

## Kent-based equine charity operating again after charity regulator takes action

The Commission has also appointed two new trustees to run the charity.

The charity's aims are to provide education and training on the care and welfare of equine animals, as well as to prevent and relieve their suffering.

The charity was removed from the Register in 2013 after it was found to be inactive; the trustees had failed to file any annual returns, had not responded to the Commission's attempts to contact them and there had been no transactions in or out of the charity's bank account since January 2015.

The Commission launched its statutory inquiry into The National Equine Training Trust in April 2020, after discovering that the charity still owned a piece of land in Sevenoaks, Kent, registered with HM Land Registry as the Gwendoline Walker Donkey Centre.

The Commission was alerted to this after a neighbour of the property, who claimed to have been using the land for several years, filed an adverse possession claim to take ownership of the land. The trustees had not responded to these proceedings.

The Commission therefore took action to intervene in the proceedings to protect the land that belonged to the charity. As a result, the possession claim was struck out, ensuring the land remained in the charity's possession.

The Commission also exercised its powers to remove the remaining inactive trustees. The inquiry concluded that they had mismanaged the charity by failing to manage its property responsibly. To place the charity on secure footing into the future, the Commission appointed two new trustees in their place, who have since recruited three further trustees. Following its intervention to ensure the administration of the charity is properly taken forward, the Commission re-instated the charity onto the Register on 15 March 2021.

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission said:

This case serves as a reminder that good governance is not a bureaucratic detail – it underpins the delivery of a charity's purposes to the high standards expected by the public – and without it, in this case, land and assets belonging the charity were almost lost. Trustees must properly manage their charity's assets and ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to protect them.

Our intervention has been crucial in enabling The National Equine Training Trust to get up and running again. We took action to

protect the charity's land and assets so it could again deliver on its charitable purposes. I hope, with new trustees in place, this charity will be able to again provide support to equine animals and inspire the trust of the communities it was set up to help.

[Read the full report of the inquiry into The National Equine Training Trust.](#)

## **Ends**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.