



Mare and Foal Sanctuary

Trustee Recruitment Pack



Welcome to The Mare and Foal Sanctuary

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee at The Mare and Foal Sanctuary, we're excited you want to join our expert sanctuary team.

We're a charity that's growing its influence in the care and rescue of horses and ponies across the South West - and nationally. This is supported by forward-thinking approaches to animal welfare and how we can maximise our impact.

This pack will introduce you to our charity, our leadership team and the role of trustee. You'll also find details of how to apply.

We welcome people from a wide range of personal and professional backgrounds from the charity, corporate and public sector as trustees.

Horse ownership isn't required for the role – just a passion for the welfare and care of horses and ponies.

We look forward to meeting you.

A message from our Chair Helena

I hope that when you have read this information pack you will feel as inspired as I do about the future of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary.

You would be joining us as a trustee at an exciting time as we move towards finalising our new five-year strategy for sustainable growth 2026-2031, led by our Chief Executive, Rhodri Samuel.

At The Mare and Foal Sanctuary you will find an ambitious and passionate charity dedicated to the wellbeing of horses, ponies and nature and the value they bring to people's lives. Our team are talented and committed. They are highly knowledgeable in the care and welfare of horses and ponies and the operational complexities of running four sanctuary sites, welfare assistance and education, equine-assisted wellbeing services, biodiversity and a retail network to support our fundraising activities.



We are extraordinarily lucky to have a group of supporters who are loyal and passionate about our work and have enabled us to be financially secure in a tough economic climate. We want to build on this passion. We have ambitious plans to grow the scale, reach and impact of our work across the South West and become nationally recognised as a leading charity in the equine sector.

The benefits to you

The benefits of becoming a trustee are not only in the interests of our charity. As an individual, it is also an excellent personal development opportunity and includes the following benefits:

- Contributing your skills and expertise to a cause that is important to you
- Playing a fundamental role in the strategic development of the organisation
- Gaining valuable experience and learning new skills within a leadership role



- Challenging yourself by applying your skills in a different environment
- Gaining non-executive board experience in a supportive, developmentally focused culture
- Learning from other trustees and gaining new insights from seeing how others respond to situations and make decisions.

An Inclusive Board

We are committed to developing a diverse board and wish to recruit trustees from a wide range of backgrounds including young people, people from minority and ethnic communities, people with disabilities and people who have lived experience of the difference that horses and ponies or outdoor learning can make to other people's lives. We believe that different perspectives and the richness of our people's experience will help drive our growth.

Becoming a Trustee

Becoming a trustee means that you have one of the most important and inspiring roles within the charity. With your fellow trustees, you will set the direction and priorities of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary and are ultimately responsible for ensuring it achieves its aims. You can help us leverage our well-respected brand to develop and deliver an impactful new five-year strategy.

We are currently seeking trustees with financial expertise. If you feel you have the right skills to join our Board, we will very much welcome your application and look forward to hearing from you.

Our Chief Executive Rhodri

I joined The Mare and Foal Sanctuary in January 2025 and have loved my experience of leading the organisation to date. I find our passion and unity of purpose inspiring and am proud of the many things we do well. I hope to build on and focus this further through the implementation of our new five year strategy.

The new strategy works very consciously with our three existing charitable objectives and seeks to establish the charity nationally as a beacon of best practice in equine welfare, research and education and equine and nature assisted wellbeing. We are also committed to investing in the wellbeing of our sanctuary sites, regenerating soil and increasing biodiversity for the benefit of our horses and the people we work with therapeutically.



Much of the past year or so has been spent getting our house in order so we are ready to move forward with the new strategy and I'm impressed by the way everyone – Board and team – has worked together to achieve that goal. I have also introduced and we are now embedding an entirely new project management culture with clear governance, management and controls for all future projects. As well as developing the capacity of our managers to deal with complex and challenging interpersonal issues through training in Restorative Practice.

You would therefore be joining us as a trustee at an interesting and important time in the evolution of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary as we enter a new stage in our development, culture and ambition as an organisation.



About Us

The Mare and Foal Sanctuary rescues horses and ponies that have been abandoned, neglected or abused.

Together with our supporters, we ensure that horses and ponies have a sanctuary for life. Most horses and ponies are given care for life through our network of knowledgeable carers. Those horses and ponies with more complex needs are cared for in our peaceful sanctuaries.

Our charity was founded on the principles that horses and ponies, as sentient beings, and close companions of people over the centuries, have a value and a purpose. They deserve our kindness and care.

We rely entirely on donations and legacy gifts to carry out our work and we are indebted to the individuals, organisations and companies for helping to sustain our ability to deliver our charitable objects. These are:

- To rescue and provide care for, and prevent cruelty and suffering amongst, horses and ponies that are in need of attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment or ill-usage, or other like causes, and to provide temporary or permanent homes for such horses or ponies.
- To advance the education of the public in matters relating to the welfare of horses and ponies and the prevention of cruelty and suffering amongst horses and ponies.
- To relieve those children, young people, and adults in need (in particular, but not limited to, those with physical, mental, social, or emotional difficulties or disadvantages) by providing equine-assisted learning and therapeutic activities, in order to enhance their education and make their lives better through (but not limited to) appropriate provision of facilities for riding, handling or coming into contact with horses and ponies.

Rescue and lifelong care

Our rescue work is focused in the South West of England but as part of the National Equine Welfare Council we collaborate locally and nationally with the RSPCA and other equine welfare charities.

Care for life is provided to hundreds of horses and ponies rescued by The Mare and Foal Sanctuary. We currently have four peaceful sanctuaries in Devon, and it is here that our dedicated staff provide expert and specialist care for life to around 120 of these horses and ponies whose needs mean that they cannot easily be cared for elsewhere.

Our network of knowledgeable Sanctuary at Home carers helps us look after around 430 horses and ponies. This vital scheme enables space to be created at our sanctuaries for more horses and ponies in need, helps sustain our work to rescue other horses and ponies and enables us to connect more people together who love and value horses and ponies as much as we do.

We also invest in the biodiversity of our sanctuaries regenerating our land for the wellbeing of horses, people and nature.



Support and education to equine-owning communities

We give non-judgemental advice and no shame support to any horse or pony carer through our Welfare and Rehoming team, but we are also able to step in and make a formal welfare intervention when necessary, collaborating with the RSPCA.

We know that there is no one right way of caring for horses and ponies, but we do have expert understanding of the physical, psychological and social needs of horses and ponies. We can educate people in meeting these in ways that are based on current veterinary and equine science, including behavioural science.

Horses and ponies helping people

We offer human-equine interaction through equine assisted learning, equine assisted wellbeing and equine assisted activities with our rescued horses and ponies to children, young people and adults in our community.

People of all ages relate to our horses' and ponies' life stories, especially how they have overcome adverse experiences, which brings hope, a renewed sense of meaning and future direction to the lives of our participants. We are a fully inclusive organisation offering both a person-centred and equine-centred approach.

Horses and ponies

In 2025:

- There were **552** horses and ponies in our care (**122** in our sanctuaries and **430** in our Sanctuary at Home network)
- **19** horses and ponies were directly rescued into the sanctuary
- **191** were supported through veterinary care, relocation and advice
- **200** horses were supported through our Welfare and Rehoming helpline
- **461** participants attended over **880** Equine Assisted Learning and Equine Assisted Activities sessions

Our sites

- Beech Trees, Newton Abbot – Veterinary and Welfare Assessment Centre
- Honeysuckle Farm, Newton Abbot – Rehabilitation Centre
- Coombe Park, Totnes – Equestrian and Education Centre
- Upcott Park, Holsworthy - our rehoming yard where we also care for young herds
- Yelverton – Moorland Rescue Facility
- Four charity shops – in Babbacombe, Bovey Tracey, Brixham and Newton Abbot
- Olympus Business Park, Newton Abbot – our Supporter Care base

Our people

- **122** members of staff
- **60** volunteers across our yards and charity shops
- **6** trustees (plus one trustee onboarding) and **4** members of the Executive Team - you can find out more on our website - [Our Trustees and Staff | The Mare and Foal Sanctuary](#)
- **2** patrons - Angela Rippon CBE and John Nettles OBE

For more information, please visit our website: www.mareandfoal.org



Role and Person Specification

You can read more about the role of a trustee on the Charity Commission website "The Essential Trustee": <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

Summary of the role:

Trustees have responsibility for overseeing the direction and performance of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary. Our trustees are guardians of the charity's assets and are responsible for their use and security. Trustees are also responsible for the standard of governance and ensuring the charity meets all legal and regulatory requirements.

Key Responsibilities:

To advise the trustees, who hold the charity 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries, in particular:

1. To ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
2. To be responsible for the performance of the charity and for its corporate behaviour.
3. To ensure that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
4. To act as guardians of the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
5. To ensure that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

Duties and Tasks:

To work in partnership with other trustees and the Chief Executive.

1) To ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these:

- To ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic plan that have been agreed by the Board and that there is a common understanding of these by trustees and staff.
- To ensure that the business, operational and other plans support the vision, mission and strategic priorities.
- To ensure that the Chief Executive's annual and longer term objectives and targets support the achievement of the vision, mission and strategic priorities.
- To ensure that Board and operational policies support the vision, mission and strategic priorities.
- To ensure that there are effective mechanisms:
 - to listen to the views of current and future beneficiaries;
 - to review the external environment for changes that might affect the charity;
 - to review regularly its strategic plans and priorities.



2) To be responsible, with the other trustees, for the performance of the charity and for its corporate behaviour:

- To agree with the Chief Executive the method for measuring objectively the progress of the charity in relation to its vision, mission, strategic objectives/priorities, business plans and annual targets, and to receive regular reports on the performance of the charity.
- To ensure that the fundamental values and guiding principles of the charity are articulated and reflected throughout the charity.
- To appoint the Chief Executive, to set his/her terms and conditions and to ensure that the charity invest in the Chief Executive's continued professional development.
- To receive regular reports from the Chief Executive on progress towards agreed strategic priorities.
- To hold the Chief Executive to account for the management and administration of the charity.
- To ensure that the Chief Executive receives regular, constructive feedback on his/her performance in managing the charity and in meeting his/her annual and longer term targets and objectives.
- To ensure that the Chief Executive develops a learning organisation and that all staff, both paid and unpaid, review their own performance and regularly receive feedback.
- To articulate the values of the charity.
- To agree Board policies.
- To ensure that there are mechanisms for beneficiaries, employees, volunteers, other individuals, groups or organisations to bring to the attention of the trustees any activity that threatens the probity of the charity.

3) To ensure that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements:

- To be aware of, and to ensure the charity complies with, all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- To maintain familiarity with the rules and constitution that govern the charity, to ensure that the charity complies with its governing instruments and to review the constitution regularly.
- If the charity has powers to delegate, to agree the levels of delegated authority, to ensure that these are recorded in writing by means of minutes, terms of reference for Board committees and sub-committees, job descriptions for honorary officers, trustees and key staff, etc, to ensure that there are clear reporting procedures which are also recorded in writing and complied with.
- To ensure that the responsibilities delegated to the Chief Executive are clearly expressed and understood, and directions given to her/him come from the Board as a whole.

4) To act as guardians of all the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application.

- To ensure that the charity has satisfactory control systems and procedures for holding in trust for the beneficiaries all monies, properties and other assets and to ensure that monies are invested to the maximum benefit of the charity, within the constraints of the law and ethical and other policies laid down by the Board.
- To ensure that the major risks to which the charity is exposed are reviewed annually and that systems have been established to mitigate or minimise these risks.
- To ensure that the income and property of the charity is applied for the purposes set out in the governing document and for no other purpose, and with complete fairness between persons who are properly qualified to benefit.



- To act reasonably, prudently and collectively in all matters relating to the charity, and to always act in the best interests of the charity.
- To be accountable for the solvency and continuing effectiveness of the charity and the preservation of its endowments.
- To exercise effective overall control of the charity's financial affairs and to ensure that the way in which the charity is administered is not open to abuse by unscrupulous associates, employees or volunteers; and that the systems of control are rigorous and constantly maintained through regular evaluation and improvement in the light of experience.
- To ensure that intangible assets such as organisational knowledge and expertise, intellectual property, the charity's good name and reputation etc are properly valued, utilised and safeguarded.
- To know on a continuing basis the condition of the land owned by the charity, if its boundaries are being encroached upon, what can be done with it and how it is or should be used.
- To ensure that all income due to the charity is received and that all tax benefits are obtained and all rating relief due is claimed.

5) To ensure that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

- To ensure that the charity has a governance structure that is appropriate to a charity of its size/complexity, stage of development, and its charitable objects, and that enables the trustees to fulfil their responsibilities.
- To reflect annually on the Board's performance and your own performance as a trustee.
- To ensure that the trustee Board has the skills required to govern the charity well and that it has access to relevant external professional advice and expertise.
- To ensure that there is a systematic, open and fair procedure for the recruitment or co-option of trustees.
- To ensure that there are succession plans for the Chair and Chief Executive.
- To participate in individual and collective development and training of trustees.
- To abide by the code of conduct for trustees.
- To ensure that major decisions and Board policies are made by the trustees acting collectively.

Time Commitment and Terms of Appointment:

Attendance at Board meetings once every three months in person usually at the sanctuary's offices at Honeysuckle Farm, Newton Abbot, Devon. You must attend at least 3 in person visits each year. Trustees are expected to strive to attend all Board meetings.

Attendance for Board meetings includes a trustees' dinner and overnight accommodation the evening before to enable team building and in-person dialogue. On the day of the Board meeting there is a development session in the morning, followed by the formal Board meeting in the afternoon.

Trustees are also invited to attend events at the sanctuary's other locations within Devon throughout the year.

Approximately 1 hour a week reading preparation and for decisions outside of trustee meetings is required. Where possible, trustees joining a Committee of the Board is of benefit to the charity and can give you a closer perspective on management aspects of the charity. Committees of the Board meet online at most quarterly, usually less frequently.



Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Board will elect trustees for co-opted membership and thereafter confirm full membership at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) subject to satisfactory performance.

A third of the membership is expected to retire at each AGM with the longstanding members retiring and being re-elected. A trustee can only stand for a maximum of three three-year terms (9 years) before having to retire for a minimum of one year.

The Mare and Foal Sanctuary is committed to supporting its trustees and provides a thorough induction to the organisation and role. You will be expected to attend regular training events relevant to the role, as necessary.

Whilst the role is unpaid, reasonable expenses are payable in line with The Mare and Foal Sanctuary's standard expenses policy.

Our Commitment to You:

- An induction programme once you have accepted the role
- Any additional training you need for the role of trustee
- A report on the outcome of the work of the charity
- Reasonable expenses reimbursed for travel and accommodation booked to enable attendance at trustee meetings

The Application Process

You will meet with some of our existing trustees, our Chair and our Chief Executive through your application process. If your application is successful, you will be offered a full induction programme which includes a personal tour of our sanctuaries in Devon. All candidates must be over 18 and will be subject to DBS and reference checks before being appointed.

To apply, please provide:

- a full CV including your employment history, details of any voluntary/unpaid experience, membership of professional bodies and relevant qualifications;
- a supporting statement (2 pages maximum) giving your reasons for applying for this role and what you hope to bring to the charity in fulfilling it and to what extent you have the skills and experience for the post. Your experience need not have been gained in paid employment and may include special interests relevant to the post. It is important that you provide evidence of your achievements by giving examples to support your application.

Please send your CV and supporting statement to nicola.pavey@mareandfoal.org

If you would like an informal chat before submitting an application, please contact Nicola Pavey on the email above.

