



**Safe Haven  
for Donkeys**

**STRATEGY  
2026  
ONWARDS**



# EVERY ANIMAL DESERVES A SAFE HAVEN

Safe Haven operates in a region facing geopolitical instability, economic pressure, and evolving social dynamics. Despite these challenges, opportunities exist to deepen our reach, strengthen partnerships, and expand our programmes.

The needs of working equids (donkeys, ass, jenny, mule, hinny, horses, ponies etc), especially donkeys, are often misunderstood by owners, handlers, authorities and even the professionals tasked to look after them. This stems from the fact that donkeys are not entirely the same as horses due to having a different evolutionary path.

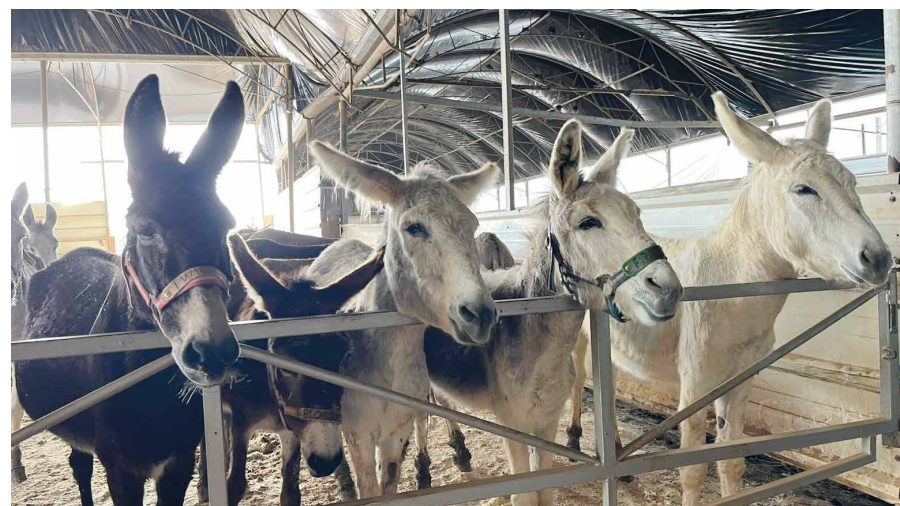
They do share the same preventable conditions when they are subjected to a working life and it is common to see both suffering from:

- injuries from ill-fitting harnesses
- severe lameness from overgrown or neglected hooves
- poor bodily condition from inappropriate food or neglected teeth
- exhaustion from overwork, even displaying PTSD like symptoms
- abandonment when they are unable to do the work required of them.

## So what can be done?

Safe Haven for Donkeys is committed to changing this situation and improving the welfare of working equids in the Middle East by:

- providing veterinary and farriery treatments
- helping owners, handlers and professionals in specific equine care to develop the skills to prevent injuries from occurring in the first place
- caring for and finding homes for unwanted or abandoned donkeys, mules and horses.

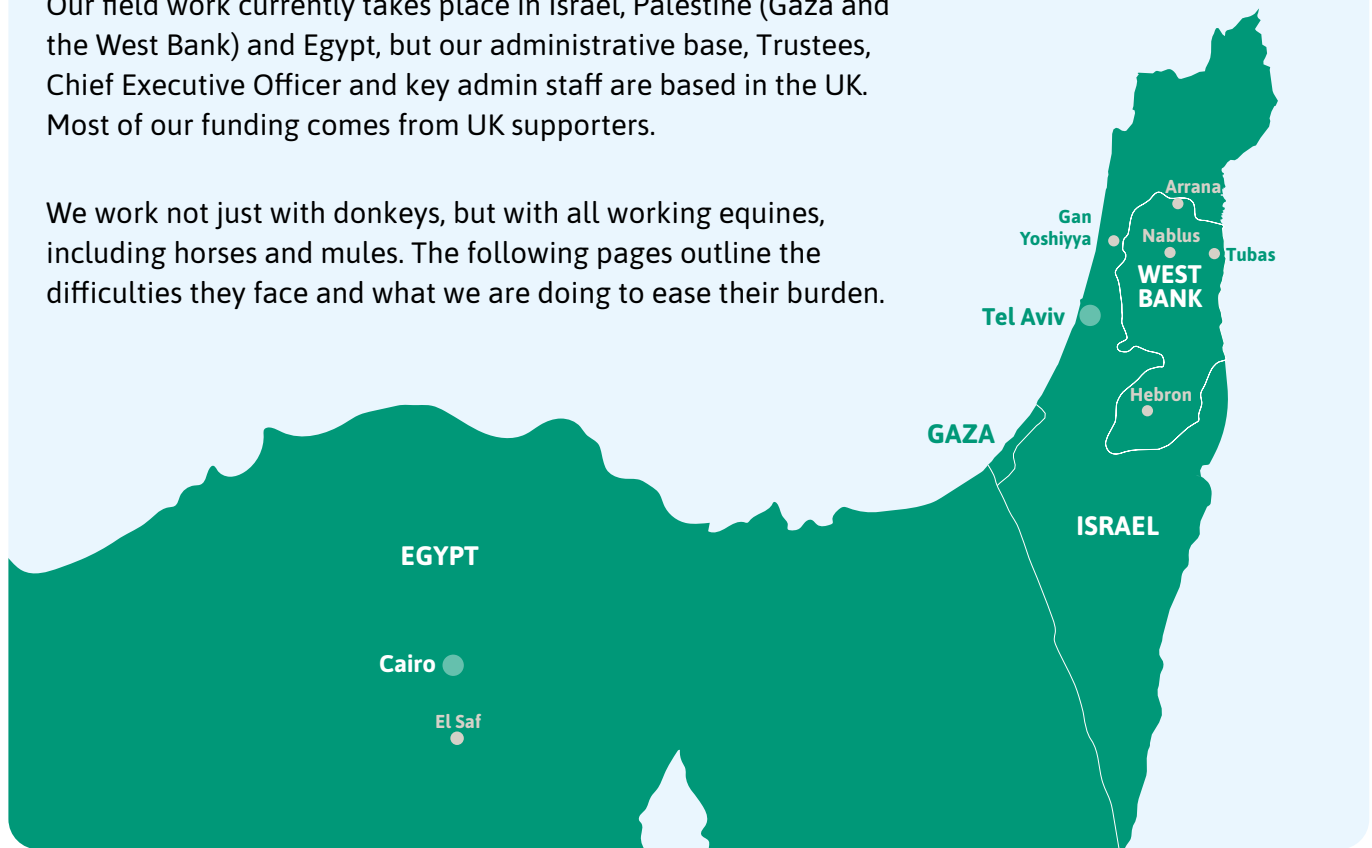


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# WHERE WE WORK

Our field work currently takes place in Israel, Palestine (Gaza and the West Bank) and Egypt, but our administrative base, Trustees, Chief Executive Officer and key admin staff are based in the UK. Most of our funding comes from UK supporters.

We work not just with donkeys, but with all working equines, including horses and mules. The following pages outline the difficulties they face and what we are doing to ease their burden.



## SAFE HAVEN TO THE RESCUE

Safe Haven for Donkeys has a clear mission to change the lives of working donkeys and horses for the better.

At our sanctuary in Israel we look after 180 donkeys that have been abandoned, rescued or handed over by their owners. We may occasionally rehome donkeys and support their use in managing land in environmentally and welfare-friendly ways. Many of the current residents though have been at the sanctuary for many years and are assured of a happy and peaceful life.

We also have a sanctuary in Arrana, a village close to Jenin in the West Bank. Here we look after 40 unwanted and abused donkeys. Both sites offer an opportunity to see what donkeys are really like away from the hard work many have been subjected to. They are inquisitive, playful and very friendly with staff and visitors despite having suffered much abuse in their lives before they arrived at their Safe Haven.



**180**  
donkeys are looked after at our sanctuary in Israel.

**40**  
donkeys are looked after at our sanctuary in the West Bank.

# HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

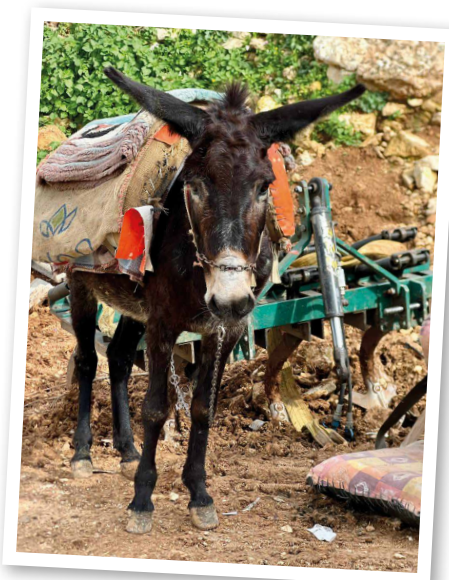
## Working animals

Communities in Palestine and Egypt depend on donkeys for a wide range of tasks, from ploughing fields and harvesting crops to providing traction on construction sites, standing in for tractors, mechanical lifts and cranes, which are just not available. Unsurprisingly, they often suffer from overwork or injury.

## On-the-spot help

We have dedicated veterinary teams working out of Nablus, Tubas and Hebron, who treat donkeys and horses where the animals work.

- We treat long-standing wounds caused by ill-fitting and unsuitable harnesses. Sometimes these wounds are so severe the animals' bones are visible, yet they still have to work.
- Our teams will often give the animals they come into contact with a complete health check, which fills the void left by the lack of vets (particularly vital in carrying out dental work) and farriers in rural areas. The animals' feet and teeth especially are checked and treated.
- The lifespans of working donkeys and horses in these conditions are much shorter than for companion animals. They are often abandoned when they can no longer work. We respond to reports of sick or abandoned donkeys and remove them from immediate danger.



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## Animals in War

In Gaza, we have a mobile clinic in the Khan Younis area providing life saving support to working animals that are vital to their communities for basic needs. The donkeys and horses we treat here often suffer from injuries sustained in the war as well as malnourishment. During 2024 and 2025, Safe Haven has managed to send shipments of animal food and veterinary supplies into Gaza to enable our team to help more animals.



## The Egyptian Brick Kilns

El Saf in the Giza desert of Egypt is the location of Safe Haven for Donkeys brick kiln project where two teams of vets and farriers provide treatment to some of the hardest working animals in the world. Donkeys and mules in the kilns are required to pull trailers loaded with bricks and weighing up to 1.5 tonnes into ovens for firing. In these inaccessible locations, where veterinary services are nonexistent, our teams have improved animal welfare beyond what we could have hoped for at the outset of our work there. This means that they can now look towards helping more animals in other locations, both in the brick kilns and the rural communities.



# WHAT WE WANT TO DO

We know we have a mountain to climb in order to bring about sustainable change for working donkeys in the Middle East. In the countries which have seen conflict, the construction industry is under huge pressure to rebuild areas that have been devastated. Providing shelter for communities that have been left homeless is therefore a priority.

Given this political and environmental backdrop, the use of donkeys and other equids in the Middle East is a matter of economic necessity. It would be unrealistic and naive for any welfare charity to think this will change in the short term. The reality is that donkeys, mules and other equines are a valuable resource in this respect and will be for many years. We are therefore committed to making a sustainable change to the welfare of working equids throughout the region.

We want to work with communities to share our knowledge of husbandry, harnessing and ways to prevent sickness and injury in the first place. By embedding and growing this vital knowledge within communities, we believe we can significantly reduce the welfare issues so commonly seen in working equids. While equine welfare is our primary concern, we also recognise that we will be helping communities to rebuild their homes and provide for their families.

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## Our Vision

The Vision of Safe Haven for Donkeys: a world where all working donkeys, horses and other equids are healthy, without injury and well cared for.

## Our Mission

Our Mission is: to use our resources, expertise, and experience to ensure all animals we come into contact with are provided with suitable care and treatment so they can live and work without pain or discomfort. We will also pass our knowledge on to owners and communities to bring about long-term and sustainable improvements to animal welfare.

## Our Values

- We are Compassionate. Wherever we see animals suffering or in need of our help, we will act.
- We are Professional. Our staff are experts in their field and everything we do is led by veterinary science.
- We act as Partners. Our job is not to lecture owners, but to work together and empower them to better care for their animals.
- We are Grateful. Every single penny donated to our charity is precious and we use our resources wisely.

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# OUR GOALS

## 1 Sustainability

In the UK, we have a very modest and capable team who support our growing field operations. To ensure that we can provide and expand the delivery of welfare improvement services for working equids well into the future, we will continue to develop and diversify fundraising opportunities using PR, social media, our website and many other channels to make more people globally aware of our work.

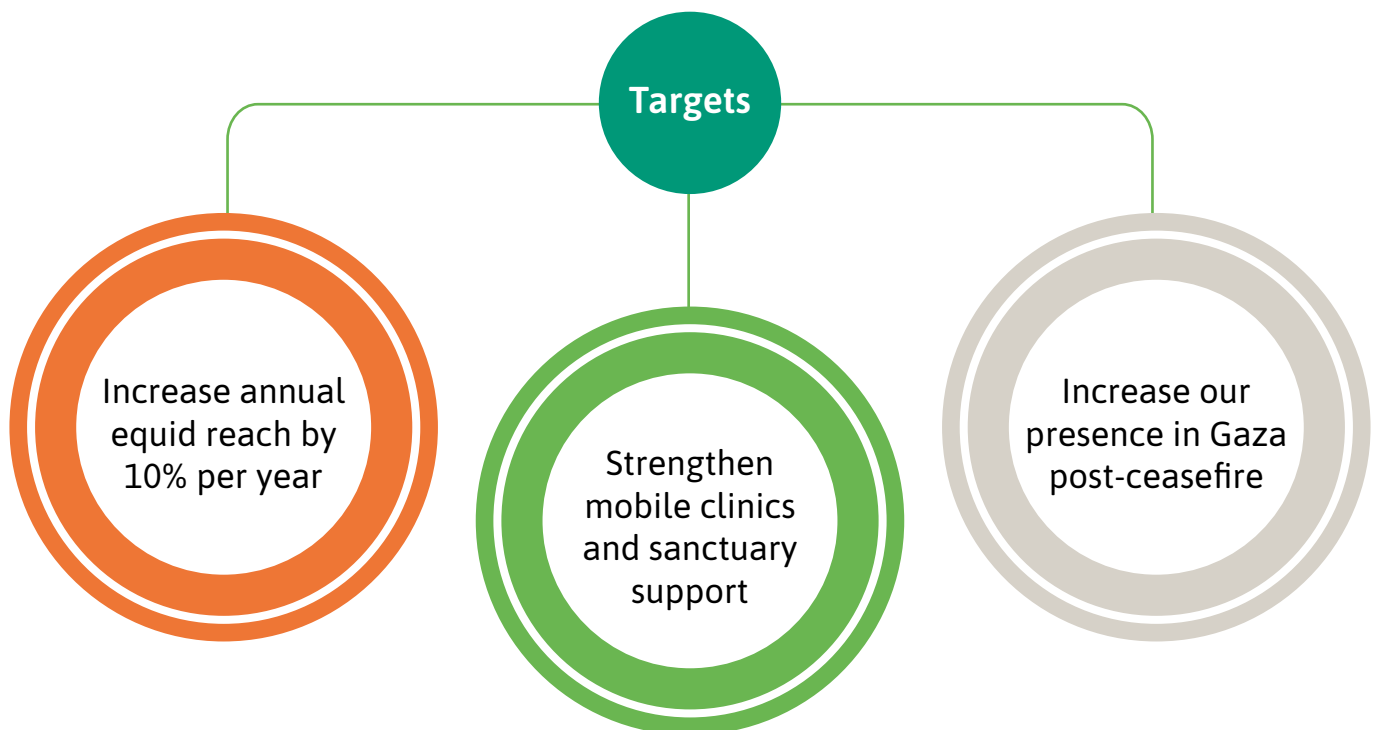
We will seek opportunities to recruit more specialists to help communicate our achievements and future plans to a much wider audience.

Leadership has been key to our success and we will continue to search for additional Trustees, Patrons and Ambassadors who will bring new skills to the board and wider charity.



## 2 Expanding Field Operations

Continue and expand veterinary and welfare services in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza and Egypt.



### 3 Education & Knowledge Transfer

Develop structured education programmes for owners, veterinary students, and professionals:



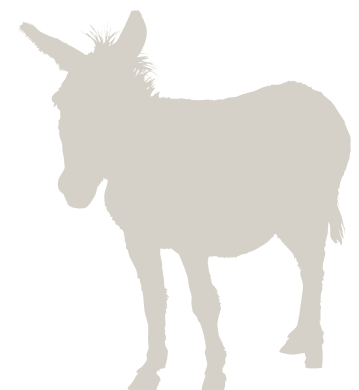
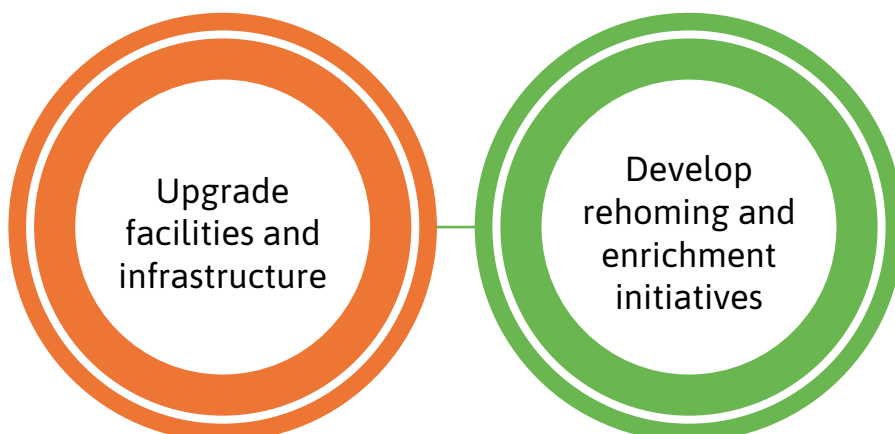
### 4 Research, Monitoring & Impact

Enhance data collection and research to demonstrate impact and share best practices:



### 5 Sanctuary Excellence & Welfare

Ensure high welfare standards and enrichment at Gan Yoshiya and Arrana shelters:



# GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES



## Israel & West Bank

- Maintain sanctuary excellence
- Expand outreach and treatment
- Re-develop our Nablus clinic to enhance our surgical capability in West Bank
- Ensure our mobile clinics have the right equipment for their patients



## Egypt

- Implement 5-year expansion plan
- Increase clinics in brick kiln region and in the farming communities
- Develop effective partnerships on education and veterinary training



## Gaza (Preparedness)

- Recruit a second team to provide greater access to our services
- Send regular supplies of animal feed and veterinary supplies from Egypt





## Fundraising & Financial Sustainability

To reach more working donkeys and horses, we need to grow. However, we must also ensure that the charity can weather times of financial hardship when donations may reduce. Our reserves policy sets minimum and maximum levels of funds to help us through difficult times and we need to ensure we keep within these. To enhance our field work we must raise more money to ensure that our services are safeguarded. The following are some areas that we believe could be improved:

- Diversify income streams (trusts, digital, legacy giving)
- Ethical storytelling and supporter engagement
- Designate current excess reserves for strategic investment (Egypt, West Bank, Gaza and sanctuary upgrades)

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## Strategic Enablers

- **Governance:** Strengthen Board with new skills and succession planning
- **Leadership & Staff:** Invest in training, wellbeing, and recruitment
- **Systems & Digital:** Improve operational efficiency and data systems
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local NGOs, universities, and networks

## Risk Management

Safe Haven for Donkeys Trustees maintain a comprehensive risk register which is reviewed quarterly. Within this register, we monitor the following areas which are deemed to be high risk:

- Monitor geopolitical risks
- Plan contingencies for funding volatility
- Mitigate key person dependency

# OUR OUTCOMES

Outcomes are important to us. We don't want to continue to deliver the same services because we always have, we want our projects to evolve and be an enabler for lasting change

As a result, we will see:

- that we will have reached more donkeys in need in more places in the Middle East and improved the welfare of thousands of working donkeys and horses through direct intervention
- professionals, owners and carers having a greater awareness of their animal's needs and feeling a sense of achievement and personal benefit from the positive change this creates
- how our precious resources can be used to best effect, and we will be able to demonstrate what impact we are having on the welfare of working equids and their owners
- children and adults engaging with our donkeys to develop mutually beneficial relationships that can influence the health and wellbeing of both
- a happy and healthy herd of donkeys at our sanctuaries in Israel and the West Bank with plenty of engagement with our visitors



# HOW WE WILL DO THIS

Everything we do is guided by the highest welfare principles and veterinary science. Using the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Standards for Working Equines as the basis for our work, we will identify new communities where basic animal welfare standards are not being met. Taking an initial baseline measure of animal welfare will be a critical factor in understanding the impact we have achieved. Using a suitably recognised equine welfare assessment model, we will assess what welfare issues are affecting working animals in the chosen area. This will help us to better understand the resources we need to deploy and for how long. We will engage with local universities to help us scope and measure the results of our work. We envisage that the resources needed will include veterinary, farriery and educational expertise.

Because the skills will be embedded within the community – owners, local vets, farriers and other animal technicians – the change will be lasting.

During and after the delivery of our services, we will measure the impact we have achieved in improving the welfare of working equids. Because the skills will be embedded within the community – owners, local vets, farriers and other animal technicians – the change will be lasting. Periodic checks and contact will help us to monitor this beyond the life of our initial work.

We will also engage with local animal welfare charities, where they exist, and veterinary and technical skills schools to ensure working equine health and welfare are featured within their curricula.





# UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ONE HEALTH ONE WELFARE

The work of our teams naturally links to the UNs SDGs and the One Health One Welfare initiative, which recognises the inseparable link between the health and wellbeing of animals, people and their environment. Whether it's supporting donkeys in the brick kilns of Egypt or sheep farmers in the West Bank, our work supports house building, food production, community prosperity and much more. In addition, a healthy animal will support a healthy family and community. Few governments currently understand this key relationship and often overlook the importance of working equids, preferring to focus more on food animals. Safe Haven will continue to highlight the importance of these key relationships in the day to day work of the mobile clinics and through focused education programmes.

## So, every animal deserves a Safe Haven

We know the scale of the task we have ahead of us but we have the expertise and the will to make a difference to these hard working animals and to the communities they serve. This strategy document sets out our plans and within just a few years we are confident that we will be able to highlight the dramatic changes we have made to the long-term welfare of donkeys, horses and mules working in the Middle East.





**Safe Haven  
for Donkeys**

**[www.safehaven4donkeys.org](http://www.safehaven4donkeys.org)**

Safe Haven for Donkeys in the Holy Land

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Registered charity: 1083468