

# Hedgehog Welfare Newsletter

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I'm afraid to say it's a sad opening to our newsletter.

Michael Key – Sally's husband – died in March after a short illness. He was aged 72.



Michael was a key part of Hedgehog Welfare for many years, not only in his endless support, but also working behind the scenes on countless projects. There was nothing he couldn't fix or make. He was ebullient and found time to talk to everyone – whether he knew them or not. More than 150 people turned out for his funeral service – many didn't know each other but they all knew Michael. The one thing in common was Michael's warm-hearted friendship and kindness to all. We are offering Sally – our triage nurse – our full support

and love through these difficult times. Because of Michael's death we are working differently to help her.

If you have a poorly hedgehog phone 07940 714830 (which may not be Janet answering) and, depending on what is wrong with your hedgehog, we will instruct you on what to do, and where to take it. We've had a few calls since the start of 2024, and the hedgehogs that have needed help have either gone straight to local vets while a few have gone to Sally. After care, the hogs are then sent to Linda Brooks, one of our more advanced carers.

If you find a hedgehog, please contact us by PHONE. Please note, our email, WhatsApp, and Facebook are not monitored all the time, so please, to get help quickly please telephone. Our phone is on 24 hours a day, but please only call us after 21.30 or before 08.00 if it is a real case of emergency. We too need our sleep but are here to help if you have an emergency.

Janet had a brain procedure in February 2024 to help with her tremor on her right hand side. It has worked well, but with a few side effects which may disappear slowly within six months. Trustee Jayne Porter is manning the telephone, but Janet hopes – all being well - to take it back partly after the end of July.

Due to the above, we apologise for the lack of newsletters and training, but we are now working on it. Some training will be given in early June 2024 to our new volunteers.

In our financial year to April 2024, Hedgehog Welfare took in 304 hedgehogs. More than 107 died – and a lot of those were from injuries. No Mow May is not helping hedgehogs. As lawns and verges grow longer – affording protection – that security is quickly lost when the mowers and strimmers come out. Many of the injuries were caused by machines. However, on a happier note, nearly 197 hedgehogs we took in were released back into the wild – many returning to the gardens where they were found.

Injuries to hedgehogs played a key role in the International Conference for Hedgehog Rehabilitators, held at Hartpury University in Gloucestershire on the 13-14 January



2024. Janet, Phil, and Sally represented Hedgehog Welfare. The attached story appeared in The London Globe. The article was also discussed on BBC 4 radio.

We also took our own photographer – Sally Key.

Some of her pictures were requested by the conference organisers.



This is how the London Globe covered the story.

Hedgehogs are being injured in gardens by robot lawnmowers used at nightfall, an international conference was told. More and more hedgehogs are making their

homes in gardens throughout the UK. However, some fall victim to mowers automatically turning on to cut the grass.

Now conservationists and hedgehog carers are calling for robotic lawnmower makers to change their designs. The hedgehog is one of Britain's most rapidly declining wildlife species. In fact, its numbers are diminishing across Europe.



Dr Sophie Lund Rasmussen – known as Dr Hedgehog – told the International Conference for Hedgehog Rehabilitators: “Not all mowers are a danger to hedgehogs – but some are. Our research has helped two major mower manufacturers design a mower that is hedgehog friendly. It seems likely that hedgehogs will come across several robot

lawnmowers in their lifetime. The hogs have taken to foraging in gardens and green urban spaces. From studying these encounters, we have helped manufacturers design a mower that will improve the animal's safety. There is an urgent need to identify and phase out models of robotic lawnmowers that pose a threat to hedgehogs. Our new standardised safety test will aid hedgehog conservation, by enabling manufacturers of robotic lawnmowers to ensure their models are ‘hedgehog friendly’ before they are put on the market.” Dr Stephan Meyer at STIHL – one of the industry partners supporting Dr Rasmussen's research – and a member of the project team said: “STIHL highly values the effect of these findings on the development of robotic lawn mowers. We are using the learnings from this interactive project to improve the situation for people and animals. The results of the studies will form the scientific basis for the development of a safety standard to protect hedgehogs.” A spokesperson from mower maker Husqvarna said: “We have a 30-year-old history in robotic lawn mowing and safety has always been our top priority. We were early to introduce the lightweight pivoting blades, which research has proven to be more ‘hedgehog-friendly’. The research conducted by Dr Rasmussen and her team will help us develop functions that will even more help to cater for keeping wildlife safe in our home gardens.”

Hedgehog carers throughout the UK noticed last year an increase in numbers of injured animals being brought in during May. Scientists believe the rise in numbers could be linked to “No Mow May” when people were urged not to cut their lawns to help wildlife. All gardeners and local authority utility workers are urged to check lawns and verges before they mow or trim. The international conference was held at Hartpury University in Gloucestershire and more than 200 people from 14 countries attended the two-day meeting. Dr Lucy Bearman-Brown and Dr Lund Rasmussen organized it along with others.

Dr Bearman-Brown said: “Wildlife rehabilitators contribute so much to animal welfare and conservation. They work incredibly hard to meet the needs of the animals they care for. It has been fantastic giving so many who are actively caring for sick and injured hedgehogs an opportunity to come together, learn and build networks.

Having other people who understand what you do is critical to wellbeing and improving practice. To provide an environment where people can come together to share their experiences has been brilliant.” The conference offered discussions about the latest hedgehog research and conservation. Most attendees were at the sharp end of hedgehog care – looking after sick and injured hogs brought in by the public. Some carers nurse hogs back to health before release while others fed orphaned hoglets – weighing next to nothing – up to four times a night. One senior carer said: “It’s like having baby – up and down all night. However, the hoglet needs constant feeding, treatment and intensive care to gain weight to hopefully be released.” There are more than 600 centres in the UK that take in an estimated 40,000 hedgehogs a year. Most are volunteer groups with a handful of charities being at the fore. “Hedgehog hospitals” hope to nurse back to health more than 50% of their “patients” and release them back into the wild. Many hogs are either injured, orphaned, or suffering from a parasite induced illness.

Our website is on the backburner while Sally and Janet sort out leaflets, forms and our information booklet that needs to be updated.

Also, our warmest thanks to Friends of Hedgehogs Welfare. From you all we received £3,833.76 - plus Gift Aid - which has been a wonderful help. Thank you.



Our volunteer Vicky updates our Facebook page – follow us as it happens (almost). Vicky is doing a wonderful job keeping up with all the hogs’ comings and goings. Facebook will link with our new website and the newsletter. We have 170 followers and it’s quickly growing. [https://www.facebook.com/Hedgehog-Welfare-](https://www.facebook.com/Hedgehog-Welfare-102664205902433/)

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Talking of kind people, a group of ladies called Hedgehog Welfare to tell us of a “sizeable” donation they’d like to make. Here’s Jayne Porter’s story on a day out ending with a big surprise. “I arrived at Little Jack’s Farm to meet the ladies from Vale Flowers having been asked by Phil to stand in for him (he was in London). “All I knew was that they wished to donate to Hedgehog Welfare. My husband came with me as the official photographer, well he needed something to do now he is retired. After a first confusion where the ladies thought he was Phil we settled down to tea and cake. Thumbs up to Little Jack’s Farm café for the choice, and deliciousness of their cakes. I started by asking the ladies how they all knew each other and they said that they came together to provide flower arrangements for weddings, parties, churches and other occasions. Brenda, who is the spokesperson, said that they never took any money for themselves and the profits were place in a Building Society

account. Their numbers have reduced to just the three, I met Brenda, Collette and Linda and I was shown photographs of their arrangements which were amazing. Apart from the arrangements they do for their local church in Bottesford they have not done much since Covid and felt that now was the time to wind up their Charity and close the Building Society account. "The decision was made to split the money between three local charities and Hedgehog Welfare was chosen. Brenda handed me the cheque in an envelope and to my great joy the amount received was a magnificent £500. Needless to say, I expressed thanks on behalf of Hedgehog Welfare. I was asked when did we do our fundraising and after telling them about Foston Village Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024 the ladies very kindly offered a flower arrangement as a raffle prize.



### Quiz

John Kitchen has raised almost £6,000 since the first quiz in 2019. Thank you, John, not only from all the hedgehogs and trustees of Hedgehog Welfare but from everyone who does the quizzes. Everyone gets so much enjoyment from doing them. The new quiz - "Just Desserts" - which has a closing date of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024 - is running at present. If you are

interested and wish to enter, please contact John on [letsgetquizzical25@yahoo.com](mailto:letsgetquizzical25@yahoo.com). Or if you prefer, they are available from Hedgehog Welfare at [admin@hedgehogwelfare.org.uk](mailto:admin@hedgehogwelfare.org.uk) or by post from Hedgehog Welfare, PO Box 8686, Grantham, NG31 0AG. If you are applying by post, please send £1.00 entry fee per sheet needed with a SAE. Make cheques out to Hedgehog Welfare. You have plenty of time to complete the quiz and it will be fun to do sitting in the sunshine in the garden - if it ever stops raining!

Hedgehog Welfare Annual Fundraiser this year will be on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024, doors will be opened to the you all at 13.15, it will be held in Foston Village Hall, NG32 2LG. We will have all the usual stalls and refreshments. Last year many of you kindly brought along plants to add to Sally's and Hilary's stall, she has asked that this year she would really appreciate it if you did not bring them, as many of them did not get sold and she no longer will have time to do any extra loads taking them home. Sorry but thank you for your generosity. More details about this event in the next newsletter.

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THESE NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE EMAIL BACK (OR FOR THOSE WHO RECEIVE IT BY POST CAN YOU EITHER PHONE, TEXT OR DROP HEDGEHOG WELFARE A NOTE) AND WE WILL REMOVE YOU FROM OUR DATABASE.



And, after years of asking here's a new photograph of our editor Philip Braund. Philip is a former Fleet Street journalist and an award-winning television producer. If you have any stories for the newsletter then please contact him on [DaisyDogMedia@gmail.com](mailto:DaisyDogMedia@gmail.com)



### HOT OFF THE PRESS

Our first babies of the season, 4 males about 10 days old, nest was disturbed by a dog on 03-06-2024 in Long Bennington. Sally has now got all 4 of them, so back to night feeds but as eyes are starting to open today 06-06-2024, they will not be long before they will be lapping. Named George, Percy, Edwin and Arthur.