

Binfield Badger Group

Protecting badgers across Berkshire

Charity Number: 1075886



Newsletter No. 137

June 2024



March With Us For Badgers! * London * 22 June

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Binfield Badger Group

Affiliated to the Badger Trust

www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk

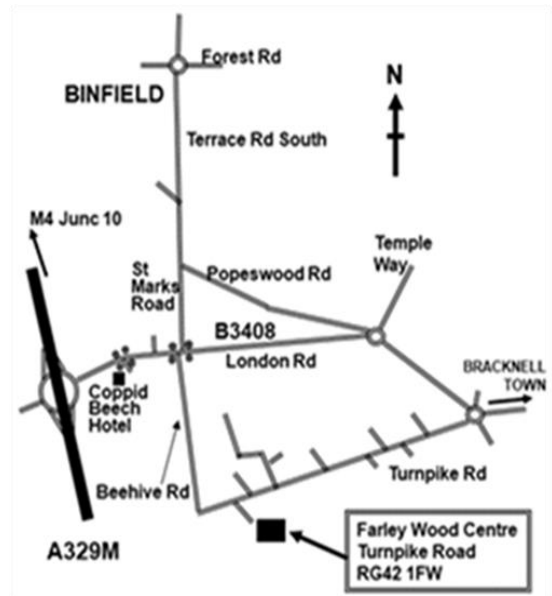
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GROUP NEWS

Our Public Meeting and AGM, held on Thursday, 28th March was well attended. Thank you to all who braved the stormy weather and came along to show your support!

We enjoyed an inspiring talk by Ailsa Claybourn, a regular volunteer with the British Trust for Ornithology and BBOWT. She told us about the science behind our love of nature and how this can enhance our feeling of wellbeing – much needed in this troubled world! Our short AGM then followed - a chance for members to hear about what the Group had been up to over the past year and contribute any views/suggestions!

The Farley Wood Centre has been booked for **our next Public Meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday, 31 October**. Hope to see you then!



REMINDER – HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP?

Thank you to all of our members who have renewed promptly this year. However, if you find a Reminder Form included with this newsletter, then I have not yet received your 2024 form and subscription, which is now overdue. We do hope that you will continue to support our Group! [There is more information on how to renew on Page 9.](#)

SUCCESS FOR BADGERS!

- Jill



You may recall that in the last newsletter, I wrote an article about a concerned resident in West Berkshire who was living next to a property that had submitted planning permission to rip out an ancient hedgerow in front of their property so they could widen their driveway. This would have had implications on the badgers on their land who were using the hedgerow for access to a subsidiary sett, but I was also very concerned about the plan to remove an ancient, healthy and wildlife-rich roadside hedgerow.

The Group sent a letter of objection, noting our concern that any development that restricts the badgers access to the subsidiary sett – and setts further afield in the same area – would have a detrimental effect on the badger's ability to roam and forage. I am delighted to say that the application was refused! There were multiple letters of concern written by local residents, as well as environmental groups, so, thanks to "People Power", the hedgerow will stay in place for all wildlife to continue to use in the future and for the badgers to safely navigate between their places of residence.



EXCITING NEWS – SOME NEW ADDITIONS AT THE COPSE!

- John



At the AGM on 28 March, we speculated that one of our resident sow badgers, Star Lux was possibly lactating. However, we had to wait until the third week of April before we had confirmation from a trail camera clip showing the first sighting of a cub, that she had indeed given birth!

Star Lux and her brother Star Trex were born in 2021, so both are now three year old adult badgers. They have lived at the Binfield Sett since birth. Their mum, Little Star, has also continued to live there too. She had twins again in 2022, but they both moved away within a year. As far as we know, as no cubs were

seen, she didn't give birth in 2023. At this time, she does not appear to be in residence, but visits from time to time. Previously, this behaviour has resulted in her eventually returning with cubs in tow - so hopefully again this year!

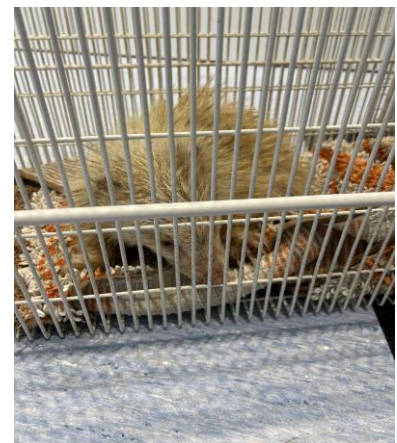
STOP PRESS - the foregoing was written and drafted into this newsletter before the following news broke. Little Star has returned with two healthy cubs!! This is her *sixth pair of twins* that we know that she has given birth to. She became a mum for the first time in 2018 when she was likely two or three years old. She is therefore eight or nine years old now.



BADGER CUBS IN TROUBLE – BBG TO THE RESCUE!

- Carol & Trevor

We had a call from a Burnham resident who had spotted a frightened and very wet albino cub behind her refuse bins. We went out straight away and were surprised to find it was a 'leucistic' cub (dark eyes/nose), not an albino. It was a joint rescue with Ian from Bucks Badger Group, who captured the cub and we transported it to Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital at Haddenham. The cub was assessed and given medication. Now named Bailey, it is reported to be doing well. They hope it will be released back with its Burnham clan in due course. 🐾



Another call came through on 31st May from the Hare Hatch area - two more cubs in trouble, seen wandering in the day looking disorientated. We were able to capture the cubs, who may have been orphaned. On the advice of Pauline Kidner of Secret World, we took the cubs home and provided shelter and supplementary feeding for 48 hours. She advised we should then return them to the sett and continue feeding for a few weeks to allow the cubs to gain weight and confidence in order to be able to forage on their own. The cubs, Alex and Danny, were released back to Hare Hatch and, with the additional help of the residents, we will continue a supplementary feeding programme and monitor their progress with trailcams. We are hopeful they will now have a good start in life! 🐾 🐾



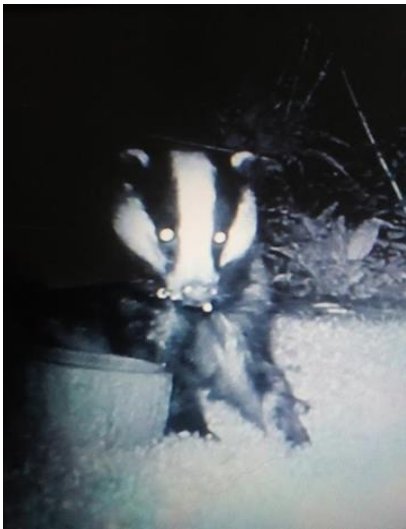
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For those of you with good memories, you may remember Boris – a badger that we rescued back in July 2021 from a resident's garden in West Berkshire when the lady that was feeding him reported him to us with a bad limp on one of his front legs. Sadly, Boris's leg was too severe an injury to save and he was euthanised by the vets – it was the kindest thing to do in the circumstances.



Subsequent reports by the kind resident kept us informed that she was continuing to have visitors to her garden, including a large female who then bought cubs back to the garden the following year. We can't be sure of course, but we were hopeful that they might have been Boris's cubs. It has been a bit of a mystery though as to where they might have been coming from, so for our April sett survey we set out to try and solve the puzzle!

The garden backs onto open woodland that has public access, so it was difficult to determine badger runs from public pathways and cycle routes, but we persevered – and were so glad we did. Approximately 500 yards as the crow flies, tucked down a slope that ran down into a small stream, we found the most glorious sett. There were over 20 active holes with large spoil heaps, dozens of partially active ones, runs, digging, latrines, tree scratch markings, hairs – it was fabulous! Here are a couple of photos of what we found.



We are always happy to welcome new members to our surveying team - only if we know where they are can we protect them!

If you would like to help us with this important activity, you can find out more on our website :- <https://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/about-sett-surveys>



On 4 June, the Badger Trust released the shocking news that Natural England CEO and Chair have overruled their own scientific advice that supplementary badger culling will not work.

Badger Trust has now urgently written to the Chief Executive of Natural England to follow the scientific guidance of its own Director of Science, Dr Peter Brotherton, **and stop the badger cull with immediate effect.**

Documents obtained by independent ecologist, Tom Langton show that **Brotherton's scientific advice was NOT to carry out the supplementary badger cull from 1 June 2024** as, *"...based on the evidence, I can find no justification for authorising further supplementary badger culls in 2024 for the purpose of preventing the spread of disease and recommend against doing so"*.

Despite this advice, **Natural England's Chief Executive Marian Spain and Chair Tony Juniper have decided to proceed with supplementary badger culling and have ordered the killing of thousands of badgers to go ahead in 17 existing and 9 unnamed new zones.**

This decision is shocking news. Badger Trust can see only one reason in the documents for this decision – that it would upset the farming industry if they did not. This seems to point to a politically based decision rather than a scientific one, contradicting the principles of evidence-based decision-making.

Peter Hambly, Executive Director of Badger Trust, said, *"This shocking decision will lead to thousands of needless badger deaths, causing significant disruption to ecosystems and putting nature further under threat; and yet it will not reduce bTB in cattle. Natural England must follow the scientific advice and call for an immediate stop to the badger cull. Every day it delays means the slaughter of more badgers and their cubs."*

In another blow to Natural England and Defra's strategy of targeting badgers, Brotherton also added, *"It is disappointing that the recent publication by Birch et al 2024 has been widely reported as providing evidence that badger culling reduces the incidence of bTB by 56%, when in fact the study shows the overall impact of implementing a range of bTB control measures, not culling alone. Further research to establish the relative disease reduction contributions of the different control methods is needed."*

Hambly added, *"Dr Brotherton's comments on the "Birch Report" are in line with what Badger Trust and independent scientists have been pointing out for months. It's cattle that spread the overwhelming majority of bTB, and it's cattle where bTB control measures should be focused. This view is widely accepted among independent scientists, further questioning the effectiveness of badger culling as a bTB control method. We are already seeing localised badger extinction in heavily culled areas. The decision to proceed with slaughtering badgers has significant implications for the badger population and the natural environment at a time of nature crisis."*

The continual scapegoating of the badger by people who are meant to protect nature continues to shock us. They must stop the killing now."





The General Election has been called for 4 July 2024.

Here, the Badger Trust outlines their asks as they seek clarity from the main political parties on their visions for badgers and their natural habitats.

In particular, they want to know their plans for the future of the badger cull. It's an ineffective, costly and unethical policy of mass killing badgers to control bovine TB. It's not a cull, it's a slaughter.

What the Trust are asking:

- **End the badger cull now** and protect the remaining wild badger population before it's too late.
- **Deliver the rapid development and roll-out of a compulsory cattle vaccine** and an improved cattle test to stamp out bTB infection in the cattle herd and protect both farmed cows and wildlife.
- **Be honest about the true levels of bTB hidden in the English cattle herd**, with compulsory nationwide use of more sensitive (reliable) testing and giving enhanced compensation to farmers.
- **Commit to a 'One Health and One Welfare' approach to UK ecosystems** by supporting farmers to integrate effective cattle-based bTB control measures into their animal welfare and environmental sustainability practices.
- **Make badger persecution notifiable** and extend the maximum sentence for convictions under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) from six months to five years, in line with the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021.
- **Make space for badgers and other wildlife** and prevent further habitat loss by ensuring new development protects and enhances our natural environment.
- **Restore Nature Now** and address the UK's nature crisis by protecting badgers and their habitats.

We're voting badger! As a registered charity, the Badger Trust is politically neutral and does not endorse any party—we only support badgers! We will continue to do all that we can to promote and enhance the welfare, conservation and protection of badgers, their setts and their habitats. We will work with all people who share those aims and want to see nature protected, not driven to extinction levels.

Use your vote wisely on 4 July – Save badgers – Save nature! -



The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world!

Badger Trust proudly supports ‘Restore Nature Now’, a campaign to address this nature crisis.

Killing 230,000 native badgers—half the estimated population—is at the very heart of this unnecessary attack on nature. Badgers also face threats from high rates of wildlife crime and the rapid rise of property and road development. As ecosystem engineers, badgers provide many benefits to other species. **Threats to badgers and their spaces are threats to the balance of our natural environment.**

What the Trust is doing:

- We have written to all the major political parties with a list of questions about ending the badger cull and their positions and vision on associated issues that affect badgers and their habitats.
- We have written to the Permanent Secretary at Defra to ensure no new badger kill licences are issued in the election period. <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/post/general-election-2024-our-manifesto-for-badgers> (Scroll to the PDF in ‘Further Information’)
- We continue to reserve the right to take legal action after the election when Defra reports back on the recent ‘badger control’ consultation.
- We will publish any responses we receive.

What you can do:

- **Sign our petition** to end the cull and show policymakers you want protection, not extinction: <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/end-the-cull/end-the-cull-petition>
- **Send a letter to your parliamentary candidates** asking for their views.—our template will help you get started: <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/post/general-election-2024-our-manifesto-for-badgers> (Scroll down to the PDF under ‘Further Information’)
- **Donate to our campaigns to protect badgers**, their setts and their habitats.
- **Get involved with your local badger group**. Volunteers at badger groups across the country campaign locally to End the Cull, and they will be pleased to have your support.
- **Join us at the ‘Restore Nature Now!’ March and Peaceful Protest on Saturday, 22 June in Central London.** : <https://www.restorenaturenow.com/>



Badger Groups are uniting nationally to End the Cull!



Restore Nature Now!

March and protest on Saturday 22nd June in London

'Restore Nature Now' is a mass event taking place on 22 June from 12 noon in central London. We hope it will be the biggest gathering of people for nature and climate the UK has ever seen

The Badger Trust will be marching peacefully with thousands of fellow nature and wildlife supporters to make all politicians sit up and take notice ahead of the election that we want them to act to Restore Nature Now—***please join us***.

(You can find details of the march here : <https://www.restorenaturenow.com/>)

The march is very well-timed to send a clear message to candidates that we must put nature first. **We want a 'badger army' marching in unison** with thousands of others representing nature and climate-based organisations.

There will be a 'BadgerTrust' rally point (*we will email details when advised*), so we can join together for the march and we hope you'll join us in all your badger finery - wearing badger t-shirts, masks, costumes, with large banners calling to End the Cull and Restore Nature Now.

There is a downloadable Badger Mask in the Group's Shared Resource Folder- [Badger craft and colouring activities | Badger Trust](#) (or you might want to get crafty and make the Wintercroft 3D Badger Mask - <https://wintercroft.com/products/badger-mask>)

.....or see Page 10, where there is a mask template you can print off on A4 size paper or card, colour and cut out, if you receive this newsletter by email.



Thank you to all of our members who have renewed promptly. **If you find a Reminder Form included with this newsletter, then I have not yet received your 2024/5 form and subscription, which is now overdue. **However, if you have asked for this newsletter to be emailed to you, a blank renewal form has been included for you to complete and return please – or renew using the ‘Join Us’ page on our website: <http://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/join-us>**



We do hope that you will continue to support our Group!

- **If you have a personalised form, please check that your details are correct,** particularly post codes and phone numbers, and add any changes in the box next to the entry.
- **Email addresses are very helpful** so we can let you know what is going on; *no personal details are shared with anyone else.*
- **Core Group Communications –** please *carefully* read the ‘Opt In’/‘Opt Out’ statements, just above your signature on the form *and tick the appropriate box.* (We hope you will choose to continue hearing from us regarding badgers and other wildlife-related issues, including our newsletters.)
- **Newsletter options-** you can now indicate on the form if you would prefer to receive your quarterly newsletter **by email**, by ticking the appropriate box. (*Of course, this will greatly save on the ever increasing cost of printing and postage!*)
- **Membership rates -** the annual Membership rates continue to be £6 per adult and £2 per child (under 18). Please remember that from this fee we pay a levy of £2 per head to the Badger Trust to support its valuable work. The membership fee doesn’t cover our costs, so we (and the badgers!) continue to be very grateful to those able to add a donation to their fees. *Please indicate where you are able to Gift Aid any donation to the Group by ticking the box.*
- **How can you help?** - You will also see a section asking for details of how you can help - you are sure to find something that interests you, but more ideas are always welcome! Please get in touch today with your ideas, or comments on current issues – contact details are all listed on the back page of this newsletter.

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) pay via Paypal -** please use the **‘Donate’** button in the ‘Join Us’ section on the website; **(3) return a cheque** (made payable to ‘Binfield Badger Group’) along with your membership form - our address is given on the form. **(We are charged fees for every cheque banked and for every Paypal transaction so more of your money goes to the Group if you are able to pay via BACS.)**

(If paying by BACS or Paypal, please still remember to return the form to us. It would help if you mark the form “paid via BACS” or “paid via website” please.)

If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, they can go to the ‘Join Us’ page on our website: <http://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/join-us>, where the whole application process can be done quickly and securely.



KIDS' PAGE - BADGER MASK TO PRINT, COLOUR AND CUT OUT!

Print onto A4 paper or card – get the black & white stripes in the right place!



WE CATCH UP WITH OUR FAVOURITE FOOTIE TEAM – THE BASILDON BADGERS!



The Binfield Badger Group are proud to sponsor Basildon Badgers FC's 'Berkshire Badgers Trophy', which is awarded to the young player who has shown special effort and qualities while playing for their team.



This time, our winner is William Eales who has been a real driving force in the Under 11's who have made real progress this year.

William continues to lead from the front, is great at winning the ball back and is inventive in his play as he looks to get the team onto the front foot.

A well deserved winner....Well done William!



AND FINALLY – IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO 'GO WILD' IN JUNE!!

BBOWT

"30 DAYS WILD" is The Wildlife Trusts' annual challenge event, where everyone involved does one wild thing a day throughout the month of June. It's the UK's biggest nature challenge and is celebrating its tenth year!

It's not too late - **Sign up today** and receive a **FREE** pack in the post, plus lots of inspiration for activities to help you **GO WILD** this month!

Just visit :- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/30dayswild>



Chairpersons: John Fennell and Jill Hoblin**Secretary:** Judith Darnell, Woodley**Treasurer:** Karen McCoy, 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.

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RG42 1HH**E-Mail:**badgers@binfieldbadgers.org.uk**Facebook:**fb.me/binfieldbadgers**Website:**www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk**EMERGENCY NUMBERS:**

(cut out and keep)

RSPCA 24 hour emergency call out number 0300 1234 999

Police emergency only (use 101 for non-urgent) 999

Harper Asprey Wildlife Rescue, Camberley 01344 623106

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.**