From Bray Talk Spring 2020 - organising a care plan for your donkey

In these strange and uncertain times, I have been thinking what would happen I was suddenly hit with ‘self-isolation’? Normally if I am unable to feed the donkeys, my family will step in. But if I had to ‘self-isolate’ the chances are they would have to do so too. Then who would feed my donkeys? I have a ‘horsey’ friend who is keen on the donkeys and would I am sure be happy to help, but she doesn’t know my routine or where everything is and the donkeys don’t really know her, although she does call in quite often, how would she cope?

Have you thought what would happen if you, and all the members of your household were suddenly hit with ‘self-isolation’ and are all unable to leave the house? Who would look after your donkeys?

You may be lucky enough to have a friend or neighbour who regularly looks after the donkeys when you are on holiday and knows your routine, your donkeys and where everything is. But what if someone unfamiliar has to step in?

It is important to have a ‘Care Plan’ in place. Donkeys like their routine and it is important not to make sudden changes to their diet. So have a think about what you do every day and write it up, as detailed as possible, so a stranger can step in and your donkeys can still be well cared for.

To you it is obvious, but where is the feed kept? Is it locked? Where is the key or what is the combination?

Is anything on medication? Where is it kept?

Do they like to be fed in a particular order?

Have they any particular likes or dislikes?

Are they stabled at night? Who goes in with who?

Do any of them have strange habits? That to you are normal, but might worry someone else.

Are there any problems to look out for? Prone to laminitis? Pollen allergies?

Where is the First Aid kit? Is it clearly labelled?

Make sure your Vets name and phone number is to hand.

Make a note when the Farrier is next due and their name and phone number.

Name and phone number of a ‘donkey minded’ friend who can help with queries.

Keep your records up-to-date, particularly the feed, as it will vary according to the time of year.

Try to keep a reasonable amount of feed in store.

I have created a chart you may like to use to help record all the details. If you would like me to email further copies please contact clarewickcroft@hotmail.co.uk

Take care and stay safe.

Clare Strang

Education & Youth committee