



Taliswood Barn Owl Nest Box Project

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Hello

Our "Taliswood Barn Owl Nest Box Project" is aimed at giving Barn Owls a helping hand by providing roosting and nesting sites where there is good hunting habitat for them. We will have put up 51 nest boxes by the end of this year, working in partnership with the Hawk & Owl Trust. Nest boxes not only provide roosting and nesting sites for Barn Owls they are also beneficial for biodiversity.

Our target is to have put up 100 boxes by the end of 2026, to do this we are appealing for help with funds. To achieve our goal we require £2,500 each year. We have recently received our first donation and are in the process of raising more funds ourselves too, more details about what we have done and how we did it below.

Many factors are affecting the decline of Barn Owls. The loss of prey rich habitat and the conversion of old barns to residential use, meaning the loss of roosting and nest sites, are both major factors. Plus their death on roads, predation, rodenticide poisoning and drowning are all factors affecting their numbers. Around 70% of young Barn Owls bred in any one year do not survive their first winter.

How it all started:

In 1997 Suzanne and I bought a cottage in Felbrigg on the edge of Felbrigg Park National Trust Estate. While walking our dogs we regularly saw Barn Owls at dawn and dusk. It was a wonderful sight watching them quarter and hunt silently near our cottage and at Felbrigg Park. Sadly over the years the number of Barn Owl sightings gradually declined.

In November 2019 to encourage Barn Owls back to our area we put up a nest box across the field at the back of our cottage and then in 2022 one in our hay barn. There were no signs that anything had been near the boxes until one morning in May 2022 when we saw a Barn Owl perched on the nest box tray across the field.

A lot of excitement ensued! We joined the Barn Owl Trust and the Hawk and Owl Trust (H&OT) to learn more about owls. Through contact with the H&OT we were introduced to Simon Dudhill, their Conservation and Adopt A Box Officer and the seed was sown for us to help with the conservation of this beautiful bird by providing some Barn Owl boxes in North Norfolk. We started off by finding local sites for three Barn Owl nest boxes in early 2023, these were put up by Simon under the H&OT Adopt A Box Scheme.

TALISWOOD BARN OWL NEST BOX PROJECT

Conservation and species recovery of Barn Owls in Norfolk

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From this small start we wanted to do more to help with the conservation of this magnificent owl so this is how our "Taliswood Barn Owl Nest Box Project" started. We funded the purchase of 19 boxes ourselves (£1,500) to get our project off the ground. This made a total of 22 nest boxes installed by the end of 2023.

We decided to continue our project into 2024. To fund the purchase of more nest boxes Suzanne designed a Barn Owl calendar using my photographs. The sale of this calendar produced a profit of £2,300. So far this year, 14 Barn Owl nest boxes have been put up with a further 15 going up in the Autumn. This will make a grand total of 51 nest boxes since we started. We are now in the process of producing another Barn Owl Calendar for 2025 with more of my photos.

In July this year Simon monitored the boxes put up in 2023. Barn Owls can take up to 5 years to breed in a new box so we were very excited when he found two boxes containing owlets after only 1 year. One box had three owlets, the other two, Simon ringed them all. There was signs of Barn Owl activity in two more boxes. The result of the monitoring exercise strengthened our resolve to continue our project, expanding the area outside of North Norfolk.

We would love you to come on our journey and make a donation towards the future of our project. Together we can make a significant difference to the Barn Owl population in Norfolk. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and the attached endorsement of our project by the Hawk and Owl Trust.

Further information and photos about our Barn Owl Nest Box Project can be found on my Taliswood Wildlife Photography website www.taliswoodphotography.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John and Suzanne Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John and Suzanne Taylor