

## FDHP DVD

Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony DVD "The year of the Dartmoor Hill Pony" is available on our online website Shop with free p&p. It's a beautiful insight into the ponies life on Dartmoor and wonderfully narrated by Brian Blessed.

# Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony

## Summer Newsletter 2020



## Donations to the Friends

To make donations to the Friends and help us keep Dartmoor as we know and love it, by supporting the ponies at [www.friendsofthedartmoorhillpony.co.uk](http://www.friendsofthedartmoorhillpony.co.uk) and make your donation via the Charity Checkout button if you are a tax payer (to enable us to claim Gift Aid) or the Donate Button if not.

Registered Charity Number 1141045

## Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony, getting support for all the ponies on Dartmoor

**International Homes** Since last September we have found good homes for 13 ponies in the UK and a further 56 homes in Germany. In total we have exported more than 200 ponies to Germany, where they are much loved and enjoyed. It never ceases to amaze us how brilliantly our new owners overseas manage to train even the most difficult of our ponies and that ensures they will have a happy and fulfilling life. Their patience and success with even the most challenging of ponies is amazing. We are delighted to work with these talented horse tamers/trainers.

Overseas Videos posted onto our Facebook page have shown DHP ponies Liberty training, competing in dressage competitions, jumping and generally making us proud of the ponies and enjoying that the ponies from the hills of Dartmoor are so appreciated.

We must also thank our transporters Parkers International who do an amazing job getting the ponies over to Germany, and to see the ponies getting out of the transporter at the other end looking well, calm and content is a tribute to their care and expertise. Our German friends are paying more than £1,000 for each Dartmoor Hill Pony, which includes all our pre-transportation Vet checks, paperwork and the transportation costs, and they are happy to do so as they have recognised their true value, lets hope we can also achieve this closer to home while we still have the opportunity to do so.

Finally thanks must go to Sandra Parlow and her team in Germany to whom we are eternally grateful for all their efforts and time on our ponies behalf.



## Finding ponies homes off the moor

If you are interested please visit our website [www.wildtowonderful.org](http://www.wildtowonderful.org) to contact us for more information. We take great care in matching temperament size and skills to your requirements. We help transport ponies to their new homes, arranging lift sharing to keep costs down where ever possible. We are very proud to say we have managed to home over 8,000 ponies since Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony charity started. Owners stories and successes about the Hill Ponies are shared on our facebook page.

## Foster Mums

In the time of COVID19 lock down, we have to give a very big THANK YOU to the foster Mums who have helped out when we had numerous ponies still at the Farm because they could not go to their new homes, things got quite tough. Thank you to Jane for taking three tiny little ones to care for, and to Ali and her sister Marina in Cornwall for taking another half dozen. They did such a good job with 20 ponies last year and we were so pleased to send them some more. Finally thank you to SJ who has taken on a sweet piebald to foster for us.



As Jane says "Fostering the ponies gives me the opportunity to offer the foals a stepping stone from them leaving the moor and their mothers to becoming whatever role they will have in their life, whether that is as a riding pony, companion pony or therapy pony. There are always those very young foals that need that extra TLC, Henry, Cookie & Jasper all had a hard start in life and are now blossoming into strong mischievous youngsters who will hopefully find their forever homes."

## Helpful Head Collars – Sponsorship

Another big thank you to our sponsors this year, they make such a difference in helping us help those foals which we were unable to home either because of underlying problems or that they didn't look as pretty or cute, usually turns into a duckling swan story. It is fantastic that the sponsorship money, whether monthly or annually allows us to take in big groups of foals as the cost of hay, hard food, worming, and bedding would otherwise be prohibitive plus it enables us to add value to the ponies by head collar training them, and getting the colts gelded which makes a huge difference to us finding good homes for them. Sponsored Gelding Cookie – His sponsor is a lovely lady who lives in Australia. Cookie is currently at a foster home with 2 other little friends, he was a late foal and was so tiny when he came to the farm the sheep were bigger than he was. He has grown in confidence and has become a firm favourite with all the volunteers.

## Tuesday Club

We all love to see the ponies on Dartmoor as we drive over the Moor. What we sometimes don't realise is that all the ponies are owned, and the number of ponies that each farmer is allowed to keep on Dartmoor is restricted. This means that many of the foals born each year need to find another home.

We home a lot of foals from our barn at Corndonford. The foals most likely to be picked for homing are those that come up and say hello to prospective owners and are willing to be handled. In order to get them friendly we have a lovely group of volunteers who come and de-sensitize these young foals and get them used to being handled, wearing a head collar, being brushed, being led about, and even picking their feet up. All through the winter and spring, we put all our foals through the process. This really helps us find good homes for these ponies and ensures they will lead fulfilling lives.

If you would be interested in joining our volunteer team for foal handling or maintenance, please do come and see us and have a go it can be an exceptionally rewarding way to get to know these wonderful ponies and make new friends at the same time.

You can do as much or as little as you are comfortable with, and no experience with ponies is necessary as experienced supervision is on hand. Boots and gloves are advised, and please wear old clothes that don't matter. The handling team meets on Tuesdays at 2pm. Tea and coffee will be available. Come and join us to help these foals get ready for their future lives.

## Pony Trainers

So much thanks must go to Carolyn, Katerina, and Sheila for all their time and hard work in training the ponies and help with the Tuesday Club.



## Mare Contraception

We run the contraceptive scheme for the mares, and we feel very strongly that semi-wild ponies should live in normal family groups with mares and stallions running freely. The stallions stop the mares wandering too far and keep a herd leared to a particular area of the Moor. We need livestock, including the ponies, eating on Dartmoor to preserve the ecology and help to stop certain plants taking over. The contraception scheme controls the number of foals born to these family groups, keeping numbers within the range that can be sold to good homes and reducing the need to cull.

We managed to find virtually all the Mares we needed to give a booster contraceptive to, despite not having people on the ground to tell us where they had seen the ponies we were looking for. This year we are looking at 99% efficacy of this project.



## Traditional, Annual Pony Drift Sale

This years pony sale will be held on Thursday 8th October 2020 at Chagford. DEFRA recognise the value of these ponies and to that

end they have given us the opportunity to manage the sale in a way which is beneficial to the ponies and will make the new owners experience a good one. The Oct 2019 drift sale was run by FDHP volunteers partnered with the Dartmoor Hill Pony Association (an Independent Voice for the Pony Keepers of Dartmoor). Despite complicated administration tasks, the sale was a roaring success. 284 ponies sold on the day for higher prices than any fetched in the last 20 years. For more detailed information on last years sale read the interview with Martin Smith.

## Money or lack of it!

Thanks for the best efforts of our wonderful team of fundraisers, thank you Mel Barret who is running a plant sale from outside her house plus many other projects and to Tricia William –Powell's Tee Pee events online photo show, which apart from giving us endless hours of entertainment has produced much needed funds. We are a voluntary organisation, dedicated to the job of supporting and promoting these ponies to give them a future on the moor, and also ensure them a good home when they leave the moor. We want them to have an identity and therefore a real value.

We have spent the last 16 years putting a management plan in place to ensure the welfare of the Dartmoor Hill Pony and to secure their future on Dartmoor. As with all such ventures, funding is required. **We need your help** to make a difference. There are still many issues surrounding their welfare and future survival.

There is no one simple answer to a multitude of challenges which include management of foal production, disease control, research projects into their rare genetics, value to grazing and of course, finding them good homes when they leave the moor.

**If you would like to make a donation, or donate a prize for one of our fundraising events to help support our work, that would be amazing.**

I would like to take this opportunity to send a heart felt thank you for supporting the Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony to Don Hanson Charitable Foundation. Your very kind generosity enables us to support people who have had compromised lives, and struggle daily with that impact. Your contribution, enables everyone the privilege and opportunity to work with the ponies and experience Dartmoor hill pony healing, one to one within the capacity of Equine Healing, thank you. We cannot underestimate what a positive impact this therapeutic space at Corndonford farm on Dartmoor seems to have, working with the ponies and each other, adult and child, everyone with a single aim to give the ponies on Dartmoor a better chance at a future, which is the reason for the charities existence. The anticipation of time spent with the ponies carries people through the week keeping their spirits intact until they can gather another happy hour. The nature of the therapy is physically strengthening as well as emotionally uplifting and everyone finds their own path to help us to help the ponies. Its all about happy memories to support a person, when they are having a tough time. We all need happy memories.

## Hay Net Fairies

A big thank you to the wonderful Hay Net Fairies who creep into the barn and fill the hay nets and then disappear leaving no trace. You know who you are and what you do is such a big, big help.

## Our Wonderful Vets

Much of our work giving the ponies on Dartmoor a future would not be possible without the help and support of our wonderful Vets the Moorgate Veterinary Group. They geld up to 60 colts each year for us which enables us to home so many colts that would otherwise be shot. Without them we could not hold the annual pony drift sale, micro-chipping each pony as it is sold. They support us through the dramas at the farm and work very closely with us on the never ending paperwork for each pony's passport, which ensures the traceability of some 300 ponies that have to leave the Moor each year. We owe them so much thank you Moorgate vets.



## Interview with Martin Smith April 2020.

**Q. How did you get involved with the charity and the annual pony auction?**

A. Bad luck, and purely by accident, whilst my wife was working with Charlotte I happened to have a conversation with Charlotte about the passporting issues and the Pony auction process. Charlotte explained that they have on previous occasions been producing passports until 2 am the following morning after the auction just in order for the buyers to take their ponies away from the auction site. So I got to thinking about how I could improve the process.

**Q. So what skills did you think you had that could benefit the process.**

A. I'm lucky that my career in industry gave me skills in planning, finance and project management, bid management and engineering, so was used to solving problems and delivering solutions and getting results.

**Q. So what did you do to help Charlotte's problem with the passports for the auction?**

A. Initially I had to understand the requirements of both DEFRA and the farmers selling their ponies and the Friends of the Dartmoor Hill Pony Association and learn about a whole new environment/subject and all the issues it comes with.

**Q. So after understanding the issues with the auction what did you then do.**

A. Essentially I redrew the whole process out from end to end on paper to show who, where and when things had to take place. Then I allocated owners for each part of the process, and identified where we needed hardware, numbers of people and where external support would be required. As an outsider I was also able to question why things had to be done a certain way and I wanted to challenge some of the existing ways things had always been done and also why DEFRA needed things to be done in a certain way.

**Q. So what did you do next?**

A. Having a better understanding of the process I was able to build a prototype database system that we could demonstrate to see whether we had covered all the requirements, I then presented this to the team (including the Pet ID passporting Office) and once it was agreed it with them, we then wrote to DEFRA in March 2019 explaining how we planned to produce the Temporary Identification Document (TID) with a photo of the pony for the 2019 pony auction at Chagford and provided a detailed process and the plan of how we were going to deliver it.

**Q. What did DEFRA say to your proposal?**

A. Due to Brexit negotiations DEFRA finally agreed to the proposal 2 weeks before the auction was to take place, we therefore had to take a big risk that they would agree the proposal. We had no choice but to get on with the job of organising everything before we had DEFRA approval.

**Q. What were the biggest tasks you had to do for the auction.**

A. Essentially we were in a field with no electricity or internet connectivity and so we had to build a network of computers, printers and laminators that would all work off a couple of generators. All the PC's and printers had to talk to each other because each operator had to be able to access the common database which held all the buyers, sellers, pony lot numbers and the microchip numbers information as each pony was chipped. This then generated the one page Temporary Identification Document to which we then had to add the photograph of each pony (printed) for each pony sold. The ponies were coming through the auction process at roughly one every 30 seconds. So no pressure then!!

**Q. So did it all work on the day of the auction?**

A. Apart from a few minor technical issues which we overcame it did work and we managed to send off 285 ponies with Temporary identification Documents by the end of the auction and we were packed ready to go home about 17:00 on the day.

**Q. So it was a big success?**

A. Yes the auction was, the DEFRA requirement is complex, add in the environment and that several stakeholders needed to do their part, meant the process is not simple. From a Seller / Buyer prospective I tried to make it as transparent as possible so that that once the pony was sold all that was needed was cash from the buyer and the paperwork (TID) was handed over, and the new owner could leave the site. Behind the scenes 3 of us had to work hard for the following 3 days with Charlotte working several more days after to complete the full paperwork pack and send it off to the passport issuing office for the full passport to be generated post the auction and send it to the new owner.

**Q. So what changes if any are you working on for this years auction in 2020?**

A. Following the successful auction DEFRA came and visited us as we had proposed some further changes to the passport process. To simplify it and automate it further to enable the previously Temporary Passport to become the full passport for all ponies sold at the auction, to do this we had to agree that the silhouette page would be replaced by a photo of the pony and this was agreed in principle with DEFRA at our meeting.

A. I also want to add a really big thank you to all the helpers and volunteers without whom we could not have made this auction the success it was.

Link to YouTube Video of the auction day.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_JoGOLTuH8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_JoGOLTuH8)