

Latest news from the Group

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A 'thank you' from us at the end of a long year...

Hello from the High Weald AONB team! Ross and Christine have been very busy with Sussex Lund site visits over the last couple of months, as well as running an number of online events. As we approach the end of a challenging year, we'd like to thank you all for your continuing enthusiasm and willingness to work in new ways. Although there have been numerous benefits to our virtual meetings, we hope that 2021 will bring us together in person again!

In the meantime, as always please contact [Christine](#) or [Ross](#) if you have any questions or if we can support you in any other way.

Barn Owl Box Project Update

The Barn Owl boxes and cameras have now arrived - as you can see from the picture on the left they are quite impressive once assembled! Thanks to several members who offered to pay for an extra box, we now have 39 being installed throughout the Rother and Dudwell Valley as part of this collaborative Sussex Lund project.

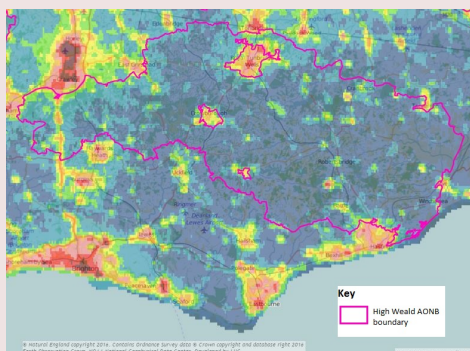


In other exciting news, the Sussex Barn Owl Study Group have joined the project; they have offered to lead the training and take on some of the monitoring. The group are experts in their field (pardon the pun) so we're delighted to welcome them on board.

Ross will be getting in touch soon to arrange installation of the Barn Owl boxes and cameras, so please keep your eyes peeled for an email.

We would love to have more collaborative projects like this one for next year's round of Sussex Lund funding, so please do have a think and let us know if you have any ideas...

High Weald Dark Skies Project



Some of you will remember taking part in our Dark Skies project a couple of years ago; a number of Farm Cluster members went out at night and took light meter readings on their land to determine the level of light pollution.

We are looking at launching a similar project in the New Year to raise awareness of this important issue and gather data to support protection of the AONB's unusually dark skies.

The light meters are very easy to use; Samantha Nicholas is leading on this project and has offered to give a short training session via Zoom for those who would like to take part, so [please send her an email](#) if you're interested. You can [read more about the High Weald's dark skies on our website](#).

Events



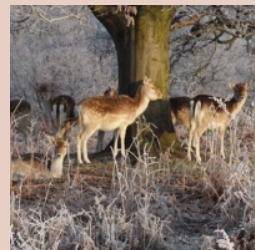
Christmas Quiz, Monday 14 December, 7pm: Please join us for a fun High Weald-themed Zoom quiz! A meeting url link will be circulated nearer the time so keep your eyes peeled for an email.

CS Mid-tier workshops: These will return before the end of March 2021 - watch this space for dates.

Deer Management

A quick note to remind you all that working together with your neighbours to maintain a healthy population of deer is still extremely important, especially at this time of year.

The Woodland Trust has funded some more specialist time to help with this, so please do [get in touch with Christine](#) if you have questions or concerns.



Other news

Fungi Survey: In the absence of a proper survey this year, it's been great to see so many members sharing their waxcap and other fungi finds on the Whatsapp group. Ross and Christine have been able to photograph some lovely specimens at a handful of sites, but we hope to be able to carry out a full survey as usual in Autumn 2021.

The Great British Hedgerow Survey: The People's Trust for Endangered Species is hoping to help build a national picture - and a health check - for the UK's hedges; a topic very close to our hearts here in the High Weald. [If you can spare some time to survey part of the hedge network on your land, please do take a look.](#)

The future of the Farm Cluster

The Defra funding for the **Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster** is coming to an end next year. We know that the Government sees Farm Clusters as being very important and that landowners working together on landscape-scale environmental care will be encouraged in future. However, the funding and organisation of these groups is not clear going forward.



We will be getting in contact with all members to discuss what you value most about the Cluster and how the group might continue. **Please have a think about any events you'd like to see in the last year** to make the most of the funding, and how we might work together in the future.

About

The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster helps farmers, foresters and other land managers work together to improve farm profitability and benefit soil, water, wildlife and historic features not just on their individual farms, but across the area. It has over 60 members covering over 3,500ha. [View map](#)

The Cluster is helped by the High Weald AONB Partnership with financial support from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund, the Environment Agency (Giant Hogweed control), and the Woodland Trust (deer management).

For more information, visit the Farm Cluster page on www.highweald.org.



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



Useful links

[The Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster](#)

More about the area

[Where is it?](#)

[What we do](#)