

## OWR summary for Blewbury Parish Council

Thank you for inviting me here this evening. My name is Anni and I'm a volunteer and Trustee for Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue.

OWR became a registered charity in 2021. We have been at our Blewbury site on Woodway Road for 2 years now, and in that time, we've been improving the building we rent and upgrading our facilities to cope with ever-increasing demand. We are funded through public donations and have been successful in applying to South and Vale District Councils for a grant to cover the cost of new veterinary cages as well as some local parish councils.

In 2022 we helped thousands of animals, and of course the public who sought our advice after finding injured or orphaned wildlife. We offer advice and guidance to the public and of course also admit wildlife casualties to our centre. From our base in Blewbury, we serve Oxfordshire and much of Berkshire, being the only wildlife rescue with emergency response in the area and one of the only rescues with a dedicated wildlife ambulance to deal with large mammals, including deer. In total, OWR covers some 1500 square miles!

During the late spring and summer of 2022, we were admitting 50 – 100 animals per week, mostly birds and small mammals that had been adversely affected by a lack of easy access to water and food caused by the prolonged dry spell and the record-breaking high temperatures, but also larger animals such as Red Kites, Owls, Buzzards, Badgers, Foxes, and Deer. We rehabilitated and released over 30 swifts last year, just one of several RSPB 'Red List' species we helped.

As mentioned, demand for our services is constantly increasing, and with this comes the need to increase funding revenue to ensure we can continue to operate at the level required and to provide this service to members of the public and do our bit in helping to preserve our fragile biodiversity. With these factors in mind, OWR are looking to secure our future by increasing our fundraising efforts, our volunteers (we have recently taken on many new volunteers swelling our ranks to over 70), employ more paid staff including veterinary personal, and ultimately, locating and moving to a larger facility to enable OWR to grow and secure our future. The Blewbury area is ideally placed as a base for OWR as we have good access to Didcot, Abingdon and Wantage, from where a huge proportion of our casualties originate, and of course easy access to Berkshire and the A34, meaning we can get around both counties with relative ease. And of course, the rural nature of Blewbury and its surroundings is perfect for wildlife rehabilitation, which needs peace and quiet and low human interaction and exposure to truly stand a chance of being returned to the wild, where all these animals ultimately belong.

Our plan is to build a world-class wildlife hospital which will include educational facilities for schools and groups and provide veterinary training in wildlife first aid and rehabilitation, something which is currently lacking in most veterinary schools. To achieve our dream, we'll be looking to find new premises in the area, so if anyone can help with this, please let me know. In the meantime, you can follow our work, and of course the animals, on our social media pages including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Many thanks for your attention.