



TIGGINS MEADOW

DEC 2020

Barn building | New website | Film making

Trail camera

We've used our new trail camera to good effect this year, placing it in various locations around the field. It's lovely to be able to get glimpses of wildlife when we're not there. We've had a badger wandering around, barn owls and short-eared owl, a rook feeding it's youngster, pheasants performing courtship dances and some lovely kestrel pics.

Owls

We've had consistent sightings of barn owls roosting and hunting in the field, though no evidence of chicks in either nest box this year. Last winter was a poor one for them which typically is followed by low breeding performance. But that apparently gives the vole population a chance to recover (we've seen lots this year!) So hopefully the owls will survive this winter and do better next breeding season.

New Website

We still have the blog at <https://tiggins.wordpress.com/> but have now also got a website wildabouttiggins.org



Season's Greetings !

What a year it has been for everyone - we sincerely hope you've managed to stay healthy and find different ways to enjoy yourselves.

For us the focus of our year has been Tiggins Meadow, in particular the barn building project. Of course, it didn't go quite to plan, starting 2 months later than intended, but once we got going friends and family were able to safely come and help us (though in much smaller groups than we'd originally planned) with the splendid weather very much on our side. The barn is timber framed with walls made with Hempcrete - not a technique we've used before so it's been a big learning curve. We are about half way through the build so expect to



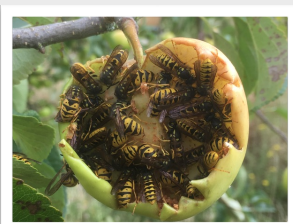
Wasps Nest

As we were preparing to start the barn building we discovered a wasps nest in the ground within a couple of meters of the site ! However, they didn't seem to be bothered by our presence so we worked alongside each other for the whole summer. It was fascinating watching them coming and going and we wished we could have marked individuals to observe how long they were - tiny GPS units have been attached to bees for studying them but we haven't yet found any studies doing the same with wasps. The Natural History Museum has some very good information:

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/what-do-wasps-do.html>

It surprised us how long into the autumn the wasps continued using their nest, but eventually the heavy rain ended it. Though we have found quite a lot of 'princess wasps' inside the barn which may well provide them with enough shelter to survive the winter.

We then did some some work with a digger to install the rainwater collection tank where the nest had been and sadly disturbed about 10 mice who had clearly been living in the surprisingly large wasp nest underground. cavity !



be working on it again next spring and summer. The barn already has owls using it to roost in (they will be provided with a space long-term) and groups of tits regularly come in to feed on insects. We will be removing the old caravan when the barn is finished.



It's been lovely having lots of local people use the field for walking, nature spotting and generally enjoying the sanctuary it provides. Many bring specialist knowledge or share advice in addition to being a friendly face and an excuse to stop what we are doing for a chat.

Trying our hand at film making

We have been asked by Wild East (see wildest.co.uk) to produce a short film about our experience of creating Tiggins Meadow so we've had some fun giving that a go. It's a lot harder than it looks ! We decided all images and soundtrack must be from the field, some of which we'd already got, some of which we needed to go and get. One tool we indulged in is a drone camera and it's been amazing for us to get a 'bird's eye' view. The film is now on our website.

Wishing you an 'elfy Christmas (sorry !) and New Year.

We hope to see you at Tiggins

Meadow in 2021.

Juliet & Peter.

