

Binfield Badger Group

Protecting badgers across Berkshire

Charity Number: 1075886



Newsletter No. 138

September 2024



..but 50,000 Badgers could be Slaughtered in 2024

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Binfield Badger Group

Affiliated to the Badger Trust

www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk

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GROUP NEWS AND OUR NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

**Make a note in your diaries – our next Public Meeting will be on
Thursday, 31st October**



Luke from Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue is kindly coming along to talk about the wonderful work of this charity. Since starting in Spring 2018, they have grown from rescuing and treating about 30

animals every year to now around a thousand and are desperately seeking a bigger site.

Here is a link to their ongoing appeal:

[Oxfordshire wildlife hospital appeal | Oxfordshire Wildlife \(oxfordshirewildliferescue.co.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshirewildliferescue.co.uk)

Remember to tell your friends – there is no entrance fee - everyone is welcome

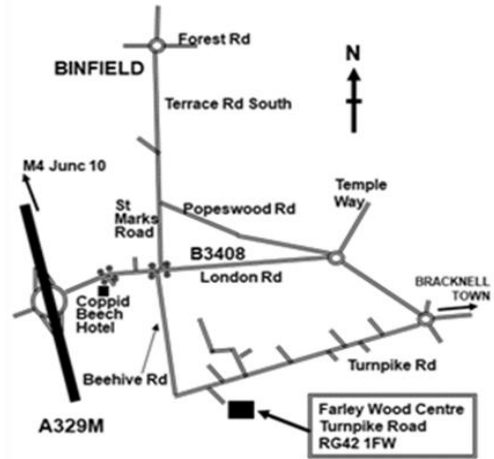


Doors open at 7.00pm and the meeting is at:-

Farley Wood Centre, Turnpike Road, Binfield, RG42 1FW.

The meeting will start at **7.30pm**.

Please remember to put the date in your diary!



HAVE YOU REMEMBERED TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP? - Judith

Thank you to all of our members who have now renewed for another year.

However, if you find a final Reminder Form included with this newsletter, then I have not yet received your 2024 form and subscription, which is now overdue. (If you have asked for this newsletter to be emailed to you, a blank form will also be attached.)

If you have a personalised form, please check that your details are correct. Please then return your form to us as soon as possible, either by post or scanned and emailed to: membership@binfieldbadgers.org.uk



Payments - there are 3 ways to pay. **(1) pay by BACS** - our bank details are:
Name: Binfield Badger Group / Sort code: 40-47-39 / Account number: 71496212;
(2) return a cheque (made payable to 'Binfield Badger Group') along with your membership form - our address is given on the form; **(3) pay via Paypal** - please use the 'Donate' button in the 'Join Us' section on the website:
<http://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/join-us>

We and the badgers hope that you will continue to support our Group.



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BADGER RESCUES – POSSIBLE THROUGH GREAT TEAM WORK!

- Jill



For those of you who follow us on Facebook, you may recall a post from July where a cub was found collapsed near Newbury and taken to Oxfordshire Wildlife Hospital. The cub was named Harley after the lady's dog who found him.

Very sadly, he didn't make it as he was very dehydrated and severely underweight



A few weeks later however, a further cub was found in the grounds of a school near Newbury and again, taken to the wildlife hospital. There was another cub there at that time that had been rescued by our friends at the Oxfordshire Badger Group and the 2 cubs were paired up for their journey back to full health. The good news is that both cubs flourished and have now been transferred to Harper Asprey Wildlife Rescue in Windlesham, where they joined a number of other orphaned cubs and are now being prepared for release as a new clan in a secret location. It's great that all these organisations work so well together to look after our wonderful badgers!



See page 11 for more badger rescue newsand some updates.



Group Sett Surveys – additional weekday sessions from October? - Jill and Karen



As many of you will be aware, we try to do a monthly Group sett survey at a different location in Berkshire on or near the first Sunday of each month and we love to see both new and existing members on these days. However, we are aware the dates selected are not always convenient for everyone who wants to join.

So, from October, we are considering also offering a weekday sett survey session, which will either be held on a Monday or a Friday. We would aim for this to be in addition to the Sunday sessions where we have availability to do both.

If you are one of our survey volunteers and keen to join survey sessions, could you let us know if you would be interested in sessions on a Monday or Friday so we know whether to pursue this idea? And indeed, if you have feedback about the Sunday sessions, let us know at the same time. Please email your feedback to us at

badgers@binfieldbadgers.org.uk



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All set to go at our stall at the **Earley Green Fair**, held at the Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve on 3 August. We had the opportunity to talk with a lot of people during the day...it's a great annual event with the emphasis on ecology and wildlife.



We also spent a lovely day at the **Nature Discovery Centre in Thatcham** last month, chatting to folks about all things Badger. Our visit there was a few days after the brilliant Brian May documentary and it was refreshing to hear that a number of people had watched it – including a farmer who was very positive about its content - and others that were planning to watch it on catch-up.

One of the visitors we had to our pitch was a lovely lady from Cornwall who proudly showed us her beautiful badger tattoo...it got us thinking!



Do you have any badger tattoos, or know someone who has one? If so, we'd love to see it and feature all of them in a future newsletter.



If you'd have a tattoo you'd like to share, please email us at badgers@binfieldbadgers.org.uk !



CODE WORD – BADGER-STYLE!

Test your badger knowledge! Have a go at filling in words that might be used in a conversation about badgers!

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								A			
4		7		20				10		22	
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2	26	25	20	16		10	25	22	1		
20		19		5				5			15
17		8	4	26	20	12	5	26	1		17
4				14		25		1	5	21	21
10	19	22		17		8			6		
17			17	3	3	5	6	5			
8								24	5	8	7
		23	17	20	20	19	3	5			17
				8					13	17	11
	7	5	8	17	22	5					1
				3							

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

(All letters of the Alphabet must be used at least once – cross them off here as you use them -

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z)

...Don't cheatanswers near the back of the newsletter



In the June newsletter, we reported the arrival of three cubs, one to Star Lux and two to Little Star. As in previous years, Little Star gave birth at an unknown (to us) location outside of the copse. We could see from the trail camera clips that she was sometimes visiting the copse.

Star Lux was clearly residing in the copse and gave birth to her cub there. For a while we had regular sightings of the cub, sometimes with Star Lux, who was lactating and occasionally on its own. There then came a window of about two weeks when the cub was not seen and at the end of which Little Star arrived back with her two cubs. Star Lux's cub has not been seen since. It had to us looked to be perfectly healthy. What do we make of this?



It is known in the badger world that a pregnant subordinate sow will sometimes have her cubs away from the main sett and only later, when she thinks it is safe to do so, return with them. At the copse the positions seem to be reversed. Little Star is the dominant sow, but has always chosen to give birth outside of the copse sett, all the while keeping an eye on the sett by way of regular visits.

We have no evidence from the trail camera footage to indicate exactly what happened to Star Lux's cub. At the age when it was last seen, it is extremely unlikely to have ventured away from the sett on its own as it had not been weaned, so still very dependent on its mother. However, due to its absence we have to assume that it is dead.

In the months leading up to the first sighting of Star Lux's cub, a pair of foxes had adopted a hole in another part of the sett. As the vixen was clearly lactating, we can be reasonably certain that the pair had cubs below ground. Both foxes were seen entering and leaving the hole on numerous occasions and all seemed well. However, the trail camera caught a badger entering and then leaving the hole at great speed with the dog fox in full chase. Whilst the badger was down the hole, the dog fox remained outside in an agitated state barking and whining. The fox cubs were never seen above ground and the vixen disappeared. We were unable to positively identify the badger involved from the trail camera footage.

Sometimes there can be badger cubs and fox cubs present in a large sett at the same time (as has been the case at the copse in the past), but there is plenty of documented evidence to show that badgers can be intolerant of foxes and will kill cubs or even adults. A sow badger with cubs will do whatever she feels is necessary to give her own cubs the best possible chance of survival and that can include the killing of any animals that might be seen as competition for food resources or even of potentially being predatory.



Little Star's New Twins born earlier this year



....and look how they've grown!





The Government continues to consider new cull licences, despite promising to end the cull. That means around 50,000 badgers are targeted for slaughter in 2024, with an intensive cull starting at the beginning of September. This is on top of the 230,000 badgers already killed.

At the end of August, the government declared that badger culling in England will end by 2029. Despite senior Defra officials declaring to the Badger Trust that it is unlikely that any new licences will be granted, an application for a new badger culling licence in

the low risk area of Cumbria has now been made to Natural England.

A four-year-long trial of epidemiological badger culling, conducted in Cumbria from 2018 to 2021, showed **removing badgers had no significant contribution to controlling bTB in cattle**. Yet, once again, the government are considering culling badgers here.

Peter Hambly, Executive Director of Badger Trust, said, *“The Labour government has already said that the badger cull is ineffective and that they want to focus on other effective methods of bTB eradication that have a real-world impact. To have reopened the consultation process for a new cull licence could set a terrible precedent and continue the mistruth about the badger cull. They should know better.”*

DEFRA Minister Zeichner focuses too much on badgers in new strategy when he should focus on cattle. **Current herd-based testing policy can leave 80% of cattle untested for bTB in their lifetime.**

- Cattle testing in England can be as infrequent as every four years in low risk areas.
- Movement between herds may result in animals either avoiding tests or cattle being slaughtered before the next testing regime.

Weak testing controls in England have led to some regions developing greater farm connectivity, contributing to a more prevalent spread of the disease.....

The government needs to focus on better cattle measures in order to tackle bTB in cattle, stand behind the science and their statement that the badger cull is ‘ineffective’, **and end the cull now**. You can read the Trust’s full initial response to the Government Statement on bTB eradication plan here: <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/post/initial-response-to-government-statement-on-btb-eradication-plan-from-badger-trust>

Peter Hambly said, *“The new announcement on bovine TB keeps badgers in the firing line. It focuses too much on badgers rather than cattle when cattle are the main spreaders of this cattle disease. It admits the government doesn’t know how many badgers are left or how many even have bTB. They haven’t counted them and haven’t tested them but they continue to slaughter them. **This planned intensification of badger culling by the Government, against their manifesto pledge, must be stopped.**”*

Rosie Wood, Chair of Badger Trust added, *“The Government has lost the plot. They know killing badgers doesn’t work....they should show clarity and honesty to the farmers and us all by focusing on the cattle —**proper testing, better biosecurity and cattle vaccination is the way forward.**”*





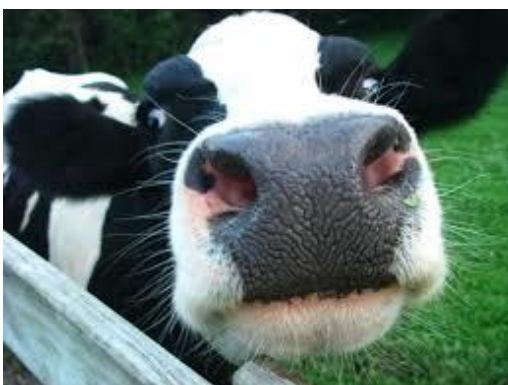
The detailed documentary **'Brian May: The Badgers, the Farmers and Me'**, aired on BBC Two on Friday, 23 August, reveals how far the government has shifted from supporting farmers and finding effective solutions to the bTB crisis.

Instead, the documentary starkly shows that Defra has knowingly focused on an ineffective badger culling policy in an unsuccessful attempt to control bTB, whilst failing to provide vital information and support to farmers and vets to help them get out of this situation.

The documentary showed how the government and its agencies rely on decades-old inaccurate testing, again knowing its insensitivity, not giving vets and farmers the information they need to stop the spread of bTB among cattle herds, and instead spreading misinformation and confusion to cover their ineffectiveness and shore up political support for a failed policy.

Although there is no causal link between badgers and bTB spread in cattle, tens of millions of pounds have been spent by farmers and taxpayers pointlessly massacring a native species in their tens of thousands, alongside continuing to slaughter 0.5% of cattle per year and causing untold mental suffering to farmers through the process.

Peter Hambly, Chief Executive of Badger Trust, said: *"This documentary focused on farmers and the support and advice they need to reduce bTB in cattle. It is clear that, like everyone else involved in this debacle, the farmers have been badly let down by misinformation and distractions. Farmers need the proper support to reduce bTB in the herd, not more nonsense about culling badgers, which science has repeatedly shown will never be an effective bTB solution."*



If you missed it, the documentary **'Brian May: The Badgers, the Farmers and Me'** is available to watch now [via BBC iPlayer](#)





Several members of the Binfield Badger Group joined Badger Trust and many others at their **National Day of Action against the badger cull** on Tuesday, 3 September 2024.



We went to stand up for badgers, listen to inspirational speakers, meet up with old friends and some were able to lobby their local MP, telling them it's time for the new government to do the right thing for badgers, for farmers, for nature and **end the cull!**

If you didn't make it to the Day of Action, **you can still make a difference for badgers from your home:**

- Sign and share the petition to #EndTheCull - <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/end-the-cull/end-the-cull-petition>
- Arrange a meeting with your newly elected MP that week - <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/>
Tell them you're advocating for an immediate end to the cruel badger killing.

Email your newly elected MP about the cull and why you want them to represent your views and stop the cull now. <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>



CODE WORD – BADGER-STYLE!

Have you cracked it??

				9 Z				2 B		8 L	
1 S		1 S	18 Q	4 U	17 A	21 T		17 A	22 G	5 E	
4 U		7 P		20 C				10 D		22 G	
2 B	26 R	25 O	20 C	16 K		10 D	25 O	22 G	1 S		
20 C		19 I		5 E				5 E			15 F
17 A		8 L	4 U	26 R	20 C	12 H	5 E	26 R	1 S		17 A
4 U				14 M		25 O		1 S	5 E	21 T	21 T
10 D	19 I	22 G		17 A		8 L			6 X		
17 A			17 A	3 N	3 N	5 E	6 X	5 E			
8 L								24 Y	5 E	8 L	7 P
		23 V	17 A	20 C	20 C	19 I	3 N	5 E			17 A
				8 L					13 J	17 A	11 W
	7 P	5 E	8 L	17 A	22 G	5 E					1 S
				3 N							

1 S	2 B	3 N	4 U	5 E	6 X	7 P	8 L	9 Z	10 D	11 W	12 H	13 J
14 M	15 F	16 K	17 A	18 Q	19 I	20 C	21 T	22 G	23 V	24 Y	25 O	26 R

What about the tricky ones? :-

ZUCKERMAN - Lord Zuckerman produced the first ever report in 1980 on badgers and bTB, which sadly recommended gassing. This practice is now banned.

PELAGE - Another name for the fur/hair of a mammal.



MORE BADGERS IN TROUBLEAND SOME HAPPY UPDATES! -Carol & Trevor

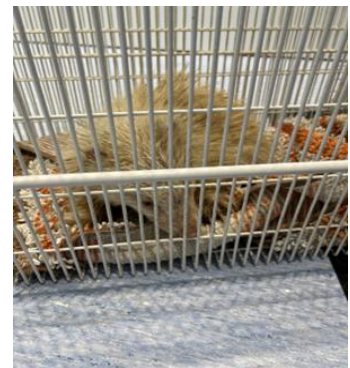


❖ We received a call recently from two concerned ladies who found a young badger that had collapsed at a location in Dorney. Luckily, the ladies stayed with the badger until we arrived. When we approached the badger, he immediately perked up and tried to run away. It was evident he had an injury to one of his rear legs. He was also shivering badly. We managed to capture him using a net and took him straight to Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital in Haddenham. He is still with them and undergoing treatment at the hospital, so we are hoping for a complete recovery and eventual release to the wild for this little guy. It is still early days but we are keeping our fingers crossed.

❖ We received an e-mail this week from a concerned resident in Farnham Royal, worried about woodland near him, in danger of being destroyed. We surveyed the site and found an active main sett. As it is in Buckinghamshire, all the relevant information has been passed to Bucks Badger Group. They can take all necessary steps to ensure this sett is protected and no clearance work could harm the badgers or their sett.

❖ Another call came through from a concerned lady in Winkfield, who saw a young badger stumbling around in a field. We attended but there was no sign of the badger. We are continuing to monitor the area with a camera and leaving out food to support the badger so fingers crossed on this one.

❖ A happy ending for the leucistic badger cub we rescued from Burnham back in May this year. This was a joint rescue with Bucks Badger Group. He has been cared for by Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital and will be released back to the wild this month to one of their safe release sites. He will be joined by two other badger cubs from Tiggywinkles.



❖ The two cubs we rescued from an estate in Hare Hatch at the end of May this year are thriving. We are still unsure whether they were orphaned or abandoned by their mother. They were under weight and too young to be able to survive on their own. We took advice from Pauline Kidner of Secret World and after assessing the cubs in captivity to make sure they were able to eat on their own, they were released back to their sett on a supplementary feeding programme. We continued to monitor the cubs using trail cams, but are reducing the support with a view to stopping the feeding this month to allow the cubs to forage naturally. They have bonded well with the other badgers in the clan so we are quite happy that we have given them the best chance to continue a natural life in the wild. The cubs were named Danny and Alex after the two guys who initially contacted us and raised concerns about the cubs wandering around in the day. We wish Danny and Alex (the cubs!) a long and happy life in the wild!

AND FINALLY..... Do you follow Binfield Badgers on Facebook? - Jill



If not, please follow us and 'Like' and 'Share' our posts!

The more followers we have means we can reach a wider audience and keep everyone informed on our activities, meetings and badgery news!

fb.me/binfieldbadgers



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COMMITTEE

Chairpersons: John Fennell and Jill Hoblin

Secretary: Judith Darnell, Woodley

Treasurer: Karen M^cCoy, Sonning

Membership Secretary:

Judith Darnell, Woodley
Binfield Badger Group
PO Box 3805, Bracknell
RG42 1HH

Group email: Mike Coon, Maidenhead

Talks: John Fennell, Binfield

Copse maintenance: Cathy Holwill, Reading

Newsletter: Judith Darnell, Woodley

Vaccination: Jill Hoblin, Newbury

Sett/RTA Records: Karen McCoy, Sonning

Surveys: Committee members

Planning: Committee members

Rescues: Carol and Trevor Samuel, Maidenhead

Website: Karen McCoy and Cathy Holwill

Your MP: www.writetothem.com/



Badger Trust, P.O. Box 708, East Grinstead, RH19 2WN.

Phone - 08458 287878 or 08458 BTRUST

Web - www.badger.org.uk



EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

(cut out and keep)

Binfield Badger Group	0844 804 1146 <i>(Premium Rate)</i>
RSPCA 24 hour <u>emergency</u> call out number	0300 1234 999
Police emergency only (use 101 for non-urgent)	999
Harper Asprey Wildlife Rescue, Camberley	01344 623106
Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue	07549 322464
Leatherhead Wildlife Aid, Surrey	09061 800132
Aylesbury Wildlife Hospital Trust, Haddenham, Bucks	01844 292292

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND WHO MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT THE GROUP - HELP THE BADGERS BY INTRODUCING A NEW MEMBER – YOU CAN NOW JOIN ONLINE.

A FULL COLOUR VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE.

