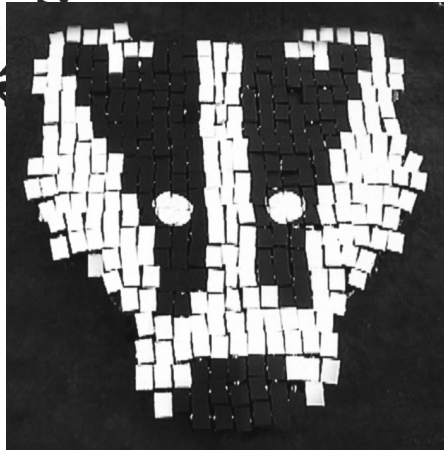


EAST SURREY BADGER PROTECTION SOCIETY

Patron: Virginia McKenna OBE

Newsletter Autumn 2013

No.98



DEATH MASK FOR A PROTECTED SPECIES



Affiliated to the **BADGER TRUST**

East Surrey Badger Protection Society
Registered charity No. 800270



EAST SURREY BADGER PROTECTION SOCIETY (ESBPS)

Please use these addresses to write to any committee member

post address: ESBPS 30 Church Road, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9NU

e-mail address: esbps.badgers@gmail.com

Website: www.esbps.org.uk

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the ESBPS. No responsibility can be accepted for errors, although every effort is made to ensure accuracy.

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ESBPS Newsletter by e-mail: If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please e-mail esbps.badgers@gmail.com with your name, postal address & e-mail address.



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
or if you have important information



ESBPS 24 Hour Rescue Service:

Warwick Reynolds 020-8688 9905 mobile: 07973 327017
Ray Ings 01883 380321 mobile: 07736 520332
Steve Monahan 020-8657 3227



RSPCA – 24 Hour Emergencies & Enquiries: 0300 1234 999



Police – Crime in progress or danger to life, but also Badgers in road accidents, or interference to Badgers or their setts: **999**
or ring your local Police Station in office hours – see local directory.

IF THE PROBLEM IS NOT URGENT ring 101 or phone below.



Kingston Wildlife Crime Officer PC Hayley Parkes - 020-8721 5855



Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit - 020-7230 8888
e-mail: wildlife@met.police.uk

Surrey Wildlife Crime & Rural Affairs Officers:



Mole Valley PC Mark Trezise – 101 extension 30370
e-mail: molevalley@surrey.police.uk



Reigate & Banstead PC Leah Mort – 101 extension 39682
e-mail: reigateandbanstead@surrey.police.uk



Epsom & Ewell PC Simon Young - 101 extension 39947
e-mail: epsom@surrey.police.uk



Tandridge PC Flis Burns - 101 extension 30220
e-mail: tandridge@surrey.police.uk



Crimestoppers – Call anonymously if you have information on anyone involved in criminal activity: 0800 555111



League Against Cruel Sports – Relies on the public to report wildlife crime. If you believe you may have important information, call their Wildlife Crimewatch Line on 01483 361108.



Reporting Dead Badgers - Please phone Warwick Reynolds.
We need to know about them but we do not collect dead badgers, your Council should be able to help.



Chairman's Comments

by Ray Ings.

Badger killings may have started by the time you read this newsletter.

Despite a wealth of scientific evidence and opinion which shows that the badger cull is not the way forward in combating TB in cattle, the Government has developed a tunnel vision mentality and will proceed with plans to kill thousands of badgers come what may. In a rather cynical move the decision appears to have been made not to start killing badgers until the end of the school summer holidays. The idea of families out on a country walk coming across dead badgers would not be a very good PR image for an already unpopular policy decision. The government on-line anti badger cull petition has now well over 260,000 signatures and is the largest petition of this kind since the scheme started.

It does not help when there are some in the farming industry that continue to flout the law. Milk from infected cattle near Tewkesbury has been sold into the food chain time since October 2010. A farmer in Weston Super Mare has been found to be ignoring cattle movement controls, which undermines all the efforts to reduce the spread of TB from cattle to cattle. How many more examples of this appalling behaviour are there? Are they the tip of the iceberg or isolated cases. It is doubtful if we will ever know.

Another story undermining the pro culling rationale is a story run in the Sunday Times. This states that the Government is continuing to allow meat from cattle infected with bovine TB to enter the public food chain. According to the report it is raking in over £10 million in the process from around 28,000 infected animals. In justifying the cull DEFRA officials in the past have cited concerns over human health. In voicing this concern yet benefiting from selling meat from infected cattle creates a considerable credibility gap. DEFRA's credibility is further damaged when they release statements such as 'bovine TB was once a disease isolated to small pockets of the country.' (Press release 4th July). This statement is completely false. The disease was widespread in UK cattle until just after World War II. In a remarkably successful eradication programme the disease was dramatically reduced from 47,000 reactors to around 1,000 by 1970 without killing a single badger. This is why badger groups are so incensed by the Government's obsession in killing badgers. It has been found in the past that TB can be radically reduced without a badger massacre. The scientific community know it, welfare and conservationist know it but not apparently DEFRA and the increasingly vociferous NFU.

Some details are beginning to emerge regarding the killing methodology involved in the badger cull. It seems that baits will be set just outside badger setts for several days and once the badgers are used to feeding from them

they will be shot. So the baits are no more than a cruel deception. Badgers will be shot in front of each other and the ones not killed instantly (and there are likely to be many of those) will not have far to go to get back to their sett and nobody will know their fate. How convenient for DEFRA. No injured badgers to deal with or to be rescued by welfare groups, no carcasses of dead badgers for the public to come across, and no figures for sub lethal injuries. DEFRA will claim that the cull is humane as there are few statistics for injured badgers. They will not be counting the rotting carcasses of those that had lingering deaths underground.

In a statement that again showed the degree of ignorance that exists at Ministerial level in DEFRA Farming Minister David Heath stated '*We have an overpopulation of badgers at the moment.*' He produced no research to support his claim or referenced any badger ecology experts. Apparently he came to this conclusion because he has seen a lot of dead ones recently on the side of the road (presumably as the result of car accidents). There is nothing like sound scientific methodology to base your opinions on. It will of course be music to the ears of badger diggers (and baiters) who can refer to the statement of a DEFRA Minister to support the sick sport. Mr Heath's comments not only have no basis in science they are extremely reckless and irresponsible. A theme that is also mirrored in a recent editorial by the Daily Telegraph.

Daily Telegraph calls for 'a bounty on badgers'

In an extraordinary recent editorial The Daily Telegraph has called for the badger to be stripped of its legal protection and goes on to say, with no evidence or references, that there are 'swarms' of badgers. If that was not bad enough the paper wants to go even further. It suggests that a 'bounty' be introduced for anybody who kills a badger. The Telegraph does not say where the money for a bounty would come from but presumably paid for by the tax payer. In effect it is calling for badger diggers (as long as they have the landowners permission, as was the case pre 1973) who under current legislation would be committing an act of criminal animal cruelty, to not only be decriminalised but to be financially rewarded by the state. This is an extremist view point even for the Telegraph which has a history of being unsympathetic towards animal welfare issues. It is not too fussy about accurate reporting either. After the RSPCA took the first successful prosecution of a fox hunt, (the Heythrop Hunt) just before last Christmas, the Telegraph has victimised the charity in numerous hostile articles with little apparent regard to the facts. Whereas it is entitled to state its views however extreme in editorials, the dressing up of a pro hunting political agenda with the clear intent of damaging a charity as news articles is disgraceful. The Telegraph does not like organisations that try to protect our wildlife and seems to feel that people in the countryside should be free to treat our wildlife as they wish. Another article was headlined 'Badger Groups Fund Labour Party'. There was not a shred of truth in the claim of course but

this is a newspaper that does not seem very concerned with accuracy when the priority is to get its own political agenda across. The relentless attack by this newspaper on the RSPCA continues. It now has the badger very much in its sights as well.

Badger and fox releases

We will again be releasing a group of badgers currently held by Wildlife Aid and there will be a report about this in the next news letter. There are currently fewer badgers than last year so it looks like we may only need one release site this year. It is ironic that while we are in the process of preparing the artificial sett and the temporary fencing needed, badgers in another part of the country are being shot in a misguided and unscientific attempt to reduce TB levels in cattle.

Wildlife Aid are currently looking for sites to release foxes. Since the anti fox hysteria in the media this year release sites have been hard to come by. If any member can be of help with this please contact us.



Treasurer

Diana Andrews
Tel; 01883 625585

I hope you renewed your subscription for 2013. We are so reliant on your subscriptions, donations and legacies to carry out the many activities we undertake in support of badgers in Surrey and the UK.



Attending Outside Events.

Julie Rawbone
mob: 07885 162039

We look forward to seeing you on:
Saturday November 2nd at
RSPB Croydon Local Group Annual
Fair, All Saint' Parish Church Hall,
Onslow Gardens, Sanderstead,
South Croydon CR2 9AB
10am to 1pm.

Talks to Local Organisations.

Unfortunately we are unable to offer this service at the moment.

If you would like to volunteer for this job, please contact Ray Ings. on 01883 380321.



Newsletter & Website Editor

David Malins
Tel: 020-8657 2174

We must acknowledge the use of drawings from Michael Clark's excellent book 'Badgers'. This is published by Whittet Books, ISBN 0-905483-65-0.

We have it on our sales stall.

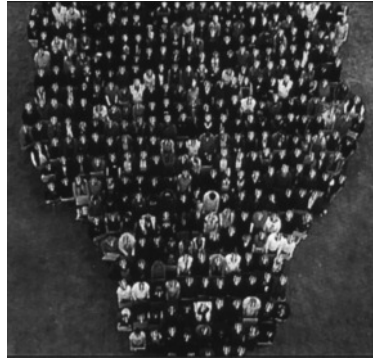
Our logo is based on Simon Turvey's painting 'Badger'.

ESBPS Website

Our website www.esbps.org.uk should be updated soon. We hope you will find it interesting.

DEATH MASK FOR A PROTECTED SPECIES

Our cover picture, from the Badger Trust, is from a video shot from an 'Octocopter' - a remote controlled high level inspection helicopter. Volunteers wearing badger masks assembled on a grid at Secret World Wildlife Rescue and then held up prepared placards. The video was made by a large team of well wishers from television, air transport and civil engineering



More News from the ESBPS

by Ray Ings

The Stable Badger

I received a call from Roger Munt of the West Surrey Badger Group to tell me that a lady had rung him concerning a badger that had spent the night sleeping in one of her stables. The door had been open all night and the badger could have left at any time but had chosen to stay there in the morning. This behaviour is unusual. Badgers will sleep in stables when there is plenty of comfortable straw for them to sleep on but this one had decided not to return to its sett in the morning. There are usually three reasons for this. It may have an injury or illness, or it has been rejected by its social group. Rejection is often indicated by bite wounds at the base of the tail.

I responded to the call and on arrival could see that the badger was likely to be one of this year's cubs. The badger had built itself a nest of straw so I went into the stable to take a closer look to see if there were any signs of injury and to gauge if it could move normally. The badger was reluctant to move and took some encouragement but when it did move it seemed to do so without any problems. It had more of an elongated shape than usual but there were no injuries that I could see and no bite wounds around the base of the tail.

Although it was not possible to do a clinical examination it seemed unlikely that injury was the reason for the badger being there. It was possible that it had received a glancing injury from a car which, although showing no outwards signs, had disorientated the badger. There remained the possibility of social rejection and hence the reluctance to leave the relative security of the stable. In discussion with Warwick, our Senior Field Officer, the decision was made to leave the badger in the stables for another night and leave the door open for the badger to leave if it so wished. I also left it food and water. If the badger was there the next morning I would take it to Wildlife Aid to join the badgers there for a group release later in the year. However in the morning the badger was gone and so was the food. This was the best result. If there is a problem with the group dynamics the badger may well return to the stables and if that happens again it might be best for it to be moved for an opportunity with another group.

Planning issues and consultants

We have been contacted by a number of local residents recently concerned about how proposed developments will impact their local environment and wildlife. It is usually the case now that the developer will pay for an ecological consultant to conduct an environmental impact assessment. In our experience, as far as badgers are concerned, the quality of the report can vary considerably. Just because there is expertise in say reptiles or bats it does not make the consultant competent when it comes to badgers. Assessing the status of a badger sett and identifying field signs of badger activity is not a skill that is developed overnight or because somebody has the relevant degree. There is no substitute for experience which we, as a badger group, certainly have.

A good example of this is a recent case of a proposed development in Warlingham. This had been assessed by an ecological consultant who concluded that there were no active badger setts in the proposed area. I was called by local residents for a second opinion. It was just as well. The flat part of the site had already been cleared of vegetation but adjacent to this was an extensive and well established badger sett. Many entrance holes at the top of the slope were not in use. However further down the slope there were some very active entrance holes showing plenty of freshly excavated soil in the classic furrow shape so characteristic of badger digging activity. Although many entrances to this very large sett were not in use, a proper survey should have assessed all entrances, not just a sample. A report has been given to the residents who will bring it to the attention of the developers and Tandridge Council.

Team Badger is a powerful coalition of the largest animal and welfare groups in the world.
We are united in one purpose to stop the badger cull.



RETHINK bovine TB

Viva!



Badger cull myths exposed in new Team Badger report

based on a RSPCA report 31.5.13

Before the start of a potentially devastating badger cull, Team Badger published a report exposing the myths which underpin these misguided plans. Team Badger's Mythbusters report PDF 974KB has been published to correct inaccuracies and misconceptions being used to justify the killing of thousands of badgers.

Team Badger, made up of IFAW, the Humane Society International (UK), Born Free, Dr Brian May's 'Save Me' organisation, the League Against Cruel Sports, Badger Trust and many other national and local organisations, aims to demonstrate that the near-extermination of the badgers will have little or no impact on reducing bovine TB in cattle.

Despite overwhelming scientific, parliamentary and public opposition, the government confirmed that it is going ahead with a cull of badgers, which may have started by the time you read this. Alarming, Defra have also indicated that the plans could quickly be rolled out further and wider following the six week pilot in parts of West Somerset and Tewkesbury.

RSPCA chief executive Gavin Grant said:

'There are many myths in circulation about badgers and bovine TB being used to justify this cull. They are unscientific, dangerously inaccurate and need to be exposed.

We care about cows and badgers alike. It is time to set the record straight and tell the truth that the cull will not help the cattle or stop bovine TB.

Only a full vaccination of badgers and cattle coupled with better bio-security on farms can do that.'

The cull could make bovine TB worse in some areas

Team Badger opposes the badger cull for both scientific and welfare reasons. We sympathise with farmers dealing with the problems of this disease. We care just as much about cattle as we do about badgers, but agree with the experts that a cull would be of little help in eradicating bovine TB in cattle, and could even make it worse in some areas.

We stand ready to work with the farming community to deliver more effective alternatives including the vaccination of both badgers and cattle and improved biosecurity.

Mark Jones, Humane Society International/UK Director & Veterinarian said: With the lives of so many thousands of badgers at stake, it is unacceptable for the public and farmers to be hoodwinked into believing that a cull will be effective in tackling bovine TB. Political spin is playing fast and loose with scientific facts and that's got to stop.

Read the full Team Badger's mythbusters report PDF 974KB - go online to rspca.org.uk/badgers, scroll down to Badger cull myths exposed in new report.

County Bans Badger Culling on all its Council land

Extracted from Daily Telegraph 24.7.13

Derbyshire has become the first county in Britain to ban badger culling on land that it owns.

The County Council branded culling "cruel" and called on the Government to rethink its policy on controlling the wild animals.

It says it based its decision on scientific evidence and suggested that culling badgers increases the spread of TB, the disease the cull is proposed to prevent.

The Council also fears that allowing culling on its land will promote illegal badger baiting. Instead, it will support a programme to vaccinate badgers against the disease.

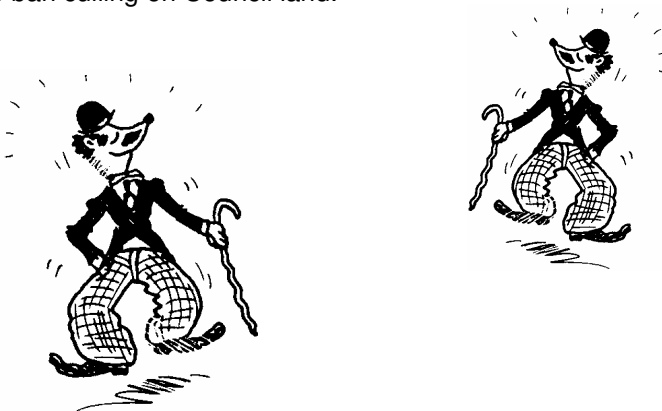
Public opinion is divided over the Government's decision to allow badgers to be culled in two pilot zones in the South West.

Derbyshire county councillors fear the culling will spread to their county which is a TB "high risk" area. Anne Western, the Council leader, said: "We are proud to live in Derbyshire which is one of the most beautiful rural counties in the country. That is why we want to protect our natural wildlife for which Derbyshire is famous.

By banning culling on our land and allowing Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to vaccinate our badgers, we are dealing with the problem of TB head on. "Culling is not only cruel but it is bad news for our farmers who are more likely to get infected herds of cattle.

"I hope that the Government eventually follows our lead and listens to the science that says culling is bad for our countryside."

In September last year the Forest of Dean district council in Gloucestershire voted to ban culling on Council land.





Badger Trust

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East Grinstead
East Sussex,
RH19 2WN.
Tel: 08458 287878
Fax: 02380 233896

e-mail: enquiries@badgertrust.org.uk
website: www.badgertrust.org.uk
Chairman - Dave Williams.
Sec'y - Dr Pam Mynott

Badger Trust is the working name of the National Federation of Badger Groups (NFBG). The NFBG is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no.5460677; Registered charity no.1111440.

Badger Trust promotes the conservation, welfare and protection of badgers, their setts and their habitats. It represents and supports 60 local voluntary badger groups throughout Britain, provides expert advice on all badger issues and works closely with the RSPCA, the police and others.

Badger Trust maintains a database on incidents of badger persecution in Britain.

Badger Trust is an active member of PAW – The Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime. This involves the police, other government agencies and non-governmental organisations that are working to fight wildlife crime. Badger Trust is a member of WCL – Wildlife & Countryside Link.

Check the website for the origination of articles marked **

Welcome trend in bTB figures

12.6.13 **

The apparent slight fall in the level of bovine TB is encouraging, says the Badger Trust. Commenting on provisional figures released today by Defra which show that the incidence rate for the first three months in 2013 is down from 3.9% to 3.6% compared with the same period in 2012.

The Trust says: "We accept that they are subject to possible adjustment, but they do appear to confirm a continuing downward trend and could be an

indicator that the Coalition's overdue and much delayed tightening of cattle movements might be starting to pay dividends".

The figures released by Defra reveal that the number of new herd incidents during the period January to March 2013 was 1,407 compared to 1,534 for January to March 2012. The number of tests on officially TB free herds was 22,878 during January to March 2013, compared to 24,981 during January to March 2012. The number of cattle compulsorily slaughtered as reactors or direct contacts was 9,278 during January to March 2013, compared to 9,474



during January to March 2012.

“The Coalition repeatedly claims it is determined to use –in its words—every tool in the box to control this dreadful disease,” says Trust chairman David Williams, “but while it has rushed ahead with its ill conceived plans for a badger slaughter, it has dragged its heels on much more important changes in the way cattle are managed and tested. The movement controls introduced earlier this year need to be given time to make their impact and promised additional changes expedited.”

Badgers are a drop in an ocean of bovine bTB muddle

4th July 2013

Two significant news releases issued on July 4th by DEFRA and the National Farmers Union contain a series of **equivocations** and **unsupportable assertions**. They also complain of the ruinous effect of slaughtering TB cattle without acknowledging that ten times as many animals are killed because of other diseases. Some of points have already been mentioned by Ray Ings.

The Defra statement said:

1. “. . . **bovine TB (bTB) was once a disease isolated to small pockets of the country**”.

Wrong - The disease was once extremely widespread across the UK just before and after World War II. A radical programme to eradicate bTB infected cattle brought the number of reactors down from an estimated 47,000 before the war to about 1,000 by 1970 without killing badgers. It remained about this level for 20 years and throughout these decades any “wildlife reservoir” had no effect. Then, from 1990 onwards progressive relaxations of cattle restrictions and lack of pre-movement testing allowed the disease to spread again. Furthermore, testing of cattle *after movement* should have been brought in many years ago.

2. “**The Government is today (July 4th) publishing a consultation on a draft strategy for achieving official freedom from bTB in England**”.

The Coalition and the cattle industry have been finally dragged to this point by the EU, 30 years after the industry should have been looking after its own interests. Instead, it ignored the rise from the early '90s to three years ago and distracted itself with myths about the wildlife reservoir in badgers.

3. “**These demonstrate the importance of applying stringent cattle control measures in combination with tackling any SIGNIFICANT reservoir of infection in wildlife**” (*Badger Trust capitals*).

This windy assertion does not define what is significant in relation to badgers considering the widely varying impact of the disease in various localities and at different times. New Zealand's achievement of reducing bTB by 94% which included killing possums, is never set against that of the United Kingdom in bringing down the total by 96% from 25,000 reactors in the early fifties to about 1,000 by the early 1970s.

4. Defra's statement also says, ominously for the industry, that both government and the cattle industry would contribute to the cost".

We say that this once again heralds a Coalition intention to offload the operational cost onto the farmers.

5. "Government the strategy built upon controls to address the reservoir of infection in badgers".

We say that the coalition needs to be careful, first to establish that there is indeed a reservoir of infection and secondly to justify its stubborn refusal to acknowledge the serious risk that culling could make matters worse.

6. "The Government is proposing to work in partnership with the industry to develop risk-based packages"

The Badger Trust understands that "risk-based packages" is sinister, meaning the relaxation of controls where risks are *presumed* to be low, but with no idea of present or impending conditions.

7. The Defra statement promises continued investment in the development of an oral badger vaccine and new diagnostic tests for cattle and badgers which could pave the way for "alternative approaches".

We say: All this has been made massively more difficult, however welcome, because of the shameful lack of will by the cattle industry while smitten by the supposed cheap short cut of killing badgers.

The NFU statement:

Welcomes farmers having a much greater input into TB control policy.

They will pay dearly and face a much greater cost because the NFU vows that farmers are prepared to contribute for "elements" of disease control. The farmers' element will be the shouldering of massive operational costs whereas the coalition will pay only the far smaller costs of administration.

Further thoughts – Protected Badgers to be culled?

Based on BBC Wildlife magazine July 2013 by James Fair.

If the creation of the world's first website by Tim Berners-Lee and the release of British hostage John McCarthy aren't reasons enough to celebrate 1991, perhaps the passage of the Badgers Bill through the House of Commons is. This piece of legislation consolidated the original 1973 Badgers Act by making it an offence not just to kill or injure a badger, but also to damage or interfere with a sett.

As *BBC Wildlife* correspondent Stephen Harris noted at the time -

Conservationists welcomed the bill because it "should help to reduce the large number of setts destroyed by farmers and developers, and greatly aid the prosecution of badger-diggers".

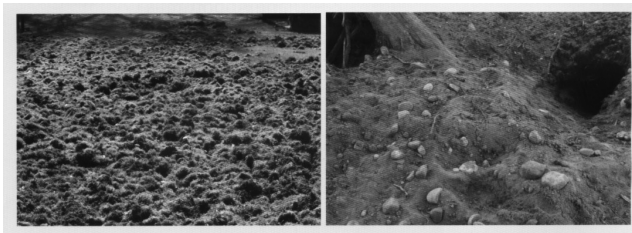
Over 20 years on, badger crime, and the associated court cases, still abounds. When a new partnership of law-enforcement agencies and conservation groups, Operation Meles, compiled a list of all known incidents involving badgers in 2009 and 2010, it contained 842 cases, including 243 of fighting or baiting.

But, as Harris also noted back in 1991, arguably the bigger issue was the continued culling of badgers to tackle bovine tuberculosis (bTB) rates in cattle. "The Mammal Society... is concerned that unless [the Government] is willing to evaluate scientifically the effectiveness of its badger-control operations, it will doggedly follow futile policies into the 21st century," he wrote.

Now for the first time in more than 10 years - badger culling is due to start in south-west England. The internet has expanded beyond our imagination and John McCarthy is still free - yet we don't seem to have made much progress in how we deal with our native fauna. *Ed: Amen to that.*

That was a sett, that was!

Police were called when a large section of an active main sett in Kenilworth, was buried under tons of soil.



Badger Group member David McDonald raised concerns about earth-moving work, and when committee member Mike Hughes visited the site he quickly involved the police - who were soon on site. He also warned regional staff at the construction company that their work was breaking badger sett protection laws.

Slow at first to respond the company then quickly attempted lengthy remedial measures, pulling back huge tonnages of soil that had been dumped across the sett as a temporary measure during excavation work on a nearby site.

The sett occupied a large section of the raised end of a hollowed out area once used to store bales of silage and more recently discarded used tyres. The sett was first logged on the Group's database in 2011 when eight active holes were recorded. But it is known to date back much further.

The decision about any follow-up legal action is now a matter for the police.

A similar situation arose at Pauline Kidner's local sett, near Secret World, about four years ago and that also survived and is now as active as ever. The police spent a long time putting together a very good case but at the end of the day the public prosecution service declined to prosecute as it was "not in the public interest". "Still, it gave the landowner a good shake up and I don't think she will do it again", said Pauline.

Ed: Proof once more for the need of vigilance and quick action.

