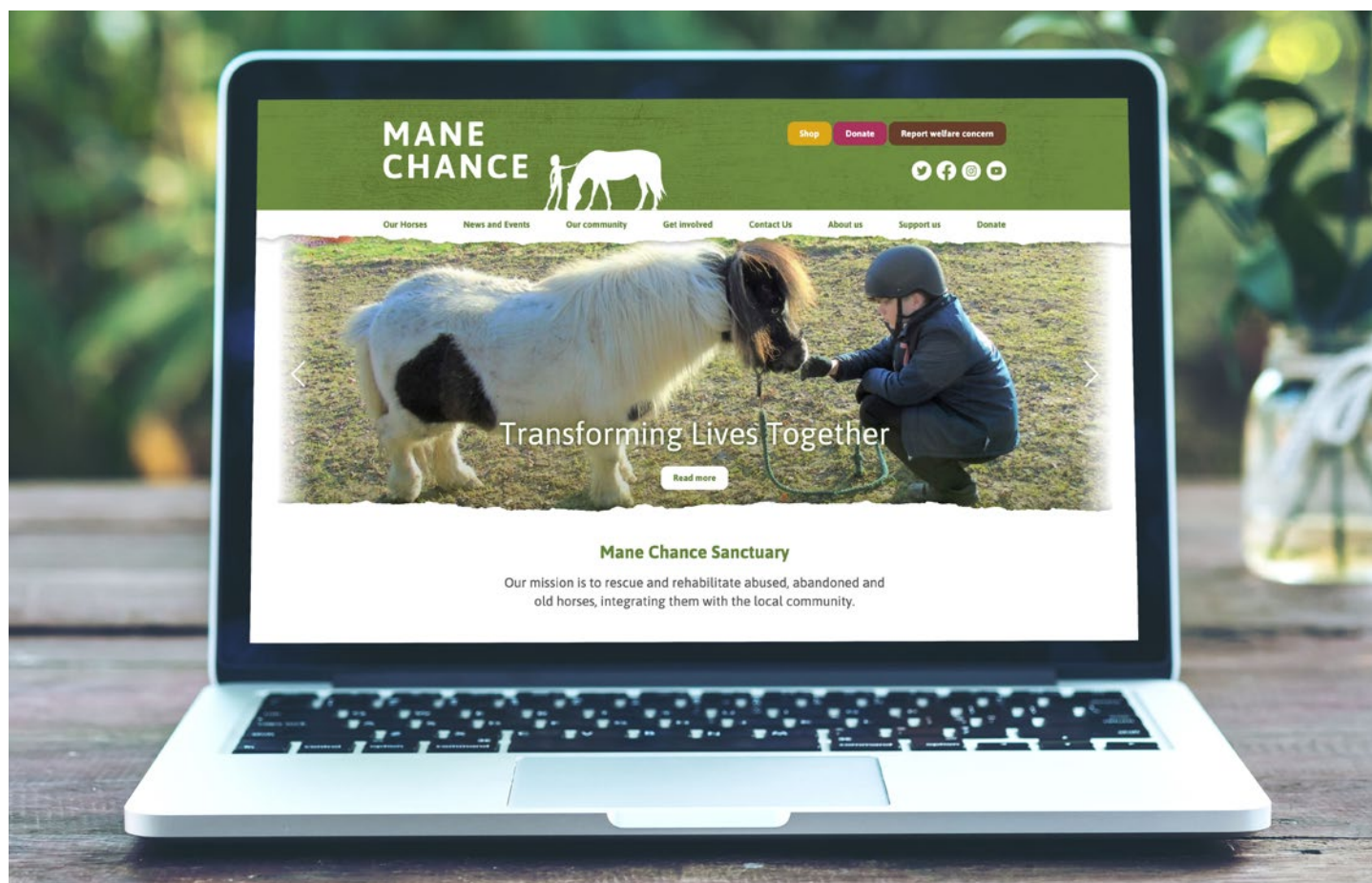
Please do spend a few moments to visit it in the next couple of weeks – we hope that you will not only like the new look, but also that you will enjoy reading all about our horses, our Sanctuary and our community. We also hope that you will feel a part of the success of what we are achieving – as our supporter, you are enabling us to do what we do – without you, this simply wouldn't be possible.

So, sit back, have a click around the site and feel proud – there is so much that we have achieved together and more that we can do over the coming months and years.

You will find the new site at the regular address –

www.manechancesanctuary.org

We would really like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Room 11 – our friends in Godalming who have designed the new site and donated so much time to us in creating it.



The opening of the Shetland Project and our Summer Family Fun Day

We were blessed with the sunshine for our summer family fun day this year and we welcomed more people than ever to the Sanctuary to enjoy an afternoon of fun and entertainment.

We were thrilled to welcome Michael Crawford CBE to the event to formally open our Shetland Project area, something that has taken two years to come to fruition and an initiative that we are immensely proud of at Mane Chance. This area is designed to meet the specific needs of the Shetland breed who require strict dietary control to ensure their maximum wellbeing. Reduced sugar content grass varieties have been sown in the grazing area and woodland has been opened up to provide good foraging opportunities. We have created a meet and greet area for our visitors with accessible surfacing and a laminitis paddock for when one of our ponies needs a little break from unrestricted grass nibbling! The area has been designed not only with the physical health of our ponies

in mind, but their emotional wellbeing too – by providing a laminitis paddock and integral meet and greet area, our ponies will rarely need to be taken out of their herds (unless they go on one of their group walks off-site down the local bridleway with our community visitors!) – horses are herd animals and for us to be able to welcome visitors, complete professional visits (such as the vet) and also deal with laminitis prevention all in one area is wonderful – it means that the ponies are always in sight of their pals and never troubled by separation worries.

We are immensely grateful to our funders who took a risk in supporting a ground-breaking project that had never been conceived of before and hope that they are pleased with the result. If you would like to know more about the project, our end of project report is available to download on our new website!

The opening day went really well and Michael was a delight to have with us – he obviously enjoyed his afternoon because by the end of the day, we had a new Patron of Mane Chance,



so taken was he with the Sanctuary! Visitors were treated to live music, food, games and tractor rides and our horses took central stage and behaved impeccably! We are so pleased to have welcomed so many people and hope that everyone had a lovely afternoon – how the weather stayed dry we don't know – it poured with rain before the event started and then about half an hour after everyone had gone!

A huge thank you must go to the staff and volunteers that hosted the event with us and worked so hard to create a lovely atmosphere and make everyone feel welcome.

A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon was had by all!



Our horses

When you reach this point of the year, it's hard not to be reflective on the past twelve months.

As ever, it's been a busy time for Mane Chance and a loss has happened in our equine fields. We have welcomed Minnie and Barnaby to the family and we have had to say goodbye to Fred and Finlay, two huge characters on site and much-loved (and much-missed) horses. I know it's inevitable when you work with animals that you have to face sadness as much as joy, but it never gets any easier. Both have left a huge impact on the team and truly won't be forgotten – their ashes have been laid to rest in our memorial garden and they have returned home – for ever.

Minnie and Barnaby bring with them much joy and we are really pleased to have them in our family – they are already participating with our work in the community and are popular with the team and visitors alike.

We are also currently in discussion with the RSPCA regarding a situation they are managing and investigating and so may be having some more new residents arriving over the coming months – the plight of equines is never ending.

The economic climate means that horse abandonments are on the rise again and many people are simply just not able to afford to keep their horses any longer, such is the financial strain. Whilst we won't overcrowd the capacity that our site can handle, we are under constant demand to take more animals and will do what we can; however, we will remain true to our ethos and work with professional bodies to accept those animals that are most in need.

Our grooms, supported by our volunteers, continue to work tirelessly with our horses and this year, we have had some real progress made with the most nervous of our herds. Horses that were too frightened to face the dentist without sedation are now able to have a check-up without any sedative; horses that could not be separated from their herds without huge anxiety



are now enjoying walks off-site without any fears at all and horses that had no idea how to interact with humans just a year or so ago, are now part of our community work and loving every moment spent with children and adults alike. It's truly extraordinary to see the changes in the horses and to watch them grow in confidence and trust. When a horse cannot find the courage to even approach a person when they first arrive and they spend their entire time on edge and alert to every movement, to then see them lying, totally relaxed with our team in the sunshine, seemingly without a care in the world, is incredible and magical.

Our horses give so much back to our community and having faced such hardship and abuse in the past, they have empathy and generosity in abundance and can give such respite, confidence and reassurance to the most vulnerable of people too. We often use the term 'healing herd' when it comes to our horses, but whilst perhaps a little unusual choice of words, it really does encapsulate their ability to help people in an unspoken way that other humans can't.

Some of our horses have the usual aches and strains that any animal has, but, in the main, they are very healthy and thriving. We have a couple of older horses, Berry and Horus that require a bit of extra TLC – extra feeds to support their weight, joint supplement to fend off the creaky bones or a nice warm

rug to see them through the night. We also have a couple of conditions to manage – Timmy has equine metabolic syndrome (akin to human diabetes) and is medicated to help balance his sugar levels. However, with all of them, we know that whilst there are medications to assist with such conditions, we can assist the horses even more by managing them correctly. To make life easier for us, Timmy could be on a larger dose of medication to aid his difficulty in processing sugars; instead we move him off grass onto a specially created bare track or give him a night in the stable when the grass is stressed and full of sugar (such as when it is frosty) and help him without resorting to using more drugs. It's a balancing act and one that takes some organisation to set up, but we try wherever possible to use the natural options first knowing that we have the more traditional medication to fall back on if necessary.

Alongside our conventional vets, we work with an equine manual therapist who is working wonders with some of the horses that have arrived to us with pain, stresses and injury – time spent working with them is really proving to give them relief from the niggles. Plus, we work with a homeopathic vet who is treating a couple of ongoing conditions – sarcoids etc. to assist others in our herds.

All of this horse care approach is part of our ethos and hugely important to us – our horses have been through enough! We aim to offer them peace, security and a care that is based on mutual respect for the rest of their natural lives – however long that they may be with us.

In return, they give us their patience and kindness which is shared with our visitors – it's a winning combination that we are proud to have occurring on our site every day.

Helping horses.

Helping people.

Transforming lives together.

Our new minibus

And if the above is not enough lovely news for one newsletter, we also had the excitement of the arrival of our new minibus a couple of months ago!

You may remember earlier in the Summer, we were overjoyed to be a winner of the People's Project Campaign – a joint initiative of the National Lottery Community Fund and ITV. Our supporters not only voted themselves, but also worked hard to canvas others to vote for us and brilliantly, we were placed second in our area and received a large grant to partially fund a minibus! The loyal Purple Poppy Appeal then agreed to fund the rest of the vehicle and we could go shopping! For those of you who have visited our Sanctuary, you will know that we are a little off the beaten track and that for anyone without transport, we are a little difficult to get to as we are not served well by public transport. Our dream of having

our own minibus so that we could offer transport to those who wished to come to the Sanctuary but had no means of getting to us, was becoming a reality!

In October, our new vehicle arrived – adorned with our logo and those of our funders, it seats up to 16 people and has the facility to accommodate two wheelchairs with ramp access. We invited a long-time supporter, Anne Milton MP who had a break from the current political pressures and did the honours by handing over the keys to Jenny. Our friends at Queen Elizabeth Park Care Home joined our team of staff and volunteers, not forgetting Minnie and Gwen who represented our equine members, and Anne Milton cut the ribbon to formally present the bus and declare it ready for use – we can't wait to bring people to the Sanctuary and ensure that we can extend our reach into the community even further!

Thank you to all of you that voted and encouraged others to vote – what an achievement!!



Meet the Team - Freda

We would like to introduce you to Freda, a volunteer that has been with us for a few years at Mane Chance.

She is quite simply amazing – whether she is poo picking a couple of times each week as part of the team, working with Nicky to lead the Duke of Edinburgh students on a Saturday morning, assisting with the community visits of Queen Elizabeth Park Care Home or working at the open Sundays and other events on site, Freda always has a smile and brings with her a wonderful sense of humour. We can rely on Freda for anything – unless she is on the golf course or with her brand-new grand daughter (who is totally adorable), she always tries to be available when we ask and we could not be more grateful. In fact, even when she is on the golf course, Mane Chance is never far from her mind – when Freda was lady-captain of the club the other year, she chose Mane Chance as her charity to support!! How lucky are we?

We are blessed with a great team of volunteers and there are many that go way over and above what we could realistically hope for – Freda is certainly one of those who just give so much to our horses, their home and our community. Thank you, Freda, – for everything – we are more grateful than you know!

And the awards go to...

We were thrilled to find out that we had been nominated for an Animal Star Award at this year's ceremony.



As you may remember, Jenny was herself given an award from them last year for her lifetime's dedication to animal welfare and we were really delighted when this year, the charity also attracted some recognition – it's a great testament to what Jenny has set up and led from the front! Jenny attended the ceremony in Portsmouth on our behalf and was delighted when our name was read out as the winner in the UK Rescue/Rehoming Centre of the Year. Not only had we been nominated, but a panel of judges had looked at all that we do at Mane Chance and had chosen us as the winner. It's a huge honour and we are very proud to accept the award on behalf of the whole team at the Sanctuary who work so hard for the animals and community!

We also have another winner in our family too! Our community volunteer and regular face at the Sanctuary, Di Smart, was also a recipient of a Volunteer Service award last month. Di was invited to a ceremony at County Hall, the headquarters of Surrey County Council and was presented with a medal and certificate to recognise the huge amount of volunteer work that she does and has done, not only for Mane Chance, but for several causes over the years. We are immensely proud of her and thank her for all the hours that she gives to the Sanctuary – whether it's running the merchandise side of the charity, the open days, assisting with the community visits or feeding the chickens! Thank you, Di, – and many congratulations – **the award is very much deserved.**

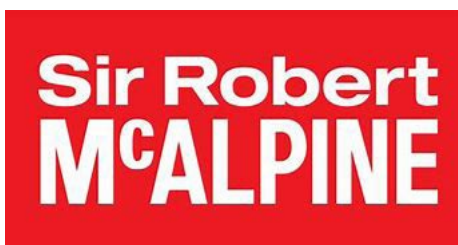
Our new friends

We are so lucky to have forged a relationship with Sir Robert McAlpine, a building and civil engineering company.

They have been working on a major project at Surrey university, building student accommodation and last month were at the point of moving out of the site. At the end of any major building work project, there are always a lot of materials that are unused and no longer required – often in the building industry, these surplus materials end up being wasted. Sir Robert McAlpine are a company that cares about the environmental impact that this wastage has, and have worked with us to organise the donation of many of these items to us at the Sanctuary so that we can use them to improve the site and ensure that they are not put into landfill. From half pallets of bricks,

underground drainage pipes and fittings and even the tarmac from their site office car park and the tea bags from the kitchen, we have taken the items to use ourselves. Obviously, we cannot receive any contaminated items (such as oil-based products) and we have had to get a waste recycling licence to accept the donations – but once that had been sorted, it's a wonderful win win situation. We gain materials to use and the carbon footprint of Sir Robert McAlpine's development is smaller!

We are so grateful to them for working with us so generously.



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And finally...

We are all terribly caught up in the current political uncertainty and it's true that the continued unsettled position of the dreaded Brexit is causing problems for us all. Charities are suffering, there is no doubt, and sadly we are no exception. Understandably, individuals, companies and grant funders are all being sensible and cautious about spending – we are too! But it has resulted in a significant drop in donations and funding for all charities, whatever type they are, and we have felt the pinch as well! We are aware of several animal charities that have not survived the current climate and are in the process of closure, thereby increasing the plight of the animals that they care for – it's a terribly sad situation and we have them in our thoughts. Mane Chance has managed to hold its head above water and the pressure is on to ensure that we remain afloat. But we are stoic and dedicated and look forward to the end of this period of nervousness when hopefully everyone will emerge the other side with renewed vigour and some form of normality is restored – however long it takes!

We still look to expand our care to more animals and to provide more facilities for our community – somehow it feels all the more important to do so now. Not only do we have 35 horses, twelve chickens and one dog that rely on us to do so, but we also have our wonderful staff and community friends that gain so much from being with us!

This situation highlights even more how special our supporters and volunteers are to us. We have never been complacent, but it is at times like these that we become even more aware of the support we receive. We owe a huge thank you from all of us to all of you for sticking with us during this time and for every penny you give towards our cause. We are hugely grateful. And please don't stop!! But please do know how invaluable you are and we thank you from the bottom of our human, equine, canine and phasianine (apparently the word for chickens!!) hearts!

So, as 2019 draws to a close and 2020 rolls in, we are feeling hopeful and our enthusiasm remains high. We will do everything we can to provide the very best care for our animals and to maintain our provision to our visitors.



WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY

MERRY
Christmas

— AND —

A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND DARE WE SAY IT,
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

