

**THE BRILL VILLAGE COMMUNITY HERD –
HOW NINE DEXTER COWS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND THEIR VOLUNTEERS ARE BEING
AWARDED THE KINGS AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

Today, 14th November 2023 - The Brill Village Community Herd Ltd (BVCH), in the heart of Buckinghamshire, has been awarded the prestigious honour of the 'Kings Award for Voluntary Service' (KAVS) in recognition of its outstanding work and dedication to conserving the nationally endangered grassland on Brill Common, in Brill Village.

KAVS is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE - BVCH is one of 262 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year, 2023.



The award recognises the volunteers who are contributing to their local communities and working to make life better for those around them.

Through grazing a small herd of native Dexter cattle on the Common, the volunteers aim to protect and enhance the biodiversity of this area known for its nationally and irreplaceable endangered grassland (with only 3% left of this precious habitat in the UK) and stunning vistas. The

Dexters were chosen as the 'cows for the job' because of their size, hardiness and ability to graze rough terrain.

The conservation grazing has played a pivotal role in restoring the ecological balance of the Common enabling native flora and fauna such as orchids, birds-foot trefoil, ladies bedstraw, lizards and butterflies to return and flourish.



The organisation's success underscores the importance of community-led conservation efforts and demonstrates what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared commitment.



Representatives of BVCH will receive the award crystal and certificate from Countess Howe, Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire. In addition, two volunteers from BVCH will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace next summer, along with other recipients of this year's Award.

In response to this national recognition, Pat Stone - a founding board member of BVCH - expressed her delight and appreciation in receiving the award, she said:

"We are highly honoured and immensely proud to receive this prestigious award, which recognises not only our volunteers' tireless efforts and unwavering commitment, but also the importance of preserving the natural heritage of Brill Common.

The changes we've seen to the habitat and wildlife over the past decade have been incredible to witness and demonstrate how grazing in a considered way can help bring nature back.

We hope that this award inspires others to engage in similar conservation efforts and appreciate the value of our natural landscapes."

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Notes to Editors

About The King's Award for Voluntary Service

The King's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK.

To be nominated, a group must:

- be made up of at least 3 people
- be led by volunteers, not paid staff
- have been running for at least 3 years
- be based in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man
- provide a specific and direct benefit to their local communities

The majority of the group must be volunteers, and more than half the volunteers must have the right to live in the UK.

Awarded groups get a certificate signed by the King and a domed glass crystal.

Local assessors research and visit nominated groups before writing a report on their suitability. Local assessment panels then decide which ones to put forward to the National Assessment Committee.

The committee considers the nominations and agrees a shortlist for approval by the King.

The awards are announced on 14 November in The Gazette.

Created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and previously known as The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the Award has been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups from all across the UK for many years.

Equivalent to an MBE, KAVS is the highest Award given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they are awarded for life.

More information can be found at <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk/>