

# Winter Newsletter



## Community and Corporate Volunteers Making a Difference

Photos: Mike Wallbank

**We were thrilled to welcome back the amazing Passport to Leisure scheme volunteers (above) for their regular three-month visit in October.**

Every time they join us, they bring such energy, enthusiasm, and a real willingness to dive in (sometimes literally)! This time, the group got into their waders and helped pull reeds from a large area at the Gadespring - vital work that keeps the water flowing and helps protect the rich habitats of this beautiful wetland. It's always a joy having them with us, and we're looking forward to their next visit.

A huge thank you, also, to the team from Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC UK) (right)

who joined us at Gadespring Nature Reserve last year. They rolled up their sleeves (and braved a few stinging nettles) to help us clear invasive orange balsam from the channels in our cress beds. This plant is spreading rapidly along waterways across the country, so tackling it has been a big focus for us. The ABC team were fantastic — enthusiastic, hardworking, and glad to swap the office for fresh air and wetlands for the day. Their efforts make a real difference to the health of our reserve, and we're so grateful for their support.

We simply couldn't do what we do without amazing volunteers like them.



# 2025 Results: Trustee Election

Thank you to all our beneficiaries who voted in our 2025 Trustee election. As a result of the ballot, four candidates have been duly elected to serve as Trustees. They are **Kevin Brown, Lynda Mills-Webb, Lisa Timms** and **Matthew Whitbread**. Our congratulations go to them, and we look forward to working with them going forward. We would also like to extend our thanks to all the candidates who stood.



## Kevin Brown

**Kevin** is a local resident of nearly 50 years, passionate about preserving Boxmoor's natural heritage. With over 20 years in UK policing and daily walks with his dogs, he is committed to giving back.



## Lynda Mills-Webb

**Lynda** is a teacher, scientist and gardener who has been a resident of Boxmoor for 45 years. She wants to help Box Moor Trust become the leading local force driving towards a more sustainable and climate-change aware community.



## Lisa Timms

**Lisa** is a Boxmoor resident and creative mum who is passionate about inclusivity, communication and collaboration. She brings experience in community engagement, events and partnerships that could support The Trust's growth and future impact.



## Matthew Whitbread

**Matthew** is a passionate and energetic conservationist who wants to bring the power of nature and community together to benefit current and future generations. He has been volunteering for the Trust since 2022.

Our newly elected Trustees join **Peter Ablett, Andy Cook, Graham French, David Kirk, Steven Mansbridge, Peter Phillips, Patrick Schneiders and Stephen Wilson** in governing Trust policy and direction. Standing down from the Board are **George Tite**, who has been a Trustee since 2000, and **Nat Sims**, who was elected in 2015. We thank them both for their long and valuable service to the Trust and wish them well for the future.



## Regenerative Felling at Upper Roughdown

The Box Moor Trust is committed to responsible woodland management and works in close partnership with the Forestry Commission to ensure all activities follow best practice and national guidance. Following thorough consultation and in alignment with Forestry Commission recommendations, we will begin regenerative tree felling works at Upper Roughdown in January 2026.

These essential works are being undertaken in response to the declining health of trees in this area mainly due to the effects of Ash Dieback. Proactive intervention is necessary

to protect public safety and support the long-term health of the woodland ecosystem. While these works will result in a noticeable transformation of the landscape, they are part of a broader strategy to regenerate and restore the woodland. Over time, this will encourage natural regeneration, improve biodiversity, and create a more resilient woodland for future generations.

For further information, please visit [www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/regenerative-felling-upper-roughdown/](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/regenerative-felling-upper-roughdown/)



## Mini & Youth Ranger Sessions 2026

We're excited to invite children and young people to join our Mini & Youth Ranger programme in 2026 — a perfect way to get outdoors, explore local green spaces and learn about nature.

Through fun, hands-on sessions in your surrounding woodlands and open spaces, young rangers will:

- Discover wildlife and plant life around them
- Help care for their local green spaces
- Learn outdoor skills and environmental stewardship

It's a fantastic opportunity for youngsters to connect with nature, make new friends, and take pride in their local environment. To stay up to date on upcoming events and find out how to get involved, check our website via the "Upcoming Events" page: <https://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/news-events/upcoming-events/>

We can't wait to welcome our next generation of rangers!



*Gerald Poll*

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Gerald Poll, a long-time volunteer with the Trust, at the age of 92.

Gerald, along with his wife Janet, was one of the original band of conservation volunteers and his commitment and expertise were greatly valued by the Trust. After many years of service, Gerald retired from active volunteering a few years ago. We extend our condolences to Janet and family.

## A Special Treat for Whipsnade Zoo

Over the last few months, we've been donating all the willow we collect during our habitat management work to Whipsnade Zoo, who have had a shortage of food for their rhinos and giraffes. The team there have kindly shared some lovely photos of the animals enjoying their tasty treats — and we couldn't resist sharing them with you too!

The willow has come primarily from the old cress beds at Gadespring wetland reserve. With nesting season over, our volunteers were able to access the kingfisher bank area and give the willow a much-

needed cutback before it takes over and turns wetland into woodland. It's wonderful to see our habitat work not only benefiting local wildlife but also bringing a little extra joy (and enrichment) to the amazing animals at Whipsnade. A huge thank you to the zoo team for the photos — and to our hardworking staff and volunteers who make partnerships like this possible.



Photos: Whipsnade Zoo

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## Callum bowls 'em over!

**Every season, the Trust donates a cricket bat made from willow grown on the Trust estate to each of the two cricket clubs on Trust land.**

They are then awarded to a deserving young cricketer from each club. This year's recipient from Hemel Hempstead Town Cricket Club was Callum Humphrey, who was awarded his bat at the club's end of season dinner at Aubrey Park Hotel in October for junior contribution to adult cricket. Callum also produces the club's monthly newsletter and was chief editor of the handbook produced to celebrate the club's 175 years.

Boxmoor Cricket Club has postponed the awarding of their bat until spring 2026 – we will report on the lucky recipient in a later edition.

**Callum with long-term club member Martin Wright**  
Photo courtesy of HH Town Cricket Club



## Dog attack on livestock

**Sadly, in November one of our goats at Bovingdon Brickworks was injured in a dog attack and required veterinary treatment.**

These incidents are deeply distressing and cause unnecessary suffering to our animals. We're asking all dog owners to please keep dogs on leads around livestock and be vigilant when walking near grazing



## Barn owl box update

**Our barn owl box is looking great this season, and we're excited to share that it continues to provide a safe, sheltered space for these incredible birds.**

Barn owls are a treasured part of our local wildlife, and providing secure nesting sites helps support their population across the estate. We'll keep monitoring the box carefully and will share any new activity as soon as we spot it. Stay tuned for more updates—and keep your eyes (and ears!) open during evening walks, you might just glimpse a barn owl hunting over the meadows.

## Gadespring Open Sessions

Just a reminder that Gadespring, our 4-acre former watercress farm off Old Fishery Lane, is open to visit on regular days during the year. These volunteer-led events are free to attend and take place every Thursday morning (10am – midday) and on the last Sunday of the month (11am – 2pm).

areas. If you see a dog chasing or attacking livestock, or witness anything suspicious, please contact us straightaway via phone on 01442 253300 or by email at: [admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk).

You can also plan your walks safely by checking our Stock Map, which shows where livestock are currently grazing: [boxmoortrust.org.uk/visit-us/stock-map/](http://boxmoortrust.org.uk/visit-us/stock-map/)

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