

newsletter

MANE CHANCE SANCTUARY



MCS Summer Newsletter - August 2020

Welcome!

Welcome to our Summer newsletter! How did that happen?

It feels like only yesterday that we wrote the Spring edition and certainly, the gap between the two has held some of the strangest times I think any of us have ever experienced.

Sadly, we are not yet out of the woods with coronavirus and all fingers are tightly crossed in hope that we don't suffer a second wave of infection. May we take the opportunity to send our very best wishes to all of you – particularly those of you who may have suffered personally at the hands of Covid-19. We know that some of our larger Mane Chance family have lost family or friends to the virus or suffered a bout themselves, so we hope you are finding a way through a very difficult time – you are in our thoughts.

We also know how emotionally frightening and challenging lockdown has been and send our best to everyone who has had moments of struggle over the past few months. We are now thankful to be hopefully slowly clawing our way back to some form of normality – however that may look. Certainly, it was a very welcome site as a few volunteer cars started to trundle down the drive several weeks ago. We are being sensibly cautious with reopening and taking it one step at a time, but it's been so lovely to see friendly faces again – everyone was sorely missed.

It also feels very fitting to take a moment to say a huge thank you to our on-site staff who all, without any fuss or panic, changed their routine, rosters and duties to ensure that the horses were well-cared for throughout the pandemic – they went over and above and we are hugely grateful to them all for their care of the animals – and the charity as a whole.

We look forward to continuing to open and restart more of those events and sessions that we have missed, but it is

likely to take a while longer. In the meantime, we are working hard to think outside of the box and find other ways to bring in income and reduce expenditure – doing our best to ensure that Mane Chance comes out the other side of this experience for many more horses and people to benefit from!

We hope that we have been good custodians of Mane Chance whilst you have all been away and can't wait to share it all with you again...



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Could you spare a moment...

to help us win £10,000 from Animal Friends Pet Insurance?

We are asking for your help again – but this time, it's something that you can do from your sofa, your car, the park or your garden!! And it doesn't cost a penny!

Our long-time pals at Animal Friends Pet Insurance are celebrating reaching 1 million live policies and are running a facebook vote of ten animal charities to receive some funding! The top 5 charities will receive a huge £10,000 each and the second 5 charities will receive £2,000 each.

Please would you vote for us? And also share and encourage your friends to do so too?! It only takes a second...**It's also easy to do:**

- Visit their facebook page via this [link](#)

Big Summer Virtual Open Day

Sunday 16th August - 12 noon via YouTube

It's been really disappointing for us to accept that we are not able to hold our annual open day this year. Even until a month or so ago, we were trying to see what we could do to welcome you all on site, but restrictions have not been lifted enough for us to open yet and we just wouldn't want to put anyone at risk – thus the decision was made to cancel!

But we are not defeated by Covid-19!

Instead of you all coming to the Sanctuary, we would like to bring the Sanctuary to you – wherever you may be.

On Sunday 16th August at 12 noon, we will be launching our virtual open day – a programme filmed and edited by our team to welcome you on site through the wonders of technology!

Already, we have shot some segments at the Sanctuary – introducing some of the horses, our rehabilitation techniques

- The top post is the voting post – click in the comments to leave a message
- Type @ManeChanceSanctuary
- Type a short sentence on why you wish to vote for us

It's really important that you tag us with the @ and type a sentence of support – otherwise your vote won't be counted!

At times like these, opportunities like this are even more important than usual – for us to receive this money would be amazing in this current fundraising climate and it would make such a difference.

Please spare a moment to vote – and then if you can, please share the link to your friends, that would also be amazing!

Once you have done that, then give yourself a pat on the back for doing all you can to give us the best chance of reaching that top 5!

and lots of other fun facts! Local patrons Hilary O'Neil, Sara Crowe, Wendy Turner-Webster and Lauren St John were able to join us and take part too. We have also been hugely supported by some of our patrons and friends who are a little further afield including Martin Shaw, Beau Dermott, Mark Curry, Damien Edwards, Vicki Michelle and Margaret Keys who have sent messages of support.

There are other guests too who you will love – but we are not going to spoil the surprise... you will have to watch to find out – and you won't be disappointed either!

The purpose of the event is to allow us to keep you in touch and to share our news – but also it serves as a big thank you for all your support – without it, we



Thank you so much in advance for any votes you can get us! And remember to write a sentence about Mane Chance after you have tagged us, because if you don't, your vote won't count!

We have not got long - closing date for votes is **Friday 14th August!**

simply wouldn't have anything to film!

All you need to do is put by an hour or so of your time, book your place on the sofa or garden chair, make a cuppa (or something else!) and enjoy – we hope that it will go some way to sharing a little piece of Mane Chance with you all – and we can't wait to get it finished!

The link will appear on our website, our social media channels and we will email our newsletter supporters too – so hopefully it will be easy for you to link into and enjoy!

We are hugely grateful to Architon LLP and Fred Adair Media for sponsoring us for the cost of the filming and editing meaning that we haven't had to spend a penny of charity money on the production – huge thank you to them!



National Animal Day concert in aid of Mane Chance

**Sunday 23rd August – 8:00pm
– via YouTube**

We are thrilled that our friends at The War Horse Memorial are also continuing to support us throughout this strange time. Teaming up with The Animal Purple Poppy Fund, who celebrate their National Animal day on August 23rd, they are producing an online concert to raise money for Mane Chance. All donations from the event will come directly to us at the Sanctuary and will go towards keeping our horses and community work going!

They have lined up some super performers for the concert including Marti Pellow – the singer latterly of Wet Wet Wet with the most amazing voice (and eyes!!) - Brian Conley, Joe Pasquale, Jess Robinson, 'Britain's Got Talent' Winner Colin Thackery, Pete Howarth and many more.

If that's not enough, the event also features our very own Jenny Seagrove and is hosted by our Patron Hilary O'Neil.

The concert will stream on YouTube from 8:00pm on Sunday 23rd August. We will put links to the concert on our website and social media, so it's easy for you to find!

In this time of virtual events, this looks set to be a wonderful evening of entertainment from the comfort of your own home.



We hope you put the time in your diary, sit back and enjoy it!



Our horses

Seemingly unaware of the current situation in the world, our horses are thriving – and that's despite everything the weather has thrown at us too. We have tried to keep the herds moving across the site, ensuring that we use as much of the grass as possible and at the same time, keep areas rested. The distinct lack of rain has proved testing at times and our fields resemble the plains of Africa more than the lush, green English countryside that we would like. But with everything else going on, that doesn't seem to be the worst of things to cope with!

Healthwise, the horses look great – our oldies have the odd niggles of course and we do have a number who have come to us with sensitivities and illnesses that we need to manage, but generally, they are all in fine fettle. The horses always look lovely in the summer when they are sleek and shiny having lost all their winter coats, but this year in particular, they are simply gleaming – even Horus who is probably the equivalent age of a 90 year old human is resplendent in his summer coat!

Weight-wise, the team have worked really hard to keep the horses trim and even when the weather is the perfect condition for a flare-up, we have kept laminitis at bay for all of our usual suspects. It's testament to their overall condition that those with illnesses have them under control – even Timmy has spent quite a bit of time off his own sparse laminitis track (because of his Equine Metabolic Syndrome) and has enjoyed grass grazing for some weeks.

Our Welsh mares have simply come on leaps and bounds over the past few months too and now that the volunteers are back, they are lapping up the attention that their increased confidence allows. Considering they were effectively wild horses when they came to us, having never been handled, they now not only enjoy a groom and scratches, but can be found out on the local bridle path being taken for enrichment walks by staff and volunteers alike – enjoying their own horse-human connections and foraging trips with the team – my, they have come a long way!

Our new arrivals just prior to lockdown are doing well. Anna has settled in well

with the Shetlands and has struck up a friendship with Rocky – yes, you read right, Rocky! Our little boy, Rocky, who has trouble striking up any relationship with horses and humans alike, now has a best friend – it's lovely! Poppet has had a few health issues for us to overcome – she arrived a little underweight and also with a skin condition that needed attention. Her weight is now good and she decided that even though she is a Shetland, she quite liked the Welsh mares and has therefore settled into their herd as if she had known them for years! But the skin irritation that she suffers has proven to be a little more of a challenge and we haven't quite won the battle yet. It seems to be related to an allergy of perhaps midge bites, but it's not the same as the sweet-itch that we manage with Daisy. She is on anti-histamine, essential oils, we have some steroids to use in case of a flare up and she is sporting a rather lovely fly rug, so we are trying a few approaches and will monitor her for progress – as with any new horse that we accept, it's a case of gradually trying things and learning about them as quickly as possible so that we can help effectively.



Meet the Team

Taryn joined us at the beginning of the year as a Community Groom. It was quite a moment for us as we had just expanded the community team to promote Frith, our Groom, into the same position. Our community work had increased so much that Nicky needed support - both girls spend half their week looking after the horses and the other half running community groups.

From the moment Taryn arrived, she slotted into the team very quickly. Even in her first few weeks, before we were so rudely interrupted by the lockdown,

she had established a roster of community work, both as one of the Chance2Be practitioners and as a staff member hosting small group and 1-2-1 sessions, excelling at both.

Thankfully, we are now able to resume some smaller sessions, so Taryn is back working with our community and already making a real difference to those that she hosts. We are so delighted that she has joined us and look forward to a long employment with her – transforming the lives of both our horses and the humans that she looks after!



Our site

If you have a lawn, I am sure you will share our frustration! We have not had nearly enough rain at the Sanctuary and our fields are looking a little brown to say the least. It seems to be the way now – the summers are getting hotter and drier which is fine unless you rely on Doctor grass to keep your animals healthy! Our annual routine is changing accordingly, of course, and we often have to feed our herds hay in the summer as well as the winter to keep them topped up – there just simply isn't enough otherwise!

However, we have managed to complete all our site work as planned (a farmer in a tractor is expert at social distancing!) to try and give the land a little TLC and a fighting chance of growing, and our grooming team are great at moving the herds around to eke out the best of the grass wherever possible.

We always joke at the Sanctuary that our farmer is constantly moaning about the weather and how it is never doing what we need it to do – a clear sign of global warming perhaps? But now we hear ourselves doing exactly the same.....oh dear! :)

Our events

There is still much uncertainty surrounding our events – it's obvious that those planned for the summer won't go ahead, but it also seems that some of the Christmas ones are perhaps at risk too. We continue to plan for them and will keep you fully informed, but the reality is that all the open Sundays will be cancelled at least for the rest of the year.

Not to be deterred, we are trying to come up with other ideas to keep some form of plan in place.

This month, we are resuming sponsor days – not the usual group sociable afternoons for sponsors to visit their chosen horses, but timed sessions with the grooms – we will find a way!

Our thinking caps are well and truly on for other ways we can open to you, our supporters.

Please bear with us whilst we work through this time and we hope to see you on site or at a venue soon, meeting in person as friends once more!





Our community

As you would expect, this side of our work disappeared overnight with the government announcement in March of the lockdown.

We had been given a little warning for the school groups so were able, in the last week we were open, to give them sessions that consolidated what they had learnt and 'finish' the course for them. However, for many of the other community visitors it felt rather an abrupt halt to their sessions with us, albeit temporary.

We are hoping to work with a number of schools in the Autumn offering Chance2Be sessions with those who need some support and are in discussions with them regarding change of time, social bubbles etc. Hopefully, we will be able to make it work for them and again, fingers crossed, the Autumn term of school can go ahead as planned.

For some young people who already have a few struggles, lockdown has been hard and has caused a rise in their symptoms. To that end, we have been able to rejig some of our staffing and offer some 1-2-1 sessions with children that have been referred to us as needing help. With smaller sessions, we can keep to the social

distancing and safety restrictions and whilst some of them might only attend with us during the summer holidays, others are looking more long term. Hopefully, we have found a way to reach those who need us now, working alongside the coronavirus restrictions and winning the battle.

Similarly, we have been able to use the same approach for vet students who need to attend work placements in order to complete their study years and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme students who have had their volunteering interrupted. Slowly, slowly, with reduced numbers and increased cleaning processes, we are finding a way to help them complete their work – and to ensure that they can continue to win their award or progress onto the next year of study.

Whilst all of this is brilliant news, and we are very happy to assist with all those that we can, we are not yet back to normal. Group visits are still our stumbling block where too many households would be together and breach the restrictions – so open days and group visits are still not possible. We will only ever feel we have got back to normal when they start again and we can offer the community respite visits once more. Patience is a virtue...

AQA Unit Award Scheme

We did have an unexpected positive to the lockdown period. It enabled the team to spend some time working on the AQA unit awards that we hope to offer from September. The units are written to enable our young people, who might not achieve in the more conventional way, to work towards different targets. When they reach a target, they are awarded a certificate as a celebration of achievement. Nationally recognised, whilst they are not qualifications as such, it means that those with emotional difficulties,

learning difficulties or physical difficulties are given the chance to succeed in another way. Over the past few months, we have written over 80 different units for different ages including horse care, chicken care, dog care, site maintenance, life cycles, health and safety and more – all the areas that we can cover at the Sanctuary. Every unit is underpinned with the same theme – being calm, considerate and kind to the animal and oneself – encouraging that experience of gentleness and self-worth that we share with all our teaching. We are so excited to be providing AQA awards and are also very proud that this is one thing that Covid-19 did not manage to disrupt!



On behalf of us all... a thank you from Jenny

I don't think I can recall a more challenging time for our wonderful charity since I started it back in 2011. Then we had nothing, except a lot of hungry animals who depended on us for everything, and all that we were given was a bonus. People were amazing and got us going and trusted us that we would build something special. And we have. I am so proud of what this charity had become. It is a real force in the community and a caring and inspiring voice for the animals – especially our horses. That is down to all of you our supporters but also to the wonderful team we have who work so hard to keep the horses safe and well, our community visitors looked after, the site functioning as it should and the charity working to best practice.

All of that is why I am struggling so much with this current pandemic – It is threatening the very long-term existence of our Sanctuary and all that we have achieved.

We managed to keep going through lockdown and now we are opening very carefully and slowly and welcoming back some of our community visitors with, hopefully, some schools joining in the Autumn. We have reserves, but these will not last forever and if we have to continue cancelling our fundraising events well into next year, then things could become quite challenging. All of which leads me to what I wanted to say when I started writing this little section...

We have done some virtual fundraising campaigns and every single one of them has been brilliantly supported by you - our supporters. We are so grateful. It is hard to keep asking, especially when we know that everyone is struggling in one way or another and many of you may have lost your jobs, but every time we do ask, you respond, and it is incredibly humbling. Together we will get through this and come out the other end. We have to. Anything else is unthinkable!



So, thank you for your support; thank you for caring and thank you for your generosity. It means so much to us.

Stay safe, keep well and see you as soon as we can!

With love from, **Jenny**

Thank you

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