

DONKEY SERENADE

Vol 41. June 2023 | Highfield Donkeys Incorporated Society Newsletter



Donkey Groomers Claire, Patty, Maxine and Gill.

Recognising National Volunteer Week



Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu
national volunteer week

New Zealand is a nation of volunteers – more than a million of us volunteer, giving our time and energy to make a difference in our communities. Volunteering NZ's vision is for volunteering to be valued and celebrated as a vital part of society. It's time to recognise and thank volunteers – we'll be shouting our wonderful team of volunteers, morning tea, on Tuesday 20th June!

What do we do? Here at Highfield Incorporated Society, we have a group of dedicated and caring individuals from all walks of life, coming together to look after and nurture a local treasure for generations to come. From the volunteers on the ground to the committee members behind the scenes; everyone has a vital part to play. We have people that volunteer their time at our weekly working bees, as donkey groomers and groundsman and women in the gardens and orchards, all with a common goal; to create a beautiful and well-maintained

space for the public to come and enjoy all year round. The donkeys are checked on every morning by our Donkey managers as the welfare of these animals has and always will be paramount.

Why Volunteer? Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community, as well as meet new people, offer up your expertise, learn new skills and contribute to something worthwhile. Working at Highfield is not only good for you physically but mentally too. There's something about being outdoors in the fresh air, which is good for the body, mind and soul.

How do I get involved? If you would like to find out more about being a Highfield Volunteer, please get in touch with Peter on 021 168 9698. Working bees are held every Tuesday at 9am.

AGM NOTIFICATION: Our AGM will be held on Tuesday 1st August at 4pm, in the Betty Paxton Room at the Mahurangi East Community Centre, Snells Beach. Ox Wightman will be our guest speaker. All are welcome.

Local School Visits Highfield

Approx 60 children from Years 0/1 at Snells Beach School, visited Highfield Garden Reserve and the Donkeys last month on Wednesday 17th May. Our Donkey Managers, Peter Caccia-Birch & Ox Wightman were able to be on site to welcome the children along with their teachers and parent helpers.

Following a brief but informative introduction and welcome from Peter, the children fed the donkeys carrots and vegetation supplied by the surrounding bushes. A small group studying the stables for a project spent time with Ox in the stable answering their questions. Another group spent time with Peter having photo opportunities sat on a donkey - which was good exercise for Peter and Ox as each child was lifted on and off. For once the weather played its part as the sun shone down.



A beautiful day for the SBS children to visit (top) and Rocco gets to sit on a donkey with Peter supervising (above).



The children eagerly wait their turn to feed the donkeys some carrots with Ox (left) while Rocco feeds Truffle some vegetation (right).

All photos courtesy of Kelsea Smith.



We received a warm mention in the SBS newsletter on Friday 19th May which stated, "Our littlest students in Rata & Rimu classes headed off to the Donkey Park as part of their enquiry learning. They were learning about how to care for animals. We are so lucky to have this amazing place in our backyard and a lovely day on which to enjoy it as well. A big thank you to our parent helpers and the amazing, knowledgeable volunteers who spent time with the children, sharing their knowledge on the day."

Thank you SBS, you are welcome back again anytime!



TRUFFLE UPDATE

As you may recall, Truffle went to stay with Ted offsite, over the Christmas period. She was gone for what would have been 3 cycles. Although we are unsure at this stage as whether Truffle is indeed pregnant, her behaviour is certainly indicating that she maybe. Since returning to the herd, Truffle is positively 'glowing', and she is in the best health she has ever been, with her offspring constantly following her around.

Pregnancy in Donkeys: Donkeys are pregnant for around 11-14 months with 12 months being the average. It is advised for a jenny (female donkey) to give birth in warmer weather, with several months of good weather to follow for the health of the foal. If a donkey has previously foaled, it's likely that subsequent foals will

arrive after a similar gestation. The tell-tale signs include looking a little plumper for a long time and this may only resemble pregnancy in the last month or so. A Donkey's pregnancy bump will be lower in the belly than normal excess fat and usually lean more to one side. Source: www.animalwised.com.



Totara planting

A small crop of Totaras (*Podocarpus Totara*), in the front road paddock, has been a programme started twelve years ago to build up our native tree stock and to complement the one already there (approx. 60/70 years old).

Unfortunately, the site is a bit too wet for Totaras, though drought tolerant, and a few have died. The aim is to continue with this programme and to replace with eco sourced trees. There are 30 trees there at the moment.

Who knows, in eighty years' time (if you are still around) there will be a lucrative millable crop for the Council.



The front road paddock contains 30 trees.



Donkey Winter Care

All the Donkeys are showing signs of the continued wet weather with their coats now looking a little drab and dirty. However, the groomers continue to do a great job on the Donkeys' appearance each Tuesday. As Donkeys are a more hard ground warm-weather animal, the wet ground is a constant source of discomfort for the Donkeys and as such they are frequently placed in the hill paddock (new grass) to alleviate the soggy ground. Hence, particular attention each grooming day is given to the condition of their feet. Continual trimming is a must. With the onset of winter, the Donkeys are receiving a minimal serve of hay regularly.

WORLD DONKEY DAY

World Donkey Day is celebrated each year on **May 8th**.

It is a day dedicated to recognising the Donkey and bringing attention to their many amazing characteristics. Scientist, Ark Raziq, created World Donkey Day, after realising the hardworking donkey wasn't being recognised for its efforts in building our society and improving the quality of life for many people around the world. The day was officially set and recognised in 2018 with a purpose to inform and educate on how Donkeys impact our lives.

Source: Nationaltoday.com.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: Memberships due for the 2023/2024 financial year can be paid by Direct Credit to:

ASB 12 3095 0254516 00. Please include your **name** and **telephone number** in the reference details.

Memberships are \$10 per household per year. **Your continuing support is much appreciated.**



For all the latest news and up to date information, please follow us at: **facebook.com/donkeyshighfield**