



Friends of Red Kites

in the North East of England

www.friendsofredkites.org.uk



Newsletter, Summer 2026

Red Kite Breeding Report 2026 – Ken Sanderson

Red Kite activity on territories increased significantly in February with kites displaying and some nest refurbishment/building taking place and even a pair were observed copulating on the 28th.

March was the peak month for nest-building and, in early April, the females were noted incubating eggs. The eggs are incubated for approx. 32 days, hatching around the 2nd week in May and so, by the end of May, most chicks are approximately 3 weeks old.

Our monitoring, as at the end of May, has produced 36 occupied territories in which 21 are active nests, i.e. female incubating has been confirmed. Six of the active nests have been recorded in Northumberland. One area of concern, at the moment, is the number of nests which have been refurbished but are not being used. It is likely that the red kites are using another nest on the same territory which we will be able to confirm when fledged chicks are observed on that territory.

In the 2nd week of June, when the chicks are about 5 weeks old, we ring and wing tag a sample of chicks from some of the nests under special licence. The wing tags give a visual identification for an individual (see photo below). This allows us to monitor the birds, once they have fledged, giving us important information on distribution and breeding.



Photo taken by Ken Sanderson

The photograph above is from last year and shows 2 chicks after being ringed and wing tagged at a nest near Minsteracres in Northumberland. Wing tag A7 has recently been sighted at Blanchland, Northumberland and Muggleswick, County Durham.

Member's Night (Monday 27th April) – Vic Lawson

The Spring Members' evening was, once again, held at the Skiff Inn on Monday 27th April. There was a full attendance of twenty-four members at an increased price of £24.

Thanks go to: Geraldine for her delicious red kite biscuits (some of which managed to survive to the end of the meal), Ken for the unusual, cryptic and challenging quiz which had many of us racking our brains and to Lori for organizing the raffle and to those who donated prizes - a total of £65 was raised. The food and service were up to their usual high standard.



Photo taken by Vic Lawson

Information stall at the Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre – Vic Lawson

On Saturday 15th August (10.00-2.00) we are staffing a stall at the Land of Oak and Iron Heritage Centre, in Winlaton Mill, with plenty of information about the red kites.

For those of you living locally, this is an excellent opportunity to come along to our pop-up stand/gazebo and learn more about the life and history of these magnificent birds of prey, their re-introduction into the Derwent Valley and the latest update on this year's breeding season.

Lori (Smith) & I will be there with information leaflets, red kite pens (£1.00 each) and a fun "Name the Red Kite" quiz for younger visitors to enjoy.

Red Kite (H8) – Vic Lawson

The Friends of Red Kites selects a number of chicks, which are about to fledge each year, to wing tag in early June so that records can be kept of their future sightings.

One such bird is H8. He fledged from a nest in a cherry tree, in Cappy Scar, Gateshead and was wing-tagged in June 2014. His father was named Chester and his mother Red Arrow. They were two of the birds released from Gibside between 2004-2006 as part of the Northern Kites Project and named by local schools who adopted the kites.

In the following two years, H8 was spotted at winter roosts in Lockhaugh Meadows and Victoria Garesfield. By 2017, he had found a partner and they raised two chicks in a nest near Lintzford. Since then, he has been seen establishing territories in the area by chasing other kites away. In May and June last year, at the age of eleven, he was spotted, with another kite, circling over a nest site in Lintzford. The pair raised two chicks which were spotted in the nest.



Notice of Annual General Meeting – Harold Dobson

Our 16th Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th June at 6.30 for 7.00 pm at Little Grandma's Cafe, Little Ollie's Garden Centre, Bridgefields, Newburn Bridge Road, NE15 8NR.

The meeting, itself, should last no more than 30 minutes. It will be followed by a buffet supper (£12.00 per head). The invitation to the AGM is appended and the paperwork, relating to the AGM, is included in a separate mailing. If you are interested in joining the FoRK Management Committee then please fill in the nomination form, which is included in the AGM paperwork. So, get a FoRK member to propose and second you.

Our Committee meets seven times each year (January, February, April, May, July, August & November) usually at 16.00 on the second Monday of the month at Thornley Woodlands Centre. Each meetings lasts no more than an hour and discusses issues relating to the red kites. If you are interested and would like to know more then please do get in touch.

Annual General Meeting

If you plan to attend the Annual General Meeting then please complete section **(A)** of the form below and return by **Wednesday 17th June 2026**.

The AGM will be followed by a finger buffet supper & sweet trolley plus tea/coffee at a cost of £12.00 per head. You may bring your own drink if you wish.

If you are planning to have the buffet supper then, **additionally**, please complete section **(B)** of the form below. Cheques should be made payable to "*Friends of Red Kites*".



To: FoRK Secretary, 19 Milverton Court, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2RD

(A) * I/we plan to attend the FoRK AGM on Wednesday 24th June.

(B) * I/we would like to book the buffet meal @ £12.00 per head for
..... person(s).

(* = please delete as appropriate)

Total amount enclosed = £ (cheque/postal order payable to "*Friends of Red Kites*").

Name(s) [Please print]:

Address:

..... Post code.....

Email address: