

# **Binfield Badger Group**

**Protecting badgers across Berkshire**

Charity Number: 1075886



**Newsletter No. 126**

**September 2021**

**HOW MANY MORE  
BADGERS MUST DIE?**

**IT'S TIME TO  
#CanTheCull**

**CAN  
THE  
CULL**

**ACT NOW! Get your Cull Action Pack**



## ***Devastating News – Cull comes to Berkshire***

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[www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk](http://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk)

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### Devastating News - The Cull is coming to Berkshire

The Group is heartbroken to bring you the news that the cruel badger cull has been extended into seven new areas of England this Autumn, including Berkshire. As cull licences last for four years, this means our precious Berkshire brocks will continue to be shot until 2024!



It's so hard to reconcile the continuation of this heartless slaughter of so many of our iconic British mammals (*a max kill quota of 75,930 this year*) with the care and effort the Group and our members put in, striving to protect individual badgers through a range of means - from surveying, to planning, to rescues, to putting out food and water...and yet the Government can just wipe out a local badger population for no scientifically proved reason.

**THERE IS MUCH MORE ABOUT THE CULL LATER IN THE NEWSLETTER, INCLUDING HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION TO #CANTHECULL.**



## NOW - MORE POSITIVE NEWS - SOME RECENT BADGER RESCUES

### ❖ A Successful Rehabilitation to Bracknell!

In the middle of August, the Group received a late-night call from a very concerned lady who had spotted an injured badger by the road while driving home near Bracknell. She was fortunate to be able to contact Wildlife Aid in Leatherhead. Lawrie kindly made the considerable journey over to Berkshire in the early hours and collected the sow badger to take her back to their centre for assessment.

Wildlife Aid's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WildlifeAid/>) takes up the story:-

*"Collaboration is one of the most vital things in the wildlife rehabilitation sector and we are always incredibly thankful for the kind support of other organisations in helping animals in need get back to the wild.*

*Rescued from Bracknell at 4am by Lawrie, this badger had been hit by a car and was in such a bad way that she barely put up a fight. She was rushed back to the centre and we spent the next 48 hours keeping everything crossed for her recovery.. Amazingly, she slowly started to rally and, after several weeks of treatment, was finally back to full health once more. As Bracknell is not an area we know too well, we contacted the team at Binfield Badgers Berkshire who not only were more than keen to help, but who went out of their way to survey the area and find her sett!*

*Once we were sure she was fighting fit once more, two members from the Binfield Badger team collected her and released her back into the wild, complete with some rather beautiful release footage!"*

Wildlife Aid were not familiar with the Bracknell area so they contacted us to see if we could help find a suitable release site. The team from BBG sprang into action and five members of the group surveyed the nearby woodlands. It wasn't long before we found quite a substantial, active sett. It was near to where the badger had been picked up but far



enough away from any busy roads. After careful consideration, we all agreed this was a perfect area to release the badger.

Two of our team picked up the badger from Wildlife Aid and met other members at the site to witness the release. At first the badger seemed reluctant to leave the cage and then suddenly ran out and straight down the sett. It was a case of 'home sweet home'!

Our thanks go to the team at Wildlife Aid for their care and dedication and giving this badger a second chance to run free again. They have a very impressive set up in Leatherhead and rescue and rehabilitate thousands of injured wildlife every year. You can visit the **Wildlife Aid Foundation** website: [www.wildlifeaid.org.uk](http://www.wildlifeaid.org.uk) and watch their videos and live webcams. - they are truly inspiring. Thanks also go to the kind lady who found the badger and stayed with it until Wildlife Aid picked it up.



The beautiful sow badger, now fully recovered, was very calm as she was transported back to her release site near Bracknell.

.....and she's off, back to her sett!

A successful rescue and release!



***If you see a badger lying by the side of the road, don't always assume it is dead, it may just be unconscious. Prioritise your own safety at all times and avoid touching the badger, but call for help if you see signs of life – Emergency Numbers are listed on the back page of the newsletter.***

### ❖ **Boris the Badger**

In the middle of July, we were called out to assess a badger who was being fed by a lovely lady in her garden in Inkpen. The badger had been seen with a limp affecting his front left leg.

After assessing the video footage we had been sent, we decided that he needed to be trapped to be taken to a vets for assessment. We laid out 2 traps and over a period of a week or two we eventually managed to capture him – after a few false starts and lots of



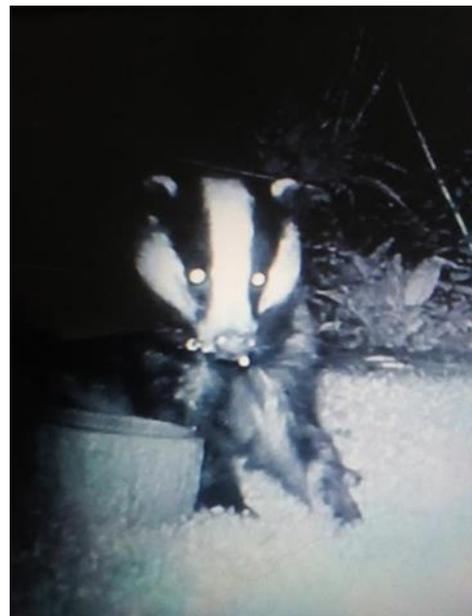
sausage rolls! He was taken by the team to Oxford Wildlife Rescue after a very lively car journey, where he managed to damage the cage he was travelling in.

X-rays showed no broken bones or fractures, but there was severe infection to the foot, which was thought likely to have been caused by a fight or accident. The vets assessed a treatment plan and placed him on anti-biotics and initially he responded well to treatment; he was alert, lively and eating well. After a period of a few days though, an unwanted complication occurred when he started chewing his paw and the diagnosis was that there was a lot of necrotic tissue and it was suspected he had a condition called osteomyelitis. Sadly it was decided the kindest thing for this lovely old boy was to put him to sleep.

We would like to thank Steph for being such a caring, kind lady and calling us out to assess Boris. If it weren't for her, he would have had prolonged suffering – which we wouldn't wish on any animal. We were touched by her dedication and compassion and wish there were more like her out there.

Steph has written a lovely account of her time with Boris, which we are sharing here:-

*Boris arrived out of the blue on the first anniversary of losing my husband; the first signs that something was going on was that the birds' fat balls hanging in the shrubs were being demolished and strewn across the lawn. This became a nightly event so, intrigued, I purchased a night time camera so I could see who the culprit was and what was going on. I was shocked to find out that it was a Badger, had never seen one in all the time I had lived here. He had made the smallest of holes in the (my indoor cat proofed) garden fence, obviously not Boris-proof (named by work colleagues)!!!! Well, I was chuffed to bits, so the nightly ritual of Fat Ball (chopped) Sultanas, Apple, Peanuts and his very favourite Peanut Butter Sandwiches in a bowl before 10pm began.*



*You could almost set your watch by his good time keeping; you couldn't always see him, but you could hear him crunching on the peanuts as he made his way up to his bowl where he would plonk himself down, sitting or lying to enjoy his supper. Very often there would be a second visit in the early hours, probably looking for another feast! He was a lovely boy; he helped me through some sad and tough times and he is greatly missed. RIP Boris.*



Our thanks are also due to the **Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue** team. They are funded solely by the public's generous donations. If you would like to learn more about the great work of this charity, please visit: <https://oxfordshirewildliferescue.myfreesites.net/>





Many of us have become accustomed to meeting up on Zoom and holding virtual events. We've all discovered benefits to this; reducing our petrol consumption and commuting times and meeting up with distant friends and family more than we ever used to. However, we've also learnt how good it is to see each other in person and chat face-to-face.

We were certainly reminded of this at the Sonning Village Show where we found badger fans of all ages. We were really encouraged by how much concern there was for badger welfare in the light of local building projects and the extension of the cull into Berkshire. Children were especially captivated by the videos of our local Binfield badgers and loved the clips of cubs playing. It really was an uplifting event and a great opportunity to spread some badger love. (Oh, and the sun shone all afternoon too!)



If you know of a local event which would benefit from a badgery presence, do drop us a line; maybe we can come along!



**Copse Maintenance session – Sunday, 12 September**



Thank you to the willing volunteers who turned up to lend a hand with the latest work at the Binfield copse, helping to maintain clear paths and open foraging areas for the badgers.

Here you see the happy band taking a well-earned break from some serious bramble clearance, careful tree coppicing and precarious duck weed scooping from the pond!



The badger cull is set to surpass 200,000 badgers killed as 2021 licences allow for 75,930 badgers to be shot as cull areas expand.

Badger Trust today expressed outrage that the largest number of badgers ever to be culled could be killed under 2021 licences. The latest release of badger cull licences, as they predicted, marks an increase in the kill rate and an expansion of the cull area in England, with a maximum kill quota stated as 75,930

Licences to kill badgers now cover almost **25% of England's entire land area**

Adam Laidlaw, Executive Director of Badger Trust

**#CanTheCull**



across both the supplementary and intensive licences issued for 2021. **Seven new intensive licences have been announced, with three of those solely concentrating on new counties to the cull map – Hampshire, Berkshire and Worcestershire.**

The Government confirmed its latest road map for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis (bTB), a cattle disease, in May 2021. This was spun as ‘ending cull licences in 2022’, and interpreted by many as a policy change and the cull coming to an end. However, Badger Trust challenged that this was nothing of the sort and that licences issued in 2022 allowed culling to continue to 2025, predicting that the kill rate was still on the increase and that new areas would be added. The publication of seven new licences by Natural England, the government agency responsible for licensing cull operations, in addition to those already in play, has confirmed this horrific reality.

Adam Laidlaw, Executive Director of Badger Trust, said:

*“Today Natural England has unleashed fresh horrors on badgers with the publication of seven more badger cull licences. Licences to kill badgers now cover almost 25% of England’s entire land area. **The death toll under all active 2021 licences could hit over 75,000 badgers. That would push us well beyond 200,000 badgers killed since the cull started in 2013, swiftly heading towards half of the estimated population of 485,000. This Government sanctioned senseless slaughter of badgers has to end.**”*

He continued: *“As we predicted at the time of the Government’s policy announcement, what we see here is increased killing, over an expanded area, and we’re speeding towards at least another 140,000 badgers still to be lost to a failed policy to control bTB in cattle. Badgers are not the problem. Bovine TB is a respiratory cattle disease, with the majority of transmission caused by cattle-to-cattle transmission. Further killing of badgers – a protected wildlife species – will have no effect on the battle to contain this disease, or help the farmers affected.”*

Under the cull licences, badgers will either be cage trapped and then shot, or ‘controlled shooting’ will be allowed on free running badgers. Since the cull started in 2013, the numbers of badgers shot whilst free running has increased from around half to just over



75% of all kills. **Badger Trust is horrified that not only are the numbers of badgers being killed increasing, but more and more are subject to a death likely to be inhumane, and involve immense suffering.** In 2015, the British Veterinary Association called for the use of cage trapping only, as free shooting had not been demonstrated in the trials to be able to be carried out effectively and humanely based on the criteria set.

The badger cull year has two licence issue points: in May 'supplementary' licences are issued to continue killing badgers at a lower rate in areas where an 'intensive' licence has already been in place for at least four years; in September 'intensive' licences are issued for new areas to undertake mass killing of badgers, and are valid for four years from point of issue. The new licences issued will run from August 2021 until 31st January 2025.

### Badger Cull licence information for Berkshire:-

Area	County	Proposed Min Kill	Proposed Max Kill
57	Berkshire - New 2021	359	486

### HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION



The Badger Trust has produced a **#CanTheCull Action Pack** to advise the public on the reality of the cull, including a postcard to be sent to their MP calling for an end to further licences and a halt to the cull.

**SIGN UP TODAY** for your #CanTheCull Action Pack by visiting :

<https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/can-the-cull>



### **BBOWT 'HEARTBROKEN' BY BADGER CULL EXTENSION - BBOWT 8/9/2021**

The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) is heartbroken by the news that **badger culling is to be extended into seven new areas of England this year, including Berkshire and Oxfordshire.**

Natural England announced on Tuesday, 7 September that it was issuing new licences which will also allow the killing of badgers in Hampshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and two areas of Shropshire. The licences allow for between 5,365 and 7,273 badgers to be shot with shotguns in those areas in an effort to control the spread of bovine tuberculosis (TB).



Julia Lofthouse, BBOWT Mammal Project Manager, said:

*"As a trust, we are absolutely heartbroken by this news. Badgers are magnificent icons of the British countryside and the emblem of the Wildlife Trusts, and our Government has allowed thousands of them be needlessly slaughtered. We do sympathise with the plight of farmers and know the hardship that bovine TB causes - but culling badgers is not the answer. The Government has seen no definitive benefits from seven years of industry-led culling of badgers in England. The science tells us the main route of bovine TB transmission is between cattle – not from wildlife such as badgers."*

Natural England has also authorised existing licence holders to resume culling in 33 existing areas this year - which will result in up to 75,930 badgers being killed.



The issuing of licences comes after the Government ran a public consultation at the beginning of this year asking for people's views on the proposal. With the support of The Wildlife Trusts, over 39,000 people responded to the Government's consultation and 36,958 of those went on to email their MP urging the Government to stop issuing badger cull licences immediately.

Despite that, the Government announced in May that it would issue licences this year and next year. **As licences last for four years, this means that badgers will continue to be shot until 2026.** By the end of the cull, **300,000 badgers out of an estimated population of 485,000 may have been culled.** Approximately 25% of the European population is found in the UK – The Wildlife Trusts believe that the UK has an international responsibility to conserve them.

The Wildlife Trusts are sympathetic to the great hardship that bovine TB causes the farming community but do not believe that culling badgers is an effective way of halting its spread. Accelerated research into cattle vaccination and improved testing regimes for cattle are urgently needed – and improved movement controls on cattle would minimize the risk of further spread of bovine TB.

Since 2014, BBOWT has been running a successful badger vaccination programme. The results have proved there is a much more humane way to tackle bovine TB that is also at least 60 times cheaper per badger than culling.



## IT'S 2021. CAN SNARES REALLY STILL BE LEGAL?!

- Andy

It surprises many people to hear that free-running snares are still legal in modern Britain, given that they frequently cause a slow, agonising death. Indeed, the League Against Cruel Sports has identified that up to 1,700,000 animals each year might be killed in these vicious nooses.

The nominated target by game keepers, and others who use such devices, are usually foxes. This in itself is abhorrent to many people. However, of equal concern are the numbers of other animals, including badgers, otters, deer, hares and family pets, who fall foul of these indiscriminate devices. Indeed, based on government research from 2012, the LACS has identified that only a quarter of the animals caught in snares are the intended target.



If you'd like to see the law changed and all snares made illegal, you might like to write to your MP. You can find his or her address at <https://www.writetothem.com> Also, you might like to sign the Parliamentary Petition which can be found at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/581402>

**Let's join the 21<sup>st</sup> century and end the use of these barbaric nooses once and for all!**



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# KIDS' PAGE - Learn to Love our Brilliant Badgers!

This new poster, which you will see if you visit our Badger stall at an event this Autumn, will help everyone learn about our favourite, fascinating British mammal!

## Brilliant badger basics

UK native since the Ice Age

Mustelid family

Secretive

Less active in winter

Nocturnal

Britain's biggest land predator

Shy

small eyes & ears

Large soft nose!

Sense of smell 800 times better than ours!

Short fluffy tail

Stout and powerful

Strong forelegs and claws - great for digging!

**WHY IS SMELL SO IMPORTANT FOR A BADGER?**

- to help find food
- to communicate with other badgers
- to identify other badgers
- to communicate fertility
- to navigate their territory
- to detect threats, eg humans

**HOW DO BADGERS COMMUNICATE VIA SMELL?**

Scent glands under the tail produce sticky secretions. Badgers distribute these:

- in their faeces;
- by SCENT MARKING other badgers;
- by SQUAT MARKING on the ground.

Badgers leave and read a lot in these pungent messages:

**CREATORES OF HABIT**

Badgers may occupy the same setts and follow the same paths for generations, leaving their mark on the countryside.

They can travel up to a mile a night, foraging for food.

**EARTHWORMS ANYONE?**

Badgers love an EARTHWORM, sucking them up like spaghetti! A single badger can eat up to 200 a night, making up 60% of their diet!

Badgers are known as OPPORTUNISTIC OMNIVORES. When worms are scarce, their diet includes whatever plant and animal material they can find.

**DELAYED IMPLANTATION!**

Badgers can mate at any time of the year but amazingly can hold back implantation till December. Cubs are then born when food is easiest to find.

**CLAN LIFE**

Badgers live in social groups of 4 to 8 animals. Frequent grooming is as much about bonding as dealing with fleas.

They are house proud, regularly refreshing their bedding. Eating & defecating takes place outside the sett.

**A badger FAMILY = CLAN**

Male = BOAR Female = SOW

**CUBS!**

- 2 or 3 in a litter
- usually born in February
- about 12cm long, blind and with little hair
- suckled in the nesting chamber
- remain below ground until April/May

**Badgers live underground in a SETT; a network of tunnels and nesting chambers**

Tree roots are often used to support tunnels

Setts are mostly found on slopes in woodland or hedgerows. A large spoil heap often shows their location

1 to 30 or more entrances

Tunnels: 20 to 100 metres long

Badgers spend about 70% of their lives underground

A badger clan may have multiple SETTS in their TERRITORY, including a MAIN SETT inhabited all year

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## WE CATCH UP WITH OUR FAVOURITE FOOTIE TEAM – THE BASILDON BADGERS!

The Binfield Badger Group are proud to sponsor Basildon Badgers FC's '**Berkshire Badgers Trophy**', which is awarded to the young player who has shown special effort and qualities while playing for their team.



Rob, the team coach, gives us a 'post-lockdown' update:

As September begins, there's a welcome feeling of normality in the air as Basildon Badgers FC gears up to begin its 7th season. From the 18th of this month, players will be training again!

Our 'Badgers Academy' will be opening its doors to children from the age of four to have a bit of a kick around with their friends on a Saturday morning. Our youngest league side, the Under 7's will be playing in the Reading and West Berkshire league on a Sunday morning....at a young age its important players learn to both win and lose so this sets them along the right path for the future! We have two groups for older players - the Under 10's and the 12 to 13 year olds.. For this season, it'll be tournaments and hopefully a handful of friendlies for the players.

The target for the new season is to secure more volunteers and engage with the community as much as we can - our small Café will be re-opening. We'll also have our player of the month award back, thanks to the kind sponsorship of Binfield Badgers!.



**AND FINALLY...meet our Binfield Badger Stars!!**



## **Learn about badgers with Badger Trust**

FREE learning  
resources for your  
school

**#NationalBadgerDay21**



As the schools go back and **National Badger Day 2021** approaches on **6 October**, the Badger Trust (*with a major input from our members, Karen and Andy*) have produced some FREE educational resources aimed at primary aged children in their mission to educate the next generation of badger protectors and spread the badger love!

The resources include **a new school assembly video, called 'The Secret Life of Badgers' and features some fabulous footage of our very own Binfield badgers!**

You can watch it here:- <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/education> – it will bring some much needed joy amongst all the current sad cull news.

The Trust says: *“A BIG THANK YOU to our amazing friends at Binfield Badger Group in Berkshire. They were instrumental in not only getting this work off the ground, but they provided the inspiration and did lots of hard work to get it all delivered.”*

Thank you, Karen and Andy!

- ❖ **If you have children of primary age, please make their school aware of these exciting new FREE resources.**
- ❖ **The school can contact us at *badgers@binfieldbadgers.org.uk* if they would like any more information or a visit from the Group to do a talk in person.**  
**....and if they use the resources, we'd be grateful for any feedback!'**



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**Chairpersons:** John Fennell and Jill Hoblin

**Secretary:** Judith Darnell, Woodley

**Treasurer:** Karen M<sup>c</sup>Coy, Sonning

**Membership Secretary:**

Judith Darnell, Woodley  
Binfield Badger Group  
PO Box 3805, Bracknell  
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**Group email:** Mike Coon, Maidenhead

**Talks:** John Fennell, Binfield

**Copse maintenance:** Cathy Holwill, Reading

**Newsletter:** Judith Darnell, Woodley

**Vaccination:** Jill Hoblin, Newbury

**Sett/RTA Records:** Karen McCoy, Sonning

**Surveys:** Committee members

**Rescues:** Carol and Trevor Samuel, Maidenhead

**Website:** Karen McCoy and Cathy Holwill

**Your MP:** [www.writetothem.com/](http://www.writetothem.com/)



**Badger Trust**, P.O. Box 708, East Grinstead, RH19 2WN.

Phone - 08458 287878 or 08458 BTRUST

Web - [www.badger.org.uk](http://www.badger.org.uk)



**EMERGENCY NUMBERS:**

(cut out and keep)

RSPCA 24 hour <u>emergency</u> call out number	0300 1234 999
Police emergency only (use 101 for non-urgent)	999
Thames Valley Police Wildlife Liaison	08458 505505
Harper Asprey Wildlife Rescue, Camberley	01344 623106
Leatherhead Wildlife Aid, Surrey	09061 800132
Aylesbury Wildlife Hospital Trust, Haddenham, Bucks	01844 292292

**PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND WHO MAY LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT THE GROUP - HELP THE BADGERS BY INTRODUCING A NEW MEMBER – YOU CAN NOW JOIN ONLINE.**

**A FULL COLOUR VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE**

