

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**14<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

# **Harnessing the power of the pig**

**Zoolittle Farm now open at the Isle of Wight Zoo**

The Isle of Wight Zoo may be most famous for its tigers, but recently some of the smaller creatures have decided that it's their turn to bathe in a bit of the limelight. The opening of a new mini-farm on site this summer has brought to the zoo a number of extroverted new animals determined to shake things up.

Rooster Heathcliff is not content to let the lions be the undisputed noisiest inhabitants of the zoo, and considering the size difference he certainly puts up an impressive fight. Meanwhile, rivalling the monkeys for mischief is Winston the mini-pig, whose escapades have rendered him infamous already.

Winston's keepers originally hoped he would enjoy going for walks around the zoo in a harness so he could meet his public. Unfortunately they hadn't counted on Winston's knack for trouble, and he soon worked out that his unique proportions would allow him to slip out of his harness and take his own, much faster, route around the zoo. Despite the fun of rounding him up it was decided that the walks would have to stop until a suitable solution to Winston's Houdini-esq tendencies was found.

The answer, staff hope, lies in getting a harness made specially for him. Winston is due to be visited on Wednesday lunchtime by the manufacturer, who will be taking his measurements and making him a bespoke, escape-proof harness. Then Winston will once again be able to go for walks around the zoo, meeting visitors and checking they haven't dropped anything edible.

Winston's new home on the mini-farm is an environmentally friendly barn and education facility, supplied by Isle of Wight Timber Buildings. It also houses a number of chickens, Guinea pigs and giant rabbits that children are allowed to touch – unlike the tigers! Potential visitors wanting to see Winston and his friends are reminded that Island residents with proof of address can get into the zoo for just £4 per person, and that the zoo is open 10am-6pm throughout September, and 10am-4pm in October. During November and December the zoo will be open on weekends (weather permitting) 10am-4pm.

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Notes to editors:

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 Zoo strives to encourage the social development and natural behaviour of each cat in their care. Every species of big cat residing at the Zoo is currently under considerable threat in its natural habitat. Isle of Wight Zoo is currently home to 12 tigers, 3 lions and 2 jaguars.

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