



Tragic demise of Front Street horses

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Two animals put down due to alleged neglect

They spent more than a decade trotting up and down Front Street giving tourists the chance to see the sights.

Carriage horses Sammy and Ben should have ended their days in a field, living out their retirement.

But instead they appeared hungry and were being kept in poor conditions - the victims of apparent neglect.

The loyal pair was so weak and malnourished that they had to be put down.

Shiloh Stables, which is run by Dee and Hobby Charles, is now being investigated for neglect by the SPCA.

The animal charity launched the inquiry into the stables after receiving a string of complaints about the condition of some carriage horses on Front Street.

Members of the public said the animals looked malnourished, had swollen back legs, appeared exhausted and could not lift their heads.

On October 6, SPCA inspectors visited the stables in Canal Road, Pembroke.

They found there were three more horses on the property than allowed under a commercial carriage license issued by the Government.

This included a working carriage horse, which was apparently being kept in an illegal stable.

Some of the stalls had what the SPCA officials described as inadequate fencing and were littered with rubbish and debris.

Four horses looked malnourished and two were lame, the SPCA told us.

The organization seized a neglected Dark Bay Mare called Honey-Bee.

A vet examined the animal and found it to be in an extremely poor condition.

Government Animal Wardens also seized an illegal pit bull dog tethered to a tree on the property.

The dog had dirty water and remnants of dried food in a dirty dish. It later tested positive for heartworm disease.

During the same visit, the SPCA identified Ben and Sammy, who were both around 25 years old, as being very thin and in extremely poor condition.

The inspectors asked the stables to surrender Sammy as he was lame and had difficulty walking but the request was refused.

A week later the stables called the SPCA to surrender Ben and Sammy.

The two old carriage horses were found to be extremely unwell and weak and they were put to sleep by a vet on October 16.

Kim Sherlaw, SPCA director, said: "We are saddened that two such magnificent animals that faithfully led hundreds of tourists by carriage through the streets of Hamilton were treated with such little dignity and respect in the remaining years of their lives.

"These animals worked for a living and financially supported Shiloh Stables and its owners Dee and Hobby Charles.

"At minimum they deserved proper care and a suitable environment to return to after a long day's work.

"The sad decision to euthanize these two horses was taken because they were in such poor condition due to the neglect they had suffered.

"They were quite old horses but they were not well cared for.

"The SPCA was honored to show Sammy and Ben compassion in their final days on behalf of all carriage horses in Bermuda who deserve the same."

The SPCA revisited Shiloh Stables with a vet on October 16.

Officers are currently waiting for the full medical report but they found three of the horses had a fungal infection of their hooves and one had maggots in his hooves.

Two horses currently pulling carriages were identified with lameness in their legs.

Four days later another old pony called Ralfie was surrendered by the stables to the SPCA - he was temporarily cared for at an independent stable - but was put down yesterday.

The stables will now receive a set of terms and conditions in writing from the SPCA with specific deadlines to correct and improve the care of the horses or face potential prosecution under the Care and Protection of Animals Act 1975.

Mrs. Sherlaw added: "The SPCA encourages Bermudians to report all suspected neglect and cruelty involving farm and companion animals.

"Working together as a community, we can promote kindness and compassion to all animals."

The Bermuda Sun has tried repeatedly to contact Dee and Hobby Charles.

We called Shiloh Stables several times and left a message. We tried Mrs. Charles's cell number repeatedly.

We also visited the stables and spoke to staff who said that Mr. and Mrs. Charles were out of the country on vacation.

Last stand: Sammy the Black Tennessee Walker, an old carriage horse, is pictured at Marsh Folly just minutes before he is put down.