

Their competitor is the NHS, which has the distinct advantage of being free.

JOHN MARTIN
Fourstones

IT was great to read your article about the young red kite which was rescued and handed over to Falconry Days bird of prey centre and, after a period of care and rehabilitation, was returned to the wild. Credit is certainly due to Mark French and his colleagues at the centre. Well said Mike.

JANETTE ADAMSON
Hexham

Kites established

IT was very good to read of the rescue of a red kite at Rye Hill, Slaley, and of the subsequent care given to the bird by Falconry Days, resulting in its release back into the wild. Kites have been present around the Devil's Water, close to Rye Hill, all spring and summer so it is possible that it was a local bird.

The red kite appears to have established itself well as a Northumberland-breeding bird, particularly from 2016 when the population reached around 30 pairs from my work in the field. Many of these are on farmland adjacent to that used for the Gateshead re-introduc-

tion. It is gleamed from our website after a roost count held on January 7, 2017.

To clarify, some red kites assemble in loose communal roosts just before dusk between September and January each year.

However, not all red kites roost and, depending on the weather conditions, some stay on territory over the winter period.

Also, we, the Friends of Red Kites (FoRK), may not have located all the roosts in the valley. To conclude, therefore, the figure of 57 red kites at three roosts is only a snapshot and does rather

Plea over signs

ONCE again we have been left with A4 printed advertising signs gradually degrading in the hedges at every road junction.

Why is it such a problem for the organisers of local events to have a ride round and take them down after the event has passed?

I realise it is often necessary to use temporary signs beforehand, but often they are there for weeks after. It's good to have local events but please take a little time to remove the signage afterwards.

ALAN GIBSON

Barrasford

bership available. Hexham RAFA is at 2A Market Street, Hexham, Northumberland. NE46 3NU.

The opening times are Tuesday 8pm to 11pm, Thursday 7.30pm to 11pm, Sunday 12.30 to 4pm. Also there is a karaoke on the last Saturday in every month. Come along and have a sing or just listen. We will look forward to seeing new members for the club.

IAN JOHNSON
Hexham



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