

“ We continue to lobby for research on badger vaccination in our county. ”



Introduction

2019 was a big year for Derbyshire’s badgers, not only was it the sixth year of badger vaccination across the county, it was also a year that saw the badger cull postponed in this region until May 2020. Thanks to a ground swell of support, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Theresa Villiers, prevented the cull from coming to Derbyshire.

This report reflects on the 2019 badger vaccination season, what it means for badgers and wildlife groups both locally and nationally and what the future for badgers looks like.

For full information on the Badger Vaccination Project

please visit:

<https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/badger-vaccination>

To donate to help this important project continue to expand

please visit:

<https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/donate/badger-donation-form>

Background

Derbyshire's badger vaccination programme started in 2013 when it became clear the Government was planning to back a cull of badgers as part of a package of measures to control the spread of bovine TB in cattle across England.

The theory behind the cull is that wild badger populations act as a reservoir for bovine TB and that killing badgers will prevent the spread of the disease. We believe that there is no strong evidence that the cull has had any significant impact on decreasing the levels of bovine TB in cattle. Indeed, culling may even cause the spread of infected badgers.

In 2013 three vaccinators were trained and a public appeal was launched. Strong support for this appeal resulted in £54,000 being raised and in 2014 badger vaccination began in Derbyshire.

Since then the cost of vaccinating a badger has been confirmed at just £82 compared to £1,000 to shoot a badger. 18 vaccinators have been trained to work across Derbyshire and the trapping success rate of badgers is running at over 80% of the animals known to be present.

The scheme is now the largest vaccination programme in the UK and the programme now works closely with the Government to help train vaccinators from across the country.

In 2019, Derbyshire was named as one of 14 counties that the badger cull could be extended to. Thanks to public support from over 7,000 people, who campaigned to their local MPs, the cull was postponed in Derbyshire – for now. 2020, is likely to bring with it another call for a badger cull in Derbyshire.



**“ Our Volunteers
are the backbone
of this project. ”**

2019 Results

- 221 badgers were vaccinated in 2019
- We worked with 52 landowners and farmers across 120km² of land.
- We carried out four national vaccinator training opportunities for the Animal and Plant Health Agency, a Government Department.
- We trained another two vaccinators in Derbyshire, bringing the total to 18, one of which is a farmer and gained two new project coordinators.
- We ran the first ever Badger Vaccination Symposium in April – a gathering of professionals, lecturers and scientists to discuss vaccination vs the cull.
- We expanded our work with National Trust to include Calke Abbey in South Derbyshire, Lyme Park on the Cheshire border and supported other vaccination projects such as the Cheshire Vaccination Project and the Calderdale Badger Vaccination Group.



Local impact

With the support of more local farmers and landowners than ever before, we have been able to vaccinate 221 badgers and there is no doubt that Derbyshire's badgers are safer thanks to this collaborative work.

The project has been successful due to local organisations working together for one cause. These organisations include South Derbyshire Badger Group, Mid Derbyshire Badger Group and High Peak Badger Group. All are volunteers, dedicated individuals from all

walks of life, such as doctors, policeman, ecologists and students from The University of Derby. Our work with The National Trust has also expanded and their volunteer support and resources have been invaluable.

We work in three teams across Derbyshire, a North Derbyshire Team, Mid Derbyshire Team and a South Derbyshire Team. Each team works across different sites – often at the same time during the peak season.



A warm welcome awaits our volunteers



Post vaccination healthchecks



Support from National Trust Rangers and Volunteers

National impact

Nationally we're having a bigger impact than ever before.

Once again we worked with the Animal and Plant Health Agency, a Government Department to train 22 new badger vaccinators.

We have also worked with the Department for Environment, Food, Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and we continue to promote that

a national badger vaccination programme, modelled on our own in Derbyshire, is the alternative to the badger cull.

We're also reaching out to more and more badger vaccination project and badger groups across the country with help and advice from our own learnings.



A huge THANK YOU to our dedicated volunteers... the backbone of our project.



An unusual badger ...



Vaccination



Teamwork

Working in partnership

Partnerships are essential to the project. We've worked with National Trust, the National Badger Groups, The National Farmers Union, Derbyshire County Council, British Mountaineering Council, private landowners as well as DEFRA, The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts and have strong backing from Derbyshire Police and the Police Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire. The project's ongoing success is down to the passion and driving force of the dedicated volunteers.

Part of working in partnership means a huge pool of knowledge and expertise. In April this year we brought together all that knowledge at the first ever Badger Vaccination Symposium.

Held at the University of Derby, there were 80 delegates consisting of representatives of Badger Groups; Government departments, Vaccination Project Coordinators; Wildlife Trusts, The National Trust, bovine TB Advisory Service, North Wales bovine TB Eradication Regional Board, Natural England, Secret World Rescue as well as farmers and vets.

This conference addressed the issue of how there could be a national roll out of the badger vaccination program instead of the national roll out of the badger cull.



Hard work

“ We have worked with DEFRA and continue to promote the idea of a national vaccination strategy modelled on our volunteer based project.”



The future

We don't know what the future will hold for Derbyshire's badgers.

What we do know is the ban on applying for a badger cull licence in our county will end in May 2020 and we face campaigning against another badger cull in Derbyshire.

We also know that our badger vaccination project will continue and will grow and expand thanks to everyone's dedication and hard work. We will continue to fight the badger cull with science and prove that vaccination is the alternative to the badger cull.

Early 2020 we will give all our vaccinators and volunteers a refresher training course to maintain our professional high standards. The course will include animal welfare, vaccination handling, vaccination storage, biosecurity and comparison of the two brands of vaccine used this year.

We will also deliver training for all our new volunteers with emphasis on surveying and new pre-baiting techniques. New ideas and methods will continue to be incorporated into the programme during the year as we improve our program.

“ Nationally we're having a bigger impact than ever before.”





Talks and workshops delivered in 2019

- Presentation to The University of Derby staff as well as BA, MSc and PhD students. Six students then signed up to volunteer on the project and gave 98 hours of their time.
- A workshop for Oxon, Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire Wildlife Trust to educate teams on how to set up a vaccination project.
- A workshop for the Calderdale Vaccination Project to support vaccination project development.
- Presentation to Marple Community Group
- Talk to the Stockport Stroke Unit
- Lecture entitled “Deploying a large-scale vaccination project using volunteers” at a The Zoological Society of London’s science and conservation event



Speakers representing vaccination projects and the farming community



Welcoming delegates to the first vaccination symposium

With thanks to

All our volunteers

All our farmers and landowners

South Derbyshire Badger Group

Mid Derbyshire Badger Group

High Peak Badger Group

National Trust

Animal and Plant Health Agency

Department for Environment, Food, Rural Affairs

Natural England

Dr Andrew Robertson, Exeter University

Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Calderdale Vaccination Project

Professor Paul Lynch, University of Derby

Dominic Dyer, CEO, Badger Trust

Professor Malcolm Bennett, University of Nottingham

Mark Jones, Born Free Foundation

Guda Van Der Burgt, Veterinary Pathologist



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[BEVS] Derbyshire 2019 Review

a partnership between:



Derbyshire
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