

SCOTTISH BADGERS (SC034297)

APPLICATION TO HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND FOR A SOUTH LANARKSHIRE PROJECT

'Badgers in the Landscape – Community Building for Wildlife Conservation'

Information for interested parties – Nov. 27th
2015



Who are we?

Scottish Badgers was formed as an alliance of badger groups in Scotland in 1999 at the behest of Scottish Government, and is a SCIO, Scottish registered charity (SC034297). It exists to educate the public, offer training to both members and other volunteers, work for adequate law enforcement in Scotland, and build a sustainable network across the country of local badger groups. Advice and guidance is given to many statutory organisations, private companies, the Police, and individuals in forestry, agriculture, and house and road building, all of whom affect badgers greatly.

We run a training system for both volunteers and paid staff working in ecological services, and for workers in public and private forestry services. An Annual Conference is held in Scotland each year, attracting all sectors.

Our core is groups of members across Scotland, providing an invaluable service.

There are 8 Trustees, who work with a wider Advisory Group of another 8-10 members, representing both geographical areas and areas of interest. These groups meet both separately and together usually 5 times a year.

All of the trustees are 'hands-on', and act in both local badger groups, and in areas of special expertise

Why the project?

Badgers, our largest native mammal in the U.K., are not an endangered species, but are subject to increasing persecution. This is in two forms: the deliberate use for baiting by dogs, and the mainly unintended, which includes 'mistakes' by development, forestry and agriculture.

Our work over the past six years has shown that the strongest and most sustainable solution is to gain the involvement of local communities, which require information, training, and active citizen participation.

This project will concentrate resources in one area of Scotland: South Lanarkshire. This is an area of various small communities, many of which are ex-coal mining with economic problems. It has a lower than average application for charitable funding and high rates of wildlife crime*, much of which is unresolved; our initial investigation reveals an enthusiasm by other agencies there to work on these issues.

The project will not just be solely 'badger-oriented' - it will engage local people, including children, in activities connected to other native wildlife, and be of interest to other NGOs, with which we will

work in partnership. Our members obviously also come into continual contact with other native wildlife such as red squirrels, foxes, rabbits, bats and owls.

Badgers fit into our eco-system due to their relationship with other species, and are found in every type of landscape including high moorland, sea shore, cliffs, etc. as well as traditional woodland. It is important to try and help people to see these connections, and understand wider biodiversity issues. Training courses within the project will highlight these connections.

What will the project do?

It will engage possible interested members of the public by local recruitment, using local newspapers (which have proved successful in the past), by word of mouth, and by using obvious local centres of information such as Country Parks.

It is planned to use various methods of engagement, many in co-operation with South Lanarkshire Rangers, such as Bio-Blitzes, children's events, talks, demonstrations, and the offering of simple short courses, especially a 'Badger Awareness' course. These would be open to any interested person in the locality. SB now offer tailor-made courses for various groups, including our own members, other natural heritage organisations' members and people working in development, forestry, agriculture and other such industries. 'Crime Scene Awareness' is one of these. We would be preparing some of the more able volunteers to be trainers and survey leaders.

We will use other NGOs to signpost people to us, and we will reciprocate – we want as many interested people, who could become active volunteers, to become engaged with the environment and wildlife in the project area.

Our aims are to recruit active volunteers, and by their experiences hopefully retain as many as possible, either for Scottish Badgers, or other NGOs; to offer a range of stimulating experiences including training; and leave a legacy of a very strong and active badger group or groups in South Lanarkshire, equipped with the skills to maintain themselves, including local contacts. These skills must include the ability to plan and lead badger surveys; the accurate recording of badger setts; and the keeping of local badger records in an organised way. There are also subsidiary skills such as the safe leading of volunteers in the countryside and ongoing monitoring of badger setts, requiring organisational skills and sustaining enthusiasm and energy.

*Natural Injustice Paper 1 'A Review of the Enforcement of Wildlife Protection Legislation in Scotland', Feb. 2015, and Natural Injustice Paper 2 'Eliminating Wildlife Crime in Scotland', Feb. 2015, published by Scottish Environment LINK

Update as at February 2017; The project has two main centres of work, Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton, (South Lanarkshire Council), and Falls of Clyde Nature Reserve, New Lanark (Scottish Wildlife Trust).

The two bodies who run these parks provide the project with help, advice and co-operation.

There is a Project Plan agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund, with targets, and Scottish Badgers provide HLF with regular updates on progress.