

WIGHT SQUIRREL PROJECT

Autumn 2021 bulletin

Changes

Welcome to the Autumn bulletin, giving an update on our work. The long term plan was always to combine Wight Squirrel Project and The IW Red Squirrel Trust into one registered charity. Now the Trust pays Beth to deal with admin, organise events and liaise with volunteers, the 'plan' is beginning to take shape. The Trust took over education when it was founded in 2005 and this year took over shows, distributing feeders, road signs and other goods. Beth was unwell for Wolverton Show, so I replaced her and it was nice to see so many familiar faces.

After some thought and discussion with volunteers who help with welfare, it was decided that Wight Squirrel Project would remain as a small independent charity but focus solely on red squirrel welfare in the long term. Monitoring and all things scientific are still undertaken by Wight Squirrel Project and will be until someone is found to eventually replace me. Finding volunteers of the right calibre and dedication is paramount to the success and long-term survival of red squirrel charities on the Isle of Wight.

Calendars and Christmas cards

The calendar theme this year is colour variation in Isle of Wight red squirrels. Copies are limited, so if you want a calendar, don't delay! You can pick one up from events such as the Wootton Community Craft Fairs: September 25th– 27th October 31st, November 28th and December 18th. Opening times 10am until 3pm.



There is also a Christmas Emporium at the Island Sailing Club in Cowes, 26th-28th November, which the Trust is attending. You can still buy Wight Squirrel Project cards and calendars there and record your red squirrel sightings, which are passed on to me. Other venues will be advertised on Facebook @wightsquirrelproject.

Wight Originals



A big thank you to Karen for choosing Wight Squirrel Project as the charity to support through online shop Wight Originals. We do have our own products on Wight Originals so check out the website: www.wightoriginals.com. Just type in 'Wight Squirrel Project calendar' to buy a copy online.

Publication progress

As chapters of the 30 year write up of Wight Squirrel Project work are finished they are uploaded on to the website, the address is below. Professional proof-reader and incidentally long-time volunteer, Caroline, is checking copy before it goes to a professional publisher to lay it out. It does look far smarter than anything I could produce as an amateur.

There is so much to get through and will take a while to complete. I had hoped to have both 'corridors' chapters finished by now but with so much else going on, I'm not quite there yet. A few days just focusing on the chapter would see it finished but that is wishful thinking!

Sally Wiltshire is one of the people helping get the publication out by running the graphs for me and she is this years holder of the Wight Squirrel Project Volunteer Trophy. More about Sally in the spring newsletter which is due in March 2022. It will give progress updates plus the results of monitoring. Please keep the sightings coming! Sadly most of the reports at present are of road kills as squirrels are dispersing.

More science in the offing

I am collecting tissue from dead squirrels for several projects which are underway with university collaborators. It isn't always possible to pick animals up straight away, so if you have room in a deep freeze, please keep hold of any bodies which are in good condition until I can pick them up.

Ryde Heritage Centre

You can pick up a free book or DVD at Ryde Heritage Centre in the Arcade, Union Street, Ryde. While you are there, have a look round at the interesting displays of life in Ryde in the past and also giggle at the Donald McGill postcards.

That's all for now but please follow us on Facebook and look for updates on the website.

Best wishes *Helen*