

Item 13 a Calderdale Badger Group

Q1 It would be useful to include a paragraph about badgers and their conservation in the Moorlands Policy that is currently being revised. I was wondering if you might be able to let me have some text about badgers that we could include? I attach a copy of the latest draft so you can see what else is being said.

R1 Thanks - having consulted with the group, we would like to suggest that it might be worth changing paragraph 4.8 in your draft, that currently states:

"The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 means that people accused of digging for badgers cannot claim they are digging for foxes. A licence is needed to interfere with a badger's sett and then only for specific purposes, such as preventing the spread of disease."

You are correct that there are situations where a licence can be obtained to interfere with a badger's sett, but this isn't to prevent disease spread. It's often development related, and has quite complicated conditions around time of year, relocating badgers, etc that is probably best avoided mentioning altogether! The law is quite specific, and it might be worth sticking to its wording - which is:

"The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 means that it is illegal to kill, injure, take, dig for or ill-treat a badger or to damage, interfere with, block or cause a dog to enter a sett or disturb a badger when it is occupying one."

A suggested paragraph from the group about badgers, their ecology and moorland presence would be:

"Whilst moorland is not normally associated with badger habitat, in Calderdale there are well established badger setts on the moors. The badgers may well be foraging for leatherjackets, which are a good food source and found in abundance. Evidence from paths and foraging suggests they mainly head down towards land below to forage for worms, their main food."

Badgers are omnivores. However the association with reduced ground nesting birds and small mammals is misleading - these creatures are in decline also in areas where there is no badger presence, indicating that environmental and other man made factors are the cause of their declining numbers."

Badgers form an important element of the local ecology - their setts are used by other burrowing mammals as homes, and the earth they dig creates aerated soil heaps for a range of invertebrate species. Eating seeds from trees and plants helps with dispersal and spread of key plant species."

If you did want to reword could we be consulted? Thanks...

Q2 The Development Committee would be very pleased to hear about any planning applications (received from Calderdale) that could potentially impact on badger welfare. It would be helpful if you could please let me know of any such planning applications and we can include feedback about this in our consultation responses to Calderdale.

R2 We do have a planning subgroup who monitor planning applications, and work closely with individual case officers to highlight any concerns. We are happy to share any applications that could impact badger welfare - would you be wanting this from all of Calderdale, or specific to Todmorden Parish?

Q3 We have introduced a new website and part of this is to provide links to local organisations. I was wondering if you have a website that we can link to/if you would like to let me have some text that we can add to the TTC website about your group?

R3 Thanks for this!

Our social media includes facebook - 'calderdalebadgers', Twitter '@calderdalebadg1' and our website - 'www.calderdalebadgergroup.org.uk'

Blurb about us:

Calderdale Badger Protection Group is run by volunteers. Our aim is to protect badgers from all forms of persecution. We map and monitor setts and work in partnership with Wildlife Crimes Officers, and RSPCA to prevent and prosecute wildlife crime. We monitor planning applications, respond to reports of dead or injured badgers, rescue those who are injured and distressed, ensuring they access veterinary care and rehabilitation if needed. We campaign against the badger cull, and raise awareness of all badger issues. We work with, and support, other wildlife rehabilitation and protection groups. You are welcome to join us!

Thanks again, it's great to have badgers on the agenda. They are, sadly, still persecuted, and in need of our help as much as ever.

If there is anything else, don't hesitate to ask - could you copy in the other emails attached here, in case the 'west' email is neglected?! Many thanks.

Wishing you all the best,

Calderdale Badger Group