

Spring Newsletter

Open farm events prove a big hit



Photo: Elaine Rushton



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Photo: Ann Trendell

A massive THANK YOU to everyone that came along to either our 'Meet the Cows' event on 24th February or our 'Lambing Weekend' on 6th and 7th April.

'Meet the Cows' took place at Howe's Retreat in Felden, where our Belted Galloway herd is housed for the winter. Everyone got an opportunity to see the cattle up close, and to learn more about their role as conservation grazers and how we care for them. There was even an opportunity to 'adopt' a toy Beltie, and lots of mini furry cows headed off home with their new owners. A great time was had by all – even the cattle seemed to enjoy the day!

In April, we welcomed over 1,000 visitors to our lambing weekend to see the new arrivals and their mums – some families were even lucky enough to witness a live birth during their visit! Once all the ewes have lambed, we anticipate having 66 lambs in total – a combination of singles and twin births. They will either be pedigree Norfolk Horn or Charollais/Norfolk Horn crosses.

Adoption packs are available on our website for Belted Galloway soft toys, as well as lambs and goats. Visit: www.boxmoortrust.org.uk





Photos: Heather Burrows

Out and about with the Boxmoor Rangers

Our monthly Youth and Mini Rangers sessions are really inspiring for youngsters with an interest in nature. Here's what Heather, who runs the groups, had to say about two of the recent meetings:

"In January, Youth Rangers enjoyed bird watching from the hide at Gadespring. This was followed by a walk when we found deer tracks, which led us straight to some muntjac deer. We finished our session by practising our fire lighting skills with flint and

steel, having a fire with marshmallows and hot chocolate. Mini Rangers was lovely and busy - everyone came out to enjoy the winter sunshine. We started the session with bird watching and were lucky enough to see a kingfisher, a heron and a little egret. We went for a walk and the children had lots of mini bird challenges to complete along the way. We finished off by building our own nest, and the children learnt why birds select materials such as moss and grasses.



In March, both the Youth and Mini Ranger groups braved the rain to go bug hunting. They found Devil's coach horse beetles and their larvae, as well as woodlice, shield bugs, slugs and snails. They also came across a hibernating hornet and a wood mouse. The wood mouse was very cooperative and let us get some lovely photos and videos. He caused much excitement amongst the group."

For information about how you can book these fun and informative sessions for your children, visit: www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/visit-us/groups-activities/box-moor-rangers/

Committee changes

At the Trust's Annual Board Meeting in February, David Kirk stood down as Chair of the Trust after 14 years of service. During that time, community involvement has increased, and the Trust has reinforced its role as an important asset to the local area.

Among the highlights of his tenure, David included being invited to meet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2016 with other representatives of the Trust. Another highlight was the water vole reintroduction project, which had been made a success thanks to the hard work of volunteers, staff and Trustees. David looks forward to continuing as a Trustee and has taken on the position of Vice Chair. The Board thanked him for his hard work and dedication during his time as Chair.

The Trustees have elected a new Chair, **Patrick Schneiders**, who has been a Trustee since 2020, during which time he has worked on the Trust's strategy, corporate governance, our SANG implementation, and improving our sponsorship and funding.

Patrick is a Bovingdon resident and works for the government in the environmental sector. He is also appointed to the Board of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Patrick has shared that he is "looking forward to navigating the challenges and opportunities of the Box Moor Trust, including seeing how we can continue to make ourselves an even better organisation for our local communities, Trust colleagues, and dedicated network of volunteers".

Andy Cook has taken over as Chair of Finance & Assets from **Peter Phillips**, who stood down after 13 years in the role. Andy has been a member of the committee for many years and will be bringing his many years of business and financial experience to bear. Peter will continue as a committee member of Finance & Assets and will oversee the Housing, Repairs & Rents sub-committee. The Estate Committee continues to be chaired by **Graham French**.

Full details of all the committee and sub-committees are on our website.

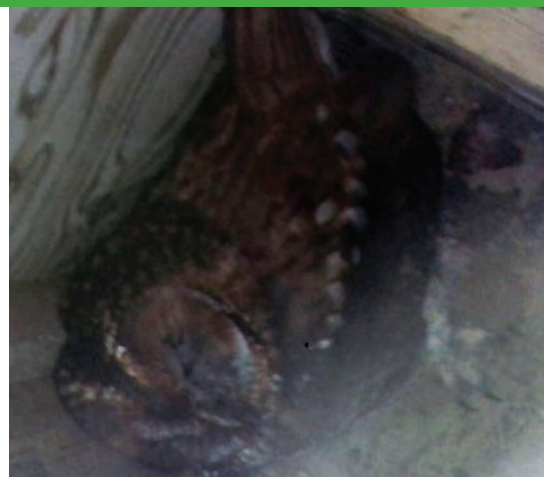
Gin-erous Donation!

The Trust is very grateful to have received a generous donation of £770 from Kate and Ben of Puddingstone Distillery in Tring, raised through the sale of their very special Box Moor Gin.

For every bottle sold, the distillery donated £2.00 to the Box Moor Trust. Kate and Ben collected berries from the Trust's juniper bushes on Roughdown Common, to be used as the key botanical in this classic London Dry style gin. It is hoped that further distillations will take place in the future – we'll keep you posted on that!



Photos: Puddingstone Distillery



Nest Boxes

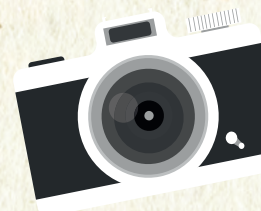
Our Rangers were out and about in February, checking the Box Moor Trust nest boxes with guidance from licenced experts.

The birds aren't disturbed in any way when the Rangers do these checks. Here's what our Ranger, Mike had to say:

"We inspected all 15 of the large bird boxes (a mix of Barn owl and Tawny owl boxes and a Kestrel box) with an endoscope to look for signs that they are being used and by what. One of the barn owl boxes was left unchecked, because we already know that it is occupied – a wildlife camera facing the box has recorded a barn owl coming and going. Of the remaining boxes, most were being used by squirrels or stock doves, but we were very happy to find that one actually had a sleepy tawny owl in it."

These checks yield useful wildlife monitoring information for our Environmental Awareness team.

Don't forget...



...entries for our calendar photo competition close on **4th August**. See website for details of how to enter.

Easy Donating

Scan Here





Conservation Volunteers: Winter/spring tasks

Photo: Jane Ahern

During the early weeks of the year, our brilliant volunteers continued their hard work to control holly regeneration in Bury Wood.

Holly has a tendency to shade out the understorey of woodland, so removing some of it will allow more sunlight to reach the woodland floor and encourage a variety of species, such as bluebells and wood anemone, to thrive. This helps to create a more diverse habitat and provides food and shelter for a variety of fauna. The oaks in this area were “haloed” – a woodland management practice that involves clearing vegetation from around older and maturing trees, particularly ancient ones. More recently, the volunteers have been working in the river to remove

a plant called ‘Floating Pennywort’. This highly invasive species was introduced to the UK in the 1980s when it escaped from garden ponds. It is very fast growing (up to 20cm a day) and can quickly swamp waterways, depleting oxygen for fish and invertebrates, blocking the water flow and crowding out native plants. It causes many problems for other waterway users, as it gets tangled round propellers and grows into pipework. The Box Moor Trust regularly work alongside partner organisations to remove this from all of our waterways.

If you'd like to get involved, please visit our website to find out how you can make a difference!

Events and Activities

For further details and to book places please visit the Upcoming Events page on our website

Boxmoor Rangers: Gadespring Cress Beds

Saturday 4th May

10am-12.30pm (Youth Rangers, 8-16s)
1.30pm-2.30pm (Mini Rangers, 5-7s)

Our monthly sessions for young people who love nature. Come and learn some skills and explore the natural world. May's session is on 'Rivers'.

Dawn Chorus Walk: Old Barn, Westbrook Hay

Sunday 5th May, 7am

Join us on Dawn Chorus day to listen to the birds as they wake up. Walk around the woodlands and meadows of Westbrook Hay with our bird experts to learn about the different calls of the morning chorus.

Afternoon Tea in the Old Barn Garden: Westbrook Hay

Wednesday 15th May, 1.30pm

Join us for a short walk down the easy access path into the woods before enjoying tea and cake in the Old Barn garden and enjoy seeing the wildlife pond and the creatures within it. Aimed at adults who are less-abled – wheelchair accessible.

Family Activity Day: Old Barn, Westbrook Hay

Wednesday 29th May,

Two timeslots: 10.30am-12.30pm
and 1.30pm-3.30pm

Join our Rangers for fun in the meadows sweeping for insects, and at the pond looking for creatures that live in the water. For families with children age 3-18.

Gadespring Cress Beds:

Open days take place on the last Sunday of every month between 11am and 2pm. In addition, the bird hide is open to the public between 10am and 12 noon on Thursday mornings.



The Old Barn and Garden at Westbrook Hay
Photo: Elizabeth Warriner

Contact Us

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