



National
Trust

Residents' newsletter
February – March 2022

Sherborne & Bibury



National Trust Images/ Dougie Holden

Hope and positivity

2022. I wonder what it will hold?

With a run of beautiful cold crisp winter days in January, highlighting Sherborne's beauty, it feels like it has started as a year of hope and positivity.

We have excellent people now settled in, keen and able to do great things.

We have volunteers back, thank you so much to all of

you, and we are looking for more, so we can do more – please do get in touch.

Mel and Jonty's wonderful work in the south of the estate will link nature habitats as well as, in time, provide more access for people.

The new paths are looking great, and I love to hear of the wonderful progress vaccinating the estate's well-loved badgers, thanks Matt and Andy.

We intend on carrying this positivity throughout 2022 to deliver visible improvements across the estate. So do keep in touch, do report any issues with your building early so we can plan how best to help and say hello or give us a wave if you are out and about. It makes a difference!

**Jonny Loose, General
Manager – Cotswold
Countryside Portfolio**

Meet Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger



Georgina Lindsay

I think it's fair to say that I've had a pretty mixed bag of roles over the last nine years.

I have worked on farms, in zoos and I even moved to South Africa to work as a Wildlife Researcher and Volunteer Coordinator.

So, a bit about me. I have undergraduate degrees in Animal Science and Wildlife Conservation as well as a Master's degree in Wildlife Documentary Production.

Prior to working for the National Trust, I travelled the country surveying all the different protected species the UK has to offer whilst working as an Ecological Field Surveyor.

As great as this job was, being on the road Monday to Friday,

working all hours including through the night and travelling hundreds of miles a day was not ideal. My journey therefore took me to the National Trust and the Sherborne Park Estate.

Getting to know Sherborne

I have now been at the National Trust for three months and it's been a very busy few months indeed.

My biggest task to tackle when starting the job was to get on top of all the health and safety and compliance work that needed to be done.

As boring as this sounds it has taken me to every nook and cranny on the estate. I do not think I would have seen as much of Sherborne otherwise, including all of the amazing wildlife you can see here.

I have also been working hard on some nature projects including putting together funding and design proposals.

Everyone I have met has been so welcoming and supportive. Both myself and Patrick, the Ranger, were new to the Trust, so we have had a lot to learn. However, everyone has been great with helping us find our feet and answering our never-ending list of questions.

You'll hear more from me later in the newsletter, but if you see me out and about, please stop and say hello. I'm looking forward to getting to know the community and learning more about the estate.

Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger

Get to know Patrick Brown, Ranger

It's been excellent getting to know the estate over the last couple of months, as well as the great team who work and volunteer here.

I've also had the pleasure of meeting members of the community too. If I haven't had chance to say hello to you yet, here's a bit more about me.

My interest in conservation was sparked as a child, playing in the woods and streams behind our house.

Whilst at school I volunteered at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, and later Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

I gained my First in Conservation Biology and Ecology from Exeter University, and thoroughly enjoyed the fieldwork aspect of my Honours project – investigating the relationship between Marsh Fritillaries and their food plant, Devil's-bit scabious.

After graduating, I was keen to apply evidence-based principles to practical conservation, and completed a Small Woods Association apprenticeship at Westonbirt, the National Arboretum. I helped to re-establish 60 acres of in-cycle hazel

National Trust/ Sherborne Park Estate



coppice, restoring valuable habitat, and producing a wide range of materials for traditional crafts.

I have a strong interest in hand tools and have learnt the historical arts of cleaving, hurdle making and carving. Working quietly in the woods gave me a privileged closeness to flora and fauna. Everytime a sparrowhawk flitted through a clearing, or a hare shifted from its form, I felt a deep connection to the land.

I began to draw upon this connection to create sculpture inspired by the life around me. Following a spell with BCN Wildlife Trust and self employment in woodland

management, I was lucky enough to sculpt full time. The pandemic curtailed this, and as Ranger I have returned to my roots.

I have a great deal to learn about the estate, and I'm grateful for the generosity of the team and the community in sharing their knowledge.

Getting to know the land will take years rather than months, but it's a rewarding challenge.

Patrick Brown, Ranger



Image credit goes here



My first few months...

By **Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger**

It's been a busy few months. I have met the Trust's Wildlife Management team and even assisted with some badger vaccinations on the estate. Having dealt with TB first-hand in livestock, I was very interested in learning more about the vaccination project and help where I could.

I have also had the opportunity to meet some of the farmers at Sherborne and talk about all things farming. I have a particular interest in livestock care and conservation farming, so it has been really great to hear about some of the environmentally led farming that is taking place here.

It's been brilliant to spend some time with our amazing volunteers too. I would have liked to have spent a bit more time with the team, but compliance work called. I hope to change that this year now I am starting to get on top of things. The volunteers have been great in helping Patrick get some of the really big tasks done around the estate, so my thanks go out to them.

Bird surveys have been something else I've had a chance to get involved in. Our local bird expert, Anna Fields showed me all things bird related at Sherborne. Birding is something I really enjoy, and bird surveys were always my favourite when working as an ecological surveyor. I can't wait to make a start on the spring surveys.

With such a big portfolio of places and people, I've also been getting to know the outdoor team who are based at our other office on the Ebworth estate.

Together we've been planting trees as well as learning how we manage our conservation grazing herd of Belted Galloway cattle.

Ellie, the Ranger who is now based at Ebworth has been particularly great at coming over to Sherborne each week. She's been helping me to carry out the tree safety management surveys. She is the portfolio tree expert, so I was really pleased that she was able to share her knowledge with me.



Re-starting volunteering

Our work across the estate is helped enormously by a team of dedicated and passionate volunteers.

Both regular and occasional groups give their time so generously to support us – especially with the big tasks where many hands make light work.

Recently, we've been focusing on removing Tubex treeguards from the woodlands.

These tubes protect young saplings from browsing animals, but over time become brittle and risk releasing plastic fragments into the environment.

Once removed and collected, the guards will be recycled, and the established trees can

grow unconstrained without their plastic jackets.

Other volunteer tasks recently have included ditch and drainage work, removing the ivy from some of the estate walls, tree felling, footpath clearing and more!

We're keen to make the most of volunteers' passion for the wildlife, history and landscape of Sherborne, and to that end we are looking to establish (or re-establish) groups to survey the archaeology, botany and fauna on the estate.

Many of these roles will start when the weather gets a bit warmer. Meanwhile, if you want to know more and are interested in joining us as a volunteer, please do get in touch:

sherborneestate@nationaltrust.org.uk



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Finding my feet



By **Patrick Brown, Ranger**

Being a Ranger often means we have to be reactive in our work plans – removing hanging branches or damaged trees for example. Alongside this, we have ash dieback to continually monitor and manage.

I have been working with other members of the team to remove affected trees in areas of concern, but there is still plenty more to do.

In Ragged Copse you may have seen us removing failed ash plantings, killed off by the disease before they could establish.

I am keen to ensure we re-plant to give the woodland the diversity of structure and continuity of canopy it needs.

We will have to carefully consider what species we plant, always giving thought to how climate change is impacting the landscape.



Paths and tracks

It's taken a little longer than expected but we've finally finished our work on the paths and tracks around the north of the estate. It's been an enormous effort so thank you for your patience while the works were taking place.

Thank you too for feeding back on the surface. With a bit of extra refinement we now have a superb surface through Ragged Copse and Pleasure Grounds that will enable year-round enjoyment for

everyone.

We've now started work on the tracks through Budgehill Belt and will also be working through Snowbottom Belt south of the A40. We have ash dieback as well as other forestry work and habitat management work to complete here.

Although there is no access, we know that these woods are popular with walkers. To make

sure everyone stays safe, we need to assess the trees and carry out any work that arises from these inspections.

Given the popularity of the woods together with the opportunity to link existing Rights of Way, we will be looking at formalising permitted access through these woods in due course. The improved tracks will help to bring all this together.

Looking ahead

By **Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger**

I am very positive about Sherborne's future. We now have some really nice new paths, waymarkers and posts.

I would like to further improve other infrastructure including the estate's bridges, signs and gates to make everyone's time here even more enjoyable.

I also have some exciting future projects with some potential for grassland restoration which I'm really

keen to progress.

With spring and summer also comes more wildlife and I hope to set up a monitoring project and collect lots of data with the help of a volunteer group I'm looking to establish specifically for this. So, lots still to do.

Update: Sherborne Brook

By **Simon Nicholas**,
Countryside Manager

You may have already seen that we have been continuing with work around the Sherborne Brook within Old Park.

The first phase of the repairs to the weir wing walls has been completed. More work to the upstream south wall is still needed and will take place later this summer.

In addition, we are employing contractors to investigate the extent of the repairs needed to the upper weir and at the turbine house. This will include an assessment of the sluices and whether replacements are needed.

As soon as ground conditions improve, contractors will be carrying out repairs to the breach in the bank of the lower Broadwater. We had planned for these repairs to be carried out last year, but despite our best efforts, the permit from the Environment Agency was delayed.

You may recall the article in the last newsletter by Dr Stewart Clarke about managing weed and silt in a sustainable way. Dr Clarke is our National Specialist for



National Trust Images/Chris Lacey

freshwater, catchments and estuaries.

He highlighted the need to understand water behaviour in the Brook. This will determine the number and scale of the flow deflectors we will be installing.

This work is progressing very quickly. Four specialist consultancies have been

approached to quote for the flow modelling work. The successful consultancy will be appointed in March.

Pending successful predications and timely permissions from the Environment Agency, the flow deflectors have a good chance of being installed later this summer.

Let Estate update

By **Emma Guthrie, Rural Surveyor**

Happy New Year from the Let Estate team.

The refurbishment of 22 Sherborne is now complete. This was a large piece of work overseen by Dan Raymond, our Senior Building Surveyor. We have installed an air source heat pump so we are looking forward to seeing how this performs and helps reduce our carbon emissions.

Kathryn is now busy working through the letting process. We have received a lot of interest from potential tenants so we're hopeful we will find a suitable tenant to look after and enjoy this lovely property.

Work has also started at 70 Sherborne and the re-letting of this will start soon.

The other vacant property in the village is 57 Sherborne and we have instructed a contractor to start work on this within the next couple of months.

We are continuing to work our way through the list of outstanding repair jobs in many properties. You may have seen Pat and Terry and our contractors out in the village completing lots of these.

We will be making progress on these jobs this year, so if you have reported issues to the Tenant Repair Line you will be hearing from one of the team

or a contractor soon.

We have also been upgrading some very old night storage heaters in a few properties and boiler services are also now in full swing. You should hear directly from our contractor to arrange these.

We would like to thank you for your patience over the last year while we have established ourselves as a new team.

If you have any queries, Kathryn remains the best point of contact:
Kathryn.alsbury@nationaltrust.org.uk

Tenant repair line

The tenant repair line launched last summer.

You can now call, email or submit your repair requests using the online portal. All of these services replace any existing arrangements and are available 24 hours a day.

In case of urgent repairs (e.g., loss of power, heating, water etc.) please report these by telephone so your case can be prioritised and if needed, a visit from a contractor can be

arranged.

Our telephone service is operated by a dedicated team of trained staff who have direct contact with our contractors.

If there is an emergency at your property, no matter the time of day, they will instruct a suitable contractor who will endeavour to call you direct, in advance of visiting you.

How to report repairs

Reporting repairs couldn't be easier. Simply;

- Call **0345 646 1311**
- Use the online portal, Fixflow
<https://nationaltrust.fixflo.com>
- Email tenantrepairs@nationaltrust.org.uk

Tree planting ambitions

National Trust Images/James Dobson



By **Simon Nicholas,** **Countryside Manager**

You've probably heard about the Trust's tree planting ambitions. As a charity, we've pledged to plant 20 million trees by 2030.

We've already started to plant trees on the estate as part of this big ambition but there are plans to plant even more...a lot more and we'll need your help.

The local community Ancestor Oak project are keen to help us and play their part in securing the future of the estate's wonderful parkland trees.

There will also be opportunities for others to get involved in continuity planting too.

I will be sharing our continuity planting plan later this year.

We will also be submitting a new and revised woodland management plan which will set the blueprint for the estate's woodland by;

- Increasing diversity of species
- Establishing a natural age structure
- Creating and restoring wildlife habitats
- Introducing and developing resilience in the face of climate change and disease

Great things are already happening at Conygree Farm where Jonty and Mel Brunyee

have been working hard planting thousands of trees and shrubs.

The final phase of the project is being delivered this winter with more new woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows being planted.

In total, Jonty and Mel will have planted around 10,000 trees and shrubs across their holding – increasing and linking woodland habitats and providing even more space for nature.

If you're interested in supporting and getting involved with our tree planting programme, please do drop us an email. We'd love to hear from you.
Sherborneestate@nationaltrust.org.uk

Project focus: Badger vaccination

National Trust/ Matt Lapham



By Matt Lapham, Wildlife Management Unit

In July last year the National Trust's Wildlife Management Unit began the badger vaccination project on the Sherborne Park Estate.

The project involves trapping and vaccinating badgers at several farms across the estate to help control bovine TB (bTB). The vaccination team consists of Dr Andy Robertson, National Trust bTB Specialist and Project Lead, and Matt Lapham. Both have years of experience in dealing with bTB in wildlife and are fully trained to carry out all aspects of vaccination work.

The plan is to vaccinate at one or two farms at a time and gradually work across the estate.

First steps

The first step of the vaccination process is to dig in a series of 'bait points' where the bait (peanuts) is buried in holes and covered with a large stone, to deter smaller animals such as mice.

The bait points are placed around areas of badger activity, such as runs, latrines and setts – many of which are monitored with wildlife cameras to get an idea of likely badger numbers.

We know that badgers are hitting the bait when the stones are moved, and the peanuts have been eaten.

After a few days of the bait being eaten, cage traps are deployed near the bait points so the badgers can get used to them.

All traps have a sign explaining what they are for and a contact number to call if there are any issues with it.

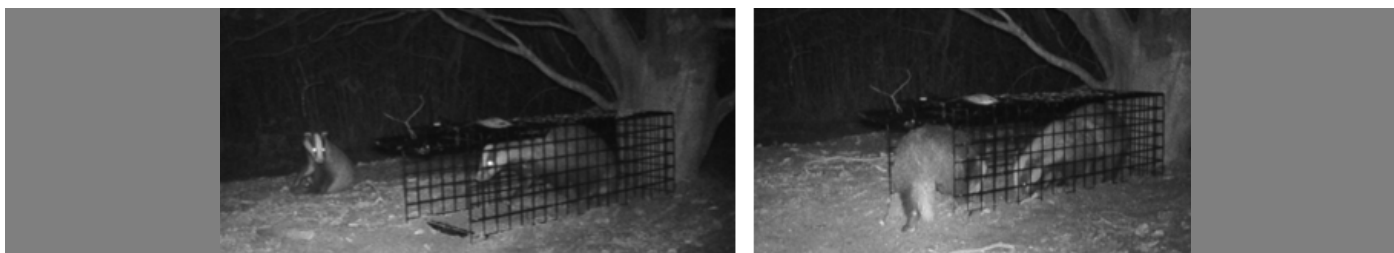
The traps are locked open and over several days the bait (covered by the stone), is gradually moved from outside to inside the trap. It is then finally moved towards the back of the trap.

This process essentially trains the badgers to enter the traps and move the stone to get a tasty reward of peanuts.

Once the bait is regularly being hit at the back of the trap, the traps are set to catch.

The trap is set using garden wire and string to attach the stone to the trigger

Cont.





This badger was vaccinated on another site. You can clearly see the stock spray on its back

mechanism which holds the door open.

As the badgers move the stone, it releases the door, catching the badger.

Vaccinating

With the difficult process of catching the badger complete, vaccinations can begin.

The traps are checked at first light. Any badgers that are found in the traps are vaccinated with a BCG injection – the same vaccine used on humans to protect against TB.

It might come as a surprise to know that most trapped badgers are quite calm, with injections being given through the sides of the traps with little reaction.

The fur is then clipped on the back of the animal and sprayed with stock marker.

That way, if the badger is caught again, the team can see if the animal has already been vaccinated.

Once released, the badgers typically trot back over to the sett and disappear back underground.

Finally, the team have to complete a range of paperwork which records the outcome of the trapping including a welfare assessment of the animals. This is submitted to Natural England who licence the whole process.

After two or three nights trapping, the team remove and disinfect the equipment and start the whole process again on another farm.

Progress so far

The project is going well, with 165 badgers being vaccinated

across the Cotswolds Portfolio to date.

Two training courses for volunteers and local people have also been held on the estate. Those trained are now able to vaccinate badgers as part of a new government initiative to increase badger vaccination as an alternative to badger culling.

If you come across any traps or bait points, please do not touch or disturb them. One of the key aims of the project is to reduce the prevalence of TB through vaccination programmes. Disturbance can affect not only how many badgers are successfully vaccinated, but also cause risk of injury.

You can find out more about the project by visiting www.tbhub.co.uk or by contacting matthew.lapham@nationaltrust.org.uk.

What I love about Sherborne

Two things I love about this time of year are overwintering bird surveys and fungi.

Winter is typically associated with few wildlife sightings, but Sherborne has been abundant with fieldfare and bramblings as well as large numbers of teal and widgeon on the Broadwaters.



Sherborne is also filled with some absolutely amazing fungi, some of which I have never seen before. I have especially enjoyed teaming up with Ellie to identify them all.



From teenie tiny bonnets, to colourful green elf ears to giant brackets – Sherborne has them all!

Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger

Winter brings its own highlights. I love seeing the hedges thick with redwing and fieldfare gorging on the berries, and the garnet glint of a bullfinch hopping heavily through the twigs.



Last week I saw a hare in Sally Coppice. With its back in the evening sun it sat up, haloed in golden fur, and fixed me with its gaze.

Effortlessly swift, it turned and loped silently into the shade raked woods.



These are the moments that make the early starts, driving rain and hard work all worthwhile.

I look forward to sharing many more of them with you in the years to come.

Patrick Brown, Ranger

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