

BadgerNews

THE NEWSLETTER OF GWENT BADGER GROUP | SUMMER 2020



Greetings from GBG



Since lockdown GBG has been quietly ticking over with no meetings or events taking place.

As the situation gradually eases GBG hopes to slowly come back to life preparing an Annual General Meeting probably for the Autumn if social distancing rules allow.

There have been no rescue requests so far since March with only a couple of requests for advice concerning young birds coming in via the emergency phone.

Members have kindly renewed their subscriptions but please note the increase that was publicised following the last AGM as several members have paid the old rates instead of this year's rates. If there is any confusion do not hesitate to contact the Treasurer whose details are listed in this Newsletter.

Since there is little news to report

apart from the continuing badger cull in England and the opposition to it this is a two-sided Newsletter only, just to stay in touch.



The Welsh Government is still operating its TVR policy (Trap and Test, Vaccinate and Release/Cull) where badgers are trapped, tested in the field for Bovine Tb, and according to the result either euthanased or vaccinated, again in the field, and if vaccinated then released.

The reliability/sensitivity of this field test has been widely

questioned as a vaccinated badger can give a positive trapside test. This is only revealed by later laboratory tests. In response to a freedom of information request in January 2020 the Welsh Government revealed that: "Of the eleven positive culture results in 2018, seven were attributed to vaccinated badgers. Four were attributed to unvaccinated badgers." The Welsh Government also stated that six Welsh farms were licensed for TVR badger operations during 2019. They say that the figures for licenses issued in 2020 will be published on the Welsh Government website at the end of the trapping season. GBG hopes that all of its members are safe and well and thanks them once again for their support.

Until we meet again ...

Animal Trap Found



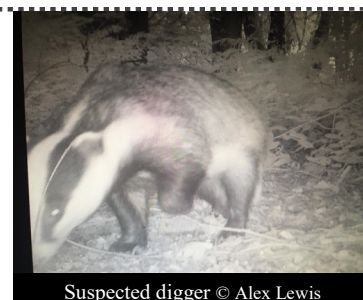
A member of Gwent Badger Group notified us in April of a large cage seen in the countryside between Langstone and Penhow which appeared to contain the decomposing remains of a badger. It was on Forestry Commission land but bordered a farm. Traps are commonly used by gamekeepers/landowners to trap unwanted animals on their land, particularly if near pheasant shoots.

The local Police were contacted by the member and an incident number obtained. A local wildlife crime officer was also involved. The trap was monitored and it mysteriously disappeared some weeks later.

Report of Disturbed Sett



A local person reported what seemed to be a disturbed sett near a footpath in the Christchurch area of Newport in July. An inspection revealed that it was most likely badgers digging there but it is just as well to report these incidents if there are any suspicions. A trail cam was



Suspected digger © Alex Lewis

set up to monitor the sett. Thanks to Alex Lewis for inspecting the sett and providing us with the photograph.



Registered Charity No. 507651

Following the passing of the 1973 Badgers Act the Gwent Badger Group was formed in May 1974 as a small group of people interested in uniting their efforts to enforce the Act locally and estimate its effectiveness. The Group aims to protect and study badgers, educate the public and where necessary offers assistance in dealing with the problems badgers may cause.

Contact Details

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New Legal Challenge for Badger Cull In England



Some members, on seeing this article, may feel that this is happening across the border and it has very little to do with Welsh badgers. However, the sheer scale of badger slaughter in English counties and the unabated ferocity of it should ring alarm bells for us all. What if the Welsh Government decided to follow the same policy? This recently distributed appeal by Tom Langton, a professional conservation ecologist, appears here in abridged form.

“First of all huge congratulations to Wild Justice for reaching the funding target for their latest challenge on the humaneness of the free shooting of badgers as licensed by Natural England. Follow @WildJustice_org on Twitter, or sign up to their Newsletter on the Wild Justice website to receive e-mail updates. There is no doubt about the intensely cruel aspects of the culls, but they are also flawed for a range of technical and legal reasons. With support from Badger Trust I have now launched an appeal for a new legal case challenging aspects of failed, incomplete or irrational consideration in Defra’s Next Steps” 5th March policy guidance.

Problems include the ignoring of key recommendations of the 2018 Godfray report and the confining of badger vaccination to a minor role, both now and in the future. Additional grounds relate to unaddressed consideration of ecological impacts of wildlife disturbance upon designated nature reserves.

Badgers face an unprecedented slaughter over the next two years and beyond, with the door to prolonged mass killing (as in the Republic of Ireland since 2004) opening up and no mechanism in place to bring it to an end. These terrible policies must be challenged. Please help me to try to help the badgers and promote effective approaches to bovine TB control with a donation if you can.

“<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/help-stop-defra-plans-to-extend-badger-culling>

If you prefer to donate by cheque or bank transfer please contact me on 01986 784596 or Pat Hayden on 01342 870320 or e-mail Pat on pat@teamopoly.com

Thank you

Tom Langton

July 2020



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