



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group Newsletter August 2017

A new Ranger, Joe, joins P&DRSG and Nic moves to Aira;

A new Ranger, Joe, joins P&DRSG and Nic moves to Aira Force



We are pleased to have welcomed Joe Taylforth into our team of Rangers, for Ullswater and Haweswater. Joe will also be working with Nic at Aira Force to continue creating a safe haven for our native red squirrels. Nic has worked for the National Trust for over 10 years and this is a new role for him too, at the Aira Force site.

Nic's new role involves a lot of time maintaining the path network and making sure visitors have the best possible experience, which for them often involves seeing a red squirrel. He says "with a lot of time and effort spent over the years by the Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group we are starting to see more and more. We estimate that we have 8 pairs now in Aira Force, which is fantastic! We have 6 squirrel feeders that we keep topped up on a regular basis to help encourage the reds to stick around and give our visitors an experience they won't forget."

Before being offered the position at Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group, Joe worked as a gamekeeper. He's always had an interest in red squirrels and maintaining their habitat as he knows how rare they are.

Here we chat a little bit to Joe...

What have been the best and worst bits of your job so far?

"There are lots of good bits to the job and no bad bits yet! My top things have to be getting out at first light before the deer and birds are up in the morning; being outside all day; and seeing a litter of reds growing and thriving through spring and into summer".

What are the best ways to see a red squirrel?

"I find the best way is around a feeder at times of the year when there is not a lot of natural food around – Autumn is ideal when there are less leaves on the trees, making them easier to spot as they gather food ahead of Winter. A feeder is a reliable food source for the red squirrels to thrive".

What are the main reasons behind the decline in red squirrels and do you think this could be changed over time?

"The grey squirrels play a huge role in the decline of reds, they are larger and more aggressive, they out compete the reds for natural food & habitat and they also carry the squirrel pox virus which doesn't affect them, but is fatal for the reds".

"We're continuing to keep the non-native grey squirrels away and reds are repopulating the woods. Unmanaged, the greys will push the reds out so as long as work continues to keep the greys at bay, the red squirrel population can continue to grow".



Aira Force by numbers

8 Pairs of reds

330 Kilos of nuts and seeds that the reds eat each year

£1000 spent on squirrel food each year

£4000 donated by Aira Force



What's on?

Cyril Squirrel Trail

Children can learn all about our native red squirrels with Cyril's red squirrel ramble. Follow the map and clues to unlock the password and become a squirrel detective. Available to buy in the shop at the main Aira Force car park

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group. Woodside, Armthwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX. Registered charity number 1117418.

The Administrator can be contacted on 07788 264571 e-mail: info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk

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Thank you Sam

All at P&DRSG extend our greatest thanks to Gamekeeper Sam Cropper for the monumental red squirrel conservation work he has carried out on two key estates within our areas where he has been hugely successful at keeping the resident reds thriving. Sam left the area in February for pastures new and we couldn't let him go without presenting him with a small token of our appreciation. We wish Sam all the best for the future.



Cheers Christian

We were sad to say our farewell's to Christian, who returned South in June after being our Ullswater Ranger since February 2013. Without his hard work and dedication, there would quite simply be no red squirrels left in the Ullswater Valley. One example of Christian's fantastic work is the return of red squirrels in Hartsop woodlands where they have been absent from for many years. What a legacy to leave us with! We hope you are enjoying that Whisky - Cheers!!



PR work and appeals

Many of you will have seen or heard so much in the way of press releases over the last six months or so regarding a contraceptive for grey squirrels, a vaccine to save red squirrels from squirrel pox virus disease and also the Pine Marten theory of creating a 'landscape of fear' for the greys.

As it stands currently; a workable contraceptive formula is at least a decade away and even if this comes to fruition, it is of no use to our group as cannot be used in areas where there are red squirrels; there is no funding available to develop the prototype of the squirrel pox vaccine any further; and there is no statistically significant evidence relating to the Pine Marten theory.

The only way to save the much loved red squirrels in our area is through human intervention using the successful methods that we deploy. Our standardised recording data provides very clear, significant evidence that using a humane, combination methodology of trapping and shooting is the most effective means of clearing areas of the non-native grey squirrels to allow our iconic and genetically unique red squirrels to survive for future generations to enjoy. It is this dedicated 'boots on the ground front line work' that is making the biggest impact in red squirrel conservation.



We have been extremely busy in our attempts at relaying this; with press, social media, radio coverage and various funding appeals going out far and wide; which in the main, has been mostly positive. Our thanks to all who have supported our appeal.

This has allowed us to secure our current contracted 'P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger team' of five, for a further 6 months which takes us to the end of this year (2017). Our huge gratitude goes to The Oglesby Trust for their committed financial support to cover the costs of our Upper Eden Valley Ranger for three years, and also Lord Inglewood (as our first 'Diamond' donator) towards our Hutton Ranger costs however, to secure the future for resident red squirrels, across all our areas, into 2018 and beyond, we still need urgent additional funding to sustain our full contractor team.

Can you help? Or do you know of anyone that can?

For more information, please contact our Administrator, Julie (contact detailed below)

Thermal Imaging

Keeping the Reds Thriving and the Greys at Bay with Thermal Imaging

Finding squirrels hiding in the woods is now easier than ever thanks to specialist thermal cameras provided to the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group by thermal specialists; PASS.

Traditionally finding squirrels is a time-consuming, difficult process. They can be hard to spot amongst the leaves of trees; with darkened conditions only making it even harder.

Thermal cameras designed for outdoor wildlife observation are providing an innovative solution to this problem allowing conservation groups to spot squirrels through the trees, darkness and even poor weather conditions.

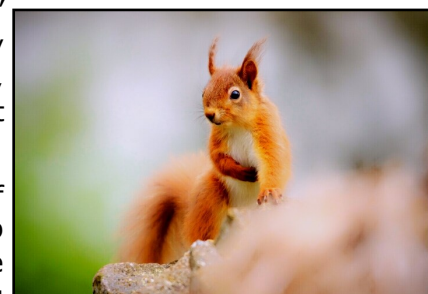


Thermal imaging makes monitoring so much easier as it picks up the body heat given off by an object, even over a distance. As squirrels are warm-blooded mammals, they emit heat, which is displayed clearly on a thermal camera, even in difficult conditions. Whether it's during the day, during the night or working in the rain and snow, thermal cameras still provide excellent results.

PASS LTD in Stockton-on-Tees is a proud supporter of the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group and supplies the group with a range of thermal imaging monocular scopes and cameras for tracking and monitoring squirrel numbers.

"Thermal imaging cameras are a much welcomed, valuable addition to our equipment list and have increased both the efficiency and effectiveness of our Red Squirrel Rangers' work," said Julie Bailey from the Red Squirrel Group. "We use the technology to spot squirrels through the trees, in dense woodland and on the ground, and at significant distances where otherwise the naked eye just wouldn't see; helping our red squirrel conservation efforts significantly."

Since 2012, the group has been using thermal imaging regularly as part of their conservation efforts, reducing the population of grey squirrels to help our native red squirrels thrive once again. PASS works closely with the group to provide a range of thermal cameras for their use, including starting cameras such as the FLIR Scout PS24 and PS32, the Pulsar XQ23, as well as more advanced models such as Scout 240, Scout 320 and Pulsar XQ30.



"Thermal imaging has so many uses in outdoor conditions," said David Atkins, sales manager at PASS LTD. "It's amazing to see how effective the technology has been for the Red Squirrel Group and we are delighted that we can help in a big way to help increase red squirrel numbers across the district."

PASS LTD joined the Red Squirrel Group at the Lowther Show, where they showcased a range of thermal cameras designed for outdoor activities such as red squirrel conservation.

Attendees at the show entered PASS's competition for the chance to win a FLIR Scout TK.

You can take a look at PASS's range of thermal cameras by visiting their specialist website Tester.co.uk and visiting the Hunting/Outdoor thermal imaging section.



The Purr-fect Patient

After being rescued from the clutches of a cat; this little red was rushed to a local vet where it was given antibiotics, long lasting pain relief and a chance of survival.

Jerry Moss and Sarah McNeil received a call from the surgery asking if they could care for the injured squirrel. Within no time, the little red was at their home near Penrith.

Jerry carefully opened up the cardboard carry box and together the couple examined the drowsy and frightened squirrel. They could clearly see that the offending cat had done a very good job at immobilising the patient.



The couple instantly knew it was going to be a lengthy process before any possibility of this little one being released back into the wild but they never gave up hope.

Each day Sarah would massage two of the squirrels' leg muscles, syringe feed him special formula milk containing vital vitamins & minerals and hand feed him nuts & seeds.

After only a few days in their care and by then named Wesley, they noticed that he had found some strength to groom himself and had cleaned the dried blood from his tail.

This was a huge turning point and would start the ball rolling for more achievements to happen.

Wesley has now regained his balance and is able to walk; the strength in his front paw is improving.

He now manages to climb the walls of his large cage. Wesley's next move will be into an outdoor enclosure and if all goes to plan, a gentle release back into the wild.



Images

Here at P&DRSG, we are very fortunate to have so many of you sending in your red squirrel images and are extremely grateful to all for kindly giving the group permission to use them.

Keep sending them in, please!



Newsletter Sponsorship

A big thank you to the National Trust Air Force for sponsoring the costs of this newsletter.

The next edition is being sponsored by our very own Penrith residents and subscribing members, the Pettigrew family.

Thank you so much.



Red reports

A few snippets of recent Red reports from some very happy folks!



Northern Eden Valley area - Returning reds in a large plantation near Armathwaite, which adjoins a Caravan Club site, have caused much excitement amongst our visitors as pox had hit the area and unfortunately resident red squirrel numbers were decimated. We are absolutely delighted to see at least three new reds on site which are now visiting regularly and can say with certainty that this would not be the case without the tremendous efforts of the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group. Thanks Phil & Julie.

Calthwaite resident - I've seen a return of reds after almost two years of continued P&DRSG grey control by Andrew. Reds had been completely ousted from the area but they're now back and I regularly see a family of five at a feeder in the woods.

Dalston resident - I thought you might like to know that I saw a red squirrel this morning on the front lawn of the castle, close to the gatehouse. The squirrel was at the door of the shed, feeding on sunflower seeds that I had left there. It jumped up on to the wall and disappeared down the other side when it saw me. There's a pine tree that overhangs the shed, so perhaps it went up there. It's the best year we have had for red squirrel sightings for at least 10 years, and I am sure it is thanks to your input here, thank you, David.



Patterdale resident - We have had two red squirrels visiting our feeders at Patterdale. One is deep red, and certainly male, the other has blonde sides and a blonde tail and may be female. Red squirrels have also been reported in Hartsop, a hamlet further up the valley, after many years' absence. Christian has done a splendid job.

Stainmore resident - Red squirrel populations are making a come back in North & South Stainmore areas thanks to Ranger, Gary's work. We are seeing red squirrels here for the time ever!

Shap resident - A small population of red squirrels near Shap has been monitored for a couple of years now and all signs indicate that they are thriving. As many as 11 reds have been seen at one time near 2 feeders set up with a camera watching their numbers and feeding habits – as well as keeping an eye out for greys. So far we have been lucky and, whilst grey squirrels have been reported in the area, they have not been seen in this particular wood. Hopefully, we will start to see the numbers increase over the next few years and look forward to them spreading out into neighbouring woods.



How are we doing?

Andrew - P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Hutton area



After a rather quiet spell grey squirrel wise at the start of the year, they have now well and truly come out of the woodwork and in some places in alarming numbers. There's been a lot of grey kittens turning up as well as lots of adults and in areas where they have not been seen for quite some months. This resurgence has been the biggest I've seen for years however; it has been quelled and numbers are slowing down again. It's very good news on the red front as I'm seeing lots of young reds in all areas and hopefully it's been a great breeding season for them and their populations will be on the increase.

David - P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Caldbeck/Dalston area



Grey squirrels are opportunistic characters and dispersing juveniles and wandering adults can quickly exploit vacant habitat where rangers have previously undertaken control measures. Itinerant Squirrels present a problem because you don't know when and where they will turn up. This puts great demands on Rangers to constantly 'watch their backs' by visiting woods time and time again. Whereas it is of benefit to receive casual Grey sighting information from the public, regular reports from reliable sources are gold dust in terms of time management. Helpers who report not only sightings but activity at feeders, checking cameras and traps are priceless. It can be very onerous when trapping in Red squirrel country and traps need checking at least twice a day. This year I have been fortunate to recruit helpers who have done all these things and my network has grown considerably. Again, fund raiser effort, landowner and farmer cooperation has been

brilliant. Red squirrel sightings have been good but I currently have 2 pox outbreaks to contend with.

Gary - P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Upper Eden Valley area



This year started off fairly quiet but the grey's seem to be reappearing again now, mainly in the Stainmore and Brough area but there is good news around concerning the red population. I have seen over 130 reds this year with only one case of squirrel pox virus. People have been ringing me to say they have seen or got red squirrels in their garden for the first time and others reporting returning reds in over five years. There are lots of different ways that people in my area can get involved with the protection of the red squirrel; you can become a subscribing member of P&DRSG or maybe you run a group which could possibly hold a fund raising event?

Joe - P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Ullswater area



Starting from June 19th from the capable hand of Christian and having spent as many days as possible with him leading up to the start date; learning the ropes, area etc., June was a busy month removing young and old greys across the Ullswater Valley. On the other hand, the reds are still doing very well with sightings of both mature and immature reds in areas where they haven't been seen in years; this paying tribute to Christians hard work and dedication. I look forward to meeting/working with many of you over the coming months and keeping this area **RED**.

John - P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Northern Eden Valley area



Spring got off to a slow start as far as trapping goes with greys not too keen to use the traps however the thermal imager did a great job, enabling me to spot and shoot greys. May saw a big increase in grey sightings and culls throughout the Northern Eden Valley and they became easier to trap too! On a positive note; I am feeding more reds than last year and also seeing the odd red kitten. Grey sightings were down in June compared with May so fingers crossed for that continuing. I've had no reports of squirrel pox for some time now. Many thanks to landowners for your cooperation and to all the volunteers for your help and support, it is very much appreciated.

Jerry - Center Parcs Red Squirrel Ranger - Whinfell area

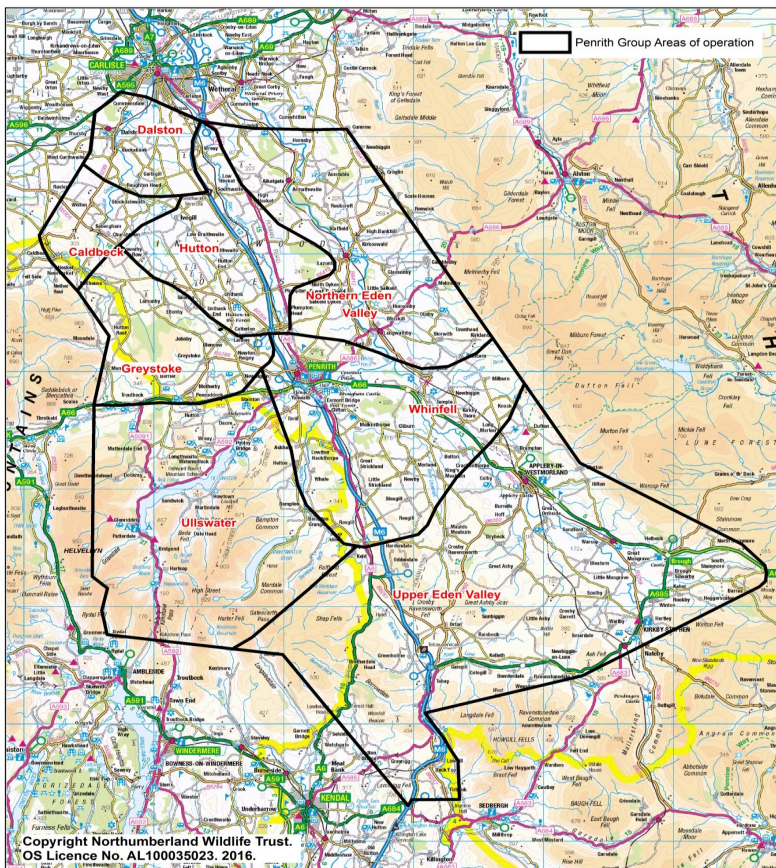
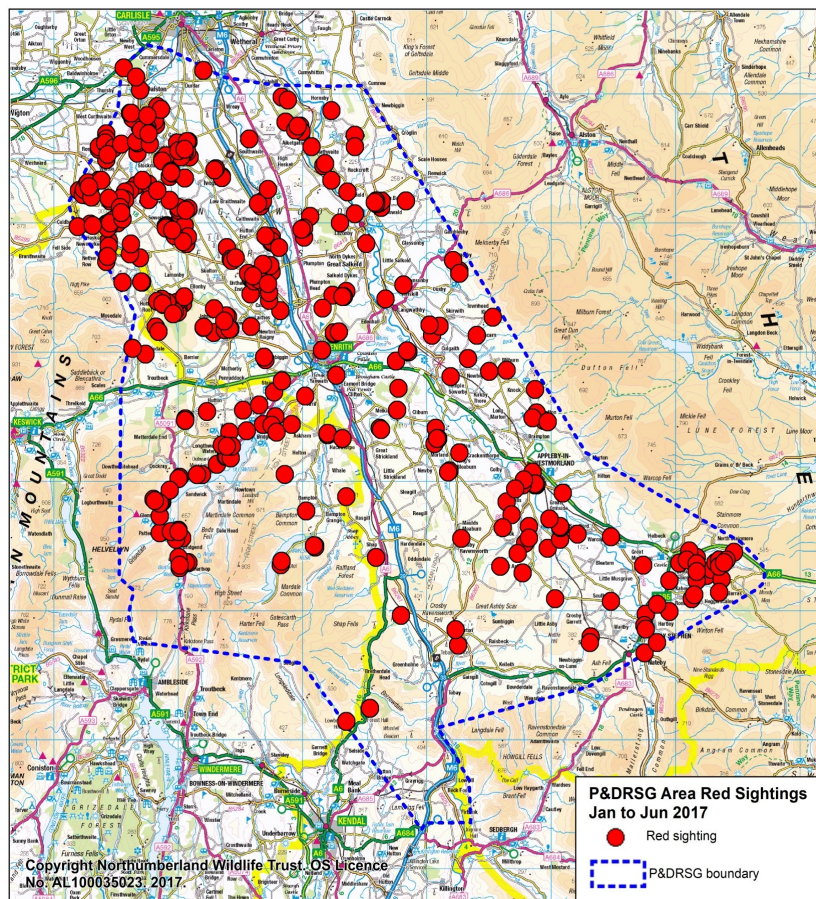


Spring was steady away with a few grey sightings here and there in my area. Reds doing well in places and Whinfell is seeing a few more reds turning up including kittens being seen. I have also seen red kittens in many of the other woodlands I visit and monitor. Late Spring into early Summer; grey squirrel sightings took off and has kept me very busy around my feeding areas and with trapping. Certain areas have turned into hot spots but I think I am now turning the corner on them. Natural food is starting to come into the equation now and only time will tell in seeing what news the Autumn and Winter brings.

This years figures to date (June 2017) compared with the same six month period last year shows a 16% increase in red squirrel sightings and a 50% decrease in squirrel pox cases, fantastic news! Reds are increasing their range across our area (see our 'red map' for Jan—June 2017 over page)

How are we doing?

All our Rangers' areas have reds!



If you see any squirrels don't delay, contact your area Ranger today!

Andrew 07983 459918
silverhodge@hotmail.com

David 07542 191865
dec@davidcowen.co.uk

Gary 07974 788434
garymurphy2408@btinternet.com

Joe 07388 831150
jtaylforth@hotmail.co.uk

John 07841 449648
john.lisle@btinternet.com

Jerry 07736 779965
jmossjerry@aol.com

Matthew 07949 366334
mstuart86@hotmail.com
(RSNE Ranger, Greystoke)

To report any squirrel sightings outside the P&DRSG's area, please report to www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk

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Feeding & monitoring

Feeding & Monitoring

Red squirrels need to eat all year round to ensure they survive and thrive. We help by providing them with supplementary feed which costs the group approximately £4000 per year.

We would be delighted to hear from anyone who would be willing to sponsor these costs; Please get in touch with Julie, our P&DRSG Administrator (contact details below), if you can help with this.



Feeding the reds also helps with monitoring activities which is an essential component of the Rangers' work.

Monitoring cameras are located at feeding stations which provide valuable information on squirrel health, use and visiting times.



The monitoring work also alerts the Rangers to any feeder visits from grey squirrel incursion which allows for their prompt removal to help the reds.

Siba Contracts

Here at P&DRSG, we are very fortunate to have the support of Siba Contracts who have kindly sponsored the costs of some materials for making feeders.



Production Line

Once the materials arrive; it's a very busy time for the Rangers on the 'production line!'



Members & followers

Members

Membership is the life blood of any charity and ours is no different.

We currently have **522** subscribing members from the 719 contacts listed on our database. Please contact Julie, (contact details below) if you are not sure if your membership is up to date and at the current fees.

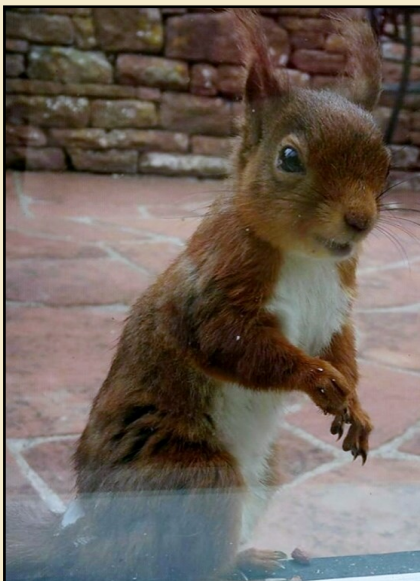
Our annual membership fees are only £20 for an individual and £30 for a family. Please see the last page of this newsletter for more information and the membership form.

Can you help us increase our membership by passing on this newsletter to friends, family and indeed anyone you know who you think may be interested in becoming a subscribing member to help our little Red friends?

Followers

P&DRSG has over 1100 Facebook followers, thank you all for your support.

Find us on Facebook at Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group and send us your Red stories and pics



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Raising awareness & funds

Recent Support

Back to School

Well it was back to school for some of our P&DRSG team;

Andrew, Julie, Jerry & Sarah joined the staff and children at Clifton Primary School near Penrith to give a talk on red squirrel conservation.

There was some very interesting questions posed by the children at the Q&A sessions. They made red squirrel masks, helped assemble squirrel feeders and there was a special guest appearance by Charles, the giant red squirrel.

£43.50 was donated and thankfully the team didn't get any homework!



Eden Place

Our Red Squirrel Ranger, Gary, recently represented the group at an open garden day event held at Eden Place in Kirkby Stephen.

Thanks to all who popped along to the stand on the day to say hello and make a few purchases.

Every penny raised, like the £68 from this event, really helps the plight of the reds.

Pictured left to right:
Reg Metcalfe, Richard De-Robeck, John Nicholson & Chris Metcalf -Gibson



P&DRSG Annual Public Meeting

Our groups' Annual Public Meeting held in July was another chance to meet the P&DRSG team and enjoy the refreshments provided.

Many thanks for raffle prizes donated for this event and for everyone's help with setting up and running this event which raised £135.

The Guest Speaker for this year was Lorraine Priestley from Carlisle Beekeepers Association who gave us a very interesting talk on bees as well as a fantastic demonstration on Encoustic Art - painting with beeswax using a travel iron!

These was one of the works of art made on the evening.



The Hadfield Trust

The Hadfield Trust have supported us once again following our recent Grant application for funding. This £2,500 is very welcome and allows us to upgrade some of our invaluable thermal imaging equipment.

Cumbria Community Foundation/HSBC

Our Cumbria Community Foundation funding application was also successful with an HSBC £1,727 grant being awarded and greatly received to purchase some more, much needed monitoring cameras.

Team work for the Reds

£1,007 for the Dalston/Caldbeck patch has been raised recently through various events held locally. Fabulous work David, Lyndsay, Wendy & Co! Thank you all.

The Barry Green Memorial Trust

We very much appreciated the continuous support from The Barry Green Memorial Trust who recently sent a £1,000 donation.

Llama Karma Kafe initiative

P&DRSG extended their thanks and appreciation to Llama Karma Kafe for donating proceeds from their 'Selfie with a Llama' programme. This initiative has raised £587 so far!

Domino drives at Pooley

We'd also like to thank the Pooley Bridge Parkin Memorial Hall for donating £318 of the proceeds raised from several domino drives recently.

In Memory of Mary Roberts

We express our sympathies to the family of the late Mary Roberts, 21st March 1925 - 8th July 2017. £237.50 was kindly donated to P&DRSG in her memory.

Raising awareness & funds

P&DRSG are Chosen Charity;

One of our long standing members has kindly chosen Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group as the nominated charity for this year at the Lazonby Xmas Craft & Shopping Fair (details as below).

We are thrilled to have been chosen and will gratefully receive the proceeds from this event. Huge thanks to the absolutely fabulous, Jill, see you there!

There will be 30 stalls of crafts, gifts & photography, home made refreshments & lunches served all day and it's free entry to the public. Pop along and see us and get all your Christmas Gifts at once!

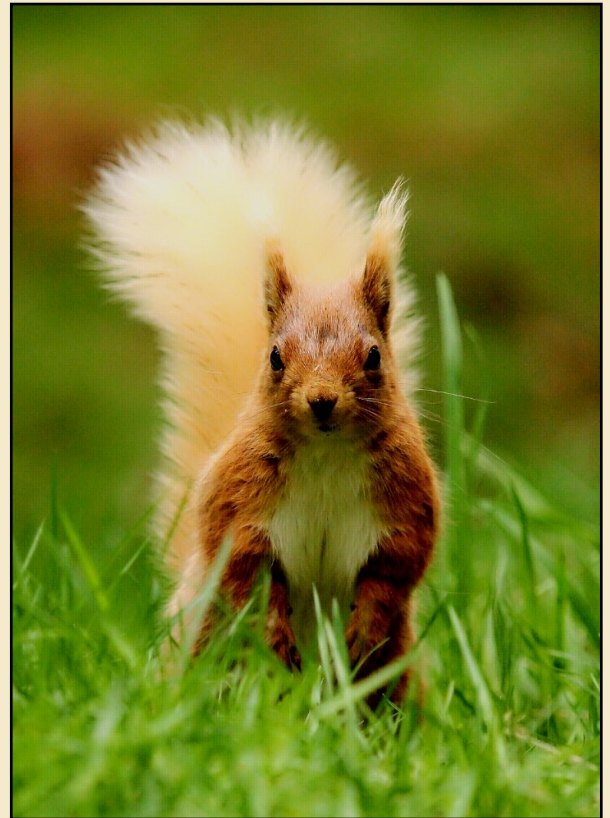
If you'd like to book a stall, these must be booked in advance: £20 for a 6ft table plus donation of a small craft item for the raffle. Contact: info@lazonby-cumbriacraftfairs.co.uk

Xmas Craft & Shopping Fair in aid of P&DRSG; 10am - 4pm, Sunday 19th November 2017, Lazonby Village Hall, Lazonby CA10 1AQ.

Ways you can help

You can help us by

- Making a donation and/or becoming a member (see back page)
- Giving a gift of membership subscription (see back page)
- Organising a fund raising event
- Hosting a charity collection box
- Promptly reporting all squirrel sightings
- Sponsoring rangers
- Sponsoring feed costs
- Sponsoring administration costs
- Sponsoring equipment costs
- Recruiting new members
- Hosting our merchandise for sale in your premises
- Leaving a legacy in your will
- Sending us your 'Red' pictures and stories



Last but by no means least

P&DRSG give huge thanks to all of our Rangers and volunteers for their hard work and vigilance, our members for their support and all other individuals, businesses and landowners who continue to support our group, we really couldn't do it without you!

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Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group **Membership Form**

Membership is for the calendar year, payable at any time - Please feel free to enter a higher amount should you wish to increase your subscription by including a donation

Standard Individual Membership is £20 ☐ By **Cash/Cheque** or £..... including donation
☐ By **Annual** Standing Order or £..... including donation
☐ By **Quarterly** Standing Order at **£5** or £..... including donation

Standard Family Membership is £30 ☐ By **Cash/Cheque** or £..... including donation
☐ By **Annual** Standing Order or £..... including donation
☐ By **Monthly** Standing Order at **£2.50** or £..... including donation

— For those who wish to give a bit more, please join one of the tiers below —



Bronze £50 ☐ **Silver £100** ☐ **Gold £250** ☐ **Diamond £500** ☐

By **Cash/Cheque** ☐ By **Monthly** Standing Order ☐ By **Annual** Standing Order ☐



Title/s: First name/s: Surname/s:

Company Name: (if applicable)

Address:

..... Postcode:

Phone: Email:

Signed: **Date:**

Please tick this box if you wish P&DRSG to claim **GiftAid** on your donation. ☐

If you are a UK income or capital gains tax payer **GiftAid** allows us to claim back the tax (currently 25p for every £1) on all of your donations. Please note the total reclaimed tax (on this or any other donations to charities or CASC's) must not exceed the amount of tax you pay in the current tax year.

Please return this form to: **Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, Woodside, Armathwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX**

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group **Standing Order Form**

To the manager Bank/Building Soc. Sort code

Bank/Building Society address..... Account number

..... Account name

Instruction to your Bank / Building Society to pay by Standing Order

Please pay HSBC Bank, Market Square, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7SN, Sort Code 40-36-10 for the credit of Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group.
Account Number: 01310968

the sum of £ (Pounds and pence) commencing on the /..... /20..... and thereafter every month/annually* on the same day until further notice in writing and debit my/our* account accordingly. (* delete as necessary)

Signed: **Date:**

Please tick this box if you wish P&DRSG to claim **GiftAid** on your donation. ☐

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