

## Boyland Common Report for Shelfanger Parish Council meeting 31.7.23

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Chris Batey, Boyland Common's 'Owl Man' visited the Common to check the Owl Box.

The Friends of Boyland Common had asked if he could give his opinion as to whether the owl box was still fit for purpose, it having been installed in late December 2015. His answer was yes, it was still OK, and there were 3 barn owl chicks in the box at the time of his visit, two he was able to ring, the third was too young and he will make a return visit to ring that one.

Later in the year we will look to trimming the branches of the nearby tree to improve flight access to the box, but at present there is always the chance that the barn owls may have had a second brood, so the trimming will have to wait.

The information board situated near the seating on the Common has now weathered to the point of being completely blank. The board has now been removed, and the 'Friends' are in the process of considering its replacement. It has also been suggested that a smaller information board be placed near the gates, inviting people to visit, and giving some information about the history and biodiversity of the Common.

In 2012, the District Council designed and funded the original information board, and Pam Ross, as Chairwoman for the 'Friends' has contacted District Councillor James Easter to ask if the District Council might fund the replacement.

Also, there has for some time been concern over the state of the access points at the gates to the Common on both sides of the road. Pam has contacted District Councillor James Easter to see if any progress has been made following a request for help from the District Council in this matter. Once again, we are reminded that the District Council is deemed to be 'The Owner' of Boyland Common, the 'Friends Group' act as caretakers, noting what needs to be done, and undertaking conservation tasks within their capabilities at the appropriate times.

James has approached SND Council with the suggestion that they might fund a replacement board, and there does seem to be a distinct possibility that that will come to pass. The 'Friends' now have quite a bit of work to do to put together and cost out an appropriate design.

Early in 2023, in her capacity as Clerk to the Parish Council, Lois Easter had created and arranged a display of information about Boyland Common for the notice board in the Bus Shelter. This display had then provided a backdrop for the 'Boyland Common' themed installation created by members of the Shelfanger Knit and Natter group for the Shelfanger Open Gardens weekend.

The original display on the notice board is to be updated and refreshed, drawing attention to the asset that is Shelfanger's Boyland Common, and drawing visitors attention to both the history and the biodiversity of the this important County Wildlife site.

Pam Ross, Chairwoman of the 'Friends of Boyland Common' group