



The Sathya Sai Sanctuary Trust for Nature

SPONSOR A DONKEY/PONY SCHEME 2026

The Sathya Sai Sanctuary Trust for Nature is situated adjacent to the ancient Neolithic site of Carrowkeel, in the Bricklieve Mountains at Castlebaldwin, Co. Sligo, two and a half miles (4 km) from the N4 Dublin to Sligo road. It is signposted from the village or follow the signs for the Carrowkeel Passage Tombs.

Set on a large site in beautiful surroundings the Sanctuary's aim is to provide refuge for elderly, unwanted, abandoned, and abused donkeys, and small ponies.

Once so much part of the Irish heritage these animals are now often forgotten or neglected in a world geared more for profit and production.

The Sanctuary is dedicated to Sathya Sai Baba, a non-sectarian spiritual teacher from India who gave the project his blessing in 1991.



The Sanctuary is funded largely by private donations with support from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and is run on a voluntary basis as a Registered Charity. With a view to the future, we are changing the Charity Trust to a Charitable Company *limited by guarantee*. The process is lengthy and fairly involved but safeguards the future of the Sanctuary, giving everyone, including followers and supporters, great peace of mind. This effectively changes nothing except the title; which will become The Sathya Sai Donkey Sanctuary CLG (*a charitable company limited by guarantee*).

The Sathya Sai Sanctuary Trust for Nature
Clodhoge Lower, Castlebaldwin, Sligo, F52 H046, Ireland.

Registered Charity Number: CHY 10840

Changes to the Sponsor a Donkey/Pony Scheme 2026.

We are revamping our Sponsor a Donkey/Pony Scheme (formerly known as the Adopt a Donkey/Pony Scheme) from the start of 2026. The cost of a new sponsorship is €30 for the first year, which includes a small Welcome Pack and Sponsorship Certificate. Current sponsors who wish to continue their sponsorship can renew for €25 if they do not require a Welcome Pack. We are also reducing the number of ponies and donkeys available for adoption.

Most of the donkeys who come to the Sathya Sai Sanctuary Trust for Nature are elderly. An ever decreasing few would have been working donkeys who laboured for years bringing in the harvest and the turf, even carrying the milk churns to the creamery and ploughing and harrowing the fields. Nowadays this work is all done by tractors and other farm machinery.

They come to us from many sources: voluntary relinquishment when their owners can no longer care for them through ill health or death; abandonment, when they are usually found wandering loose on the roads or dumped on waste land or in forestry; or in cases of severe neglect or cruelty.

The most common problems involve neglect of their hooves due to inadequate, insufficient and unprofessional trimming, and keeping them in unsuitable conditions such as on wet, acid land with no shelter or recourse to somewhere dry. The neglected hooves shown below are totally unacceptable: owners could face prosecution.



The picture on the right shows a newly trimmed hoof: this is the correct shape and balance for a donkey!



Hooves should NEVER be sawn off or trimmed by an amateur.



Other common problems include skin disorders like rain scald and mud fever as a result of living out in Ireland's wet climate without a dry shelter. Both conditions are painful and difficult to cure. Whilst native ponies have good waterproof coats donkeys come from the desert areas of Africa and Asia and have no waterproofing in their coats.

Sometimes severe wounds are inflicted by an over tight rope halter or headcollar left on permanently. On a young animal that is still growing this is dangerous and can cause permanent damage to their respiratory system.



Under most circumstances any of our donkeys and ponies may be sponsored under our Sponsor a Donkey/Pony Scheme but it should be remembered that older animals have a predictably shorter life span and young healthy animals may be placed into foster homes without notice. For those of you not familiar with our friends here are a few suggestions.



Tommi - a donkey gelding now 31 yrs with a slightly shaggy chestnut coat who came to us as a year old foal with a mild spinal problem.

Perdido - meaning 'the lost one' was found abandoned on the road at 5 months old in poor condition. After a poor start he has grown into a robust and healthy boy.



Victor - a pure white 'proper gentleman' donkey gelding who was found abandoned on the road with badly overgrown hooves and taken in by a kind man who passed him onto us. He suffers with his joints but is uncomplaining.

Charlie Dougal - an unwanted colt foal who arrived at 6 months old. He was well handled and very friendly so was 'buddied up' with Perdido and the two are now inseparable.



Merlin - a 14.2hh piebald mare now in her mid twenties and suffering from arthritis in her hips. Merlin was a children's riding pony for many years and was relinquished when her owners realised she was in too much pain to be ridden.

Retirement suits her well. A sweet natured girl.



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SPONSOR A DONKEY/PONY SCHEME 2026



I would like to Sponsor _____

My full name (block capitals please!) _____

Address _____

Your telephone number _____ Date to start _____

If the sponsorship is a gift for someone else, please complete the details below:

Sponsorship paid by _____

Name of giftee _____

Address if different from above _____

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Sponsorship Fee €30 per year. (€25 for existing sponsors who do not require a Welcome Pack)

I enclose a cheque (any currency), or Irish postal order, made out to **The Sathya Sai Sanctuary Trust for Nature**

for €/£/\$ etc _____ or send direct to the Sanctuary's account at the

Bank of Ireland, Main Street, Boyle, Co. Roscommon, E52 EP96, Ireland.

IBAN: IE48 BOFI 9052 8032 9838 06 BIC: BOFIE2D

Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you

The Sathya Sai Sanctuary Trust for Nature, Castlebaldwin, Co. Sligo, F52 H046, Ireland.

Tel: 00353 (0) 86 103 1932 Email: sai.donkeys@gmail.com Web: <https://www.donkeys.ie>

Visitors welcome but best to phone first.

OPEN: 1 April to 30 September, Saturdays and Sundays 10.00am – 4.00pm

All other days by arrangement only please.

NO WINTER VISITING

We're also on Facebook (Meta) and Instagram