

Feedback



& the

Barn Owl Trust Annual Report 2021-2022

Issue 68 / Autumn 2022



Reg Charity No: 299 835
www.barnowltrust.org.uk

Waterleat, Ashburton
Devon TQ13 7HU

In this issue....

Welcome to Feedback	2
Diary Dates	2
BOT News	3
Bird News	4
LLP Update	5
Back at the County Shows	6
Winter & Spring LLP Walks	6
Breeding Season 2022	7
Prize Draw	7
Thank you WPD	8
Sandra Reardon	9
In Memoriam	9
BOT Annual Report	10-16
Poetry Competition Winner	17
Caught on Camera	17
Owly Inbox	18
Barn Owl Rehab Story	18
Team Talk	19
Barn Owl Hazards: Water Troughs	19
Thanks and Things	20
Tail Piece	20

This issue of Feedback is dedicated to Sandra Reardon; BOT Admin Assistant from 1996 - 2003, BOT Office Manager 2003 - 2009 and Feedback Proof Reader till July 2022.

Cover Photo: Gavin Bickerton-Jones

Feedback is produced for supporters of the Barn Owl Trust by staff and volunteers.

A big thank you to everyone who provided words and pictures for this issue.

Proofing: The BOT Team


Copy date for issue No 69 - 20th January 2023

Send your contributions - news, letters, pictures and information to: Feedback, Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7HU

Email: feedback@barnowltrust.org.uk

Website: www.barnowltrust.org.uk

Telephone: 01364 255256

Follow us on:   



Diary Dates

November 2022

Friday 18th - Winter Bird Walk - 10am

December 2022

Saturday 3rd - Winter Work Party - 10am

(practical work with the Conservation Team in the LLP)

Wednesday 7th - Annual Prize Draw

Wednesday 14th - Winter Bird Walk - 10am

Friday 23rd - Office Closes 4pm

January 2023

Tuesday 3rd - Office Reopens 10am

Friday 20th - Winter Bird Walk - 10am

February 2023

Wednesday 15th - Winter Bird Walk - 10am

For more information visit the [Events Diary](#) on our website. Contact us on info@barnowltrust.org.uk or call the office to book a place - booking is essential as places are strictly limited.

'The month of August had turned into a griddle where the days just lay there and sizzled'

Sue Monk Kidd, The Secret Life of Bees.

Hello everyone and welcome to the 68th edition of Feedback. I hope that you were able to enjoy the heat of the summer this year, without suffering from too much sun, or lack of water (or too much water, depending on where you live!). It has been incredibly hot this year, with exceptional temperatures recorded not only in the UK, but right around the world. Not good news for us, or for our wildlife. Here, at the Barn Owl Trust, we brought in fans, opened all the windows and tried to keep cool. And then rain came to Devon, and nature gave a huge sigh of relief. Not over yet, of course, as we are still under drought conditions. We worry for the Barn Owls in this changing climate, and for the environment that sustains them.

We think you'll find plenty of interesting things to read in this edition of Feedback. You can follow the valiant and successful efforts of Jacqui and her 'adopted' Barn Owl in Northamptonshire – what a remarkable thing to do! We think Jacqui should be very proud of herself – see Page 18 for more about this story. We thank Western Power Distribution apprentices on Page 8 for their wonderful contribution to the work of the Trust – we are truly grateful and loved having them on site.

The LLP of course goes from strength to strength, although this summer has been a testing time for the crops and the wildlife. There's a full and fascinating picture of the reserve over the summer on Page 5. There's also plenty of news about our Bird Hospital and Sanctuary, and this year's breeding season – see Pages 4 & 7.

We are proud and excited about the reception that our new online BOESS course received when it launched in April. It took such a lot of hard work to get it ready and we are thrilled that it's been received so positively. We're now planning the Advanced course.

You'll be delighted, I'm sure, to read Jennie Holvey's winning entry in this year's Poetry Competition which is printed in full on Page 17. Perhaps you'll be inspired to enter your own poem next year! We were thrilled to have over 50 entries as we hadn't been able to run the competition during Lockdown.

As usual at this time of year, our Annual Report is included in this edition. You can read about our Governance, Management and Finances on Pages 10–15, which includes our Conservation Report on Pages 12-13.

Please take a moment to read the Thank You section (Page 16) where we show our gratitude to those people and groups who have supported us in so many ways in the last financial year, with our work and various projects, and those who have kindly remembered us in their Wills. We are always so grateful for legacies, grants and sponsorship and other innovative ways people find to support us.

We hope you'll enjoy reading snippets about our Events, our Supporters and our staff (past and present) in the last pages of this edition – we are very proud of all of them. Finally, can I just say that this year's prizes in our Annual Prize Draw are the BEST EVER!! Please buy a ticket or two. All proceeds go to support our work. A list of some of the prizes can be seen on page 7 and a full list is viewable on our [website](#) – do take a look.

Thank you so much for all your ongoing support of the Trust and our work and I hope you have a great Autumn and looking ahead, a joyful Festive Season.

Gill Gant
Office Manager

BOT News



NEW Calendar, Cards & Flasks!

We are very excited to tell you about our [new Calendar](#) for 2023. The A4 landscape Calendar is jammed full of wonderful Barn Owl images for you to enjoy throughout the year. As always, we have a limited number available so hurry to get your order in! We will also have six brand [new Christmas Cards](#) available for your seasonal Barn Owl shopping!

Our sincere thanks go to Gavin Bickerton-Jones, Paul Smith, Michael Leach, Nigel Rampton, Gavin Turner, Craig Jones, Evan Jenkins, Mark Summers, Steve Platt, David Tolliday, Rebecca Nason and Eric Zhou for the use of their amazing Barn Owl photos.



Due to their popularity as Christmas cards, we are also reprinting these two beautiful images below, taken by Russell Savory and Craig Jones, as general greetings cards, blank for your own message. These will be available to purchase, like all our [A6 greetings cards](#), at 65p per card or 60p each if you buy 12 or more! An absolute bargain!

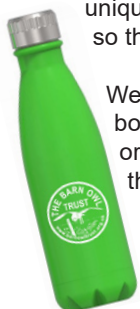


Additionally, we are thrilled to introduce you to our brand new Limited Edition Barn Owl Trust Water Bottle. The double walled flask will keep your drinking water really cool in the hottest weather

and is excellent quality, very stylish and a great alternative to buying single-use plastics. We have decorated the silver coloured bottle with the same image that we have on our Barn Owl Trust show trailer, which makes it truly unique. We have only 50 of these fantastic bottles for sale so they are a limited edition.



We will also be stocking this brand new green water bottle which will be a regular stock item. You can order these products through our online shop or by using the sales leaflet enclosed.



Don't forget that all proceeds from the sale of these goods goes towards our conservation work. Thank you for all your support!

News Bites

Shadow Play

Devon-based shadow puppet company called 'The Clockwork Moth' contacted the Barn Owl Trust in October 2021 to say that they'd secured the rights to Jill Tomlinson's novel 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark'. The shadow puppet show featured live narration and musicians and was aimed at adults and children alike.

The Company was planning to tour the puppet show in the Spring of 2022 and very kindly asked the Barn Owl Trust to write a foreword for their Programme about Barn Owls today and what they tell us about the world we live in. In return, the Clockwork Moth offered to take a Barn Owl Trust donation bucket on their tour to collect funds for us. They were delighted (and so were we!) to present us with £146.65 in donations from their tour. Thank you!

BOESS Course Update

We released the online version of our [BOESS course](#) on the 4th of April this year. Since then, over 100 people have signed up and we've received lots of wonderful feedback which makes all the hard work worthwhile!

"The most well-designed online ecology training course I have ever attended, and I hope to return in future and attend the online advanced course when it is made available... Will be recommending to all my fellow ecologists"

In light of the success of the BOESS course, we have very recently started work on creating an online Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation (ABOSM) course. We hope to be able to release it in April 2023, exactly 1 year after the release of the online BOESS course.

Volunteers Needed

The Trust is always seeking local volunteers to help us with our work. We have both regular helpers, and also people willing to help on occasions including manning stalls at County Shows and moving casualty birds. Our regular volunteers can help us with aviary cleaning, general building maintenance, land management such as bracken bashing, and hedge-laying, and some general office admin tasks. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with the Trust, please email us on info@barnowltrust.org.uk and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Reducing Postage on Tree Nestboxes

Whilst prices are increasing everywhere, we have managed to reduce the cost of our delivery charge by changing courier and we now want to pass this saving onto our customers. We are pleased that we are able to reduce our carriage charge for a Tree Nestbox from £39 to £30.

Bird News

Bird Hospital

On 25th May we visited one of the Trust's three 'foster homes' where a volunteer kindly looks after two elderly Tawny Owls for us. The owls' health was checked over and they were both found to be in good condition. Health checks at the other two foster homes will be carried out shortly.

On 17th May we received a phone call to inform us that a Tawny Owl living with a foster carer in Cornwall had sadly died. We had moved Archie to the foster home sixteen years ago and we are very grateful to the foster carer there for all those years of looking after him. After so many years, Archie's demise was a great loss to his carer, who is a long-standing helper at the Barn Owl Trust. However, some events that unfolded through our rehabilitation and release work meant that the situation developed further... On 22nd May someone found a dazed adult Tawny Owl on the ground in a leafy crescent in Plymouth. We encouraged them to take the owl to Estover Veterinary Hospital where an x-ray revealed that the bird had suffered a fracture near its shoulder. It arrived at the Barn Owl Trust the following day and we carefully rehabilitated it until it could fly again. However, one of the owl's eyes had been damaged in the collision and it sadly became evident that its behaviour was also very unusual. Because it seemed so unlikely that the bird would survive in the wild, we contacted Archie's carer, who was delighted at the opportunity to take on a new charge and offer long-term foster care for the new resident. She has named her new companion Tammy!

In late April and early May, we received two healthy Tawny Owl owlets from different places. Ashy was picked up after their nest-mate died, and Foxy was spotted in a pothole on a dark night on the edge of Dartmoor. Immediate return to the wild was unviable so now they are cohabiting in our static release aviary ready to go free in September.



Ashy and Foxy in our hospital aviary
early May
Photo: Pip Laker

On 7th July a small but extremely feisty young male Barn Owl was brought to the Trust after being recovered near Berry Pomeroy, with no known nest site nearby. After we had administered fluids and then food, the newly named Duke began to regain weight and health. However, some worrying wheezing led us to put him on a course of antibiotics. While this helped temporarily, the problem returned, and we are now monitoring Duke's health carefully.

On 12th July a large lorry arrived at the Trust early in the morning because the driver had rescued a struggling Tawny Owl at the roadside near Crediton. Amazingly, the driver had previously

done a work experience placement at the Trust some ten or fifteen years earlier! The poor owl had a serious case of fly strike around the gape and gullet. Its condition was so awful that it was euthanised as promptly as possible to end its suffering. On 21st July another Tawny Owl was brought in, this time after being spotted on the side of the A38 dual carriageway, just a couple of miles from the Trust offices. Our initial health check found a badly damaged wing and clear signs of a blow to the head, so a volunteer was contacted to transport the unlucky bird to the Estover Veterinary Hospital. They discovered that there was a double fracture and quickly operated to fit an external brace that would hold the wing still while it healed. Despite commendable efforts by the passing driver who rescued the road-side bird, our keen volunteer, and the amazing veterinary team, this beautiful Tawny tragically did not survive the operation.

Sanctuary

It has been a fairly quiet summer at the sanctuary so far, with sixteen Tawny Owls and twelve Barn Owls all healthy and no new additions. In mid-May we received a call from someone living locally who wished to donate some food for the sanctuary owls. This was because their long-term and beloved captive Barn Owl had just died, peacefully. They also mentioned that a large and well-furnished aviary was now available in a quiet garden, should we know of any potential new residents. At the Trust's sanctuary there had been a stunning, large Barn Owl, with a voracious appetite. Rose also had a propensity for causing unrest amongst her cohabitators and for this reason she had been in an aviary on her own. The offer of a spacious and completely unoccupied aviary was enough to prompt us to relocate Rose to a new home on 22nd May. Many thanks to the kind family who now look after her, and to those whose adoption donations continue to support Rose.

We are extremely grateful to all the members of the public who have tried to help owls that are obviously struggling to survive in the wild. We are also really appreciative of the volunteers who help us by collecting owls and transporting them to and from vets. Thank you!

Mateo Ruiz
Conservation and Science Officer



Ashy and Foxy in our static
release aviary, late July
Photo: Pip Laker



Rose enjoying her new aviary
Photo Provided

LLP Update

Bluebell leaves started to appear in Corner Wood and along the Apprentice Path in March. Daffodils were in full flower in the Orchard whilst more Primroses were emerging along the Pennsland Lane hedge; a clear sign that Spring was here! Visiting Mandarin Ducks had decimated most of the Frogspawn in both ponds by this time. The damp and drizzle did not deter the enthusiastic group of Plymouth University students who visited on the 2nd to help burn up the Blackthorn previously cleared from the roadside edge to encourage Brown Hairstreak butterflies. Three large Brown Trout were spotted together in the Flo Pond along with a few tadpoles; there were also sightings of Mallards and a Heron this month, with a first for the LLP on the 13th when 2 Herons were seen at the same time flying up from the Pond! On the 9th of March, staff and volunteers continued hedge laying on the North Park hedge, and Annie and Clarabel (the goats) really enjoyed the company and browsing on the brash. The first Brimstone Butterfly of the year was seen in North Park flying towards Corner Wood on the 14th and it was a pleasure to see a Roe Deer in amongst the bird food crop shortly after. An inspection of the crop showed there was still a lot of seed remaining and we were still seeing 100+ Linnets most days. The first Chiffchaff was heard in North Park on the 17th, whilst the first Skylark of the year was heard on the 21st. By the end of the month the grassland near the Holly hedge was dotted with Celandines and North Park was a sea of yellow.



High Brown Fritillary on Hemp-Agrimony
Photo Pip Laker

At the beginning of April, Annie and Clarabel, who over the winter had free range over all the fields, were restricted to North Park and the electric fence around the bird food crop was taken down. The two 'Ingrid' Almond trees in the Orchard produced a delicate pink blossom, and the Plum trees and Bullace were in flower along with the Blackthorn in the hedgerows. On the 10th, some of the apple trees in the Orchard were starting to come into leaf and the first Bluebell and Herb Robert flowers were seen in Corner Wood. The last of the hedge laying brash was burnt up on the 13th and mowing of the crop area began and continued on the 14th. Tadpoles could be seen swimming in the Oakley Pond but not a single one was visible in the Flo Pond; however, on the 20th, we did spot the first recorded Toad spawn on the edge of the Flo Pond. We were regularly seeing Black Oil-Beetles on the path in Corner Wood this month and also spotted one on the mown path in North Park. This was great to see as Oil Beetles have been identified as priorities for conservation action through the UK Biodiversity Action Plan – meaning urgent work needs to be done to conserve them and their habitats. The Early Purple Orchids growing in the patch in Kiln Close were counted on the 27th and there were at least 66. On the 29th, we broadcast the seed on the Winter Bird Food Crop area with a 2m nectar strip

sown along the south side. Seeds were harrowed in afterwards, attracting over 40 Herring Gulls and up to 20 Stock Doves were seen there later.

Some of our small bird boxes were checked on the 2nd May: 9 were occupied by Blue Tits, 6 by Great Tits, 2 Nuthatches, 1 Pied Flycatcher, and a Mandarin Duck was found on eggs in the duck box near the abstraction pool. A Barn Owl was seen flying out of the Kestrel compartment of the wildlife tower on the same day. On the 4th, the female Mandarin Duck was on the Flo Pond with several ducklings, the first confirmed breeding on the site! By the second week of the month, we could see seedlings germinating in the bird crop area. Interestingly, Fodder Radish and Corn Marigold, neither of which were sown this year, were the most prominent. On the 21st, a Sparrowhawk was seen chasing a Mistle Thrush towards the bird food crop, and a great view of the Skylark was had on the 23rd - it was seen landing in the long grass near the airstrip after an impressive song flight. By the end of the month, the wild bird food crop area was looking really green; the Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*) was flowering on the Orchard hedge bank and the Sorrel was in full flower, turning the airstrip from Buttercup yellow to red.

We started June with a fantastic view of a Barn Owl hunting in the field on the evening of the 2nd. On June 6th, 27 Western Power Distribution apprentices and their trainers arrived for a four-day community project (see page 8). On the 18th, a Kingfisher was spotted as a flash of blue flying off from the Ash Tree near the Flo Pond. We saw the first Marbled White butterflies hatch on the 21st and a Small Skipper was seen during the Thistle count on the same day. We were being treated to regular sightings of Buzzards, House Martins and Swifts, and heard Skylarks singing throughout the month. We had perfect weather for our Mid-Summer Solstice evening walk on the 21st with 15 people, and on an evening walk on the 22nd a Roe Deer was spotted again in the crop adjacent to the North Park hedge. By the 23rd, the crop area was white with flowering Spring Linseed and the Hedge Bedstraw was starting to appear in the rough grassland. The Brown Bent (grass) was starting to turn purple and a few knee-high Sunflowers were spotted in the crop. On the evening of the 29th there were two sightings of a Barn Owl at about 10pm - one hunting and one commuting, heading from Forde Orchard over Kiln Close, before it disappeared from sight.

In July, the first Ringlet butterflies were starting to appear. The Pink Mallow and Hedge Bedstraw in the grassland were in flower, along with huge patches of Birdsfoot Trefoil and Corn Marigold along the edge of the crop. A student from Exeter University placed 20 Dormouse tubes in the Pennsland lane hedge on the 6th. These tubes have a charcoal strip which transfers onto the feet of any small mammals wandering through the tubes and then onto white paper. During just one of our Butterfly Walks this month, at least 50 Marbled Whites were seen along with over 100 Meadow Browns and Ringlets, numerous Commas, Small Skippers, Silver-washed Fritillaries and Six-spot Burnet moths. On the 25th, the first Linnets of the season were recorded flying out of the crop, which was looking green and yellow and full of Fodder Radish seeds and Corn Marigold flowers. The Dormouse boxes were all checked by Tony, our licenced volunteer, and sadly no Dormice were present but there was a family of Wood Mice with young in one of them! We also recorded another first for the LLP this month when Pip saw (and took photos of) a High Brown Fritillary on Hemp-Agrimony in the Orchard. Please do check our Diary Dates on [page 2](#), and book yourself on one of our winter walks...and then come on a spring walk too! Just like supporter Robert Stephenson did – you can read about his experience on [page 6](#).

Back at the County Shows!



Harry & Matt (l-r) ready to welcome RCS visitors to the BOT stand

Back in June we dusted off our show trailer and headed down to the Royal Cornwall Show on the 9th, 10th & 11th, followed by the Devon County Show on the 30th June, 1st July & 2nd of July.

The Royal Cornwall Show started off with some grey drizzle on the Thursday, but fortunately the sun burnt through and Friday and Saturday were beautiful blue-sky days. Our trailer was positioned alongside other brilliant charities, including some very friendly guide dogs on the stand opposite who received quite a few strokes from our team. We were delighted by the continual stream of visitors to our stand over the three days and chatted to many about the current state of the Barn Owl population and

what measures can be taken to help conserve them. This advice consisted of creating suitable Barn Owl foraging habitat, providing roost/nest sites, installing water trough floats and avoiding the use of rodenticides. It was great to be visited by many people who had success stories of Barn Owls moving in after the erection of nestboxes – this news is always such a boost to us all!



We lucked out again with the weather at the Devon County Show and had another busy three days of continual Barn Owl chat! This year we had a new feature - 'The Wheel of Wildlife' - a wooden wheel handmade by Joel and Emily from our nestboxing team with beautiful wildlife drawings depicted on it. Prizes were determined by the species the dial landed on and the wheel proved a great success with kids! Rather excitingly, on Thursday afternoon we were visited by the show's officials and were awarded bronze prize for the 'best show trailer under 6m' - a category with over 200 entries! We are very grateful to our wonderful volunteers who helped represent the Trust over the six show days: Jackie, Tony, Diane and Harry.

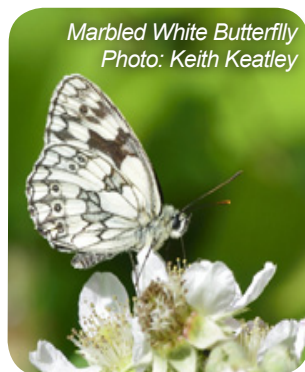
Pip Laker

Photos BOT Staff

Assistant Conservation Officer

Winter and Spring LLP Walks

I feel very lucky to have had two guided walks around the Barn Owl Trust's twenty-six-acre Lennon Legacy Project (LLP) - the first in December 2021, the second in June 2022. Some things were, of course, the same: excellent (but different) guides clearly explaining the history of the Project and the beneficial changes the Trust has made to the former farmland, whilst answering my numerous questions. But the look of the land in December, the type of birdlife, the lack of insects, leafless trees and cold weather to name but a few differences, contrasted so much with hot, leafy, buzzy June.



Marbled White Butterfly
Photo: Keith Keatley

As we started off that cold December day around the bottom of the big field, the rough grassland looked empty and dull, but we were told it was a great feeding area for Barn Owls, as it was perfect accommodation for Field Voles, mice and shrews. Wooden poles are dotted about for hunting owls to perch upon, although with it being daytime, we didn't expect to see any. The role of the hedges was explained, the considerable work required to maintain and improve the habitat for owls and more widely insects and other birds. Indeed, seed-feeding finches were numerous in the area specially developed for them further up the field where wild-flowers had been sown that spring. As we were to see in June, the huge view from the top of the field all around but particularly southwards is very fine, especially on a clear day. The bare Oak woods of December were all green and broccoli-lush in June, but equally beautiful to me in both months.



View of the River Ashburn from the top bridge in Corner Wood
Photo: Provided

I must mention several great pleasures from my June visit. The Marbled White butterflies were numerous. I have many varieties of butterfly in my own garden but not this delightful species. There were so many other insects as you would expect in such varied grass areas, long and short. This time we visited the ponds below the orchard with a few small brown River Trout in (depleted by Otter visits) and walked uphill, following the tiny river Ashburn on the new wooden walkways (provided by Western Power), winding our way through the woods. I could have happily stayed a long time here, enjoying its wildlife and listening to the tumbling stream. And now, as I look at the Barn Owl Trust box I have erected in my garden (awaiting a lucky owl) I am, of course, greatly looking forward to my next visit.

Robert Stephenson

Barn Owl Trust Supporter

Breeding Season 2022

Every June, the Trust undertakes a programme of visits to assess productivity at sites across Devon and east Cornwall. Each site receives at least one visit, at which time we record Barn Owl occupancy rates (nesting, roosting, absence). Where nesting occurs, clutch and/or brood size is also recorded. Adults, and any young over about 3 weeks of age, are fitted with uniquely coded metal BTO rings under license. This gives us vital information on dispersal distances, survival rates and longevity. This year, 67 of the 81 Annual Monitoring Sites were visited and the results are shown in the table (right).

As the results show, nesting occupancy at just over 55% was slightly above the long-term average of 52%. This was encouraging and shows that this year there appeared to be a few more pairs breeding than usual. However, absence was also high, resulting in apparently fewer, unpaired individuals roosting. Unfortunately, brood size at 2.63 was below the long-term average of 2.9, the figure which is required for a self-sustaining population.



Fledgling ringed under licence in North Devon
Photo: Pip Laker

We need to bear in mind of course that these types of fluctuation are entirely normal for a specialist predator. Small mammal populations themselves fluctuate cyclically, typically over a 3- to 4-year period, so it's not unusual for Barn Owls to have several below average years before a peak in productivity. Unfortunately, several other factors are at play, not least of which is the influence of the British weather, so these peaks are not always guaranteed.

Year	Nesting (%)	Mean brood size	Regular roosting (%)	Occasional roosting (%)	Absent (%)
Ave. 1990-2015	52%	2.9	14%	5%	29%
2007	58%	3.7	12%	4%	27%
2008	62%	2.6	11%	2%	25%
2009	61%	2.5	7%	3%	30%
2010	60%	2.35	12%	1%	27%
2011	42%	2.63	17%	5%	36%
2012	68%	3.23	6%	2%	25%
2013	17%	2.13	27%	14%	42%
2014	46%	4.15	12%	7%	35%
2015	59%	2.67	10%	1%	29%
2016	39%	2.42	17%	3%	42%
2017	48%	3.24	7%	11%	34%
2018	59%	3.0	0%	3%	38%
2019	43%	2.72	7%	4%	46%
2020	-	-	-	-	-
2021	54%	2.97	2%	6%	38%
2022	55%	2.63	3	3	39%

Results of annual monitoring site visits in 2022, showing site status as a proportion of the total number of sites checked compared with the long-term average, and mean brood size.

Nevertheless, it's not been a total disaster despite the UK teetering on the brink of drought and several meteorological records for lack of rainfall being broken. We very much hope for a kind autumn and winter and better fortunes for the UK's Barn Owls in 2023.

Matthew Twigg
Senior Conservation Officer

Prize Draw

Our 2022 Annual Barn Owl Trust Prize Draw has been launched and this year the prizes are bigger and better than ever! The Christmas Draw always attracts much interest locally and nationally, and is a great fund raiser, enabling us to continue our conservation work here at the Trust. The Draw takes place this year on Wednesday 7th December 2022 and the tickets are now on sale.

Tickets are £1 each or £5 for a book of 5 tickets and some are included with your Feedback Magazine. If you would like to purchase tickets, please return your completed stubs with a cheque. Alternatively you can [make a donation](#) via our website with a message 'Draw Tickets' and we will fill in the stubs for you and let you know your ticket numbers by email. If you would like more tickets by post, please contact us and we can arrange for them to be sent to you. Here are just a few of the fantastic prizes up for grabs. For more details and the complete list of prizes, please see [our website](#) where the prize list is being updated regularly.



Scott's Chainsaw Carvings - Barn Owl wood carving
Naturetrek - £250 holiday voucher

Coppet Hill Glamping - 2 night stay in a Landpod
Pipers Farm - £50 e-voucher
The Eden Project - Entry for 2 people
Dartmoor Hawking - Family introduction experience
Buckfast Butterfly Farm - Entry for 2 people
Finlake Riding School - £30 voucher
Becky Falls - Entry for 2 people
Wildmoor Fine Food and Drink - Fondue for two
Shute Fruit - Basket of preserves

And so much more...

We would like to say a huge thank you to all those generous businesses who have donated these wonderful prizes to help us to raise much needed funds. Your support really is greatly appreciated.

Thank You WPD!



BOT staff and WPD staff and apprentices

In October 2010, we were fortunate to have a group of 32 apprentices and their trainers here for four days from Western Power Distribution (WPD). In that time they built a large Tawny Owl aviary for 45 birds that were arriving the following week from a sanctuary near Rochdale that was closing.



The apprentice path showing signs of wear

They also built our 'Apprentice Path', a walkway with 3 boardwalks and two bridges giving access to a strip of our land on the far side of the River Ashburn. Until this path was built this area was fairly inaccessible and totally unmanaged. Other than keeping the path clear we have left it that way, so that over the intervening years visitors on guided walks have been able to experience a very different and almost magical part of the site as they walk along the riverside edge.



A broken board on the apprentice path

Last year the bridges and boardwalks were showing signs of decay and for H&S reasons we could no longer take visitors



Restoration of the bottom bridge in full swing

along the Apprentice Path, so we were absolutely delighted that WPD agreed to come back. Covid had put a stop to WPD's Community Projects so many of their apprentices hadn't been able to participate during their training. In June, a mix of 27 apprentices and staff that were now working for the company came along with half a dozen trainers to demolish the existing bridges and boardwalks and rebuild them. They also began the groundworks for the first of the conservation field-shelters we are planning to build on the LLP.



The top bridge completely remade!

We are very grateful to WPD who paid for the materials, the trainers who organised everything and to everyone who took part. On 21st June our Mid-Summer Solstice walk, we were able to take our 15 visitors along the Apprentice Path.

Frances Ramsden
Photos BOT Staff

Sandra Reardon



Sandra - September 2018
Photo: David Ramsden

It was with great sadness we heard of the unexpected death of Sandra Reardon on the 14th July.

Sandra began working part-time for the Trust as an Admin Assistant on our adoption scheme in November 1996 and with a background in graphic design she soon proved invaluable in the office. In 2003, she became Office Manager and continued in that role until she finally retired (despite our best efforts to keep her) in 2009.

She saw many changes over her time here including the installation of our first flushing loo. In her retirement piece for Feedback 41 she wrote:

"When I started working for just one day a week the Trust had three computers and I often had to wait for my turn to use one of them. Valerie, the other part-time admin person, and I shared

a space no larger than a cupboard and the office was open for just two days a week. We all had to turn our hands to a bit of everything, aided by a very faithful and long-suffering band of volunteers wherever possible. I remember reading the sign on the wall in the loo, which housed a portable chemical 'porta-loo' on my first day – it read as follows: 'If you use this toilet you may be asked to empty it'. Fortunately I never was - or maybe I wouldn't have stayed for thirteen years. To bring you up to date: we now have two flushing loos and a shower, 12 employees and enough computers so that no-one needs to share. We also have a beautiful field full of rough grass, lots of brilliant wildlife, nesting Barn Owls and a very attractive barn full of innumerable boxes and nooks and crannies to house pretty much every bird and insect that happens to pass by.



Artwork by Dom Reardon

Before becoming Office Manager I ran our adoption scheme for quite a few years and really enjoyed corresponding with so many of our supporters and it's great to see that many of them are still taking an interest in what we do and giving us their support. I have been privileged to meet a lot of lovely people over the years and quite a lot of lovely owls too! Although I will no longer be an employee after the end of March you can rest assured that I will be making a nuisance of myself from time to time at Waterleat. After all, it's become part of my life."

Sandra continued her involvement with the Trust by proofing Feedback and our Annual Report, and regularly visiting Waterleat.

You may have noticed that this issue of Feedback has been dedicated to Sandra. She really will be greatly missed.

Maureen Basford 1938 - 2021

Maureen had a lifelong love of nature and conservation. Her interest in Barn Owls started in 1995, when she realised that their numbers were so low in her area of Northamptonshire. She bred her own owl, a male named Poppy, and together they raised awareness with many farmers and local people through talks at local and national shows. She partnered with interested people to put up owl boxes on their land and monitor activity, as well as other ornithologists who used her research on population and examination of pellets for their own larger studies. The 23 year effort led to a huge increase in the barn owl population in her area

- from no recorded breeding pairs in 1996, to 310 fledged birds recorded by the end of 2019. She was responsible for over 300 boxes/barrels being erected, and leaves an incredible legacy that will continue on through the dedication of people that she positively influenced and who want to see the Barn Owl continue to flourish.

Thanks to Maureen's daughter Helen for words & photo.



In Memoriam

The Trust has received legacies from the estates of:

Peter Blood, Margaret Anne Davies, Heather Hynes, Pauline Laws, James Roy Ward and Edward John Layton.

and donations in memory of:

Clifford James, Sylvia Elizabeth Linington, Margaret Morgan, Sandra Reardon, Patricia Siddons, Gwen Skuse and Nora Annie Webber.

Our grateful thanks and sincere sympathies go to their families and friends



Charity Information

Barn Owl Trust

Waterleat Ashburton Devon TQ13 7HU
01364 653026 / 255256 info@barnowltrust.org.uk
www.barnowltrust.org.uk

Registered Charity number 299 835

BOT Environmental Enrolment Number 203 178

Trustees: Keith Grant (1990) Frances Ramsden (1988) Simon Wilson (2000)
Kevin Keatley (2010) Ed McNeil (2020) Hon Treasurer: Mark Pountney (2002)
Secretary: Gill Gant Minutes: Gillian Gant, Kaye Thomas

Independent Examiners:
Francis Clark LLP
Chartered Accountants
Sigma House, Oak View Close
Edginswell Park
Torquay, Devon TQ2 7FF

Solicitors:
Wollen's
Carlton House
30 The Terrace
Torquay, Devon TQ1 1BS

Bankers:
CAF Bank Ltd
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4TA
Lloyds TSB
31 Fore Street
Totnes
Devon TQ9 5HH

The stated objective of the Trust *'is to advance the conservation of wildlife, especially the Barn Owl and other endangered species, to provide them with a safe breeding environment, with the object of encouraging the re-creation and preservation of appropriate ecological conditions that they may be provided with the means to continue and flourish in as natural an environment as possible'*.

The main areas of the Trust's work are practical conservation, education, provision of information and research. The Trust also responds to live owl emergencies and provides a sanctuary and rehabilitation facility for injured owls. The Trust became a registered charity in 1988.

Practical conservation and rehabilitation work takes place in South West England (mainly Devon and Cornwall), but all other areas of work have national (and sometimes international) significance: e.g. the free information and advice service is available by post, email, telephone and via the worldwide web. Our research work is relevant throughout the UK and beyond.

The Trust also leases 26 acres of land from the Barn Owl Legacy Trust (BOLT) which was purchased with a legacy in 2001, it is known as the Lennon Legacy Project, this is managed entirely for wildlife. What was once intensively grazed pasture has become a haven for birds, butterflies, flowers and insects under BOT management. Monitoring and recording the ever-increasing biodiversity and promoting habitat creation by others is a significant part of the Trust's work.

TRUST STAFF

OFFICE MANAGER : Gill Gant
Jackie Atkinson*

HEAD OF CONSERVATION : David Ramsden MBE

SENIOR CONSERVATION OFFICER : Matthew Twigg

CONSERVATION OFFICER : Rick Lockwood*

CONS. & SCIENCE OFFICER : Mateo Ruiz

ASSISTANT CONS OFFICER : Pip Laker

CONS. TEAM ASSISTANT : Kaye Thomas

ADMIN ASSISTANTS : Marianne Bryan
Anne-Marie Glenn
Jessica Munday
Vanessa Lewis
Aaron Kitts*
Judith Read*

LEGACY PROJECT : Lisa Fordham

PRACTICAL SUPPORT : Jasmin Ramsden
Natasha Mihailovic*
Joel Turnbull
Chris Allen
Emily Smith

SCHOOL VISITS/TALKS : David Ramsden
Mateo Ruiz

COMPUTER/IT SUPPORT : Alan Lewis

ACCOUNTS : Frances Ramsden

TRUST VOLUNTEERS

HONORARY SOLICITORS : Wollen's

VETS : Veterinary Hospital (Estover)
Westmoor Vets (Tavistock)
City Vets (Exeter)

BTO RINGING COORDINATOR : Keith Grant

EDUCATION VOLUNTEER : Baley the Barn Owl

LIVE OWL EMERGENCY HELP & OWL TRANSPORTATION : Margaret Rhodes
Bill Bishop
Esther Van Delft

PRACTICAL SUPPORT : Kim Baker
Tony Hulatt

FEEDBACK : Marianne Bryan
Frances Ramsden

GENERAL ASSISTANCE : Diane Baker
Di Hawkings
Harry Hingston
Ambios Trainees
Margaret Rhodes
Jayne Hartley
Kim & Ed McNeil
Michael Park
Sandra Reardon
Sam Tully

Barn Owl Trust staff and volunteers often have several roles, only their main areas of work are listed here.

Conservation task helpers are not included but not forgotten.

** Indicates those leaving during the period of this report*

BOT Environmental

BOT Environmental is an Enrolled Body under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. It was set up in 1998 to allow the Trust to apply for grants from landfill operators who can give money to community or environmental projects rather than pay tax to central government. There was no BOT Environmental activity in the year and both the opening and the closing balance of the fund at the year end was £0.

Cover photo: Paul Smith

Annual Report 2021 - 2022



Welcome to the Annual Review of our last financial year 2021 - 2022 where we report on the 'new normal' we are all experiencing.

Several of our staff and volunteers did catch Covid, but fortunately all have recovered and the infection controls in place helped to prevent the virus spreading. We have amended our infection control policy in light of government advice, and several changes have been made to on-going working arrangements. Where possible, we now have 'hybrid' staff working, splitting their time between working from home and being in the office. This helps to reduce their travel time (and emissions) and improves the work/life balance for those that can do it. We also now have an internet-based phone system to complement our landline; which enables the transfer of calls between those working at home and in the office. We now answer the telephone between 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. Our Office Manager, who has a healthcare background, continues to monitor the Covid situation and update staff and Trustees accordingly.

We were able to resume our Annual Monitoring visits during the summer, but winter fieldwork was affected by staff recruitment and vehicle issues. We did, however, begin a project in conjunction with Devon Birds to place cameras in wild Barn Owl sites. Another major project this year was with Kier Highways, who manage vegetation along trunk roads on behalf of National Highways. As most people know, major road verges are a significant hazard for Barn Owls, many of whom die every year whilst crossing the carriageways or hunting the verges. An estimated one quarter of juvenile Barn Owls die on trunk roads each year, along with one-sixth of adults. The Conservation Team used our 34-year data set to identify where Barn Owls were being killed and displayed this information using a Geographical Information System. They also made six days of visits to the M5, M4, A38 and A30 and at the beginning of March gave Kier a 77 page document 'Mitigating Barn Owl - Vehicle Collisions on the South West Trunk Road Network: Where and How'.

After many years of work, our research paper - '*Juvenile Barn Owl Dispersal: roost site selection in relation to landscape features – a radio tracking study*' was published in the esteemed journal 'Bird Study' earlier this year. We also produced the 9th edition of the 'State of the UK Barn Owl Population - 2021'.

We restarted our events programme during the winter with four Winter Bird Walks and have dates set for the new financial year.

Management Information

The Barn Owl Trust was constituted in December 1987 and became a national registered charity in July 1988, it is governed by a Trust Deed. The objectives of the Trust, as stated in our Deed, are 'the conservation of wildlife, especially the Barn Owl and the preservation and re-creation of appropriate ecological conditions to provide a natural environment for wildlife to flourish'.

The Trust has five Trustees. The year of their appointment is listed next to their names in the Charity Information. New Trustees are chosen by the existing Trustees, when required, on the basis of their relevant expertise.

The number of Trustees is required to be between three and five, and in the event of the number falling below three the remaining Trustees may only act for the purpose of appointing additional Trustees and for no other purpose.

The Trustees have full and unrestricted powers of investing monies as decided by a majority. The Trustees have adopted a formal policy on general financial reserves (see page 16).

Day-to-day running of the Trust is the responsibility of the Management Team (Senior Staff) who are line-managed by and liaise regularly with individual Trustees and report at quarterly Trustees meetings. ★

The winter bird food crop once again brought in large numbers of birds, particularly Linnets and Chaffinches who could often be seen in flocks of 100's, and we have planted another crop for the winter of 2022-23.

We had several staff changes during the year with some staff retiring and others moving on to other jobs. Luckily we have been able to recruit some excellent replacements who have settled in well, and we will shortly be taking on our first Intern to train and work on the reserve for fifteen months. Much of our staff time has been spent dealing with conservation enquiries and we have been able to direct people to our extensive website and YouTube channel with its instructional videos. Our website received over 1,000,000 page views and our YouTube channel more than 170,000.

Back in 2009, in response to requests, we started selling nestboxes to the public. In January 2022, we had to register for VAT as income from nestboxes (and their carriage) was going to take us over the VAT threshold. We made the decision to hold the prices and absorb VAT cost ourselves. Our nestbox team of two, working six days between them, has now changed to a team of five, working six days between them. Sale of boxes is a significant source of income which helps support the cost of running our Conservation Team and dealing with enquiries.

In March 2020, Covid meant the suspension of our in-person training courses - Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs (BOESS) and Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation (ABOSM). The Conservation Team has been working on an online version of BOESS for more than 18 months and had it ready for launch at the end of the financial year. It went live at the beginning of April this year and has received excellent feedback and reviews. They are now starting to work on an online / interactive version of ABOSM to be ready for April 2023.

Having searched long and hard, right at the end of the year, with the help of grant funding and legacies, we were able to purchase our first electric vehicle - an estate car with the range we need for fieldwork. We had hoped to be able to find a small van with a good range and capable of towing, but such a thing doesn't yet exist.

We weren't able to attend any shows during the year and had to postpone a Conservation Team visit to Ireland; these will happen, Covid permitting, in the next financial year, but we did resume school visits and talks both online and in-person. Most notable here were the forty-seven Climate talks given during the period ('Climate and Ecological Crisis? What's all the fuss about?') to various groups both in the UK and abroad.

As we said last year, things are changing rapidly and nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history, and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts: "1,000,000 species threatened with extinction"; "Current global response insufficient"; "Transformative changes are needed to restore and protect nature". Climate change is already affecting people and species globally. Here in the UK we have been lucky, so far. The war in Ukraine, which began at the end of the financial year we are reporting on, has had significant global and economic implications, and the Climate and Ecological Emergency will dwarf these in coming years.

It is essential that sustainability must be key to everything we do now, not just at work but in our whole lives. We will, as always, continue to give environmental and ethical consideration to all of our activities here at the Trust, and to the purchase of resources.

On behalf of all of the Trustees, I would like to thank our staff, our volunteers and everyone who has supported us during what has been another challenging year. We couldn't do this without you and *together we can make a world of difference*. Thank you all and stay safe.

Keith Grant Chair of Trustees, July 2022 ★

New normal

Contrary to popular belief, the year was certainly not 'post-pandemic', with persistent waves causing some serious issues for staffing, volunteering, events and management. The 'new normal' we are apparently living in, not only includes living with Covid-19 but also coping with the consequences of climate change, most notably the increasing frequency of extreme weather events affecting Barn Owls and people alike. On February 18th, Storm Eunice paid us a visit, blowing over and damaging a mobile aviary that a released Barn Owl was still returning to for food. Fortunately, we were able to repair and right it before dusk.



Storm damaged release aviary

Photo: Frances Ramsden

State of the UK Barn Owl Population 2021

The most up-to-date figures on the UK Barn Owl population were published in our report: State of the UK Barn Owl Population 2021, based on results provided by 37 independent monitoring groups who between them checked 5,669 potential nest sites.

After the peaks and troughs seen over the last five years, we were due a much-needed peak. While the number of pairs nesting (nesting occupancy) was above average, unfortunately the increase wasn't as high as previous peaks. Despite a fairly good start to the breeding season, the number of young in nests (brood sizes) were typically small, certainly below the average of all previous years, and only showed a slight improvement upon the really poor year of 2020. In terms of regional variation, nesting occupancy was quite good across a large area of mid-England and mid-Wales. However, both nesting occupancy and mean brood size were much more mixed in the southwest, poor in the southeast, and very poor in the north and northeast.



Seven Ringed Barn Owl Chicks

Photo: Bill Glancy

The Lennon Legacy Project – our nature reserve

As regular readers will know, we are extremely fortunate to have



Mandarin Drake on the Flo Pond

Photo: Marianne Bryan

a 26-acre nature reserve. It is all thanks to the generosity of Ms Vivien Lennon, who remembered the Barn Owl Trust in her Will, and due (by chance or good fortune) to the land becoming available shortly afterwards.

Wildlife got off to a slow start, with a very dry and cold April followed by a cold and very wet May. Fortunately, our wild bird food crop finally got going in June and seed production was high by September when passerine numbers started to build. Autumn highlights included a Barn Owl watched in broad daylight taking a 10-minute shower in the rain, our first sighting of a Dipper since they disappeared a few years ago, and finally getting a photo of a Barn Owl roosting in our Wildlife Tower.

Two of our three winter birdwatching events were a great success, with Linnets pecking at 3-400 in January, and with sightings of Chaffinch, Brambling, Goldfinch, and Reed Bunting. Even a few Greenfinch were seen despite their catastrophic decline nationally. It's not all about the crop however! Our rough grassland continues to support strong populations of small mammals, which are prey for a variety of predators, including a released Barn Owl (more below). The high abundance and diversity of invertebrates within the rough grassland supports populations of insectivorous birds, including our Skylarks which thankfully nested once again.



Linnets over the crop in December

Photo: Tony Utting

Core activities

Incoming owls

Two very small Barn Owl chicks arrived from a mid-Devon nest that was 'accidentally' destroyed, killing their sibling. Hand rearing them was a joy, whilst at the same time avoiding tameness by minimising direct contact. Shortly after, they were joined by a fledged youngster passed on to us by the RSPCA in Somerset. All three were successfully released, and at the time of writing, one was still around the release site. During the year, five were released. Sadly, three died having arrived in 'unrecoverable'

condition. Five Tawny Owls arrived, of which four were released and one was taken into permanent sanctuary. The relatively low numbers of birds involved was a reflection of 1) the fact that owls are scarce and 2) that many owl-finders are able to assess and treat birds themselves using the advice available 24/7 on our comprehensive webpages and instructional guides on YouTube.

Fieldwork trips

Thirty trips conducted during the year included twelve all-day trips to check our seventy-five Annual Monitoring Sites, three for road mortality research, four during which eight nestbox cameras were installed in a joint project with Devon Birds, two for the removal and replacement of unsafe 'flat' nestboxes, four trips were spent erecting nestboxes, two for nestbox maintenance, and two purely for habitat advice.

With gradual emergence from the pandemic, new staff in post, more planned project work, and a new electric vehicle(!), we anticipate a general increase in field work during 2022/23.



Polebox inspection - an adult Barn Owl using the roosting chamber and 3 healthy owlets in the nest Photo: Keith Grant

Talks

Six 'Wings of Change' Barn Owl talks were provided in junior schools, of which four were delivered online, and seven 'Restoring the Balance' talks (about Barn Owls and the work of the Trust) were given to adult groups, of which three were online.

With the Trust's support, our Head of Conservation presented his own 'Climate and Ecological Crisis? What's all the fuss about?' talk 41 times during the year of which 33 were online.

Towards the year's end, work began on producing 'Flying into the Future', a new story-telling lesson to replace or complement the 'Wings of Change' talk, which focuses on what's happened to Barn Owls in the past. After 34 years of presenting 'Wings of Change', we hope 'Flying into the Future' will be a great way of inspiring children to take care of wildlife and help them understand the unfolding climate and ecological crisis.



Jess introduces Baley the Barn Owl during a school visit Photo: Provided

Enquiries

During the year, a staggering 18,424 communications or transactions were recorded on our database, of which there were 6,508 email enquiries and responses. Nestbox enquiries alone accounted for 799!

Events

Due to the ongoing pandemic, show attendances were drastically scaled back, although we did manage three productive days at the Devon County Show and one day at Celebrate Start Bay.

Training Courses

For the Conservation Team, our most major output of the year was the creation, almost from scratch, of the Trust's first-ever online training course: 'Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs'. Many, many hundreds of hours were well-spent. The implementation of new ideas involved learning new skills, creating and commissioning new content, and extensive 'in field' testing. The course was finally launched on 4th April 2022.



Annual Reports such as these cannot possibly convey how much work goes on, even in times of lock down. Thanks to our wonderful staff and volunteers all emergencies were responded to, our owl care continued, and even our enquiry service was maintained.



Barn Owl on a Stone Cross

Photo: Paul Smith



Financial Report

I am delighted to be able to report that we ended the financial year with a surplus, which the Trustees have decided to invest in our first ever Intern Placement. We will be providing employment and training to a new graduate for 15 months.

The biggest financial change of the year was the requirement to register for VAT in January because of the income generated by our nestbox sales and carriage. We made the decision to absorb the VAT ourselves, rather than increase the price of our nestboxes which we'd put up earlier in the year to cover escalating material costs.

Because most of our income is either 'Outside the Scope' or 'Exempt' from VAT, we are known as 'partially exempt'. This made our accounts far more complicated, meaning our accountancy/management costs increased during the year from 2.7% to 3.9% of our expenditure. However, our income from nestbox sales was 31% higher than 2021 at £82,136 (2021 - £62,878).

Total incoming resources for the year were £389,064, a decrease of £43,832 on 2021 (-28%). In the previous year, we received furlough payments of £92,568 to support our staff and some significant legacies. Furlough grants in this year were £10,111 (11% of 2021). Our restricted grants in the year increased from £1,281 in 2021 to £15,200, and unrestricted donations from Charitable Trusts were up significantly at £45,898 (£18,000). We saw a net surplus of £30,008 for the year (2021 - £22,792).

Combined income from grants, legacies and donations saw a drop of 28% on the previous year, at £245,176 (2021 - £341,755) accounting for 63% of total income (2021 - 79%). During the year, we used restricted funds carried over from last year towards an electric vehicle. We saw a 51% drop in individual donations to £24,111 (£47,630), however our Friends scheme income increased by 4%. We did see a 33% increase in income from Adoptions, as staff were back in the office and available to send out reminders. Volunteer fundraising also increased by 32% to £1,135 (2021 - £857).

Legacy and gifts in memoriam income was down 27% at £87,571 (£120,756), accounting for 23% of total income for the year (2021 - 28%). We are always extremely grateful for the legacies and the gifts in memoriam we receive.

Our fundraising income was 58% higher than 2021 at £1,424 (£902), most of which came from our Annual Draw. Income from sales goods was also up by 97% - £13,560 (£6,897) comparable with 2020. Our solar panels generated £4,637 (2021 - £4,785) which is 3% less than the previous year.

Overall expenditure decreased by 12% to £359,056 (2021- £410,104). Last year was unusually high because we transferred assets to BOLT (£106,960). A more representative comparison is with 2020 when expenditure was £347,180.

Expenditure on Charitable Activities was £339,150, 85% of 2021- £397,094. The cost of practical work increased by 6% to £160,082 (2021 - £149,748). The Information and Advice Service costs also increased by 19% to £104,493 (2021 - £87,941). All salaries were increased by £850 across the scales in April 2021.

The cost of fundraising increased by 21% from £10,371 in 2021 to £12,525, mainly due to staff time and salary increases. This still accounts for just 3% of our total expenditure, *Continued on page 15*

THE BARN OWL TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31st MARCH 2022

		2022	2021
		£	£
	Notes		
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	5	42,010	36,306
Current assets			
Stock	6	12,911	15,025
Debtors	7	20,077	5,188
Cash at bank and in hand		557,157	548,179
		590,145	568,392
Liabilities			
Creditors - Amounts falling due within one year	8	15,358	17,909
Net current assets		574,787	550,483
Net assets		616,797	586,789
The funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted funds	9	592,835	547,482
Restricted funds	10	23,962	39,307
Total charity funds		616,797	586,789

SOFA Note 2.

	2022	2021
	£	£
Income		
(a) Donations and legacies:		
Grants and donations	157,605	220,999
Legacies	87,571	120,756
	245,176	341,755
(b) Charitable activities:		
Nestboxes	82,136	62,878
Training courses	-	-
Other	41,545	14,703
	123,681	77,581
(c) Other trading activities:		
Fundraising	1,424	902
Promotional goods	13,560	6,897
	14,984	7,799
(d) Other income:		
Solar generation	4,637	4,785
Bank interest	570	756
Other	16	220
Sale of fixed assets	-	-
	5,223	5,761
	389,064	432,896

S.O.F.A. Statement of financial activity



		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
		2022			2021		
Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	219,865	25,311	245,176	247,907	93,848	341,755
Charitable activities	2	123,681	-	123,681	77,581	-	77,581
Other trading activities	2	14,984	-	14,984	7,799	-	7,799
Other Income	2	5,223	-	5,223	5,761	-	5,761
Total		363,753	25,311	389,064	339,048	93,948	432,896
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	3	19,906	-	19,906	8,909	4,101	13,010
Charitable activities	3	315,062	24,088	339,150	307,893	89,201	397,094
Total		334,968	24,088	359,056	316,802	93,302	410,104
Net (expenditure)/income		28,785	1,223	30,008	22,246	546	22,792
Transfers between funds		16,568	(16,568)	-	20,337	(20,337)	-
Net movement in funds		45,353	(15,345)	30,008	42,583	(19,791)	22,792
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		547,482	39,307	586,789	504,899	59,098	563,997
Total funds carried forward		592,835	23,962	616,797	547,482	39,307	586,789

Financial Report continued

and includes time spent applying for grants. We spent 180% more on promotional goods, £7,381 (£2,639), which generated £13,560 income (£6,897).

Support costs have increased by 34% over the year to £28,125 (2021 - £21,059) and account for 8% of expenditure. They include telephone, repairs, overheads such as insurance, water & electricity, stationery, management, payroll, and office cleaning.

Of the unrestricted funds available to the Trust, the Trustees have allocated £358,162 as a reserve for the next financial year, and £33,000 for other projects, leaving a general fund of £201,672 (2020 - £221,742). However, our fixed assets and stock account for £54,920.94 (£54,332) of this and, in light of the regular shortfall in Income vs. Expenditure (excluding legacies), we expect to have to start drawing on these reserves. The Trustees continue to look carefully at all outgoings; it is a difficult balance as holding reserves to ensure you can continue through the lean times often makes your appeals to Charitable Trusts less attractive than those from charities with smaller reserves, particularly in difficult economic times. It is these reserves that will allow us to continue in these post-lockdown times and work out a way forward.

SOFA Note 3

Expenditure

	Activities Undertaken Directly	Governance and Support Costs	Total 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£
Raising funds:				
Fundraising	12,525	-	12,525	10,371
Promotional goods	7,381	-	7,381	2,639
	19,906	-	19,906	13,010
Charitable activities:				
Nestboxes	45,201	-	45,201	29,380
Training course	-	-	-	761
Practical work	160,081	-	160,081	149,748
Information and advice	104,493	-	104,493	87,941
Grants and donations	-	-	-	106,960
Support costs	-	28,125	28,125	21,059
Independent examination	-	1,250	1,250	1,245
	309,775	29,375	339,150	397,094
	329,681	29,375	359,056	410,104

Mark Pountney MAAT - Honorary Treasurer



Thank You

We are very grateful to the following charities, businesses and other organisations that have supported our work with grants, sponsorship or donations in kind during this financial year. Thank you!

Blair Foundation
Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
Cobalt Trust
City Vets (Exeter)
Devon Birds
Diana Mary Symon Charitable Trust
Dumbreck Charity
Elmgrant Trust
Hamamelis Charitable Trust
Haszard Charitable Trust
Holbeche Corfield Charitable Trust
James Gibson Charitable Trust
J Patston Charitable Trust
Joan Cullen Charitable Trust
John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust

Keith Ewart Charitable Trust
Mabel Cooper Charity
Oakdale Trust
Ofenheim Charitable Trust
Pennycress Trust
Scott (Eredine) Charitable Trust
St Marys Charity
Three Owls
Valerie Ayton Charitable Trust
Verdon-Smith Family Charitable Settlement
Veterinary Hospital Group
Walker 597 Trust
Westmoor Vets (Tavistock)
Wildlife Watching Supplies
William Haddon Charitable Trust

During this period we received legacies from:

Elizabeth Miller, Richard Potter, Diane Rowland, Elizabeth Mary Knibbs, Barbara Lucas,
Michael Craddock Robinson, Joyce Aldridge, Michael Coles, Harvey Kendall and Mrs J M Heslop

and Gifts in Memory of:

Derek W. Pretious, Keith Thomas Lynn, Maureen Basford, Ronald Staines, Edna M Rickards, Tim Stephens, Patricia Johns, Reeve,
Pam Booker, Don Hancock, Christine Walker, Mr D Tate, John Allen, Enid Wells, Harvey Kendall, Janet Beard, Nora Dorothy Coombes,
Martin Luther Smith, David Pearson, Rebecca Jayne Smith, Gwen S Wilson, Pauline Huxter,
Christopher Harrison and John Roe

Rest in peace



Photo: David Ramsden

Donations from sponsored events and other fundraising were received from:

Henry Bellamy for a sponsored 650km run, Hilary Audus for sale of her Barn Owl sculptures,
Tracey Morris & Shelley Wright for sale of their Owl Mug Cosies, Joe Boyce completed a Jumpathon,
Billing Finance staff raised money by dressing up in fancy dress & Catherine Williamson held a raffle.

Thank you all so much for your support

Poetry Competition Winner

We were delighted to reinstate our BOT Poetry Competition after a two year absence. This year, due to the gap created by the pandemic, we asked the Editor of Dartmoor Magazine, Sue Viccars, to judge the competition. She was delighted to be our Judge and spent many happy hours reading fifty five poems out loud until she decided on the winners.

The theme of this year's competition was 'Inspirational Nature', and our poets came up with some great entries. The standard of the poems submitted was, as in previous years, remarkable and it was a hard task, according to Sue, to select the overall winner, runners-up and those who were highly commended.

This year's Winner is Jennie Holvey, for her poem 'Do Foxes Drive Ferraris' – we hope you enjoy it as much as we did. Congratulations Jennie!

Second Prize went to Hazel Mitcheson, for 'Butterfly's Song', and Third Prize was awarded to Ginnie Cox, for 'Swift'. Well done to all! Congratulations also to those poets who were 'Highly Commended':

- The Tree – Mark Page
- Blackberry Picking – Pippa Ebel
- Song of the Earth – Michael Newman
- The Origin of Toes – Lily Penfold
- My Corner of the Earth – Heather Buswell
- I'm not lying, honest – SallyAnn Ling

As we have done before, we have put the winning and commended poems, as well as a selection of the other entries into our Wildlife Words Anthology, which is available for sale for £5 plus P&P through our website. For a full list of poems and poets published in the Anthology, please visit our website. We do hope you will buy your own copy and enjoy the inspirational verses that we've been privileged to read.

Caught On Camera



Our new Intern Reserves Officer and Volunteer Coordinator, Harry Hingston, took this amazing photo of a Wasp Spider (*Argiope bruennichi*) spotted in the LLP. The Wasp Spider mimics the colourings of a common wasp which helps keep it safe from predators, even though it is not dangerous itself.

You can read all the latest LLP news by heading to our Wildlife Diary at

www.barnowltrust.org.uk/wildlife-diary

DO FOXES DRIVE FERRARIS

by Jennie Holvey

Do Foxes drive Ferraris
Do they race each other up and down the lanes all night
or Cruise along the kerbside in the towns
roof down and hoping to catch the attention of a foxy female
Do foxes drive Ferraris

Do Bees join rock bands
Do they get a buzz out of playing lead guitar
or stay up all night high on whiskey, writing songs and
scouring their minds for words which rhyme with money and honey
Do bees join rock bands

Do Butterflies make bets
Do they have a flutter on the horses
or make a flying visit to casinos in Monte Carlo
and gamble away their savings
Do butterflies make bets

Do Rabbits hold raves
Do they gather in the fields
waving their paws in the air to trance music
tripping out on magic mushrooms
and hopping into bed exhausted as dawn breaks
Do rabbits hold raves

Do owls do Twitter
Do they tweet about the large mouse they caught last night
or upload photos of themselves to dating apps
hoping someone will want to woo them
Do owls do Twitter

Do mice go to the movies
Do they sit in little velvet chairs
holding paws as they quiver and shake through Mousetrap the movie
drinking fizzy drinks through a straw and eating popcorn
Do mice go to the movies.

Do badgers drink in bars
set in their ways, do they sit in the same chair in the corner
peering over the top of their spectacles while drinking badger ale
reminiscing over times gone by with anyone who will listen
Do badgers drink in bars

Do trees have tantrums
Do they have a hissy fit and
dump wet soggy slippery leaves all in one go on the path
Do they send a branch crashing down on the road
just before rush hour and watch as commuters scowl
and complain as they are diverted the long way around.
Do trees have tantrums

Do crows hold conferences
do they gather in trees
to discuss working conditions and pay
Do they attend branch meetings to elect a new leader
Do crows hold conferences

Do humans do happiness
do we stop for 5 minutes to watch the world go by with the
inquisitiveness of the mouse
or live our lives with the wisdom of the owl and the patience of the tree
can we dance through life with the grace of the butterfly
and the gentleness of the rabbit
Do we set off on life's adventures with the boldness of the badger,
the intelligence of the crow
and the fearlessness of the fox.
Do humans do happiness.

Owly Inbox

Creswell Heritage Trust

In January, Hannah Andrews contacted us on behalf of the Creswell Heritage Trust, who are an independent registered charity that look after the Ice Age site of Creswell Crags. They work to maintain the caves, cliffs, landscape and wildlife, as well as educate the public about the incredible heritage and natural history they look after. One of their education projects was to hold Owl Pellet Dissection workshops for the public in March as part of a series of bird-themed events at the Crags, and Hannah asked if we would like to support their cause by donating some Barn Owl pellets. We were more than happy to contribute to this wonderful hands-on project. After the week long workshop had come to an end, Hannah let us know how it all went.

"The dissection sessions were really popular during half-term, so much so that we're hoping to run them again later in the year. Even the staff ended up having a go! Thanks again for helping us out with this - I couldn't have run it without you."



*Pellet Dissection in action
Photo Provided: Hannah Andrews*

We were absolutely delighted to hear that the pellet dissections were incredibly popular! If you would like to dissect a couple of pellets yourself, please do visit our website as we sell pellet packs suitable for the home with everything you need to dissect and analyse all your findings.

One in a Million Photo!



*Barn Owl caught a Skylark
Photo Provided: Wayne Turner*

Barn Owl Trust supporter, Wayne Turner, sent our Assistant Conservation Officer Pip, this amazing photo for us to share with you all. He skilfully managed to get a snap of a male Barn Owl predating a young Skylark in West Sussex. He watched the owl dive on the Skylark and snatch it up from the ground! This is a really unusual shot as, on average, birds only make up 0.07% of a Barn Owl's diet, so managing to capture a photo of this is quite an achievement!

We would like to thank Wayne for sending us this image and congratulate him on his superb photography! Have you ever seen a Barn Owl with an unusual prey item? Do [drop us a line](#), we'd love to hear from you!

Barn Owl Rehab Story



*The injured Barn Owl at various stages of her rehabilitation
Photos Provided*

In April, we received a phone call from Jacqui in Northamptonshire who had rescued an injured female Barn Owl found tangled on a barbed wire fence. After establishing with a vet that the owl had no serious injuries (just exhausted and with several feathers missing), Jacqui couldn't find anyone local to rehabilitate the owl and so she took it home with her. Jacqui proceeded to care for the owl herself which included building an aviary just 100 yards away from where she had been found! Amazingly, during the rehabilitation

period, Jacqui observed the owl being repeatedly visited by her mate who would call to her from just outside the aviary. When the owl was strong and fit, Jacqui carried out a very successful soft release where the owl continued to return to the aviary to collect food through the opened lid. We are all so impressed with the commitment and level of care Jacqui provided and are very hopeful that the Barn Owl pair went on to have a successful brood.

Pip Laker

Assistant Conservation Officer

Team Talk

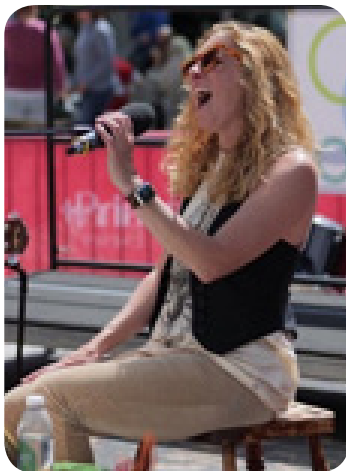
There have been a few new additions to our Team here at the Trust since the last issue of Feedback. We are delighted to welcome back **Joel Turnbull**, who worked for the Trust as a Nestbox Builder from July 2017 – December 2019. He has returned for one day a week from September 2021, after Nathan Giles left the position in February. Below we introduce you to two more additions to our Nestboxing team and our first ever Intern.



Emily Smith Nestbox Builder

Emily joined the Trust in March 2022, working one day a week with our Nestboxing team. After attending a woman's carpentry class, she realised how much she enjoyed working with wood and building things, and was keen to join our team, hone her skills and help conserve Barn Owls.

Originally from Virginia, she has been living, creating and raising



her three kids in Devon for the last 25 years. A working and gigging musician, she's just started a new band with her son and enjoys going out gigging all over the Southwest. Her historical street art work can be found all over Ashburton's walls and further afield. She is currently working as a portrait artist of both people and dogs, and in the winter she runs her sustainable rental Christmas tree business from her land on Dartmoor. When she's not creating, singing or mothering, she can be found

out on a walk with her colliepool, often practicing Shinrin Yoku and embracing nature.

Aiden Lawley Nestbox Builder

Aiden moved from Essex to Devon in 2013. During lockdown, Aiden decided to retrain in a new area and is currently completing a Furniture Making course at college. Aiden started working for the Trust one day a week in April 2022, and is enjoying learning the nestbox building process and getting to know the crew (and owls) at the Trust. In their free time, they love strolling the Devon lanes, seeing the seasons changing, and exploring the moors in their campervan with their wife Billie, and naughty pooch Arla.



Harry Hingston Intern Reserve Officer and Volunteer Coordinator

Harry began work at the Barn Owl Trust in July 2022 as an Intern Reserves Officer and Volunteer Coordinator, having been a volunteer since he did a week's work experience in 2016, when he was 14. Harry has regularly returned to help out with tasks as varied as bracken control, aviary cleaning, pond clearing, and Dormouse surveys.

Harry went on to study at Bangor University for a degree in Conservation with Forestry. As an intern, he'll be given the opportunity to broaden his knowledge and learn new skills, such as chainsaw and brush-cutter operation, knapsack spraying, hedge laying, wildlife identification and much more. He will also be coordinating our volunteers and training them in conservation and land management projects very soon. If you are interested in volunteering, or would like to spend some time in the scenic outdoors at our LLP, please drop us a line! In his spare time, Harry enjoys wild camping and hiking around Snowdonia National Park and Dartmoor National Park, along with walking his border collie Maud.



Photos Provided

Barn Owl Hazards: Water Troughs

Did you know that you can make your water troughs safe for Barn Owls and other wildlife? We use a simple frame of treated timber fitted with strong plastic mesh and polystyrene for permanent buoyancy. The incorporation of a buoyant material (such as expanded polystyrene) is essential – waterlogged wood sinks too easily. Once the frame is thoroughly soaked, the mesh will lie just below the water surface and support the weight of a Barn Owl. When cattle, sheep, horses, or other



*Barn Owl Float in Water Trough
Photo: Mike Barritt*

stock drink, the float will easily sink and then come up again.

One of our supporters, Mike Barritt, decided to make his very own float. Whilst it's best to have the float across the entire trough, we are very impressed with his efforts!



*BOT design float for a water trough
Photo: David Ramsden*

Thank you Mike for being conscientious and helping Barn Owls! If you'd like to try your hand at building your own float for a water trough, a [free design](#) and [instructional video](#) can be found on our website.

Thanks & Things

A big thank you to all our supporters who have sent in items from our Wants List or goods for recycling:

Heather Buswell, Carol Courtier, Joan Davies, J Dinot Smith & Son, Keith Grant, Anne Harding, Honey Ingram, Pat Le Herissier, Kim & Ed McNeil, Janet Rutter, Ann & Peter Stansell, Mrs J Willcocks & Elizabeth Wilson.

Thank you to all our Prize Draw donators:

The Eden Project, Ashburton Cookery School, Dartmoor Hawking, Buckfast Butterfly Farm, Dartmouth Steam Railway, Dartmoor Butchers, Coppet Hill Glamping, Becky Falls, Naturetrek, Babbacombe Model Village, Scotts Chainsaw Carvings, Dartmoor Lodge Hotel, Pipers Farm, Sandford Orchards, Shute Fruit, Wildmoor Fine Food and Drink, Stover Golf Club, Tess Designs Ashburton, House of Marbles, Haven Health Clinic Ashburton, Ullacombe Farm Café & Shop, Finlake Riding School, Claycutters Pub Chudleigh Knighton, Luscombe Organics and Slimbridge Wetlands Centre.

Another huge thank you must go to our wonderful volunteers who give up their time to help the Trust:

Fiona Anderson, Jackie Atkinson, Di Baker, Kim Baker, Bill Bishop, Lisa Fordham, Diane Hawkings, Harry Hingston, Tony Hulatt, Sylvia Marshall, Judith Read, Melanie Reeves, Margaret Rhodes, Jeanne Silvestri, Sue Vickers, Kathryn Webb and the Plymouth University Students. Not to forget our wonderful work experience students Daniel Snow (from Kevick) and Elsa Rivers (from South Dartmoor School).

To all our fantastic fundraisers, thank You! Since the last issue of Feedback, we have received donations from individuals and companies for a variety of events, including a small doorstep plant sale held by Catherine Williamson. Sienna, Megan, Isabelle and Millie from St Michaels Primary School raised funds by making cards, and Derrick and Margaret Crocker sold plants and jams!

Can you help us with:

- Folding saw horses/trestles
- Electric chain saw (cordless)
- Electric Strimmer/Brushcutter (cordless)
- Mini Digger
- ViewSonic PX748-4K Projector
- Metal Detector
- Used stamps, including any foreign stamps & currency
- Postcards and pre-1970 envelopes with stamps on
- Wild bird food - mainly sacks of black sunflower seeds, also peanuts & plain canary seed
- Wood for making outdoor nestboxes - sheets of 9 / 12mm tanalised ply and lengths of 25 x 50mm tanalised batten
- A4/A3 recycled paper/card both coloured and white
- Waders - any over size 7
- Old newspapers (for owl boxes in our Bird Room)
- 2 covers for 50mm tow-balls
- Brightly coloured ripstock material for banner printing
- Outdoor PIR sensor LED lights (small)
- Socket set (48 pc 1/2 inch drive)
- Extra long drill bits (3,4 & 5mm)
- Wire cutters
- Quick grip clamps
- Box Trailer (minimum 2.4m x 1.5m x 1.8m high)
- Small plate compactor
- Prizes for our Grand Draw (postable i.e. not heavy or bulky)

Thank you for your help.

Tail Piece



What an amazing summer we've had (until rain arrived on 15th August). Reminiscent of childhood summers where, at least in my memory, the sun shone every day. Over the last few years, the rain has seemed to begin as soon as the school holidays start in July. We had just 8.4mm of rain over 7 days here during July, compared to a monthly average of 66.5mm over 14 days. We also recorded our highest temperature here on the 18th July when it hit 34.4°C in the shade. However, there was a price to pay for the summer weather and we are now, despite the drizzle, in a drought. The grass and crop in the field turned brown and crisp, and many of the trees began changing into their autumn colours in early August and losing their leaves as a survival mechanism. The river here was the lowest we'd ever seen it and the Flo Pond in Forde Orchard has been covered in a layer of Saharan dust since mid-July.

Around the planet, Climate Change is having an impact, and in some places, like Pakistan, you can see the devastating effect it's been having on individuals and communities. What isn't apparent is how it impacts wildlife. When hundreds of acres of land are burnt or flooded, this kills or displaces innumerable insects, reptiles and mammals, not to mention the flora that supports them. Whilst some mammals and birds can escape the flames or flood water, their habitat and food supply is destroyed.

It has been heartening to see at last, the mainstream media mentioning Climate Change, but amazingly there didn't seem to be any mention of the storm that hit several countries in Europe during August killing people. Extreme weather events are, as we know, becoming more frequent and in March this year the United Nations Secretary, General António Guterres, warned; "We are sleepwalking to climate catastrophe. In our globally connected world, no country and no corporation, can insulate itself from these levels of chaos. Keeping 1.5°C alive requires a 45 percent reduction in global emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by mid-century".

Unfortunately, according to current national commitments however, global emissions are set to increase by almost 14 percent during the rest of the decade, and the war in Ukraine is a huge setback

for efforts to speed up climate action. Our politicians and world leaders are not heeding the warnings or treating Climate Change with the urgency it deserves. Here in the UK, the choice of our new Prime Minister, inflation and economic growth are dominating the headlines. But all of these things pale into insignificance when compared to the food shortages, habitat destruction and refugees that will come with climate breakdown. It's a depressing picture, and needs decisive and concerted policy change from governments around the world. Massive investment in renewables and public transport, immediate changes in planning policy to ensure that all new buildings are carbon neutral, and an enormous effort to insulate existing homes to reduce energy consumption and emissions, are just some of the things that would start to make a difference, and the cost is minimal when compared to the price of dealing with climate disasters. These things would also create skilled and well-paid jobs.

The pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and now inflation have shown us how important it is to build sustainable and supportive communities. We can all do our bit to recycle and eat locally grown food, but we are now at a stage where only major national and international political changes will reduce emissions quickly and significantly enough, so its time to write to our MPs – ask them to support the Climate and Ecology Bill (a plan for a new UK law that addresses the full extent of the climate and nature crisis in line with the most up-to-date science). Talk to other people about how serious the situation is and how it will affect our children, grandchildren, wildlife and all life on Earth. Let's all tell our leaders that we are not prepared to 'sleepwalk into climate catastrophe', surely if we all make enough noise they will have to listen.....

On a brighter note, the fields are beginning to turn green again after the rain this month. Nature is resilient if we give it the opportunity. We humans need to remember that 'all things are connected', and we need to protect and cherish the natural world for ourselves and for future generations.

Together we can make a world of difference.

Frances Ramsden