

- [Skip to content](#)



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I'm looking for

- Our site  Our directory

- [News](#)
  - [Crime](#)
  - [Education](#)
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  - [Farming](#)
  - [Health](#)
  - [Politics](#)
  - [Transport](#)
  - [Traffic Cameras](#)
  - [Weather](#)
- [Sport](#)
  - [Football](#)
  - [Truro City](#)
  - [Cornish Pirates](#)
  - [Rugby](#)
  - [Cricket](#)
  - [Athletics](#)
  - [Tennis](#)
  - [Angling](#)
  - [Equestrian](#)
  - [Water Sport](#)
  - [Other Sport](#)
  - [London 2012](#)
- [Forums](#)
- [What's On](#)
  - [Entertainment](#)
  - [Lifestyle](#)
  - [Music](#)
  - [Eating](#)

- [Out](#)
  - [Shopping](#)
  - [Reviews](#)
  - [Comedy](#)
  - [Film](#)
  - [Nightlife](#)
  - [Theatre](#)
  - [Eden Sessions](#)
  - [Boardmasters](#)
- [Deals](#)
  - [Wowcher](#)
  - [Local Vouchers](#)
- [Pictures](#)
  - [Buy a Photo](#)
- [Notices](#)
  - [Announcements](#)
  - [Obituaries](#)
  - [Special Occasions](#)
  - [Public Notices](#)
- [Jobs](#)
  - [Jobseeker Login](#)
  - [Recruiter Login](#)
- [Motors](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Restaurants](#)
  - [Chinese](#)
  - [English](#)
  - [French](#)
  - [Indian](#)
  - [Italian](#)
  - [Pizzeria](#)
  - [Pub Food](#)
  - [Thai](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Places](#)
  - [Arts & Culture](#)
  - [Attractions](#)
  - [Hairdressers](#)
  - [Health & Beauty](#)
  - [Hotels & Travel](#)
  - [Pubs & Bars](#)
  - [Shopping](#)
  - [Sport & Leisure](#)
  - [More...](#)
- [Services](#)
  - [Builders & Construction](#)

- [Estate Agents](#)
  - [Event Services](#)
  - [Motoring](#)
  - [Pets](#)
  - [Recruitment](#)
  - [Taxis](#)
  - [Tradesmen](#)
  - [Weddings](#)
  - [More...](#)
- [Business](#)
  - [Dating](#)
  - [Classifieds](#)
  - [Holidays](#)
  - [Place an Ad](#)
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## Monk comes to rescue of sanctuary



Monday, August 23, 2010



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A Westcountry animal sanctuary in dire financial straits may be saved from closure – by a nomadic Buddhist monk.

Kelsang Pawo is determined to raise funds to buy the Quality of Life Animal Sanctuary and ensure the future of its residents – which include Britain's oldest horse.



1.

Lilly, a 52-year-old pony, is too old to be moved and faces an uncertain future if the 60-acre site in Holsworthy is forced to close.

Pawo, who was ordained by the Dalai Lama, is touring the country from today and staging a series of "sit-ins" to draw attention to the need for funds. The monk runs the Gesar Foundation, a children's charity which works with distressed or traumatised youngsters.

The organisation has been bringing children to the animal sanctuary for several years where they spend time with animals who also have a troubled past.

Pawo said: "I hope companies and individuals alike come forward to help.

"There are more than 300 animals at the centre and we need to save them. In addition, my own foundation needs to continue its work with children on the site."

The elderly monk, who is a close friend of actor Ray Winstone, has no planned route for his fundraising tour and will hitch a ride with anybody willing to take him to the next destination. He aims to raise enough money to buy the sanctuary for his foundation, so animals in need can continue to find homes and troubled children are able to visit.

Debbie De Ste Croix, who runs the sanctuary with her family, said they have been struggling financially for years.

"It would be terrible if we were forced to close, we have so many animals," she said.

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- [18 News](#)
- [4 Sport](#)
- [298 Things to do](#)
- [46 Deals](#)
- [223 Jobs](#)
- [3791 Motors](#)
- [7749 Homes](#)
- [292 Restaurants](#)
- [680 Places](#)
- [175 Services](#)

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- [Terms and Conditions](#)
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- [Book an Ad](#)
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- [News](#)
  - [Crime](#)
  - [Education](#)
  - [Emergency Services](#)
  - [Environment](#)
  - [Farming](#)
  - [Health](#)
  - [Politics](#)
  - [Transport](#)
  - [Traffic Cameras](#)
  - [Weather](#)
- [Sport](#)
  - [Football](#)
  - [Truro City](#)
  - [Cornish Pirates](#)
  - [Rugby](#)



- [Cricket](#)
- [Athletics](#)
- [Tennis](#)
- [Angling](#)
- [Equestrian](#)
- [Water Sport](#)
- [Other Sport](#)
- [London 2012](#)
- [Forums](#)
- [What's On](#)
  - [Entertainment](#)
  - [Lifestyle](#)
  - [Music](#)
  - [Eating Out](#)
  - [Shopping](#)
  - [Reviews](#)
  - [Comedy](#)
  - [Film](#)
  - [Nightlife](#)
  - [Theatre](#)
  - [Eden Sessions](#)
  - [Boardmasters](#)
- [Deals](#)
  - [Wowcher](#)
  - [Local Vouchers](#)
- [Pictures](#)
  - [Buy a Photo](#)
- [Notices](#)
  - [Announcements](#)
  - [Obituaries](#)
  - [Special Occasions](#)
  - [Public Notices](#)
- [Jobs](#)
  - [Jobseeker Login](#)
  - [Recruiter Login](#)
- [Motors](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Restaurants](#)
  - [Chinese](#)
  - [English](#)
  - [French](#)
  - [Indian](#)
  - [Italian](#)
  - [Pizzeria](#)
  - [Pub Food](#)
  - [Thai](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Places](#)
  - [Arts & Culture](#)
  - [Attractions](#)
  - [Hairdressers](#)
  - [Health & Beauty](#)
  - [Hotels & Travel](#)
  - [Pubs & Bars](#)
  - [Shopping](#)
  - [Sport & Leisure](#)
  - [More...](#)
- [Services](#)
  - [Builders & Construction](#)
  - [Estate Agents](#)
  - [Event Services](#)
  - [Motoring](#)
  - [Pets](#)
  - [Recruitment](#)
  - [Taxis](#)

- [Tradesmen](#)
- [Weddings](#)
- [More...](#)