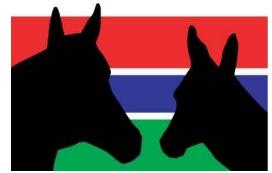




The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust

Fighting Poverty – Feeding Families

Registered Charity No: 1096814



Autumn 2021

A challenging year...

It seems that along with many institutions, 2021 has been probably one of our most challenging years ever. We have incurred large expenses on repairs, replacements and maintenance. We have been faced with huge health challenges with outbreaks of distemper, parvo virus and trypanosomiasis. We have also lost many good friends. The pandemic has meant we have been unable to recruit volunteer vets to share the load so it has been a really tough year for us all. Hopefully that is all behind us and we would like to reflect more on all that we have achieved and our exciting plans for the future.

It is our lovely supporters who have kept us going, with their generosity, kindness and moral support. Vets with Horsepower held a magnificent continuing professional development marathon and the money they raised for us will enable us to purchase a replacement vehicle. It was also a big morale boost at the British Equine Veterinary Congress when Professor Knottenbelt, who leads Vets with Horsepower, came to our stand wearing our GHDT uniform polo shirt! He is very definitely part of the GHDT family!



This year we have made more shipments than ever before thanks to your generosity and helped in no small way by the incredible donations of dog and cat food given by ANIMAL SUPPORT ANGELS. When the going gets tough, it is all the wonderful people and organisations who give their help and who go the extra mile for us that keeps us going and helps us dare to plan ahead.

We are hoping to set up an online training course for large and small animal Veterinary Technicians with the help of a number of veterinarians to increase the knowledge and skills of the veterinary paravets who work in The Gambia. This will build veterinary capacity in The Gambia and hopefully help to improve animal welfare at the same time.

We are also planning to embark on the Dog Project where we will initially expand our teaching in schools on rabies prevention and a better understanding of dog behaviour. This has been planned by an experienced and well qualified dog behaviourist, Ali Scott, who has given a great deal of her time planning the lessons. We plan to train a display team made up of Gambian rescue dogs to demonstrate to people just how special these dogs are. We are still trying to find funding, so if you know of anyone who may be interested in sponsoring this very exciting project, we would be happy to send you the full proposal.

We shall need more voluntary help and you can find more details inside this newsletter, but please be assured of a very warm welcome if you choose to join us. We promise you will not be bored!

It is going to be a busy and exciting year ahead, so we are trying to shake off the gremlins. With your support, we will think positive and embrace the New Year! We hope you will join us in our efforts to build veterinary capacity, improve animal welfare and fight poverty.



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Letter from the Director, Heather Armstrong.

When my late sister Stella and I first started the charity, needless to say, we met a few challenges. If I ever dared to complain about it, Stella's stock reply was "No one said it was going to be easy Heather". After almost 20 years, although I never anticipated it would be easy, I never quite expected all the challenges to come at the same time and no one ever said it would be quite so hard either.

The gremlins were out in force on my recent visit, the aging vehicles all broke down at the same time, the last stocks of hay we had became mouldy and had to be thrown out before the new season hay was ready. This meant buying in extra supplies of bran and any forage we could to fill the gap causing additional expense. Our solar energy system broke down, so not only was there no light but we were unable to run blood tests or X-ray animals in need. The Wi-Fi would not work, the tsetse flies were out in force and all the animals suffered from trypanosomiasis, including the local dogs which we have never seen before. All this has meant huge expense and the reserves we had have been severely dented so we need your support more than ever.

In addition to these challenges we have lost some very good friends, our wonderful yard manager Samba, lost his fight with cancer and is sorely missed. Liz Serinken, our web master, has decided to retire, Paul Jatta our yard manager from Makasutu decided to try his hand in pastures new and Adama left us to study abroad as he was fortunate enough to win a scholarship. We have also lost some very special animals. The heartache of losing so many good friends, both two and four legged, has taken its toll on us all.

It has been a time of great sadness, worry, expense and change but on the plus side more and more people are seeking help for their animals and although we still have a great deal to do, the tide is turning and we are seeing positive change.

We hope that you have a very Happy Christmas and that 2022 will be much better for us all.

Best wishes

Heather



SAMBA BALDEH



Samba worked with us for many years at our Sambel centre. Sadly he became sick in January 2021 with what turned out to be cancer and he died on the 26th September. He was a brilliant paravet and incredibly good with the animals. He had a magnificent sense of humour and could lighten the darkest of moments. We are heartbroken to lose him both as a staff member and a much loved and respected friend. He is badly missed and our condolences go to his family.

Rest in Peace Samba, there will be many grateful animals who appreciated your care waiting to greet you.



World Animal Day

The Quran contains many references to and endorses good animal welfare. Recently one of the Animal Welfare Advocates mentioned how thrilled he was when he heard his Imaam giving a sermon on the subject of animal welfare. We decided to invite a group of Imaams to our centre to see the work that we do and how it relates to what is said in the Quran. The Imaams visited us on World Animal Day and meetings were held with our staff, the Animal Welfare Advocates and Dr. Daffeh who is a high profile proponent of animal welfare in The Gambia. Following their time at Makasutu some of the Imaams also joined our teams on panel discussions held by several radio stations. It was gratifying to have The Gambia's religious leaders endorsing our work and being prepared to promote the teachings of the Holy Book in their sermons in order to promote good animal welfare. We look forward to working closely with them in the future.



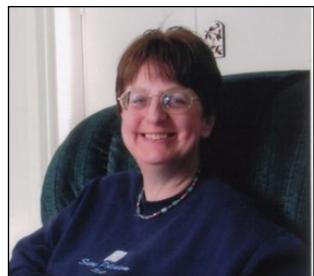
London Marathon

We would like to give our very sincere thanks to our very own Bea Milne for running the London Marathon dressed as a donkey. She far exceeded her fundraising target thanks to our supporters and her friends. When asked whether she wouldn't get too hot running like that, she pointed out that working donkeys all over the world carry out their often heavy work in far higher temperatures and they have no choice in the matter. Thank you so much Bea!



Liz Serinken

Many years ago, at the beginning of this century, when we were setting up our charity, we were desperate for someone to help us with a website. A lovely lady called Sue Robb, set up a small temporary site for us, but she was a busy lady with a career and simply did not have the time to maintain it. Fate was smiling on us, as by chance, we met Liz who lives in Canada and who offered to build the website for us in a voluntary capacity. She is superbly well organised and is without doubt an integral part of the growth of this charity. She has held online auctions for us and promoted us and is very much loved and valued member of the GHDT family. Liz is moving house soon and has decided that the time has come to retire. We are so sad to lose her and she will be badly missed. Thank you Liz for all you have done for our little charity, through your selfless work over all of these years. Countless lives have changed for the better thanks to you and we hope that you and Nur enjoy your beautiful new home and your new life.



Liz will be a very hard act to follow, but if anyone would like take over as webmaster in a voluntary capacity we would love to hear from you.

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Crocodiles.

We have come to accept that we can be called at any time of day or night for anything. Recently we were called to rescue a crocodile that had been caught in a fence. When you work with animals you tend to be aware of the sharp bits and we are pleased to say the crocodile was safely rescued and returned to the river without any injuries to himself or his rescuers. It is rewarding that the people who found this creature took the trouble to call us rather than harm it. This is one of many examples we have had this year that positive change in animal welfare is happening.



Ding dong bell, donkey in the well.

We were recently called to rescue a donkey who had somehow managed to fall down a partially dug well. The team went out immediately. It took a little organising, but where there is a will there is a way and they used their ingenuity to release the donkey unharmed from the well. Needless to say, the community were also advised to cover the well to avoid future accidents.



More education needed.

It is concerning that we have had several animals that have been into our centre for treatment and who have gone home in good condition to happy owners only to be returned to us in appalling condition within a few months. We clearly need to find a better way to communicate with the owners to better achieve some human behaviour change. It is so unfair on the animals and our staff, who invest so much of their time and care in treating these animals. These are two recent cases which have returned to our care recently. We are hoping that there will soon be changes in the law that will enable us to do more to prevent this.



If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter
or would prefer to receive it by email, please
let us know so that we don't post it
unnecessarily to you.



Jiminy Cricket (our little miracle)

Emily was called out one night to a little dog who was having seizures and who was being stoned by children. We are not sure which came first, the stoning or the seizures. Children frequently try to kill dogs who behave abnormally due to the risk of rabies. The dog was rescued and taken to Makasutu and kept in quarantine. It soon became apparent that it was not rabies but the dog was totally blind. He was an extremely sweet natured little chap and was christened Jiminy Cricket. With love and good care Jiminy flourished and somehow managed to graduate to being a house dog. One day as Emily was sweeping the floor she suddenly realised that Jiminy was following the broom and it became apparent that at least some of his sight had been restored. Jiminy is a young and playful little soul and is a delight to have around. He loves cushions and they have a habit of "spontaneously exploding" when he is close to them but he is such an endearing little character that it is very easy to forgive him.



Animal Welfare Advocates

Some years ago a group of students came to attend a workshop on Animal Welfare at our Sambel Kunda Centre. Initially they were not unnaturally a little wary of all the animals but by the end of the week they were even sharing their breakfast bread with the donkeys. We learnt as much from them as they learned from us and it was a very special week. They went on to establish an organisation called The Animal Welfare Advocates The Gambia and they have gone from strength to strength and are doing outstanding work all around the country. Many have now graduated from College and University and have been posted throughout the country and they are continuing their outreach work in their communities and schools. We work closely with them and they frequently refer animals in need of help that they have found. They are now establishing sub groups of Advocates in schools and will shortly have an inter schools competition. This group don't just talk about issues, they get out there and are really active. They frequently visit us and help us out. This is how the ripples spread and they have our utmost respect and admiration.



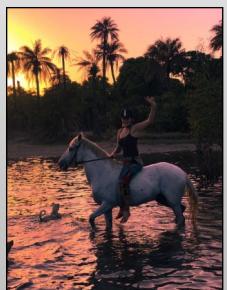
Petplan Awards

We are very proud to have been nominated for the second year running as Charity Team of the year in the Petplan Awards and we would like to extend our thanks to whoever nominated us. Our staff work very hard and achieve so much in difficult circumstances and it means a lot to us all that you have taken the time to do this. We would also like to thank Emily, Megan and the teams in Sambel Kunda and Makasutu for their incredible efforts and hard work this year, it is much appreciated.



MAXI

Many of you who follow us on social media will be aware of a gorgeous grey horse called Maxi who featured in many of our pictures. He and Emily had a particularly close bond and would ride out together most evenings. He had come to us when his owner was unable to keep him. He was a very empathetic boy but hated to be in a stable and did his best to smash the doors by pawing at them. This led to him living out in the paddock 24/7. Sadly he recently developed trypanosomiasis and became very ill. He was treated but the parasite appears to have crossed the blood brain barrier and he became a neurological case. It all happened very fast and he was dead within hours of the first neurological signs developing. Needless to say we are all in total shock and disbelief. Our hearts go out to Emily and Mariama who previously cared for him. He was a very special boy. Rest in Peace Maxi.



FACTS AND FIGURES

We are very grateful to Emily, Megan and the team for their incredible work this year. The figures for the first 10 months of 2021 show that we treated 2,045 animals at Makasutu and a further 876 on mobile clinics and call outs. We managed to do 134 castrations and 87 spays, despite there being so few vets coming out. We treated 15 cases of Tetanus, 61 cases of Parvo Virus, 20 Cases of Distemper. We saw 8 cases of Rabies and gave 235 rabies vaccinations at a total cost of £1,185 . We dealt with 61 road traffic accidents, 48 fractures and 24 cases of Epizootic Lymphangitis. Many of these cases required intensive care nursing which requires round the clock care. This is a great achievement for a small charity that gets by on such a small income and with the help of volunteers.

Calling All Vets

The last year has made us realise that something really does need to be done to reduce the rising number of cats and dogs in the country. In partnership with the Department of Livestock Services we would like to hold as many neutering clinics as we possibly can so we are looking for small animal vets to help us. We are also looking for equine and farm vets to help provide CPD to our staff and to Government fieldworkers. If you fancy some time in the sun this winter, we can guarantee you an interesting and varied caseload and a rewarding stay, knowing that you have contributed to building veterinary capacity, relieved suffering and made a positive impact on animal welfare. Please contact us if you are interested in helping us.



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Climate change is affecting us.

We have had serious problems with our hay supply. Although we purchased enough hay to see us through until the new season, thanks to a wonderful benefactor, our last 2-3 weeks supply became mouldy with the high humidity we were experiencing at the end of the rains. The rains were strange this year. They started and then stopped so that the seeds many had planted during the “planting rains” died. They then had very heavy rains. After harvesting it rained again wetting the drying hay and potentially causing mould and aflatoxins to build up. Our general manager has been scouring the country for hay that has not been rained on and the first few lorries have now delivered their precious cargoes. With the increasing number of animals coming to us we need as much hay as we can get but it is becoming expensive and we need a great deal of it to feed all the animals that come into our care. If anyone can help us with our hay appeal, we would be very grateful indeed. If you would like to make a donation to the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust you can do so in a variety of ways:

- ONLINE - Via <https://www.justgiving.com/ghdt> or via the 'Online Donations' tab on our website
- VIA FACEBOOK - Simply click on the 'SHOP NOW' button and follow the instructions
- VIA POST - Simply send an old fashioned cheque to our postal address
- PAYPAL ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk

Thank you!



Join our team!

We never anticipated how much attitudes regarding animal welfare would change in such a relatively short time. We receive daily requests now to go and work in different areas to help the animals and their owners. The work load has increased dramatically and the staff are stretched to their limits. We need more long-term volunteers to help ease the workload and to train Gambian counterparts

If you have a HUGE sense of adventure, want to make a difference to the lives of animals and people, if you are willing to share your knowledge and teach, if you have a positive attitude and are prepared to go the extra mile for your patients, if you are willing to learn about our culture and our ethos, we are looking for two veterinary nurses, preferably one equine and one small animal nurse. We are also looking for someone who has experience in project management who would be willing to work alongside a Gambian counterpart and train them to take over the position when you leave. We provide airfares, insurance, board and lodging plus pocket money if you are prepared to stay with us for a year. Please apply to the email address at the bottom of the page with your CV.



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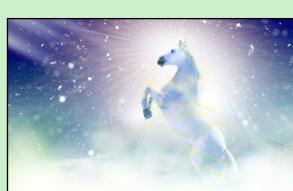
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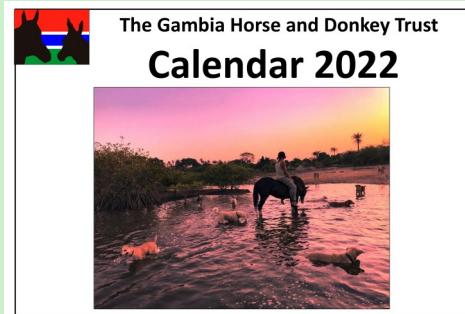
Christmas cards: £4.25 a pack of 5 including P&P

Christmas cards: £4.25 a pack of 4 including P&P



And special for 2022 as requested by our supporters:

£8 plus P&P



Looking for that special Christmas present for someone who has everything and needs nothing???

Look at our website for some lovely ideas to help those who have nothing and need everything.

<http://www.gambiahorseandonkey.org.uk/ghdtshop.htm>

Animal Sponsorship, Meaningful Gifts available.



Thank you.....

We are so grateful to all our supporters. We simply could not survive without you, so you are as much a part of our team as our staff are. We have made more shipments this year than ever before thanks to your incredible generosity with goods donated and we have been able to make those shipments thanks to your financial donations. It is impossible to name everyone individually though we are incredibly grateful to each and every one of you, but we must give special thanks to The Aqualia Foundation, Vets with Horsepower and The Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust, the Animal Defence Trust and Animal Support Angels for their wonderful support of our work. Thank you ALL so much!

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