

# ***Binfield Badger Group***

***Protecting badgers across Berkshire***

Charity Number: 1075886



***Newsletter No. 133***

***June 2023***



***These Badger Cubs can be Shot at 4 Months Old...  
WHY?!***

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## GROUP NEWS

Our Public Meeting and AGM, held on Thursday, 6th April was well attended. Thank you to all who came along to show your support.

The meeting started with an entertaining and enlightening talk by our friend, Debbie White and Barbara Witkowski from the Oxfordshire Badger Group about their Group's vaccination project and badger rescues.



Following the AGM, we put our audience to the test with a challenging 'badger quiz', which I think many who were there will agree, had even the 'experts' present scratching their heads!

If you'd like to test your badger knowledge, **go to Page 6** (answers at the end of the newsletter – no cheating!)



### We're Spreading the Badger Love this Summer....Some dates for your diaries!



The Group is looking forward to once again getting out to some of the summer events around Berkshire. It's a great opportunity to speak to people about badgers and their welfare.

We've already had stalls at LUSH in Reading, at last month's Binfield Coronation Event and at the recent 'What's Happening in Binfield' day. All attracted lots of interest, particularly amongst the younger generation who will hopefully become the future champions for our beautiful brocks!

We hope you'll come along to meet us at our stalls we have planned at the following events this Summer and give us some welcome support:-



- *Party 'Bye' the Pitch, Binfield Cricket Club (RG42 4DU) Sat 1 July 4pm -10.30pm*
- *St James's Environment Fair, Woodley (RG5 3LH) Sat 15 July 2pm – 4.30pm*
- *Earley Green Fair, Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve (RG6 5QJ) Sat 5 Aug 10.00- 3.00pm*
- *National Animal Welfare Trust, Berkshire Open Day (RG17 7DQ) Sun 13th August*

These promise to be really fun events and we would welcome a few extra helping hands, if you have an hour or two to spare! .....and if you know of a local event which would benefit from a badger presence, do drop us a line; maybe we can come along!

Hopefully, we will gain some new supporters and raise some funds, whilst having fun as a team. Fingers crossed for sun!



## Our monthly Group's Sett Surveys sometimes give us an unexpected bonus!

We normally hold a group/training session on the first Sunday of every month. If you'd like to come along to a group survey, please drop us a line at [badgers@berksbadgers.org.uk](mailto:badgers@berksbadgers.org.uk) and we'll send you an invitation to the next survey. Note that surveys will be on a strict RSVP basis so we can plan for expected numbers.

Once you've built up your surveying skills, you can then also look for setts in your own area, sending in records to help build our knowledge and understanding of Berkshire's badger populations. We recommend surveying is always done with a minimum of 2 people for safety reasons.



Find out more here: <https://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/volunteer-sett-surveying>

When out with us in sunny West Berkshire this month, one of our regular volunteer sett surveyors, BBG member Grant, miraculously managed to capture these amazing photos of another of our countryside's elusive beauties, the Brown Hare.



Grant says:

*"I've always been a lover of wildlife and hate what the Government is doing to our lovely Badgers. I enjoy coming along to the Badger Sett Surveys as I get pleasure, like we all do, at seeing that most Badger setts are still active, which is good."*

*"I only bring the camera along because you don't know what's around the corner when it comes to wildlife... it could be a rare bird or a deer or even a Badger (very unlikely!)"*



## HAVE YOU REMEMBERED TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP? - Judith

Thank you to all of our members who have renewed promptly. **If you find a Reminder Form included with this newsletter, then I have not yet received your 2023 form and subscription, which is now overdue.** (If you have asked for this newsletter to be emailed to you, your form will be also be attached.) **We do hope that you will continue to support our Group!**



- **Please check that your details are correct**, particularly post codes and phone numbers, and add any changes in the box next to the entry.
- **Email addresses are very helpful** so we can let you know what is going on; *no personal details are shared with anyone else.*
- **Core Group Communications** – please *carefully* read the ‘Opt In’/‘Opt Out’ statements, just above your signature on the form *and tick the appropriate box.* (We hope you will choose to continue hearing from us regarding badgers and other wildlife-related issues, including our newsletters.)
- **Newsletter options-** you can now indicate on the form if you would prefer to receive your quarterly newsletter **by email**, by ticking the appropriate box. (*Of course, this will greatly save on the ever increasing cost of printing and postage!*)
- **Membership rates** - the annual Membership rates continue to be £6 per adult and £2 per child (under 18). Please remember that from this fee we pay a levy of £2 per head to the Badger Trust to support its valuable work. The membership fee doesn’t cover all of our costs, so we (and the badgers!) continue to be very grateful to those able to add a donation to their fees. Please indicate where you are able to Gift Aid any donation to the Group by ticking the box.
- **How can you help?** - You will also see a section asking for details of how you can help - you are sure to find something that interests you, but more ideas are always welcome! Please get in touch today with your ideas, or comments on current issues – contact details are all listed on the back page of this newsletter.

**Please then return your form to us as soon as possible, either by post or scanned and emailed to: [membership@binfieldbadgers.org.uk](mailto:membership@binfieldbadgers.org.uk)**

- **Payments** - there are 3 ways to pay. **(1) pay by BACS** - our bank details are: Name: Binfield Badger Group / Sort code: 40-47-39 / Account number: 71496212; **(2) return a cheque** (made payable to ‘Binfield Badger Group’) along with your membership form - our address is given on the form; **(3) pay via Paypal** - please use the ‘Donate’ button in the ‘Join Us’ section on the website. (***We are charged fees for every cheque banked and for every Paypal transaction so more of your money goes to badgers if you are able to pay via BACS.***)

**(If paying by BACS or Paypal, please still remember to return the form to us, It would help if you mark the form “paid via website”, or “paid via BACS” please.)**

**If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, they can go to the ‘Join Us’ page on our web site: <http://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/join-us>, where the whole application process can be done quickly and securely.**



On the 7<sup>th</sup> June, DEFRA issued 11 new supplementary cull licences, revealing that **the controversial badger-killing policy is nowhere near over.**



Peter Hambly, Executive Director of Badger Trust, said:

*“The first thing many of this year’s new badger cubs will see when they come out of their sett is the barrel of a gun. At the same time as we say we want to be more nature-friendly by 2030, we are killing our native wildlife on*

*a daily basis – to the brink of extinction in some areas of England. All this, when the evidence overwhelmingly points to cattle-to-cattle transmission as the primary spreader of bovine TB. The badger cull is the most toxic wildlife management strategy in Britain’s contemporary history. To kill half of our badger population under these circumstances is a wildlife catastrophe.”*

New figures from Natural England show 29 zones have been issued with supplementary cull licences to kill badgers untested for bovine TB (bTB). As a result, 11 new zones ranging from Cornwall to Cheshire have now been issued with supplementary cull licences. The DEFRA-sponsored public body, Natural England, has also authorised licence holders to resume badger killing in a further 18 existing supplementary cull areas.

This new data reveals that between 1st June 2023 and 31st January 2024, as many as 29,000 badgers could be killed in supplementary cull areas alone, mostly in the South West and West Midlands. DEFRA has called this time ‘open season’ for culling badgers, including this year’s cubs, who can be as young as four months old as the killing starts. The future of the badger is now seriously under threat, especially in areas of Gloucestershire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall... **and culling resumes at a time when new cubs are just starting to venture further from their setts.**

**Over 210,000 badgers have been culled since 2013 in a failed bid by DEFRA to eradicate bTB in cattle.** Evidence produced by DEFRA itself failed to prove badger culling reduced bTB in cattle. The evidence overwhelmingly points to cattle-to-cattle transmission as the primary infection route. In Wales and Scotland, badgers are not killed; instead, they prioritise cattle-focused measures such as restricting movements. Both countries have had more success with bTB reduction than England. In England, it is cattle-focused methods that bring results. Badger culling does not affect the bTB rate, but the government persists to the point that half the badger population may have been killed.

*A table with data from Natural England, setting out the areas, the number of badgers to be killed (minimum and maximum numbers are stated as part of the licence conditions), and what year of supplementary culling the county area is in can be found on the Trust’s website under ‘End the Cull’:* <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/news/categories/news>.



## Test your Badger Knowledge!

### Badgers in Winter

1. Do badgers hibernate?
2. What word describes the period in winter when badgers sleep more and are less active?
3. What time of year do badgers become more active after winter?
4. What time of year are badger road casualties most common?
5. What is the word to describe animals that are active at dawn and dusk?
6. What is the lifespan of a badger?

### Badger Setts

1. The material that badgers have excavated and left outside a tunnel entrance is referred to as what?
2. There are 4 classifications of setts in general use. Which one is missing from these? – Main; Annexe; Outlier
3. What is the typical maximum depth below the surface that badgers excavate their setts to?
4. On a frosty morning, what might you see emanating from an entrance of a sett normally occupied by badgers?

### Badger Anatomy

1. How many toes do badgers have on each foot?
2. What is unique about a badger's front claws compared to its back claws?
3. What is unique about an adult badger's skull?
4. What anatomical feature makes the badger's jaw so powerful?

### Famous Badgers

1. Complete the title of this 1990's TV show – '----- and Badger'.



2.	Rupert the Bear's best friend was a badger, but what was his name?
3.	Tommy Brock was created by which children's author?
4.	Which football club has Billy the Badger as their mascot?

### Badger Communication (Multiple choice)

1.	What attitude is a boar badger signalling when he bristles his fur to its fullest extent? Itchiness; Belligerence; Invitation To Groom
2.	Their musky scent (hence "mustelid" family name) is important for badgers to belong to their clan. Where is the musk gland? Under The Chin; Under The Tail; Between Toes
3.	What is a badger cub signalling when it bounces up and down near to another cub? Itchiness; Eagerness To Play; Invitation To Groom
4.	What is the probable reason for a sow badger to defecate in a dung pit near the main sett rather than in one around the boundary of the clan's territory? Caught Short; Very Young Cubs Below Ground; Arthritis

### Badger Cubs (Multiple choice)

1.	Badger gestation is typically: 30 days; 40 days; 49 days?
2.	Most badger cubs are born in: December; February; April?
3.	Badger cubs are born blind and don't open their eyes until they are: 2 weeks old; 3 weeks old; 5 weeks old?
4.	What is the name for the mechanism which ensures badger cubs are born at the optimal time of year for food and weather: delayed implantation; delayed fertilisation; delayed gestation?

### Badger Food

1.	Name a plant badgers can eat that is extremely toxic to humans.
2.	Badger meat was eaten in England up to World War 2, but name a nation that currently still eats badger meat.
3.	Toads are poisonous to most animals, but according to a study in France in the 1980s, on average how many kilos of toads (to the nearest ten) were eaten per badger per year?



## BADGER TRUST AGM LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVES FOR BADGERS



Two of our members, Karen and Andy represented the Group at the Trust's recent AGM, held on 13 May. The meeting was well attended by those from many badger groups all around the country.

The Trust announced several new initiatives for badger protection, but sadly, the cruel and senseless Badger Cull continues to be their main focus:

### ❖ 'END THE CULL' their priority campaign:

The Trust are working tirelessly to stop this senseless badger slaughter and are in discussions with all the political parties to push for a policy change that protects badgers and reduces bTB ahead of next year's General Election. They are focusing on compiling a ground-breaking report to show the impact of badger culling on animal welfare, disease control, the economy, and the environment. **Read more here:** <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/end-the-cull>



### ❖ 'THE STATE OF THE BADGER' PROJECT – Can You Help?:-



The Trust is excited to announce a new and exciting citizen-science project, **'The State of the Badger'**. This is a landmark piece of work for Badger Trust as they attempt to assess the true impact of the badger cull, crime, and increasing development on badger populations.

**Volunteers are invited to get involved in their ambitious new badger survey looking at badger population health in England and Wales** - the exact number of badgers in Britain is unknown, and there is an urgent need to understand the population health of Britain's largest remaining carnivore.

This ambitious project's pilot stage is generously funded by the John Spedan Lewis Foundation and LUSH. State Of The Badger will be Badger Trust's first citizen-science project, as well as the first large-scale assessment of badger population health to be carried out since the mass culling of badgers began 10 years ago.

The Trust know that over 210,000 badgers have been killed by the government-endorsed cull alone in the past 10 years, and it is estimated that thousands more badgers are killed annually in road traffic collisions. This is without the uncalculated losses from crime and unlawful development. So large numbers of human-caused badger deaths have happened in a relatively short time frame. However, they don't know how this impacts local, regional, and national badger population levels and their potential for recovery and so hope this study will help them better conserve Britain's most iconic native mammal.



*Binfield Badger Group*

*Affiliated to the Badger Trust*

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



**Working together for badgers:** Inspired by a similar project by Scottish Badgers called Get Sett Scotland, The Trust will be relying on members of the public from our badger groups as well as recruiting new volunteers that are not currently engaged with badger conservation. Their pilot project volunteers will help them gather data on badger setts and badger presence to better understand the threats to badgers and their potential for population recovery.

To conduct a study of this size is a big team effort, and the Trust are working closely with Colleges and Universities, other wildlife and environmental NGOs, landowners, and Trusts. They have also established a fantastic team of experts to join our Scientific Advisory Group, with expertise in badger conservation and welfare, citizen-science projects, and population surveys. They hope to finally have the data they need to start to understand the true impact of human-created stressors on badgers in England.



### **The badgers of England and Wales need YOU!**

*Are you interested in getting involved with the State Of The Badger pilot survey?* All volunteers will undergo extensive training and receive a comprehensive training pack and all data collection resources. The Trust particularly welcome anybody that may not have any experience with badgers previously and would like to be involved and do something to help us protect our beautiful native wildlife.

**Please do get in touch with the Badger Trust.**

Learn more about the project or kindly donate to help support this huge financial undertaking here : <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/state-of-the-badger>

### ❖ **'SPACE FOR BADGERS' Campaign – Planning and Development:**



The rapid rise of property and road development across England and Wales means that **Planning and Development** now represent one of the most significant risks to local badger populations. However, badgers and their setts are protected by law, and the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) strictly prohibits any malicious or negligent act which disturbs badgers or their homes (setts). The Trust's free guides will help protect them from harm and avoid long-term problems:

*Guide for Developers; Guide for Individuals (if you plan to develop on your land); Guide for Badger Champions and Guide for Badger Groups.*

They have also produce a Guide for **'Living with Badgers'** - badgers have called Britain their home for 250,000 years, so they have been an integral part of our shared landscape for generations. Unfortunately more and more badgers are coming into conflict with humans, from damage caused to lawns to dogs getting trapped in setts. The Trust gives guidance for gardeners, information on the badger's protected status, and what to do if your dog ventures into a badger's sett.

**Find out more at:** <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/space-for-badgers>



## BADGER QUIZ - ANSWERS - HOW DID YOU DO?

### BADGERS IN WINTER:

1. No
2. Torpor
3. Generally late Feb/early March
4. Late winter/early spring when young males are moved out of the natal sett to explore unknown territory
5. Crepuscular - badgers are both nocturnal and crepuscular animals
6. Badgers can live up to 15 years in the wild, but most don't survive beyond 3 years

### BADGER SETTS:

1. Spoil heap
2. Subsidiary
3. 2 metres
4. Condensate

### BADGER ANATOMY:

1. 5 on each foot
2. The claws on its front paws are twice as long as those on its back paws.
3. Adult badger skulls have a crest along the top.
4. The lower and upper jaws cannot be detached from each other .

### FAMOUS BADGERS:

1. Bodger
2. Bill
3. Beatrix Potter
4. Fulham

### BADGER COMMUNICATION

1. Belligerence)
2. Under the tail = subcaudal (coda = tail, too)
3. Eagerness to play
4. Very young cubs below ground

### BADGER CUBS:

1. 49 days
2. February
3. 5 weeks old
4. Delayed implantation

### BADGER FOOD:

1. Wild Arum (Cuckoo Pint)
2. Russia (shish kebabs), Croatia (goulash) and China
3. 56KG equivalent to 1360 toads!



## 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.



This time, Rob, the team coach, has exciting news of some recent team successes!

The Badgers have recently won some silverware – the first in our history of 8 years! Our U7s won their RWBL league tournament over the Easter holidays and our U10s won the plate at the local Thatcham Tornadoes tournament. Our U6s are also just starting to play some friendlies and enter their first ever tournament with a view to joining the league in September. The other age groups are all still enjoying their Saturday morning football and we have some young coaches helping out as part of their DoFE volunteering (who are ex Badgers themselves!).



We have just a few more weeks left of the season and are looking forward to some well earned rest over the summer!



## AND FINALLY - SUMMER'S HERE....but.... DEHYDRATION KILLS!

Now the hot weather has arrived, we and all Wildlife organisations are anxious to get this vital message over. Water is essential for all of us - many of the smaller species find their water from the morning dew and puddles. In the recent hot weather, water evaporates and they are unable to find it.

Earthworms, which form a vital part of the diet for many wild animals, cannot survive in drought conditions indefinitely and around 87% will perish. They are a badger's main food and in a single night, one badger could eat perhaps as many as 200 worms!

The Badger Trust also has an interesting article on this:

<https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/how-drought-impacts-the-lives-of-badgers>



Once again this summer, we are asking our BBG members who know of a sett or foraging area near them, to **put out water in a shallow plant pot tray (or something similar) for the badgers each night, or as often as possible**. The tray should be placed in the shade, in as hidden a position as possible so that the badgers' location isn't advertised!

*(Remember that other animals such as hedgehogs may be drawn to the water, so please avoid putting out anything too deep.)*



**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  
RG42 1HH

**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/)



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**EMERGENCY NUMBERS:**

(cut out and keep)

RSPCA 24 hour emergency call out number 0300 1234 999

Police emergency only (use 101 for non-urgent) 999

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 MIGHT 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.**

