



# BRACKLEY HOGWATCH - 07528 119416

A community conservation project dedicated to growing a strong hedgehog population in Brackley and the surrounding five-mile radius - Registered Charity No. 1188770

The daffodils, snowdrops and crocuses have emerged from beneath the late winter earth, giving a resplendent display of colour – what a welcome sight! Meteorological spring starts on the 1st of March and our much-loved hedgehogs are beginning to wake up.

When a hedgehog starts to stir it's a slow waking up process for them and very different from sleep. Hibernation is an energy conserving mechanism where their bodies go into a state of torpor, or, in other words, decreased activity. Their heart rate slows from over 200 beats per minute to less than 10. The normal body temperature of a healthy and active hedgehog is around 95.7-98.6°F (35.4-37.0°C). However, a fully hibernating hedgehog's core body temperature is around 41-50°F (5-10°C). Their metabolic rate drops, and their breathing becomes shallow. Hedgehogs use their fat reserves during hibernation and studies show that these reserves which would only last an active hedgehog 16 hours, can sustain a hibernating hedgehog for 120 days. Unsurprisingly, a hog emerges having lost about a third of its body weight.

However, not all hedgehogs have hibernated, and we have received regular reports of hogs visiting feeding

stations throughout the winter, gratefully enjoying a welcome snack and drink. I have had a healthy-looking nightly visitor to my feeding station throughout the winter (even on Christmas Day) and have, of course, ensured a bowl of kitten biscuits and shallow bowls of fresh water have been left out every night (although trying to stop water freezing during sub-zero temperatures has proved problematic). In the four years since I have been observing hogs, this is the first winter where I have had a visitor appearing every night bar the odd one in late December and a stretch of eleven days in early February. My trail camera has recorded appearances of a hog visiting the feeding station during bouts of snow, ice and torrential rain. Whether it's the same hog, or a different one, I do not know, and it will remain a mystery, but I am quite sure supplementary feeding, especially during the winter, has helped its survival.

Currently it's not known as to why some hedgehogs do not hibernate, but some theories are it could be down to climate change, not having enough fat reserves to trigger a hog into hibernation, milder winters or, equally, be due to the hogs having an abundance of supplementary food, left out by caring humans. Whatever the reasons, we think you would all agree, we must all do whatever we can to help these wonderful creatures to survive for future generations. After all, they have been

around for the past 15 million years! In the meantime, and whatever the reasons, Brackley Hogwatch agree with Hedgehog Street's recommendation that's it's a good idea to put some supplementary food and water out during milder weather, or if you see any active hedgehogs (at night) during the winter.

**So, what can you do now they're waking**  
**Sup:** Emerging hogs will be very hungry and thirsty, so, if you don't already, please leave shallow bowls of fresh water and food out for them. The BHPS (British Hedgehog Preservation Society) recommend good quality meaty hedgehog food, meaty cat or dog food and/or dry kitten biscuits - ensuring that meat is the first ingredient listed. Foods **NOT** to feed include bread, milk, raw meat/eggs, dried fruit/grapes, mealworms, sunflower seeds and hearts and peanuts (whole or crushed).

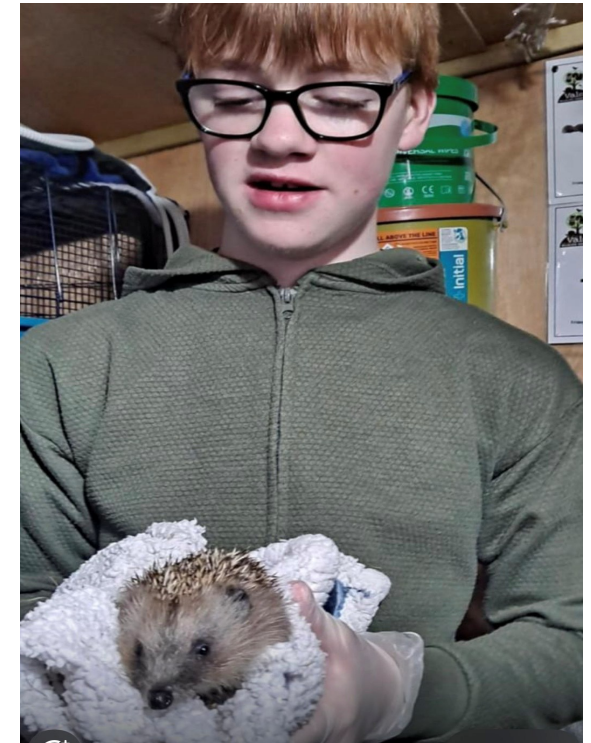
**Please remember, that at this time of the year, A HOG OUT IN THE DAY IS NOT OK and needs rescuing. Please call us on 07528 119416 as a matter of urgency.**

We would love to see your photos/videos of emerging hogs, so please do post them on our FB page.



## DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME

Rescuer, Julie Wade, is very generously supporting Billy with his Duke of Edinburgh Award by giving him 12 weeks' experience. Billy attends Julie's rescue for one hour per week and has been learning all about how to care for hedgehogs.



**DONATIONS** – would be gratefully received as we rely entirely on local fundraising and donations. These can be made in several ways:

By BankTransfer: Account name: Brackley Hogwatch sort code: 30 96 26 Account: 77712468

By Paypal: @Brackley Hogwatch or [hogwatch@outlook.com](mailto:hogwatch@outlook.com)

By Card: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/Brackleyhogwatch>

Cash/cheque donations made payable to Brackley Hogwatch c/o Julie Wade 29 Newbery Drive, Brackley NN13 6NN

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/318R6PWJ5920E...>