

# Winter Newsletter



## Help for Wildlife through Corporate Volunteering

An important part of our charity work is to create, restore and improve wildlife habitats. The Box Moor Trust estate is home to a wide range of different species, including some that are protected by law such as otters, barn owls and badgers.

We have recently installed an otter holt to help improve the habitat for these beautiful creatures that make the River Bulbourne their home. Thank you to Henkel, a local company who donated money to allow us to complete this project and to the Henkel staff who volunteered their time to help us install the holt.



Photos: Jason Fathers



# Elections ahead in October

## New Trustees needed

**To work on behalf of all residents in Hemel Hempstead and Bovington and ensure YOUR Trust flourishes for everyone's benefit.**

Do you care passionately about the vital contribution that the local landscape makes to the community's quality of life? Have you a skill or experience that will be of benefit to a Board managing a large range of activities? If so, then we would love to hear from you.

Over the coming months, we will be seeking candidates to stand for election in October to one of several vacancies

on the Trust Board. Being a Trustee is a responsible task that involves time commitments, but it can also be very rewarding. It is a voluntary role, with emphasis on ensuring good governance, seeking financial stability and shaping strategic direction for this unique local charity. Being a Trustee gives you the opportunity to help make our community special in many ways and the role can be hugely rewarding.

The Trust welcomes prospective applications from all backgrounds and we're actively hoping that our future elected Board will reflect the wide diversity

of our local community. Together we aim to ensure a sustainable financial future, to support and engage with all the different local communities and to be an exemplar of land management, as well as working hard to do what we can to make lives better for our 100,000 beneficiaries.

In due course, there will be an information pack available, but in the meantime please contact us at [admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk) to register your interest – we will be pleased to put you in touch with a serving Trustee, who can tell you more about the role and answer any questions.



Photo: Adam Brennan



Photos: Elaine Rushton



## Winter Wreaths

**In December, our Ranger Mike ran an enjoyable wreathmaking evening in the Old Barn at Westbrook Hay.**

Sustained by mince pies and mulled wine, the group learned how to bend willow withies and form them into a wreath shape, and then decorate them with a variety of natural materials supplied by the Trust, including yew, hemlock, holly, ivy, pinecones and berries. Everyone left with a beautiful seasonal wreath to decorate their homes.

# Photo competition

2025 theme: "Nature's Gift, Our Responsibility"

The Box Moor Trust photographic competition is open to all. We're looking for stunning photos that celebrate the beauty, wildlife and landscapes of Trust land, and we aim to hold an exhibition to showcase a selection of the best entries. From majestic seasonal views to the hidden gems of nature, show us what makes our local area so special. The closing date is **31st December 2025**, giving you plenty of time to photograph different seasons of the year. Competitors may interpret the

theme in any way they choose, however all photographs must have been taken on, or of, Box Moor Trust land. Entry is free and competitors may submit up to 10 images. The selected finalists will be put to the public vote on the Box Moor Trust Facebook page to determine 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Prizes are £100 for first place, £75 for second and £50 for third. Please upload your image file(s) via the quick and easy to complete entry form on our website.

## Gadespring Open Sessions

Have you yet discovered the hidden gem that is Gadespring? A thriving watercress farm until the late 1980s, the Trust acquired the 4-acre site in 2011 and has worked tirelessly to naturalise and enhance it for wildlife. Today, Gadespring features wet woodlands, reedbeds and ponds. The bird hide overlooks our kingfisher bank, and these stunning birds are often seen.

Gadespring is open to the public every Thursday (10am–12 noon) and on the last Sunday of the month (11am–2pm). Thursdays are all about birdwatching—head to the bird hide and enjoy the chance to spot

a variety of species. Our knowledgeable volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions. Sunday sessions offer a bit more flexibility, with opportunities to explore the site further (subject to staffing). Nestled down Old Fishery Lane, Gadespring is a peaceful escape and well worth a visit. Come and see for yourself!



Photo: Graham Denney



**Easy Donating**

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Photo: Lee Buttle

# Meet the Cows!

**Saturday 15th March 2025**

Howe's Retreat, Felden Lane,  
Hemel Hempstead, HP3 0BY

**Our Belted Galloway cattle can't wait to see you at their winter home in the cattle barns at Howes Retreat, Felden Lane.**

Come and learn all about their role as living lawnmowers, keeping the pastures of the estate in good order. Our rangers will be on hand to answer all your cow-related questions. There will be children's activities and refreshments, as well as our pop-up shop and the chance to own your very own miniature Beltie! This is a bookable event with four one-hour timeslots throughout the day. Spaces are limited, so grab your spot now. Places can be booked at <https://bookwhen.com/boxmoortrust> or via our **website**. All ages welcome - children under 18 must be accompanied by a guardian.

## End of an Era: Retirement of Dennis Furnell, Trustee

**After 37 years of service as a Box Moor Trustee, Dennis Furnell retired from the Board at the end of December.**



Elected to the Box Moor Trust Board in April 1987 as a lifetime Trustee, Dennis has lived in Hemel Hempstead for over 60 years. A past vice-chair of the Trust and chair of various committees over the years, he has brought all his vast experience and knowledge to bear on guiding and shaping the Trust in tandem with his fellow Trustees.

Dennis is an author, radio and TV broadcaster and programme maker, artist and photographer specialising in wildlife and the environment and also disability access.

He is involved with a number of national and international conservation organisations and is joint president of the International

Otter Survival Fund and patron of the Cat Survival Fund, a charity set up to protect and conserve species of wild felines and their habitats. He is secretary of Halsey Field local nature reserve in Gadebridge, past warden of Tring Reservoirs and past vice president of St. Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital. Dennis was deafened by a motoring accident some 25 years ago and is currently a Trustee of the Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service.

Although retiring, we are sure that Dennis will be a regular visitor to the Trust and will continue to share his knowledge and expertise. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

## Volunteer Heroes

We're always delighted to welcome volunteer groups to the Box Moor Trust, and this month we had the pleasure of hosting Passport to Leisure, a local community project providing day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. They regularly visit to help with tasks and enjoy guided tours of the estate. This time, the group rolled up their sleeves (and got very muddy!) planting some of the last new trees at Hay

Wood. Their efforts are part of our vital replanting work following the essential felling of diseased ash trees. It was fantastic to see the group getting stuck into such an important job revitalising the woodland—work they'll be able to revisit and take pride in for years to come. We're so grateful for their enthusiasm and hard work, and we can't wait to see them again soon.



Photo: Michael Wallbank

Contact Us

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