

Spring Newsletter



Spring Lambs at the Trust

When the lambs start to arrive, it's a sure sign that Spring is here.

Photo: Elaine Rushton

Lambing at the Box Moor Trust started on 1st April and has kept our stockman, Bob, busy night and day. In total, we had forty-four ewes in lamb; thirty pedigree Norfolk Horns and fourteen Charolais crosses. Eighteen ewes were expecting single lambs, twenty-four had twins and the other two were carrying triplets. So, a total of seventy-two babies! The new lambs are now out on the meadows of Westbrook Hay with their mums. See the stock map on our website at www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/stock-map/ for up-to-date information on where the lambs can be seen.

We would please ask dog owners to be especially vigilant at this time, and to keep strict control of your dog when walking at Westbrook Hay. Dogs may not go into fields where the lambs are grazing and should be kept on leads in the areas around the sheep pastures to minimise the risk of that happening. Please enjoy the lambs responsibly.

Our rare breed Belted Galloway cattle have been lodged at their winter quarters at Howes Retreat for the last few months but have now returned to the moors, where they will graze until the autumn. With their distinctive black coats with white banding, we are often asked over the winter months "when will the Oreo cows be back?" We know they are a very popular feature of the local landscape and have become a symbol of the Trust for many.



Community Grants: Suspension of Programme

When surplus funds allow, the Trust makes available a grant fund to eligible not-for-profit organisations within its area of benefit. Over the past 20 years, the Trust is proud to have helped with the funding of over 170 local community projects in this way. It is with regret, therefore, that because of ongoing uncertainty regarding the Trust's income levels due to Covid-19, we have reluctantly had to take the decision to suspend the grant programme until further notice. We hope and anticipate that this will be a temporary measure. *(Please note that if your organisation submitted a successful application in 2020 and has yet to claim the funding, don't worry – you can still claim the grant awarded to you.)*

Bin it!

We know that our beautiful moors offer great spaces for dog walking and we welcome responsible dog owners. Unfortunately, a significant minority do not clear up after their dogs and that causes problems for all of us. Dog waste can spread a variety of diseases to humans and other animals including Neospora, which can cause abortion in infected cattle. If your dog fouls, always bag it and bin it, or take it away with you. It is impossible for us to provide and service bins all over the estate. Any waste bin will do. Please do not leave bags lying around or decorate trees and bushes - this is repugnant to everyone and does not constitute responsible dog walking. We will shortly be launching a coordinated awareness campaign to combat this issue, so look out for the posters soon.



Photo: Tawny James

Calling all photographers...



Photo: Derrick Dunks

Don't forget to enter this year's photo competition, which closes on **7th August 2021**. The winning photos will feature in the Box Moor Trust 2022 calendar. As we know, it's been a very unusual year to say the least, so our theme, **"Box Moor Trust Land Through Lockdown"**, should generate some interesting and imaginative images. All photographs must have been on, or of, Box Moor Trust land and we are looking for all seasons to be represented in the calendar. The Trust will select the 12

finalists, and the top 3 will be chosen by public vote on the Trust's Facebook page. The competition is free to enter and cash prizes will be awarded to all those whose photos are selected for the calendar (£100 for first place, £75 for second and £50 for third, with £10 awarded to the authors of the remaining nine images selected). Entry forms and full rules and regulations can be downloaded at: www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/the-trust/calendar-competition/

Changes to the Kickstart Scheme

On Monday 25th January, the Government announced changes to the Kickstart scheme which mean that we are no longer able to proceed as a Gateway.

Every Gateway on the national list that was still collecting the 30 minimum placements, so obviously up against the difficulty of commitments during an uncertain lockdown, has now been debarred from proceeding. This is highly disappointing for us after all the hard work that we have put into this.

From 3rd February 2021, employers could apply directly to the Kickstart scheme for any number of job placements. The threshold of 30 job placements has been removed.

The Box Moor Trust and the Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors remain committed to supporting youth employment in Dacorum. If you do still want to move forward and employ someone through the scheme, we are happy to answer your questions and offer support.

We will continue to review our approach as more information is released. We had been working on a training program designed to help young people taking part in the scheme to become more employable. We are still considering if this is possible.

For further information on how to apply to take part in the Kickstart scheme visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

Staff Changes

Following some internal restructuring to incorporate Environmental Awareness, Education & Community into our Estate team, we are delighted to be introducing you to some new staff members, who will be taking up key posts within the Trust.

Firstly, a familiar face to many: Karen Poore worked with us as an Estate Ranger several years ago but left to take up the position of Commons & Greens Officer with Harpenden Town Council. We are so pleased to welcome Karen back to the Trust as Deputy Estate Manager, where she will play a pivotal role in supporting Estate Manager Peter Samson with the management and conservation of the estate. Karen will be stepping into the shoes of Mike Wilson, who is leaving us to move closer to family in East Anglia. Often to be seen out and about with his trusty border collie, Faye, by his side, Mike will be greatly missed by his colleagues. He will be taking up a role managing a private estate in Suffolk.

Also joining the team is Matthew Shrimpton, Senior Ranger (Estate). Bringing his experience and knowledge of working for the National Trust's Bradenham estate in Bucks, Matthew is sure to be a valuable asset.

Striving to put nature conservation at the core of the Trust's work will be Heather Burrows, who will be taking on the key role of Senior Ranger (Environmental Awareness & Community). Previously running her own Forest Schools business, Heather has a great deal of experience in working in, and with, schools, and in outdoor education generally.

Our new Ecology Ranger is Danielle Beckett, whose work on the estate will include particular responsibility for organising ecological surveys and helping to engender enthusiasm for the natural world among our beneficiaries. Danielle previously worked for the Royal Veterinary College.



Jane Ahern

Finally, our Seasonal Ranger Jane Ahern (pictured) will be staying on as a Trainee Ranger. Jane has worked with us for a couple of seasons now, and we are delighted to have been able to formalise her role as a member of the Estate team.

Farewell Jane, Hello Charley

Finance Manager Jane Tilley is retiring at the end of April and will be much missed. In the short time she has been with the Trust, Jane has streamlined our accounts processes and has worked closely with the Finance & Assets committee to keep the Trust's finances on an

even keel in testing times. Taking over from Jane is Charley Eriksen, who until recently has been living and working in Hong Kong. She has experience as an Office Manager and as an Accountant and Auditor. We look forward to working with her.



Photo: Alastair Cowe

Fishery Moor Boardwalk Bridge

At last, we have been able to complete this new boardwalk-style bridge, requested by local residents to make access easier for buggies. Unfortunately, successful completion of the project was delayed and delayed by the exceptionally wet conditions of recent months, so we are relieved and happy to now have this crossing over the stream on Fishery Moor in place. Well done to all our staff.



Photo: Mike Dunks

Wildlife through the Lens

We are very fortunate at the Trust to have a committed group of volunteers working with us, many of whom are knowledgeable in a variety of aspects of the natural world.

One of these is Liam Edwards, a keen naturalist and skilled photographer, who has been monitoring the wildlife of the estate over recent months, including nesting sites, badger setts, fox dens and a number of owl locations.

In early March, whilst checking a location on the valley floor, he suddenly heard a lot of commotion and a male and female kingfisher came flying up the water channel and landed on a small bridge. The female was extremely vocal. Liam managed to grab this great shot of her scolding the male, who looks suitably chastened! He will continue to discreetly monitor the site for evidence of the pair nesting.

Also pictured is another one of Liam's spots – this pale phase common buzzard was photographed near to Howes Retreat whilst Liam was on the lookout for barn owls. A buzzard's plumage can vary greatly in shade, from dark brown to extremely pale. Juvenile birds are also paler than adults.

We look forward to sharing more of Liam's beautiful photos with you in future issues.



Photos: Liam Edwards

Moor Good Citizens

With better weather coming and with it the chance to get out into the fresh air and enjoy our amenity spaces, litter is inevitably becoming ever more problematic. Together with anti-social behaviour and vandalism, it has been worsened by the Covid crisis, particularly on Blackbirds Moor. The Trust's own staff and volunteers work hard to keep on top of the problem, but the support of the community in tackling the issue is key.

Local councillor William Allen's vision for this area to be a safe and clean environment that the whole community can enjoy has resulted in Moor Good Citizens, an initiative aimed at encouraging people to make use of the bins provided, refrain from causing damage to benches, bins, trees or cricket facilities and minimise disturbance to other users of the open space. The idea is for volunteers to sign up for the scheme and show by example the importance of recycling/disposal of litter and responsible behaviour. Participants will have

access to litter bags provided by DBC. They will book a time to do a 'round' and go round the Moor with a recycling bag, collecting cans and bottles. Whilst doing this, they may take the opportunity to chat with groups and direct them to bins for non-recyclable waste. The key point is to get across the point that this is everyone's space and needs everyone to take care of it by clearing up litter, not breaking benches or bottles etc. Rubbish collected in DBC bags (see-through bags for recyclables and orange bags for general waste) can be left behind the bin opposite the turning for Beechfield Road. DBC will collect on their bin round. On-line training in effective engagement with young people will be provided.

For further information and to join, email your name and mobile number to: boxmoorcouncillors@gmail.com They will be delighted to hear from you!



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