



Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group

Newsletter

Summer 2011



RED SQUIRRELS NORTHERN ENGLAND - Update



The transition from Save Our Squirrels to Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE) has not been without some difficulty. The original Project Manager, Craig Shuttleworth, decided that he could not commit to this full time position and has now been replaced by Nick Mason (photo left), who took up the challenge in April. Welcome to the deep end Nick.

Funding also seems to be more precarious than originally envisaged and whilst Simon O'Hare, Jamie Stewart and Christine Westerbacks positions have been retained several others have not and we have to say goodbye to Charlotte Widgery. Charlotte has been a great friend to P&DRSG, we will miss her and wish her every success in her new employment with Nurture Lakeland.

The new project strategy is now totally focused on grey control but the long awaited employment of additional Red Squirrel Rangers and funds for contractors now seems to hinge on the various applications for funding that have been submitted. A SITA application for a Northumberland project has unfortunately failed but should RSNE succeed with a much larger Biffaward application (decision August) the project would be back on track. We wish RSNE the best of luck!

Date for
your
diary

Squirrel Fest 2011

By courtesy of LDNPA at Brockhole Visitors Centre, Windermere
Sunday 18th September - 11am to 4pm

RSNE Funding for Aira Force & Caldbeck

For the second year running the **RSNE** Grey Control Fund provided £40,000 to successful applicants for grey control projects. P&DRSG made three applications and were bitterly disappointed to fail with the largest, the continuance of our Red Squirrel Rangers work in the Upper Eden Valley but we were pleased to be awarded modest funds for two short term projects at Aira Force and Caldbeck.

The Caldbeck project extends through the Forestry Commission's Parsons Park at Caldbeck and along the river Caldew to the privately owned Dentonside woods at Sebergham. All these woods are rather inaccessible and, whilst there were no recorded increases in grey activity, it had been noted that there was a drop in red numbers which was indicative of a problem. Given the proximity to the Greystoke reserve, we felt we could not ignore it. Volunteers have already made a very successful start by removing several greys and seeing more reds than expected at Parsons Park and this will be complimented by a paid contractor working from Sebergham to meet up with them.



Photo courtesy of David Cole

The Aira Force project is simply to eliminate grey squirrels from the whole area around the falls and kick start the bigger project of returning Aira Force to 'the' place to see red squirrels.

Once the projects are complete both areas will need volunteers to carry on with the vital job of monitoring the woods. If you can offer a little time please contact us.

Thanks
to our
Sponsor

A huge thank you to Center Parcs who continue to most generously sponsor the cost of printing our newsletters

Center Parcs support for red squirrel conservation goes beyond mere commercialism. Their long term commitment to the cause is nationally recognised and here locally we do likewise by appointing them as our very first Corporate Sponsor 'Patron'.



A Grand Day Out? - Grand As Owt!

On 17th February 2011 at Hutton in the Forest, Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group were very well represented at the launch of Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE), the new five year red squirrel conservation project, attended by HRH the Prince of Wales, patron of the Red Squirrel Survival Trust (RSST). RSNE is an exciting project that draws together volunteer organisations, like P&DRSG, from across the north along with statutory bodies and charities such as the Forestry Commission, Wildlife Trusts and Natural England.



Pictured from left to right: Julie Bailey (Penrith volunteer & secretary of Brampton RSG), Richard Dyke - Secretary, Kirsty Kenny (Brampton RSG), Robert Benson - Chairman, Bernard Parker, John Lisle, Jerry Moss, Sarah McNeil, Christian Bensaid and Gary Murphy were privileged to attend and although it was held on our 'patch' we wish to make it clear that we were in no way involved with the organisation of the event or the invitation list and apologise if anyone felt they had been left out.

The captivating story of Charles the orphaned red squirrel, hand reared by Sarah McNeil, was recounted when Prince Charles was introduced to her (again) and how his fame lead to him being immortalised by Kirsty Kenny, volunteer coordinator of Brampton Red Squirrel Group, who sculpted a stunning likeness of him and commissioned a 100 piece limited edition.



Kirsty is seen here making her presentation of 'Charles' number 1.

HRH the Prince of Wales accepted Richard Dyke's

If you would like to buy "Charles" he is available at The Birds Bistro, Penruddock or direct from Kirsty at aartducko@aol.com - he costs just £125 (With £10 going to red squirrel conservation)



Wear the badge with pride

offer of a P&DRSG pin badge and invited him to attach it to his lapel. The moment was opportunistically taken to invest him as an honorary member of the group.

The event went off extremely well and the project received much welcome publicity. In précis the message was that this is England's last ditch attempt to halt the tide of grey squirrel incursion and that all involved must simply work together, now, in a spirit of support, cooperation and coordination.



Official P&DRSG badges are available at the Birds Bistro, Penruddock for the princely sum of just £1 (or more if you prefer!)



Come and See us at the Local Shows



Volunteers will be running our stall at the following shows, please come along and say hello, we have lots of squirrel merchandise for you to buy!

Lowther Game and Country Fair - 13th & 14th August
Appleby Show - 20th August
Dufton Show - 27th August
Hesket Newmarket Show - 3rd September
Loweswater Show - 4th September
Penrith Library Coffee Morning - 17th September
Apple Day - Acorn Bank, Temple Sowerby - 16th October



**Your Squirrels
need YOU!**

Please get in touch if you would like to help!

Pictured at Dalemain Garden Festival, - Julie Bailey and Sam Cropper, Dalemain's new game keeper and enthusiastic red squirrel champion

Gary Murphy in the Upper Eden Valley

The Upper Eden Valley enjoys the services of Red Squirrel Ranger, Gary Murphy, almost solely from the funding provided by the Oglesby Charitable Trust. Even though they don't even live in the area, Mike and Jean Oglesby give their support because they have a second home in Dufton, which they share with local red squirrels. They do however think it only equitable that funding from local sources is also provided.

Following their magnificent donation to pay for Gary's initial year's employment in 2010, P&DRSG undertook to seek ongoing funding through appeals not only to national bodies but also from members of the local community, land owners and businesses. We proposed to apply to the SITA landfill tax community award for three years funding but for various reasons (not least that a RSNE application for Northumberland failed and we needed to know why) this approach has been delayed.

Through Nigel Milsom's generous sponsorship, we held in May a well attended meeting of landowners and interested parties at the Tufton Arms Hotel, Appleby to explain the facts of squirrel life. Basically, we felt we have proved beyond doubt that a squirrel ranger makes the difference between success or failure in the preservation of red squirrels and that now is the time for local people to step forward and support the project.



Photo: Mark Davies

The meeting was told that the initial funding for Gary had run out at the end of April and we had been left with the prospect of struggling on, on a month by month basis, until either more funds were raised or they simply ran out. We were however delighted to report that once again the Oglesby's had stepped in and agreed to provide an additional six months funding. This, together with our own resources has enabled us to guarantee and contractually continue Gary's employment until the end of December 2011.

We will continue to seek major funding but it is vital that before the end of the year sufficient new members and corporate members from the Upper Eden Valley sign up to the standing order schemes (as outlined later in this newsletter) so that a regular monthly income of £1,000 per month can be raised to enable Gary to continue his vital work. When we consider the number of people who already have red squirrels, the guest houses, hotels and businesses in the Appleby, Brough, Kirkby Stephen area plus the wider landscape from Tebay to Shap, this is surely a very achievable aim.

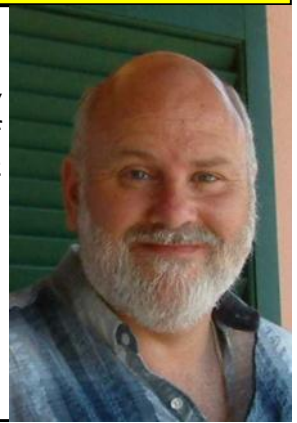
Our admin resources are however very limited (and entirely voluntary), we don't have marketing or sales people and simply can't get this message out to everyone we would like - but with your help we can - please become a member yourself and promote the scheme to all the local folk and businesses you think would/should be interested. Many thanks, we look forward to hearing from you.

Red Squirrels have lost a good friend with the passing of Barrie Gardner from Sowerby Row. Barrie loved to see red squirrels on his land and he and his wife Rena have generously supported the activities of this group for many years now. His final request was that any donations made in his memory should go to P&DRSG and we thank Rena, his family and friends for raising a very welcome £300 for us.

Can You Raise Funds for us? - FundAid did !

Last seen serving the buffet at our Annual Public meeting, John Turner from Morland runs FundAid (www.fundaaid.net) a Charity advisory and fundraising business that has been supporting small to medium sized Charities working across the UK and internationally for the past 10 years. Luckily for us John is very fond of red squirrels and has recently given his time and expertise, free of charge, to organise a trust funding campaign in order to bring in some much needed funds so that we can move on further with our plans.

In the first few weeks the appeal has raised over £5,500 and it is hoped this figure will rise significantly over the coming months. John said: "I am delighted to be able to help P&DRSG in this way and am thrilled with the response to the campaign so far. We regularly get reds in the garden so it is marvellous to be able to offer our services to support the brilliant work of the group".



C2C Cycle Ride Raises £970



P&DRSG member Anne Dawson thought that cycling from coast to coast with her friend Ann Hope would make a nice break and a good start to her recent retirement. Prompted by our Secretary she agreed to seek sponsorship but was sceptical as to how successful she would be.

We are delighted to report that not only was their sea to sea adventure a thoroughly enjoyable experience (despite wonky brake cables and two punctures) but also that these intrepid travellers raised just short of £2,000! The funds were divided equally between P&DRSG and the Prostate Cancer charity and we congratulate and thank Anne and Ann most sincerely for their magnificent achievement and contribution.

Richard Dyke receiving cheque from Anne Dawson (left) and Ann Hope

The Birds' Bistro take a "Walk in the Park"

When the staff at the Birds' Bistro (Lakeland's Wild Bird and Red Squirrel Feeding Specialists) had the bright idea of entering a team in Keswick Rotary Club's 'A Walk in the Park' the boss (and PDRSG Secretary) had little choice other than to join them.

The inappropriately named event turned out to be a 16 mile slog around Derwentwater, from Keswick over Walla Crag, through Watendlath, Rosthwaite and Grange and back along the terrace path on Cat Bells and back via Portinscale. Raising £200, it took them seven hours to complete the walk but apparently the de-briefing, over a meal in the pub, just flew by.

Left to right - Richard, Lesley, Mike, Annelise, Denise, Penny and Anne-Marie



Proposed 'Invasive Species' Kayak Expedition

P&DRSG volunteer Dave Welch is planning, with two others, to undertake a sponsored Kayak expedition along the river Eden from Appleby to Wetheral to highlight the threat posed by invasive species. The two day trip will cover 38 miles and is planned to start on Saturday 8th October with an overnight stop at either Langwathby or Lazonby. The whole of the beautiful river Eden is a red squirrel stronghold but any river corridor is also an incursion route for grey squirrels and this expedition will not only raise public awareness for the squirrel cause but will also be used to publicise the Check-Clean-Dry campaign on how other non native species, killer shrimp, floating Pennywort etc. can be spread by river users.

Dave will need help in raising funds via sponsorship forms, friendly and 'cheap' overnight accommodation and encouragement on route - the bridges at Langwathby, Lazonby, Armathwaite and Wetheral come to mind.

Dave can be contacted on Tel: 07772 884690 or Eimearigli:spod@live.co.uk



Ullswater - What's happening?

Ullswater continues to provide us with many highs and lows.

- Low - Grey squirrels are infiltrating all over the Ullswater valley.
- High - Red squirrels seem to have had a good breeding season.
- Low - Big increase in grey sightings in Patterdale.
- High - Dedicated local volunteers are doing sterling work and a warm welcome John Harrison who has accounted for 55 greys there since 1st June.
- Low - Dalemain without a keeper for a couple of months and greys move in.
- High - Jerry Moss and volunteers help out and together with new keeper Sam Cropper have accounted for over 80 greys. Reds back in Stainton.
- Low - Big increase in grey squirrel sightings around north Ullswater
- High - Charlie Watson busy, busy busy and successfully controlling greys.
- Low - Very few Ullswater residents are paying members or financially contribute to the cause. The well advertised Public Meeting 17th March at Glenridding offered free wine but only attracted 3 visitors.
- High - Sorry, no high to that, except to say that the 3 visitors were very nice and one, John Teasdale from Southwaite has since become a volunteer.
- Low - Poor local response to our plea for volunteers to become friends of Aira Force and help with trap checking on a rota system.
- High - The NT are right behind the project and John Harrison has taken on the grey control contract work.



Thank you to the Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation for the generous donation of £500 for the purchase of feeders.

Coffee Morning

Jill Eastham has kindly offered to raise funds for us by organising a Coffee Morning at Penrith Library on Saturday 17th September 10am to 12.30pm.

There will be a children's 'Draw a Red Squirrel' competition (1st prize - family ticket to Walby Farm) Stalls with Landscape photography and cards Jewellery and children's gifts Pretty bags and beadwork and a bring and buy stall Please support this generous initiative - donations to the bring and buy stall would be most welcome.

Thank you Jack Pyke

Thanks go to Glen Lewis from Jack Pyke for most generously supplying 'English Woodland' pattern shooting suits to Red Squirrel Rangers Jerry Moss and Christian Bensaid. Jerry said "this sponsorship is particularly welcome as we're out in all weathers and the protection we get from the suits is great. The camouflage is also second to none, so much so that Christian went 'missing' most of the first day!" Thanks also to Airgun World for their continuing support and positive publicity.

Ways You Can Help P&DRSG

In addition to just giving us money - You can help us by:-

- J · Volunteering for grey control in your local area
- J · Volunteering to check traps
- J · Volunteering to monitor squirrel numbers
- J · Promptly reporting sightings of grey squirrels to group contacts – list on last page
- J · Promptly report sightings of sickly red squirrels
- J · Reporting grey kills by you or others in or outside of this group, with date, location etc.
- J · Recruiting new members and corporate sponsors
- J · Promoting the view that red squirrel conservation is predominantly about grey squirrel control
- J · Organising a fund raising event – coffee mornings, garden open days, selling quiz or raffle tickets etc.
- J · Report/ensure any dead reds are sent for analysis
- J · Host or find hosts for our charity collection boxes
- J · Raise awareness locally – schools, organisations, parish councils / magazines etc. & talks to groups



The nice people who make Eat Natural bars have produced a Red Squirrel peanut bar, 5p from the sale of which goes to red squirrel conservation.

If you see the bars, they are available across the country in places like Boots, WH Smith and Waitrose., please buy lots (it's OK they're good for you!).

For more information and for a range of specially produced T-shirts check out the website...
<http://www.eatnatural.co.uk/special-stuff/>
 or
<http://www.rsst.ore.uk/>



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Standard and Maize free Red Squirrel Feed
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Come and see us at The Old Forge
 Penriddock, just off the A66
 Tel: 017684 83100



Standing Room only for Annual Public Meeting

A bumper turn out meant there was standing room only at the Annual Public meeting of the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group held at Penrith Rugby Club on Wednesday 7th July. The committee had invited guest speaker Robin Page and were delighted with the attendance of over 100 people from across P&DRSG's patch which stretches from Tebay to Brough via Appleby to Armathwaite and across to Dalston, Greystoke, Ullswater, Haweswater and back. It is an enormous area covering approximately 600 square miles.



Chairman Robert Benson in welcoming the huge audience opened the meeting with a statement "If it wasn't for the work carried out by the group's rangers and volunteers over the last few years, we would not be here at this meeting. There would be no reason for a meeting as the red squirrel would almost certainly have disappeared from this part of Cumbria".

The group now has 4 red squirrel rangers, 5 main areas of operation and 16 sub groups. Penrith is the biggest group in the UK and works in partnership with Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE) which was launched by HRH the Prince of Wales at Hutton in the Forest in February this year. Simon O'Hare of RSNE gave a brief presentation on the national picture. Mr Benson went on to thank inspirational secretary Richard Dyke, Treasurer Dr Marian Whitwham and all of the volunteers and the hard working rangers.

He stressed that the only way of ensuring the survival of the red squirrel is by removing the grey which out competes the red but more importantly carries the deadly squirrel pox virus. This is lethal to reds and has caused a worrying decline in recent months in overall numbers of reds following several outbreaks across the area. It was encouraging that red squirrels had returned to several areas of woodland following the removal of the greys and Richard Dyke praised the work being done by the volunteers and rangers. Richard appealed for more volunteers and for the general public to join the effort by reporting grey sightings, becoming members of the group and playing their part in the battle to conserve this wonderful indigenous animal.

Fundraising in the current economic climate had been surprisingly good reported treasurer Marian Whitwham with Penrith Group's income well up on the previous year. Total income to 31st December 2010 was £31,399, compared to the previous years £12,576, but expenditure was also significantly up at £19,759. Cash in hand at the year end was £17,809 though most of this was restricted income for projects and was subsequently spent in early 2011. Despite this huge outflow current funds stand at a very respectable £24,115 (£5,750 of which is restricted) The drive for standing orders had been very successful with £800 now being received each month and it is hoped to increase this dramatically to ensure the groups sustainability.



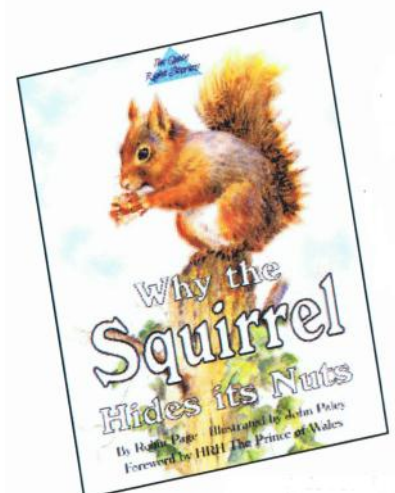
Robin Page, Richard Dyke and Robert Benson

There had been a magnificent response to fundraising initiatives from the public, landowners and gamekeepers who so importantly had given permission for rangers and volunteers to go onto their land. In particular the wonderful support of Whinell Forest Holiday Village operators Center Parcs in employing two rangers and the Oglesby Charitable Trust in providing the funding for a third, had meant that Penrith Group could now start to plan for further rangers and were hoping to employ a new ranger for the Greystoke Forest area. Recent numbers of greys being trapped or shot on the edge of this stronghold have been very worrying and it is vital that the group can deal with them. As ever funding is the key – it is hoped that woodland owners will agree to apply for the grants available in this area from the Forestry Commission.

The highlight of the evening was a most amusing talk by Robin Page – farmer, writer, conservationist and founder of the Countryside Restoration Trust. Robin, who is also a best selling author has been a great friend of the red squirrel for years and his latest book "Why the Squirrel Hides its Nuts" was available for purchase on the night.

He praised the work of all involved in the red squirrel conservation battle and appealed to more to get involved. At the same time Robin took the opportunity to remind Government, Natural England, the RSPB and all other organisations that they were guilty of leaving the real conservation work to 'amateurs' like of Penrith and the other, mostly volunteer led groups and gave examples of why we should thank goodness for amateurs - the world over!

He reminded the audience of the damage done by grey squirrels – estimated at £14million a year to timber and property – their predation of songbirds and the fact that this alien species introduced into Britain in the 1860s was responsible for the disappearance of the native red squirrel from almost all English counties.



The book costs £5.50 and is available from us or www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books - 50p from the sale of each book goes to red squirrel conservation

Prices include SAT - Squirrel Added Tax



We urge businesses to follow Andrew and Elaine Forsyth's lead of including Squirrel Added Tax into the selling price of squirrel friendly trees they offer for sale at their business, Weasdale Nurseries, Ravenstonedale. The Birds' Bistro have now also introduced the scheme to their range of squirrel feed and we would encourage everyone to consider whether their business could do likewise. As seen in these examples, logos can be tailored to your requirements - What a great way of showing your customers that your business is pro-active in the business of red squirrel conservation.



Become a Major or Corporate Sponsor - Please

You can become a member of P&DRSG for as little as £1.00 per month but did you know that you or your business can become a **Major or Corporate Sponsor** for as little as **£10.00 per month**.

The success we have achieved in recruiting our squirrel rangers significantly increases the responsibility for us to ensure that their employment is given continuity and some security of tenure. As a business minded person you will appreciate the importance of smoothing the cash flow and that is why we are asking you to become a major or corporate sponsor by making a regular monthly donation - by standing order.

To become a major or corporate sponsor please use our dedicated form and choose from the following options:-

Bronze - £10 per month, **Silver** - £25 per month, **Gold** - £50 per month, **Platinum** - £100 per month
A Patron - £250 per month. If preferred, an annual Standing Order would of course be most welcome.

Advantages to you are that your donations are tax deductible, you become a part of the success story of red squirrel conservation, you can have a link to your business from our website, we will recognise your support in literature and at events and your can use our logo on your own letterheads, website etc.

If you consider how much you would have to pay for a 'call out' for an expert contractor to deal with a vermin problem, it only highlights your sponsorship's excellent value - Please help us continue this work.




Become a Member / Renew Today - Please

First a plea to all existing and prospective members to please pay for their subscription by standing order. In addition we would actually prefer this to be by a 'monthly' standing order as it smoothes out our cash flow but of course an 'annual' standing order still does away with the need and expense for us to send renewal letters and reminders. It also saves you the trouble of writing cheques and posting forms off, let alone remembering to do it.

From 2011 all memberships are for the calendar year with payment due in January. Members who join later in the year and wish to pay by cash/cheque are invited to make a pro rata adjustment to take in membership for the following year.

For example a family taking out membership in June 2011 may wish to pay £36 for it to run until the end of 2012.


These measures will ensure that more effort and funding will be directed to our core activities - thank you very much.



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group

Membership Application/Donation Form

Membership is for the calendar year - please feel free to increase your donation or pro rata it to take in the following year



Membership by cash/cheque Individual	£12 <input type="checkbox"/>	Family £24 <input type="checkbox"/>	or £..... pro rata adjusted / incl. donation (delete as appropriate)
Membership by Annual Standing Order	£12 <input type="checkbox"/>	£24 <input type="checkbox"/>	or £..... including a donation
Membership by Monthly Standing Order	£1 <input type="checkbox"/>	£2 <input type="checkbox"/>	£5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		£10 <input type="checkbox"/>	or £..... including a donation

Title:..... First name/s: Surname/s:

Address:.....Postcode:

Phone:..... Email:.....

Signed: **Date:**

Please tick this box if you are a UK income tax/capital gains tax payer and wish PDRSG to claim GiftAid on your donation. The Government will increase your donation by 25p for every pound. Please note the reclaimed tax must not exceed the amount of tax you pay this year.

Return this form to: Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, The Estate Office, Lowther, Penrith, Cumbria. CA10 2HG

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Please contact one of the coordinators below immediately

Contact Robert Benson, chairman, Marian Whitwham, treasurer or Richard Dyke, secretary via e-mail info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk
Correspondence to:- **Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, The Estate Office, Lowther, Penrith, Cumbria. CA10 2HG**
The Secretary can be contacted by telephone c/o the Birds' Bistro on 017684 83100



Northern Red Squirrels

Use this site to report grey squirrel sightings outside the P&DRSG area or make contact with the Red Squirrel Group nearest to you. **NRS - the voice of volunteers in Northern England**
Contact Jackie Foott on 015396 25453 or visit www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk

The Red Squirrel Survival Trust is a national charity, set up under the patronage of HRH the Prince of Wales, for the conservation of the red squirrel in the UK. It actively supports the voluntary groups and can finance projects of merit.

Contact: Helena Stroud – Programme Administrator. Email: info@rsst.org.uk Tel 020 7554 8579



Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE)

Gosling Sike Farm, Houghton Road, Houghton, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 0LD

Nick Mason - RSNE Project Manager - 01228 829579 - nick.mason@rsst.org.uk

Simon O'Hare - RSNE Conservation Officer - 01228 829573 - Mob 07748 269260

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group Standing Order Form



To the manager.....Bank/Building Soc Sort code.....

Bank address..... Account number.....

..... Account Name.....

Instruction to your Bank / Building Society to pay by Standing Order

Please pay HSBC Bank, Market Square, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7SN, Sort Code 40-36-10 for the credit of Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group. Account Number. 01310968

the sum of £ (Pounds and pence)

commencing on the /..... /20..... and thereafter every month/annually* on the same day until further notice in writing and debit my/our* account accordingly. (* delete as necessary)

Signed: **Date:**

Please tick here if you would like us to claim **1 k h or your donation***
*If you are a UK tax payer, we can receive 25p for every £1 you give. Gift Aid allows us to reclaim tax on donations. For your donation(s) to be eligible you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax that is at least equal to the tax that P&DRSG reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year.

Please return this original completed form to Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, The Estate Office, Lowther, Penrith CA10 2HG