

WHY IS THE GRASS SO LONG ON THE CARAVAN FIELD?



There is a good reason for this. We are trying to encourage a strong population of field voles, which can only thrive in long tussocky grass. What's so special about field voles? The reason is that we would love to have barn owls back at Weston, whose main diet is.... field voles!



20 - 30 years ago we often saw the ghostly white shape of an owl hunting in these fields at dusk. Sadly they have become rarer and rarer, and are now on the amber list of endangered birds. According to The Shropshire Barn Owl Group, in 1932 there were 287 breeding pairs in Shropshire, but by 2002 there were just 121 - 140 pairs - a decline of nearly 50%.

One of the main reasons for this is a loss of habitat: modern farming methods rarely support field voles. A breeding pair of owls need 10 acres (4 hectares) of rough tussocky grass to survive. The caravan field is approximately 5 acres, just enough for one bird!

Together with some of our neighbouring farmers, we are doing what we can to make our little bit of the Corve Dale a place where barn owls can thrive once again.



For more information visit shropshirebarnowlgroup.org.uk and www.barnowltrust.org.uk