



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Header – Hearts for tigers fundraising campaign launched

CONTENT:

Help The Wildheart Trust provide safe sanctuary on the Isle of Wight for a rescued tiger

“We can’t change the world for every tiger in need but together we can make the world of difference for this one. Every penny will all add up to provide a much richer life for this animal.” **Chris Packham - broadcaster, author and trustee of The Wildheart Trust.**



The Wildheart Trust is based at the Isle of Wight Zoo. The zoo has long been known and respected for its provision of lifelong refuge for unwanted, confiscated and mistreated big cats and is committed to the care and conservation of these wonderful animals. During the Isle of Wight Zoo's 40 year lifetime more than 60 big cats have been given safe haven here. From tigers to lions and jaguars, the dedicated specialised team have worked tirelessly to ensure they have had a safe, loving and enriching place to call home. Currently the zoo's big cat family totals 8 individuals who have come from a variety of unfortunate backgrounds.

Every year countless big cats end up in temporary rescue centres across Europe, all with a tragic story to tell. Whether they have been abandoned by private owners (who no longer want them after they outgrow the cute and cuddly phase) or have been subjected to cruelty or

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bad welfare in circuses, they all need a permanent home. Until they find one, other desperate animals must wait their turn to be saved.

In March of this year the zoo sadly lost one of its beloved tigers, Lola, an elderly ex-circus cat. Lola left behind her good friend Simi, also an ex-circus tiger. In many ways Lola's loss was bittersweet, because as much as she is still missed, there is now space to rescue another tiger. However, in order to facilitate this major re-development of the old outdoor enclosure complex, work must be undertaken to ensure it meets the highest standards for this next era of rescue work. Unfortunately, at this time the zoo does not have the funds in its operating budget to cover the cost of this renovation work and therefore must fundraise.

A dedicated crowdfunder page has been set up to assist the zoo in raising the vital funds and donations are now starting to roll in ,every donation made will take the zoo one step closer to reaching its goal.

<http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/heartsfortigers>

Message from CEO and trustee of The Wildheart Trust – Charlotte Corney

"Without the support of our friends we would never have evolved into the specialist centre that we are today. Once we have completed the renovation, the team will be ready and waiting to welcome another tiger into The Wildheart family where he or she will be provided with exemplary day to day care"

How much will the project cost?

The project will be undertaken in two phases and will cost a total £50,000.

Phase 1 (£38,000) will include:

- Demolition and removal of old enclosure
- Replacement of exterior fencing
- Construction of a new dividing fence
- Planting and soft landscaping
- Creation of two ponds
- Building of resting platforms

Phase 2 (£12,000) will include:

- Building of two heated rocks with caves

In the unlikely event that the project should come in under budget we will ensure that any surplus funds raised be put into a 'Tiger Pension Plan' for the rescued tiger. These funds would help towards the future care of the individual cat.

The aim is for Phase 1 of the work to be completed by the end of the summer, with sufficient funds raised to enable the zoo to embark on Phase 2 by the autumn of 2017. The sooner the facility is completed, the sooner the zoo can welcome a tiger into its care.

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Notes to editors:

The Isle of Wight Zoo aims to promote the survival of endangered species through first class educational and recreational experiences, exemplary animal management, conservation and research. The Zoo is best known for its work with exotic cats. As a centre for surplus or rescued big cats, all have come to the Zoo at different stages of their lives and from a variety of backgrounds. The Isle of Wight Zoo is currently home to 4 tigers, 3 lions and 1 jaguar.