

Conservation update: Bulbourne project and Gadespring

The project to improve the river Bulbourne where it flows through Box Moor Trust land has attracted yet another accolade, being commended in the 'Natural Environment' category of the Canal and River Trust Living Waterways Awards 2018. The positive impact that the work has had on the river and its environs is becoming ever clearer, with ecological monitoring providing evidence of an increase in the numbers and species of fish and invertebrates, as well as regular sightings of water-loving mammals and wetland birds. We were contacted by local resident Alice Vesty, who photographed one such bird on Hardings Moor in October. Alice said, "I was pleasantly surprised to spot what I'm pretty sure was a snipe down on the moor earlier. The changes that the Box Moor Trust have made down there really are wonderful."



Sedge warbler and wren at Gadespring

It has been exciting to record the first sightings of otters locally for more than 50 years, although this was tempered by the sad news that one of them is now in Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital recovering from a dog attack. In addition, the bird hide

at Gadespring continues to afford sightings of uncommon species in recent months, including a sedge warbler, a spotted fly catcher and this jack snipe, photographed by Trust conservation volunteer Clive Tomlinson.



Jack Snipe

Trust sponsors live music for the elderly

The Box Moor Trust has been working with another charity, Music in Hospitals and Care, to provide live music entertainment for the elderly and people with dementia in Hemel Hempstead. It is well documented how therapeutic music from their younger days can be for dementia sufferers. In early December, senior citizens at the Centre in the Park were treated to a live music session provided by singer and pianist TJ Johnson, a local resident himself. "The mini concert last Friday went very well; the service users here thoroughly enjoyed it, as did the staff, so thank you very much - all positive feedback from everyone," said Janette

Rowe, Deputy Manager at the Centre in the Park.

In late September, a group of people with dementia from B&M Care came to the Box Moor Trust Centre to watch guitarist and banjo player Matt Redman and singer/musician Patricia Hammond perform a selection of well known favourites from the good old days. "Thank you so much, we all had a lovely afternoon," said Becki Theophile, of B&M Care. The Trust plans to fund further such events in the future - please contact us if you are a care home and are interested.



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The Box Moor Trust

Your land, your heritage, your future

Winter Newsletter

Learn and have fun with nature



The Trust works with community organisations such as Waterways Experiences, who help us to deliver educational trips for local schools at our Gadespring site. Our photo shows Chaulden School pupils and staff enjoying their day out. Photo: Henry White

Our vibrant Education & Community department delivers a range of kids' services, including courses and Forest School sessions for local schools, wildlife explorer groups, activity days and more. Here are some further details of their forthcoming events and activities:

Nature Tots runs on the third Tuesday of the month. We run both a morning and an afternoon session and we are starting a new Wednesday morning group in January. A very popular group, there is currently a waiting list for places. To add your child's name, please contact education@boxmoortrust.org.uk

Box Moor Rangers is our youth group, meeting on the third Saturday of the month and exploring the great outdoors. **Minis** are 3-7 years and meet 1.30-2.30pm, **Juniors** are 8-10 years and meet 10am-12.30pm and **Youth Conservation Rangers** are 11-16 years and also meet 10am-12.30pm. For details or to register, please email: education@boxmoortrust.org.uk

Save the Dates for our Easter programme:

Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th April: Lambing Weekend

Tuesday 9th April: Family Easter Eggstravaganza at The Old Barn

As part of the RSPB Big Birdwatch, we will be having a **Family Birdwatch** on **Sunday 27th January** at the Gadespring Open Day, Old Fishery Lane, between 11am-2 pm. Come and join us for birdwatching, a guided tour of the cress beds and some children's activities. Donations welcome on the day, no need to book.



For more news visit www.boxmoortrust.org.uk

Consultation: proposed deregistration and exchange of common land

Fast changing circumstances are bringing a significant risk to the Trust's regular income stream. For the Trust to continue protecting the land and offering services to the growing community, it is essential that it seeks new ways to fund itself sustainably. Consequently, the Trust proposes to deregister a small part of its estate for development, and in exchange it will offer an alternative plot as protected common land. We need to carry out a local consultation to ask for your views before applying to the National Planning Inspectorate for what is known as a 'deregistration' of common land. Your views really matter, and to demonstrate a fair and independent assessment of the feedback, we have employed specialist consultants.

The financial sustainability of the Trust's work and services in the future will depend on the results, so your response of support

could be absolutely key. It is very important that we get your feedback and you can do this online at www.boxmoortrust.org.uk. If you can't get online, you can provide feedback by filling out a paper form and sending it directly to our independent consultants via a pre-paid envelope. A leaflet, set of FAQs and an accompanying questionnaire are being distributed at Hemel Hempstead and Bovingdon libraries, Marlowes - Hemel Hempstead Information Centre, Apsley Community Centre and St. Mary's Church. They are also available at the Box Moor Trust Office. Alternatively, if you ring us on 01442 253300 we can send you a copy by post. A public notice has been placed in the Gazette. After this consultation there will also be the opportunity to make a 'representation' in February, either in support or against, to the Secretary of State. Details will be available later.



Box Moor Trust grant scheme in action



Giant marrow grown by DESC students July 2018

Students from Dacorum Education Support Centre (DESC), an organisation that works with young people outside mainstream education, learned team building, construction and gardening skills as part of a wider "Outside Project". Thanks to a £2,500 grant awarded to DESC by the Box Moor Trust in 2016, the school in Grovehill was able to kick start their outdoor space project. Students were involved from

the start such as researching ideas and ordering materials.

The project saw students and staff building benches and vegetable beds, as well as erecting a greenhouse and a shed. The greenhouse is now in regular use for planting cuttings and sowing seeds. Students have been learning about horticulture and have successfully grown vegetables such as beetroot, runner beans, tomatoes and marrows. The outdoor space has also been used for presentations and events such as the Year 11 end of year BBQ.

The Outside Project is ongoing and DESC have plans to create a pond, more seating and further facilities to enable them to run a horticulture course.

"We wish to thank the Box Moor Trust for this donation which has helped us with phase 1 of our Outdoor Project" said Gill Caslake, Curriculum Co-ordinator. Box Moor Trust Chair, David Kirk said, "It's terrific to see our grants be put into good use. Not only have DESC students learned a wide variety of practical skills, they have also benefitted from improved self-esteem, teamwork and a sense of achievement."

Christmas in Hay Wood

On December 1st, Santa braved the torrential rain to make an appearance at our family fun day in Hay Wood at Westbrook Hay and hand out presents to the children. Fun was had by all, with craft activities taking place in the Old Barn and an opportunity to take photos with Pennington Bear!



Samuel and Annabel Berry with Pennington Bear

Norfolk Horn wool

Following the popularity of our last batch of wool (which completely sold out), we decided to have this year's fleeces processed and have now received the finished product back from the mill. Made from the fleeces of our flock of rare breed Norfolk Horn sheep, the three-ply 50g balls are a beautiful natural cream colour. You can buy them directly from the Trust Centre or online from our website at £6 per ball.



Green Walk leaflet

The last of our four colour-coded walk leaflets has been updated, and new way markers put up along the route to help walkers to navigate their way round. Green Walk guides the visitor around the scenic woods and meadows of Westbrook Hay, and does include a few steep hills. Copies of the leaflet are available from the Box Moor Trust Centre or can be downloaded from our website.



Cheers!

After liaising with Puddingstone Distillery in Tring earlier this year, we are very excited to announce a new venture for 2019. As a part of our 425th anniversary we are hoping they will produce a Box Moor Trust gin! Our volunteers have been hard at work harvesting juniper berries on Roughdown Common, which are now being stored at the distillery... watch this space for further details!

Photos by Nick Spurling



A few calendars left...

We still have a few 2019 calendars, featuring beautiful scenes of Box Moor Trust land, available to buy at £6 each. Buy online at www.boxmoortrust.org.uk or drop into the Trust Centre and pick up your copy. When they're gone, they're gone!

....and images needed for 2020

The photo competition to select pictures for inclusion in the Trust's 2020 calendar is now underway – download your entry form from our website. The theme this year is, "Unusual Viewpoints" and there are cash prizes to be won, including a first prize of £100. Entry is free and the competition is open to all. Closing date is 3rd August 2019.