

Scottish Badgers Code of Conduct for Members – draft as at Nov. 22nd

(Note, as a SCIO, the Scottish Badgers' Board are both Company Directors and Charity Trustees; in this Code, the term 'Directors' is used. Scottish Badgers is in places referred to as 'SB', or 'the Company')

The purpose of a Code of Conduct is to create and maintain an environment in which members, volunteers, and either paid staff or contractors can go about the charity's work free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, or any other unacceptable behaviour.

Background of the Board's responsibility

The Board of a Charity is charged with a serious public duty; not only with governing with due discretion, following best practice with regard to Limited Company law, but also placing itself as far as possible above any criticism of undue influence being used, or involved in any conflict of interest. It is not enough for the Board to be satisfied within itself on such matters, but that the public face of the Board is clear and open to scrutiny.

Board Directors have a hierarchy of responsibility; their first duty is to the continuing financial and legal health of the Company, their fellow Directors and the employed (or contracted) staff members; the second is to the whole membership of the Company. There cannot be an unswerving loyalty to only one part of the Company's membership, it must be balanced. There is a legal duty to avoid conflicts of interest.

The issues above have considerable implications for day-to-day practice, as laid out in the Code of Conduct for Directors/Trustees and Advisors sitting on the SB Advisory Group.

The Code of Conduct

- Sets out the standards required by Scottish Badgers as a condition of membership, employment, or appointment
- Applies to all members, employees and contractors, no matter what their role in the organisation
- Is intended to guide behaviours within the charity's activities, and remind all members not to take any action that could impact or harm the charity.

All policies on e.g. Equality, Lone Working etc. will come with in the remit of this Code.

You Should;

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation.
- Treat others with respect so that they are able to join in with the charity's activities without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment, or abuse.
- Conduct yourself with consideration for the safety, comfort and welfare of others.
- Behave with discretion when discussing individuals, and avoid public criticism, or demeaning others.
- Respect the opinions and decisions of those in a position of leadership and/or responsibility (please pay special attention to the Section below on badger surveying).
- Present a public united front in matters of policy and matters decided by the Board/Advisory Group

- Promote the reputation of Scottish Badgers as a charity registered in Scotland.

You Should Not;

- Behave in any way which involves, or could be construed, as abuse of any kind, be it sexual, physical, emotional, neglectful or bullying.
- Disclose or authorise to be disclosed, or use for personal gain, or to benefit a third party, confidential information except with the permission of the Scottish Badgers Directors, or as required by legislation (Please also note below the Section on Badger Sett records).
- Misrepresent any information on Scottish Badgers' activities to others.
- Publish, or cause to be published, any comments on any ongoing SB disciplinary process.
- Do anything which could adversely affect SB in Scotland, or work with badgers.

Relationships with staff/Contractors

An appropriate relationship with staff is of crucial importance, and it has to remain at the forefront of member's minds that they are not supervising the staff, nor giving advice or direction to staff unless with the express knowledge or agreement of the Chair.

This should not be viewed as a requirement for members to avoid staff outside arranged meetings. Members should not enter into discussion with staff or contractors that could, in any way, be interpreted as an instruction or direction on operational matters. If for some reason a member feels that the discussion did, or may have seemed, to stray into such areas, they should inform the Chair – it is clearly the person's responsibility to pass on such issues to ensure fair and effective staff management.

The Members DO NOT 'employ the staff'. They are under either Employment Contracts, or in a contracted position with the company by separate contract, and day-to-day under supervision of the Chair.

General requirements of members

Members are expected to acquit themselves at all times as representatives of SB, in a privileged position. All contacts and communications within work with badgers should be subject to a personal test of whether they are in the best interests of the organisation.

Use of Social Media, and communications with outside organisations

Members should be always aware with regard to all of the Code above in their dealings on social media, as they are pronouncing publicly on issues pertaining to Scottish Badgers. Members are especially reminded of the following;

Useful methods such as Facebook pages for local branches represent the charity and need to adhere to SB's established policy. Particular care should be taken to ensure that defamatory, offensive or contentious comments are not posted. This will require a level of moderation by the person running the page. No image or words should be posted on Facebook or elsewhere that could identify the location of a badger sett.

Scottish Badgers is continually, via the Trustees and Advisors, in contact, and conversations, with our allied partners. These include, often via Scottish Environment LINK, other NGOs both in Scotland, and further afield; and also government agencies such as SNH, Scottish Government Wildlife and Habitats staff, and MSPs and advisers.

For all of the above reasons, members are requested to proceed with caution when contacting external organisations about badger issues. When in communication with outside bodies, members should not seek to act as spokesperson for Scottish Badgers or its policies, unless authorised by the Directors. Please **ask for advice in advance from members of the Advisory Group. We are here to represent and help you!**

Badger Surveying

Surveying for badger signs, and to record setts, is one of the charity's main activities, and is usually carried out by an experienced member giving up time to organise, arrange, and conduct a survey. Many of these people carry out many days of such volunteer activity in each year. For surveys to be both successful operationally and safe for the members on them, it is imperative that members follow instructions whilst out on survey; listen to advice; and do not wander off individually. The SB insurance rest on the survey leader being conscious all of the time of a survey that they know the whereabouts of members of the group. The survey leader is responsible for;

- The safety, health and welfare of all group members, at all times, and that members are properly clothed, and have food and drink with them
- Any hazards within the area of a survey, be they man-made or natural
- The area of location of the survey, the times of the survey, and the responsibility for knowledge of the weather etc.
- The recording of all badger information.

Badger Records

SB was set up to collect, store, and safeguard badger records in Scotland. The charity keeps a central secure set of records, and continually adds to them of badger sightings, setts, and road kills. These records are not made generally available to all members, but individual records are made available when a member has good reason to use them, e.g. either to run a survey, or to record current use at a known sett. Abuse of these protocols is a serious breach of the Code.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If a member fails to observe the above advice, and brings themselves into a position of possibly bringing Scottish Badgers into disrepute, whether by action or intent, they are accountable to the Board. They are subject to the disciplinary rules of the association and additionally subject to the continuing confidence of the Board. This situation may entail action up to and including a vote of no confidence and the resultant action that incurs.

Eddie Palmer

Chairman

November 27 th 2017

