



Autumn 2026 Newsletter



Red Kite breeding, ringing and wing-tagging – Ken Sanderson

With warm and dry conditions prevailing in the spring and early summer it gave the kites a very good start to the breeding season. So much so that, once again, another record season for fledged young was experienced. In total, 59 young fledged from 29 successful nests, compared with 47 fledglings last year. There were only 2 nests that failed, down from 8 nests that failed last year, and this will have contributed significantly to the total number of fledged young.

In all, our monitoring confirmed 41 occupied territories: 30 in Durham and 11 in Northumberland. 39 chicks fledged from 21 nests in Durham, with the majority of nests located in, and around, Gateshead's Derwent Valley. In Northumberland, 20 chicks fledged from 8 nests, mainly located in the west; also another record breeding season for the county.

Ringing and wing-tagging took place on Friday 12th June. Four nests in Northumberland had been selected but ringing and wing-tagging only took place at two of these. At two nests, the chicks were too big to wing tag and were ringed only. Five chicks were ringed and wing-tagged. This year's colour for the right wing tag is black (see photograph below of youngsters from a nest near Newlands, Northumberland).



Photograph: Ken Sanderson

Time To Renew Your Membership – Jennifer Adams

September is an important month in the Friends of Red Kites calendar. The work carried out throughout the year by our team of dedicated volunteers who monitor the health and welfare of the red kites in the Derwent Valley, and surrounding areas, is very dependent on our wonderful members giving their continued support to enable this essential work to prevail.

The work FoRK undertakes has never been more vital - the renewal of your membership contributes greatly to our mission to sustain and protect the stunningly, beautiful red kites adorning our skies.

Members will be sent information of any upcoming events along with the Newsletter that is posted out four times a year.

FoRK look forward to having you as a member in 2026 – 2027.

Please find the membership form sent out as a separate document along with this newsletter.

Thornley Café Re-opens – Harold Dobson

We are pleased to announce that Thornley Cafe has been refurbished and has now reopened at Thornley Woodlands Centre with a new leaseholder, Angela Watson, who also runs the cafes at Durham Wildlife Trust's Rainton Meadows & Low Barnes nature reserves.

Annual General Meeting – Vic Lawson

The AGM was held at Little Grandma's Café on the evening of Wednesday 24th June. 22 members attended and the meeting last no more than 10 minutes. The buffet was excellent and plentiful. As it was a lovely evening many took the option of eating outside. Thanks are due to Geraldine for supplies of her red kite biscuits; none of them were left at the end ! 'Doggy Bags' were supplied.

Pop-up Information Stall at the Land of Oak & Iron – Vic Lawson

We held a Red Kite Information Stall at the Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre (Winlaton Mill) on Saturday 15th August 10.00 – 2.00.

The stall was set up by Harold and staffed by Jackie, Lori and myself. Thanks are also due to Geraldine who provided a generous supply of red kite biscuits which were enjoyed by both members and visitors. The courtyard at the Land of Oak and Iron was quieter than normal and the number of visitors was lower than hoped. However, we had some good conversations about the red kites and enjoyed the day.



Photo by Harold Dobson

A date for your diary - Winter Members' night – Vic Lawson

Our Winter Members' Night will be held in the conservatory at the Skiff Inn, Clasper Way, Swalwell, Gateshead, on the evening of Monday 30th November. Further details will be sent out in early October once the menu choices and price have been agreed with the Skiff Inn.

The Friends of Red Kites Coffee Morning

You are warmly invited to join friends and enjoy home-made cakes, scones and biscuits with a cup of tea or coffee

AT: Fellside Church Hall, Ancaster Road, off Fellside Road, Whickham NE16 5BJ

WHEN: Saturday 31st October 2026

FROM: 10 am until 12 noon

Donations of cakes, biscuits or scones are welcomed on the day. If you do plan to bring some goodies along then could you kindly let Jen Adams know in advance (email: red.kite2020@gmail.com, mobile: 07906 044934) and also bring along a list of ingredients used on the day.



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www.friendsofredkites.org.uk