



Member of
Northern Red Squirrels
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Red Squirrel Watch!

Safeguarding Ponteland District's Red Squirrels For Future Generations
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WAITROSE AWARD £500 TO HELP OUR REDS

We would like to thank WAITROSE and its excellent Community initiative for the £500 awarded to Ponteland Red Squirrel Group! We would also like to thank all those people who chose to put their GREEN DISCS in our box in November. It was heartening to realise how many people care for our population of red squirrels.



The funds will be used to support the continued work we are doing in Ponteland and district to ensure the safety of our red squirrels. Ponteland is a unique area where residents are lucky enough to share their gardens, woodlands, parks, workplaces and golf course with red squirrels. It's great to know our residents and local businesses support our efforts to make Ponteland a safe haven for our red squirrels for future generations. THANK YOU!

Ponteland Report

Spring is almost upon us after a long hard winter, which has been difficult, not only for us humans, but for our wildlife as well! Red Squirrels don't hibernate as they can't store enough fat to keep them safe for the winter, so you will probably have seen them out and about even on the coldest days! Like us, our red squirrels do stay 'indoors' for longer periods during the winter – curled up inside their dreys, often snuggled together for warmth. However, they do need to venture out for food, usually staying close to their dreys and raiding the food stores they made during the autumn, when the nuts and natural food was plentiful. Ponteland's reds are very lucky, as many residents provide much-needed supplementary food – we just had to make sure the feeder lids weren't frozen closed! I watched a frantic red desperately trying to open a frozen feeder. He scuttled up the tree and waited on a top branch whilst I waded across the garden through the deep snow and prodded the lid open with a broom handle. Back inside the warmth of my kitchen, I watched him return to the feeder, sitting for more than 10 minutes gnawing through hazelnut after hazelnut. I think he had probably stayed in his drey for warmth until he was very, very hungry! Roll on Springtime! By Sally Hardy



Our gorgeous RED SQUIRREL CALENDARS 2010 have been a great success and have enabled us to raise awareness and funds for our group. Thank you to the AUTOMOTIVE GROUP for producing these for us.

VOLUNTEER TRAPPER REQUIRED – TO WORK ON OWN INITIATIVE IN THE WIDER PONTELAND DISTRICT. SUIT A RETIRED PERSON WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA. SOME EXPENSES AVAILABLE. CONTACT SALLY.

Did You Know? A new red squirrel 'walk-through' enclosure has opened at the British Wildlife Centre, in Surrey. The Centre has already had lots of success with several breeding pairs. www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk

Thank You To The Police HQ

The staff at the Police Headquarters have been lucky enough to enjoy watching red squirrels whilst they work and as a thank you for our efforts to keep the Ponteland District red they have made a £60 donation towards our work. THANK YOU.

Supplementary Feeding



Supplementary feeding is extremely important for our red squirrels, not only to help them avoid starvation but to encourage successful breeding, too. Believe it or not the Summer months are the leanest time for our reds. They will have depleted their natural store, built up in the autumn, and are awaiting the ripening of fruits and nuts for following autumn. This is a crucial time to provide extra supplies, too.

By providing supplementary food we can help more of our reds survive and stay healthy and also help females maintain a healthy weight in order to breed and rear their kittens. Red Squirrels love hazelnuts and these are best provided in their shell in a special Squirrel Feeder. The squirrels will eat what they need and also bury or store the nuts for later. Hazelnuts can be purchased from **Poltross Enterprises (01434 321111)** (They deliver for free) or **Cowells Garden Centre, Woolsington.**

Rustic Feeders £5 (filled with hazelnuts). Free local delivery or available at our Ponteland Farmers' Market Stall. Call Sally on 07878 061880.

Do You Have A Squirrel Drey In Your Garden Or Wood?

Squirrels build **dreys** for shelter and to rear their young. The drey is a spherical structure made out of twigs and leaves. It is hollow inside and lined with soft materials, such as moss and fur. They range in size, but are roughly the size of a beach ball (approx 50cm). Dreys are usually positioned high up in a tree, close to the trunk where a branch forks. Dreys can be mistaken for birds' nests, however, a nest is often on the limb of a branch or right at the top of a tree, where it is easier for them to fly in and out. Squirrels will also use a natural hollow in a tree, too. These are called **dens**, they, too, are lined with fur and moss, in a similar way to a drey.



Red Squirrels often use more than one drey at a time. They use each other's dreys as well. If you have regular red squirrel visiting your garden, the chances are that there will be a drey not too far away.

Have you got a Drey or Den near you? We would like to know! If you think you have a Drey or Den please contact us as we would love to come and have a look. Knowing where our reds have their dreys will help us to monitor the location, health and population of our reds. **WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!**

ROAD KILL

A new year and already 3 red squirrels have run over in Darras Hall. Last year, the number of reds run-over in just Ponteland and Darras Hall was 22. **THIS IS FAR TOO MANY!**

PLEASE drive at the speed limit around the Estate and keep your eyes open for reds on the verges or pavements. Unfortunately, red squirrels don't have any road sense, so it is up to us to watch out for them!

Woolsington residents were excited to report two reds back in the area (after two years!). This is thanks to the grey control which has been carried out. However, the good news didn't last as one of the reds was run-over – not on the main road, but on Woolsington Park South.

PLEASE KEEP EYES PEELED FOR REDS CROSSING THE ROAD!

PLEASE REPORT ALL SQUIRREL SIGHTINGS TO **PONTELAND RED SQUIRRELS YOU CAN USE THE FORM ON OUR WEBSITE, EMAIL US OR TELEPHONE. CONTACT DETAILS OVERLEAF.**