

# Calderdale Badger Protection Group

Working to protect badgers from all forms of persecution



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# Annual report

# 2022



# Eyes peeled for nature crime

## 63 badgers fall victim to roads

Our first road casualty of 2022 was a young female, probably a cub from 2021, found on 11 January in West Vale at the junction of Stainland Road and Church Street. Lee attended and laid her to rest over a wall and covered her with leaves.

In total, Calderdale lost 63 badgers to road traffic accidents throughout the year (these are the ones we are aware of). We recovered 44 road victims, 16 badgers were not there when we attended, and three dead badgers could not be confirmed as RTAs.

We lost three cubs, 10 males, 27 of unknown sex, 18 adult females and 5 young females.

### Report contributors

Cath Baker: Treasurer, Committee member & Vaccinator

Steve Francis: Planning Subgroup member

Lee Roberts, Twitterer

Lisa Wilkinson, Crime Liaison Officer, Planning Subgroup member & Committee member

Report compiled by Emily Rawlins

Front cover photo taken by former group member Andrew Tilsley in Hebden Bridge



Large boulders were used to block this badger sett in Todmorden.

The beginning of 2022 was busy in relation to badger crime, particularly sett interference. Thankfully the end of the year was much quieter.

January 2022 started with the discovery of an extensive active sett in woodland on the edge of Sowerby Bridge. Unfortunately, there was also evidence of extensive bottle digging around the sett, which had clearly damaged the sett, and some of the underground tunnels and chambers were exposed.

This was reported to the police, and our Wildlife Crimes Officer (WCO) contacted the landowner. Notices were placed at entry points into the woods and near the digging with the landowner's permission. There was plenty of evidence of badger activity plus a subsidiary sett discovered in the woodland. Given the damaged sett was on steeply sloping and very friable land, it would have been extremely difficult to repair, as we have done on a previous sett damaged by bottle diggers.

In March, two bottle digging sites were discovered near Shelf with extensive damage to two active badger setts. Our WCO visited the site with us and a request for information was put out on West Yorkshire Police social media and an article in the Halifax Courier.

Another sett was damaged by bottle digging in the Midgley area. A sharp-sighted member spotted men digging on a steep bank and went to investigate. After the men had left, it became evident that a sett had been damaged. This was a sett that had previously been unknown to us. Three blocked setts were discovered by group members during the year. A sett in Brighouse in a private garden area was discovered in February and unblocked by members of the group with permission from our WCO.

A larger sett monitored by us in a field in Northowram appeared to have been blocked or flattened by what looked like heavy machinery. Again, this was reported to the police.

Another blocked sett was found by a member on farmland in Todmorden in September and reported to the police.

Other crime issues included an incident of young people jumping on a sett and poking it with sticks. This was reported to the police by a member of the public, but there was no apparent damage to the sett.

We also received information about an animal trap found by a group of litter pickers who reported it to the local authority's Community Safety Team, who contacted us and the police. The trap was found about 5 metres from an active badger sett and removed.

Another area of potential badger crime which we keep a close eye on are planning applications if badgers are on or near a development site.

We had reports from a worried resident about the site clearance of a piece of land with a current planning application submitted. The resident was aware of a badger sett on the site. On checking the site, it was evident that there had been no damage to the sett and a full badger report had been submitted as part of the application.

The planning group are heavily involved in another planning application in which badgers are present on the site of a large housing development. This is an ongoing case which has involved both Natural England, as the licence providers for the Badger Mitigation Plan, and the police. As it an ongoing case, we will hopefully be able to comment in more detail in the next report, when hopefully things will have been resolved.



# 999 service for badgers in peril



This cub was taken to the RSPCA Centre at Stapeley Grange, Cheshire.

Calderdale Badger Protection Group operates a free 24/7 Badger Rescue Service for big and small badgers who are in trouble or injured.

An example of how this service operates occurred on 28 June 2022. We received a call on the Emergency 24-hour hotline, 07894 497544, that a cub had been spotted wandering around erratically in daylight on a footpath in local woods and looked in need of help.

Two of our responders, Mel and Steve, set off with all the necessary equipment to at about 9pm. On arrival, they found the cub already in a cage belonging to the reporter. This is an unusual occurrence, as we ask the public not to approach a badger for fear that they might either frighten it or get bitten. However, we do ask for the following information: full details including a contact phone number from the reporter, and an exact location

(using the what3words app if possible) of where the animal was found.

Returning to the incident itself, our responders loaded the cage and took the cub to a local vet, Donaldsons in Almondbury, Huddersfield, for a full check-up to ensure it was not dehydrated or had any serious injuries. The vet gave it a pain relief injection and a clean bill of health. The cub thanked the vet by trying to

bite her fingers. It was then given food and water overnight. First thing the following morning, Steve was joined by Liz (as Mel was unavailable) and the pair contacted the RSPCA Centre at Stapeley Grange in Cheshire to ask if they could take the cub for rehabilitation. With the RSPCA's agreement, they set off on the long journey to Cheshire and delivered the cub safely.

## Vaccinators visit Derbyshire

The badger cull in England continued apace in 2022, with the total number killed since 2013 topping 200,000 – around half the population.

This travesty is predicated on the myth that badgers are the cause of bovine Tuberculosis in cattle. A scientific paper produced by Tom Langton and Dr Mark Jones, comparing Defra's own figures with those from Wales, where they do not cull badgers, concluded that **culling badgers has had no effect on reducing bovine TB in cattle**. Instead, incidences of bTB reduction were due to **cattle measures**.

In areas where the government allows culling, local groups and Wildlife Trusts have been offering badger vaccination.

While we are not currently vaccinating in Calderdale, as there is no evidence of bTB in badgers here, our two trained vaccinators, ***pictured***, maintained their skills by helping out in Derbyshire with Debbie Bailey and her team of badger vaccinators.

As the first light illuminated the



Derbyshire countryside, we checked the traps set the afternoon before. The only sounds were birds, and the quiet murmur of the vaccination team.

The traps were checked with nervous excitement – will there be a badger there? For some volunteers, who pre-baited the traps over the previous 10 days, this might be the first time they have seen a live badger. The hard work pays off, as the soft foggy grey of a badger's fur or their iconic facial stripes are spotted in a cage.

The trapped badgers are vaccinated with BCG vaccine, then some of the hairs on their back snipped and stock-marked to ensure that they are not vaccinated again.

The badgers show their different

characters – some lively, some quiet, curled up asleep in the cage, or surrounded by earth from digging for every last peanut. None react to the vaccine, although most dislike the sound of the stock spray.

The badgers are checked for adverse reaction (none has ever been seen) and then – the best bit – released. With the door opened, some bolt straight out and into the nearby sett, while others take a moment to notice that they are free, then slowly trot off into the sunrise.

The reward for us is seeing these beautiful, iconic, gentle creatures being given a chance to survive, in an area where their neighbours just a few miles away are being shot at night, leaving setts deserted.

Our focus for 2023 is to continue to campaign against the cull, provide the public with evidence that the cull does not work, and make sure politicians preparing for election understand the strength of feeling from the public, to ensure that the next government will follow the lead from Wales, and ban the cull.

# CALDERDALE BADGER PROTECTION GROUP

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2022

Accounting period 1 January to 31 December

### Bank Account

Opening Balance	£8,809.28
Funds for specific purposes	
Vaccination Fund	£5,888.06
Emergency/Rescue Fund	£1,012.32

General Funds brought forward £1,908.90

### Income

Member Subscriptions	£570.00
Member Donations	£121.00
Other Donations	£894.00

### Expenditure

Merchandise Sales	£1,708.65	Cost of Merchandise	£1,048.43
		Stall Costs	£15.00

Badger Trust Subscription £595.00

Total Income £3,293.65 Total Expenditure £1,658.43

Income less Expenditure £1,635.22

Closing Balance **£10,444.50**

### Paypal Account

Opening Balance	£1,527.31
Income (donation)	£30.00
Closing Balance	£1,557.31

### Cash on Hand

Opening Balance	£730.07
Income	
Member Subscriptions	£20.00
Merchandise Sales	£263.80

### Expenditure

Transferred to Bank Account £600.00

Closing Balance **£414.17**

Total funds at 1/1/22 **£11,066.66**

Total funds at 31/12/22 **£12,415.77**

Outstanding Liabilities (Insurance)\* £314.70

Profit in 2022 **£1,034.41**

### Notes

\*Insurance was paid by a member who was not reimbursed till after the year end.

£115 in subscriptions paid by cheque was lost as the cheques were misplaced.

Other Donations were from HDHUK £744 and Sara Abbot; painting sold for £150.

We thank them for their generosity