

**SUSSEX HORSE RESCUE TRUST**  
Hempstead Farm  
Hempstead Lane  
Uckfield  
East Sussex TN22 3DL  
*Registered Charity No. 297576*

07742 870819/01825 762010  
sussexhorsetrust@yahoo.com



## **REQUIREMENTS FOR LOANING A DONKEY**

Please read thoroughly and ensure that you understand the following requirements prior to completing an application to loan through us. If you are successful in a loan application, please retain this requirements document for future reference.

To have a donkey on loan from Sussex Horse Rescue Trust, we expect you to:-

- Provide adequate shelter with clean bedding to protect from rain, wind, sun, and flies
- Ensure a constant supply of fresh, clean water from a safe container (not a pond or river)
- Visit our donkey at least twice daily and check for injuries, lameness, etc
- Turn out daily, without a headcollar on
- Ensure that our donkey has constant companionship of their own kind
- Make sure that there are no poisonous plants in the field or boundaries, i.e. ragwort, hemlock, acorns, sycamores, etc
- Regularly check all fencing and buildings for damage, and repair any damage promptly
- Have regular visits from a qualified farrier, and follow a recognised worming program
- Have visits from a qualified equine dentist at least once per year
- Take appropriate action to ensure that the donkey does not become overweight and develop laminitis
- Leave the equine its natural protection of mane, tail, and feathers
- Take out insurance to cover public liability (compulsory), and vet fees (recommended)
- Ensure that our donkey receives prompt veterinary attention when needed
- We do not loan donkeys for driving or riding, therefore you must ensure that neither of these activities are undertaken by our donkey
- Consider the requirements of our donkey as an individual, and ensure that care and management are appropriate
- Ensure that you offer our equine the same level of commitment as you would do if it was your own. Many of our equines have suffered physical and emotional trauma and we have undertaken often long and fraught journeys to their rehabilitation. They require stable, committed, caring, long term homes. We do not loan equines for short term companionship

**If you do all of these things, then we believe that you really do care for our animal**

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## CARING FOR DONKEYS

Are you prepared for a long term commitment? A donkey's life expectancy could be up to 40 years, and it is not in the interest of their welfare to regularly change homes.

This leaflet is intended to give only very basic information for the care and feeding of a donkey. We strongly recommend that you read up further on Stable Management and Husbandry and consult with your Veterinary Surgeon and Farrier regarding hoof and health problems.

**Donkeys** cannot carry heavy weights. Donkeys younger than five years are not mature enough to carry full weight, and no animal under three years should be asked to carry any weight at all. SHRT do not allow their donkeys to be ridden or driven under any circumstances.

**Donkeys** must be kept with at least one other of their own kind, and can become extremely distressed if separated, which can lead to injury due to the donkey's drive and determination to escape by any means possible to be reunited with its companion. If they are not happy, or are left alone, disastrous results can follow. Do not take any chances - if for any reason one donkey must be left alone then a safe, well enclosed building is advisable to safely temporarily restrain a donkey without fear of injury.

**Donkeys** need half to one acre of grazing per animal, preferably divided into two so that one half can be rested and cleaned up. You must have the facility to restrict the grazing during the spring, summer, and autumn months as donkeys can be very prone to weight gain and laminitis. Sudden dieting in donkeys can be potentially fatal due to a condition called hyperlipaemia, which mobilises fatty deposits around the body and overloads the kidneys and liver, causing organ failure. Donkeys should have a balanced diet based on grazing, with supplementary forage in winter. It is not generally necessary to give donkeys any sort of grain based feed. Donkeys are not native to this country and do not have the same waterproof coats and resistance to our English weather as many horses and ponies. A shelter giving a minimum of four square yards covered accommodation per animals is essential, with free passage in and out through a sufficiently wide opening. Such shelter must be kept clean.

**Donkeys** must be regularly wormed, and are not weighed in the same manner as horses and ponies. Special weigh tapes may be purchased from the Donkey Sanctuary, or download a copy of their worming chart online. Donkeys are prone to lungworm and must be treated accordingly, and are sensitive to many of the harsher wormers on the market, i.e. Equest Pramox, which can make them very ill.

**Donkeys** can be less expressive than horses and ponies which often leads to the belief that they are not intelligent or sensitive. In fact, donkeys are very intelligent with superb long term memories and are very susceptible to both physical and psychological stress. However, they are very stoic and problems can often be overlooked until it has become critical.

**Do not** allow passers-by to feed the donkey under any circumstances. You may find endless people attracted to the donkeys who will feed bread, apples, carrots, sweets, cakes, etc which are not good for the animals. Plastic bags and other rubbish can accidentally be eaten, with often fatal results. These same visitors can damage the fencing, and donkeys are quick to spot a weak place to escape and often harm themselves, even causing road accidents.

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All of our animals are microchipped and insurance is compulsory under the terms of our loan agreement.

Do not set up a pattern of giving titbits - only give treats as clearly defined reward, or ideally, only before you leave for the night. Donkeys are usually trusting, generous, loving creatures who will give huge amounts of pleasure if you are able to maintain a sensible pattern and routine of care.

Many of the animals here at SHRT have individual problems and personality quirks. Many of the donkeys we have available for loan have come from abroad, and have no reason to trust or relate to humans. Many people who request to loan a donkey believe that they are sweet and gentle creatures, and indeed they can be very rewarding, however, they also require the same level of care as any other equine - regular farriery, dentistry, worming, grooming, socialising/companionship, shelter, veterinary treatment, and many of our donkeys require sedation for the dentist and/or farrier; even worming them can be a challenge.

When rescued animals arrive here, they are usually traumatised in one way or another from poor treatment and/or a lengthy journey to get here. On arrival, all animals are assessed and their immediate needs met in terms of dentistry, farriery, worming, lice treatment, treatment of wounds and injuries, etc, so their first impressions of us often relate to unpleasantness. Once they are integrated into our herds they have free access to hay, grass, water, and shelter. These animals then have no reason to approach or investigate humans who in their mind have violated them. It can take months and sometimes even years to create and build the trust which then makes them easier to handle. With over 70 equines and other animals here at the sanctuary, we often cannot give each individual this dedicated time on a daily basis - as long as their everyday needs are met, then we attend to the more serious issues.

Sadly, we have had recent experiences, whereby three donkeys in different loan homes were critically ill, but the loaners had not recognised the severity of the animals' problems. It is therefore now a condition of our loaning agreement, that all loaners of donkeys use our vet, Duncan Harrison of Priors Farm, Forest Row, for any hoof or health issues.

We rarely rescue a problem free animal. If you genuinely feel that you can offer our donkeys a truly loving, caring, and knowledgeable home then we would love to hear from you via our application process online.