

2024

Extract from Draft



THE DONKEY
SANCTUARY

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS



WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT

Total expenditure for the year increased to £57.0m (2023: £54.3m). The charity has an ongoing commitment to the delivery of the strategic priorities contained in our strategic plan covering the period out to 2027, while considering financial sustainability and economic factors. Investment in capital projects and routine replacement of capital assets slightly decreased to £2.4m (2023: £3.0m).

2024



	2024 £'m	2023 £'m
Rescue and Rehoming	25.0	24.2
Research, Education and Operations	6.9	7.2
Donkeys in the Community	4.5	4.3
Donkey Assisted Activities	5.9	4.4
Raising Funds	14.7	14.2
Total	57.0	54.3



- Rescue and Rehoming** – includes staff, donkey feed and other sanctuary consumables, premises, maintenance, vehicle and travelling costs for our welfare team.
- Research, Education and Operations** – includes veterinary teams, research programmes, education and training materials and resources, operational support, data management and reporting.
- Donkeys in the Community** – includes international programmes and partnerships activity along with campaigns and advocacy activities including staff costs, overseas operational costs and, grants to collaboration partners.
- Donkey Assisted Activities** – includes activities driven by our specialist centres in the UK, enriching the lives of donkeys and children and adults with additional needs.
- Expenditure on Raising Funds** – includes the cost of our continued investment in growing our income from donations and legacies, plus the cost of running our gift shop, mail order and internet-based trading, as well as our restaurant in Sidmouth.

During the year we continued to ensure that our resident donkeys and mules received the best possible care, as well as maintaining momentum with our rehoming strategy. The increase in cost for Rescue and Rehoming activities reflects the ongoing investment in improvements to sanctuary care across our farms following site condition surveys, the impact of inflationary increases on some donkey care costs, investment in IT equipment across the charity and pay increases for all staff. In 2024 we continued implementing changes based on our donkey welfare assessment work, which have included new donkey tracks and the continuing implementation of indoor feeders for the donkeys within their barns.

Our Research, Education and Operations teams provided the highest quality of research, supporting analysis, and veterinary expertise. During the year we developed further new learning resources for internal and external learners delivered via our Donkey Academy. The reduction in cost during 2024 reflects the restructure of the Education team who are now fully staffed, together with a lower level of building maintenance work required.

In 2024, The Donkey Sanctuary continued to invest in the growth of our international portfolio by building strong programmes in existing locations to meet the holistic needs of donkeys and mules. This included investments in Kenya to ensure that preventative approaches aligned with curative, clinic-based activities to address the underlying causes of poor welfare in the Lamu Archipelago. Also illustrative is the investment in long-term funding to key educational partners in Ethiopia alongside community-based partners to drive a more systematic approach to achieving sustainable welfare improvements. We continued to build new work in places like Zimbabwe where marginalised donkeys and donkey-owning communities have been placed further at risk due to worsening drought. Alongside this programmatic development has been the investment in evidence, standards, processes and the capacity to implement them to better ensure quality throughout our portfolio.

In 2024 our advocacy and campaigns work focused on work with the African Union to approve both a moratorium on donkey slaughter and to develop a donkey preservation strategy for the continent. Both these were approved by the African Union's Heads of State Summit in 2024

and we are working with them and our partners in the International Coalition for Working Equids to implement the moratorium and to draft a strategy to go to the Heads of State in 2026. We also led work at the United Nations to get working donkeys and mules protected in the Disaster Risk Reduction plans of member states and this was approved by the General Assembly.

During 2024, four of our Donkey Assisted Activities (DAA) centres closed operational activities and our Belfast centre was repurposed following a collective consultation process. These changes were proposed in order to make best use of donors' money and focus on our core mission to improve the lives of donkeys here in the UK and around the world. Our DAA Sidmouth Centre has been continuing to offer client services, reaching 404 individuals while also supporting the training of donkeys for our rehoming scheme. Through our DAA work we continue to learn about the donkey-human relationship and use these experiences to inform best practice across the Equine Assisted Activities sector.

EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

In order to support our ongoing committed costs as well as funding new strategic priorities, we continue to invest in raising funds and hence ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the charity. During the year we spent £14.7m (2023: £14.2m). Our fundraising strategies are progressing well, and in 2024 we increased the investment in the future growth of our legacy and donation income but marginally decreased the investment in fundraising activities. In terms of expenditure on trading activity, this aligns with the marginally increased level of income combined with the economic challenges on cost base, with both trading subsidiaries performing very well and our restaurant winning the 'Taste of the West' gold award for the seventh successive year. The trustees continue to monitor the risks associated with the changing landscape of fundraising and the potential for reduced levels of income in 2025 and beyond. Through our ongoing maintenance of robust financial controls and other internal measures, we are able to closely monitor the charity's fundraising performance to mitigate this risk and take suitable action as required.