

Spring Newsletter



Photos: Iain Nibbsy

Hemel Rotary supports Box Moor Trust Tree Planting for Queen's Green Canopy

Hemel Rotary have very kindly supported the Box Moor Trust with a donation to enable some trees to be planted on Trust land as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 Green Canopy.

The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".

Peter Phillips (Trustee) said, "The Box Moor Trust is most grateful to Hemel Rotary for their very generous donation, which has enabled us to plant and nurture these three Crimson Spire oaks on Heath Park, a prominent location where they can be

enjoyed by everyone. The planting of trees on Trust land dates back to the late 19th century, when an avenue of horse chestnuts was planted on Blackbirds Moor to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, so it is wonderful to be able to continue with this historic tradition."

Hemel Rotary President 21/22, Martin Horsted, said, "Rotary International's new global area of focus is the Environment and with this coinciding with the Queens Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy this year we are delighted to be working with the Box Moor Trust on this great initiative. The trees will be a lasting legacy of this special year for all to see on the Box Moor Trust land."

This is just one of many projects that Hemel Hempstead Rotary undertakes in the local community and internationally annually. They are seeking more members to help them continue with their vital work. If you are interested in finding out how you can get involved, please call Tony Amies on 01442 254479.



Lambing Weekend:

2nd & 3rd April
from 11am-3pm



After a two-year absence, we are delighted to report that our very popular Lambing Weekend makes a return this year, on 2nd and 3rd April at Snooks End, near to the Box Moor Trust Centre in London Road.

Opening times will be 11am – 3pm and it is a drop-in event, so there'll be no need to book. There will be a Lambing Walk Trail (look out for our volunteers who can guide you around the route), a tractor, new-born lambs with their mums in the livestock pens and more baby lambs in the nursery pasture. Light refreshments will be available. Limited parking both at the Trust Centre and at Moor End Farm Nursery on London Road (HP1 2RE) and also at the Old Barn at the top of Westbrook Hay track. There is no charge to attend but donations gratefully received at your discretion. This promises to be a lovely family event – we look forward to seeing you there.



We're expecting...

Our ewes were scanned at the end of January to let us know how many lambs we are expecting from April. Our rams have obviously been very busy and have done their job very well, as we have a successful scanning percentage of 162%. We can tell from the scan how many lambs the ewes are carrying, which allows us to adjust the amount of feed each one receives accordingly. We have 53 expectant ewes, 17 of which will deliver single lambs, 34 are expecting twins and there will be 2 sets of triplets! Come and meet the newest members of our flock at our Lambing Weekend on 2nd and 3rd April.

Photo: Elaine Rushton

Overflowing Bins

Do you know what you can do when you see a bin looking like this?

The best way to keep everyone, their pets and the local wildlife safe is to report it as full on the Dacorum Borough Council website. DBC have specialist vehicles and disposal facilities for dealing with the waste. So please, next time you see the bin full report it. Or even better, take your dog waste home with you. Remember the countryside slogan, "Leave nothing, take nothing".



Photo: Jane Ahern

Youth and Mini Rangers

At Youth Rangers in February, we discussed birds and their important role in the ecosystem. The children carried out a bird survey at our Gadespring Cressbeds site, recording 23 different species including kingfisher, egret, and cormorant. As part of a Citizen Science scheme this data will be submitted to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN Atlas) to be used in the UK's national records, which help scientists track trends and populations of animals across the UK.

Despite the rain, the Mini Rangers also had fun bird watching and made some natural feeders to help the birds at home – very useful with food scarce at this time of year.

If you have youngsters between the ages of 3-7 (Minis) and 8-16 (Youth) who would be interested in coming along to our Ranger groups, sessions are held monthly on the third Saturday of the month. Tickets are made available via Eventbrite (link from our website).



Photo: Jane Ahern

Station Moor Bridge

Our rangers, with some help from our volunteers, have been very busy in some very cold weather upgrading the bridge over the Bulbourne on Station Moor with new self-closing gates at either end. There is now no need to close the gates behind you as, with a little magic, they

can do it themselves! The 'soft close' mechanisms should ensure a long life, as the gates are less susceptible to damage. The works are now complete. Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this project - it is greatly appreciated!



Donating made easy

As a charitable Trust, we are most grateful to our supporters and beneficiaries who kindly make financial donations towards our work. To make it easier for people to donate, we are trialling a scheme using QR codes at a couple of sites around the estate (currently Old Barn, Westbrook Hay and Gadespring Cress Beds). When the code is scanned,

users will be redirected to a donation page for a quick and easy transaction. If this proves successful, we will expand the scheme to a few more locations.

The code shown here will enable you to donate if you should wish to. Thanks to everyone who has generously donated so far.



Volunteer News

We were delighted to be able to welcome our volunteers back in June 2021, and they really hit the ground running.

Photo: Karen Poore

The conservation volunteers have been working on bank repairs along the River Bulbourne and the canal. Where previous bank reinforcements (usually made from hardcore and corrugated tin) have begun to fail, they have been installing woody bundles, which are designed to catch sediment and allow for bankside vegetation to root into them, eventually rotting down to become part of the natural bank. This work is vital to help our new resident water voles, as they build burrows into the banks which are at risk of collapsing where they are eroding, and they cannot burrow through metal. The bundles have been made from hazel and willow that the volunteers coppiced at Bovingdon Brickworks as part of the work to prolong the life of these fast-growing trees, and to create better age structure of the scrub on the site.

They have also been assisting with cutting back vegetation along the fence lines of Bovingdon Reach in preparation for the installation of new fencing around the field,

which should prevent dogs that can slip through the existing wire from the woodland into the field. It should also stop our lambs from escaping when they become curious about whether the grass is greener on the other side of the fence!

Our Community Engagement volunteers have helped with getting Youth and Mini Rangers sessions back up and running, supporting by spending one-to-one time with any children that might need it, but also offering their knowledge and expertise to the children while they learn about the natural world. They have also helped us with running bat walks and wildflower walks and ran school visits and pond dipping sessions for us throughout the year.

Behind the scenes, a hardy few have also been working their way through many, many boxes of paperwork on the history of the Box Moor Trust kindly donated to us, looking at old photos, diaries and letters to pick out items for our archives. We have also had

volunteers helping us with the day-to-day running of the Estate, filling up bird feeders, cleaning water troughs and livestock trailers, gardening and litter picking.

There are exciting new opportunities coming up soon, such as wildlife monitoring and weekend work parties. Our wildlife monitoring for the year kicked off with amphibian surveys in March, following training from the Herts Amphibian and Reptile group. This information will help us with the habitat management of our ponds and wetlands to identify what species we have, and how well they're currently doing, so we can work out if we need to do more to help them thrive.

If you would like to get involved, please contact us for more information, or head to our website to fill out an application form. We have new volunteer 'meet and greet' sessions every two months and we would be delighted to hear from you.

Contact Us

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