



OPEN DAY



OWL CHICKS



HARVESTING



BARN BUILDING

# Tiggins Meadow

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2025



## A good year & looking forward!

In 2024 we were delighted to see the new 'barn pond' (pictured above) retain water all year round with rainwater now feeding in off the barn roof. It's hosting a growing number of species including newts, dragonflies and beetles. The scabious we planted a couple of years ago did really well and our fruit and willow harvests were bountiful. We hope this continues. The orchids put on a beautiful display in June and we were thrilled to have a local photography group come to enjoy a session getting inspiration from the meadow. Plans for 2025 include continuing to cut down some of the very large self-seeded willows to prevent the grassy areas turning into woodland and to make progress on the barn building.



## Barn owl chicks

Our two barn owl nest boxes are monitored most years by a local BTO volunteer. Dave kindly let us know when he would be coming along in early July. Watching his careful process of investigating and then ringing the two chicks found was absolutely fascinating. He was pretty sure there had been three chicks but that one had already fledged.

Photos below taken by Charles Cuthbert.



Barn owls can regularly be seen hunting across the meadow so sit quietly on one of the benches at dusk and you might be lucky! We work hard to provide a good hunting habitat for the owls and have also created a loft space in the barn which is well used with plenty of evidence below of owl pellets ! The loft perches are also used by kestrels. Our specifications for the barn design included roosting opportunities for birds and other creatures so we're very pleased to see the success of this. Our son Kit is the architect and specialises in this type of work <https://naturalbuildingstudio.com/rewild/>



Photo taken outside the barn loft by our trail camera.



The 'new' barn owl box had novel occupants in 2024 when hornets took up residence, filling the entrance hole with a beautifully crafted nest. European Hornets are not aggressive like wasps and we continued to use the swing down below without any problem. It's the first time we've seen them nest at Tiggins - they are important pollinators and predate on plant pests. They are unusual in hunting at night. By the autumn they had gone.



# Barn building

We didn't realise when we started the barn building project in 2020 that we would still be doing it five years later! But life gets in the way and self-building is a slow process especially when running a business has to come first. We became very aware early on in the project just how much people value getting the chance to 'have a go' and so we continue to try to provide opportunities. Of course, for us, the benefits of sharing knowledge and labour are very enjoyable and valuable. We'll get there in the end!



Using clay from the field to make plaster and earth floor materials has been rather experimental and some of it hasn't worked well (though we're very pleased with the floor!). But we're persevering as we are finding the learning very stimulating. Even in it's unfinished state the barn is proving incredibly useful as a shelter, safe tool store and vermin proof store. The old caravan is being taken apart ready for removal.



## Art Projects

We very much encourage people to be inspired by the meadow and use its resources to have a go at creative projects. We've seen some beautiful work.



Adults as well as children enjoyed the fun (and noise) of doing hapa zome to produce a banner.



# Harvesting

Although we have very much developed Tiggins Meadow as a small nature reserve we also, right from the beginning, determined to benefit from produce. The fruit trees & grape vine we planted are now doing very well. We don't harvest all of the crops as we're keen that the creatures we share the land with also benefit. We see plenty of evidence of small mammals nibbling at windfalls, wasps chewing away at apples and plums, and birds getting all the cherries ! Likewise with the willows we planted; some varieties were chosen for their early pollen for bees, some for their beautifully straight 'osiers' for weaving and some to use for making fences or as fuel. One day we hope to use it to try making charcoal.

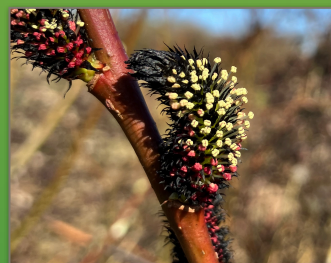


Our friend Lion comes every winter to help with the harvest and takes a quantity to make very beautiful 'tree weaves' which he sells through his shop in Glastonbury - see [https://www.instagram.com/dandeliondreamz\\_](https://www.instagram.com/dandeliondreamz_)



## Willows

We supplied willow cuttings to friends wanting to create some willow hedges.



If you look carefully as you walk around the field you may spot our 'living willow' den !





# Tiggins Meadow Open Day Saturday 14th June 11am-4pm

Our visits to Tiggins Meadow are unpredictable, sporadic and often rather busy so you may, or may not, come across us. We are always pleased to see visitors and 'down tools' for a chat but we realised that it might be nice to have a date this summer when we will definitely be there - a chance to catch up with old friends or meet new ones - an opportunity for people to see how much has changed or to share ideas about what could be done in future and to exchange knowledge about all sorts of things.

The event will be weather dependent so if it's nasty we'll postpone. It will be very low key....just a chance to look around, chat with us, enjoy the birdsong and flowers - hopefully there will be a good display of orchids by then.

Please be aware that there is only a small amount of on-site parking and absolutely NO parking on Tiggins Lane so please, if possible, arrive on foot or bicycle.



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