‘Badgers in the Landscape

Community Building for Wildlife Conservation’

Evaluation Report: Year One
1 Introduction
This first year evaluation was commissioned by Scottish Badgers, to examine and measure the impact of their project; *Badgers in the Landscape – Community Building for Wildlife Conservation*. The evaluation has reviewed the data and statistics kept by the project; spoken with key figures within the project and partnerships and assessed to what extent the project activities are helping to meet their proposed aims and objectives. This information was also set against the key outcomes within the remit of The Heritage Lottery Fund.

The evaluation exercise was carried out by Jo Clifton of Devon Associates, who has had extensive experience in working in the voluntary and community sectors since 1989.

2 Background to the Charity
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.

Scottish Badgers currently has a membership of 400 and the work is carried out by two paid project staff: a Project Officer (full-time) and one (part-time) specialising in crime prevention and providing advice to Police Scotland and project members.

The charity is governed by a board of 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: participating in both local badger groups and in areas of special expertise.

3 Reason for the Project
Although not an endangered species, the badger - the largest native mammal in the UK - is subject to increasing persecution. This can be deliberate, ie used for baiting by dogs or the - mainly unintended - destruction or disruption of setts by building development, forestry and agriculture.

Badgers fit into our eco-system by a relationship with other species, and are found in every type of landscape, high moorland, sea shore, cliffs, etc. as well as traditional woodland. It is a key strand of the work of Scottish Badgers to enable people to see these connections, and to understand the wider biodiversity. Work by the charity over the past six years has shown that the strongest and most sustainable solution is to gain the involvement of local communities. This involvement requires the provision of information, training and support to promote and sustain active citizen participation.

This project has concentrated its resources in South Lanarkshire for several reasons. It is an area of various small communities - many ex-coal mining - with economic problems. It has a lower than average application for charitable funding; it has high rates of wildlife crime - mainly unresolved; and initial investigation revealed an enthusiasm by other agencies there to work in collaboration on these issues.
The project holds 'badger-oriented' issues at its core, but also engages local people - including children - in activities connected to other native wildlife. This approach is also a key feature of their work with other NGOs and agencies, with which the project works in partnership.

4 Partnership working

A significant part of the project activities are carried out using various form of joint working, all of which are subject to agreed structures and conditions. These can range from a full partnership agreement [as in the case of SWT]; joint working practices [as in the case of South Lanarkshire Council] or utilising the resources of another agency [as in the case of CAVLP and RSPB].

In all cases, the project has entered into discussions and negotiations with these agencies – before commencing activities – to promote a mutual understanding and appreciation of the other’s values and ensure a commonality of approach and methods of working.

Appendix 1 shows more details of the partnership activities.

5 Project Activities: Year One

5.1 Volunteer Activities – badger surveys and badger watches
Badger surveys made up the bulk of the volunteer efforts in the first year; and badger watches were also very popular.

5.2 Volunteer activities – trail camera project
Eight trail camera expeditions were delivered in the first year with volunteers at the long-term monitoring site and at other sites; finding new & interesting setts. This also involved indoor sessions to view and interpret footage collected by the volunteers. This is the equivalent of 32 volunteer days and 192 volunteer hours.

5.3 Volunteer activities – sett monitoring
During the second half of the first year, 19 guided sett monitoring sessions were held. This helped volunteers to build their confidence in this task so that they could take on their own setts to monitor. Sett monitoring sessions were either stand-alone days, or parts of other sessions such as trail camera expeditions or research project days.

5.4 Volunteer activities – DNA research project
During the second half of the first year, the project took part in a DNA research project coordinated by Scottish Badgers in partnership with the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield, to determine whether the badger population in Arran (introduced by the Victorians for sport) was genetically linked to the badger population in and around Chatelherault – the seat of the Duke of Hamilton who owned Arran at the time. 14 volunteer research days were delivered, collecting both badger dung and hair samples and trialling different collection techniques. This amounted to 52 equivalent volunteer days and 312 volunteer hours.

5.5 Training opportunities
- Four free Badgers for Beginners courses were held, training 50 people in the basic skills of badger surveying.
- Level One Registered Badger Worker training day held at Chatelherault in March 2017 with 11 participants;
- Badger awareness course in March 2017 provided to fifteen professionals likely to be undertaking practical conservations tasks such as rhododendron clearance in and around badger setts.
• The Basic Wildlife Crime Awareness course and Licensing & mitigation information sharing course.
• In particular, the Basic Wildlife Crime course; demonstrating higher level training taken up by those who initially attended our Badgers for Beginners course.

5.5 Working with young people
Eight youth events were run in the first year of the project including:
• Attendance at Wild in the City events
• A Nature Ninjas event for the HAWKS Wildlife Group based at Falls of Clyde
• Forest School sessions including training in badger surveying and camera trapping with forest schools in Biggar.

5.6 Contributing to Other Conservation Agencies
The project makes an input into other conservation recording schemes by participating in training and subsequently feeding back any sightings:
• Urban Butterfly Project through Butterfly Conservation Trust
• The Bumblebee Conservation Trust
• Water vole training through CAVLP and South Lanarkshire Council Ranger Service.
• Amphibian and Reptile Conservation offering assistance with water sample collection for their Great Crested Newt Detective initiative.
• Project volunteers are also involved in on-going reporting of invasive plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam and will be trained to assist with this work during badger surveys.

See also Appendix 2 for numerical data regarding activities.

6 Forward planning in year one
A new partnership with SWT, which will greatly enhance the reach of the project and will include opportunities for volunteering, training, events and awareness raising. Volunteering opportunities will include badger surveyor, trail camera assistant, badger watch assistant and virtual badger champion.

A new partnership with SWT for schools outreach work. Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, key schools have been identified within South Lanarkshire. From April – June 2017, 1000 children will be given the opportunity to learn about badgers and other mammals on their doorstep. Each class will have elected an Animal Ambassador whose role will be to discover more and inspire their friends and family. Each Animal Ambassador will be provided with long-term support and further opportunities to get involved in the work. This will be monitored using the form at appendix 3.

7 Promoting the Project
The project promotes the work on an on-going basis;
• distributing a range of printed materials to public places throughout the region such as countryside centres, shops, cafes and libraries
• using social media outlets, such as Facebook and Twitter to advertise events [including a closed Facebook Group, which is used for more sensitive issues], and You-Tube
• producing an e-newsletter, through MailChimp, which currently has 51 subscribers.
• maintaining a professional looking website; easily navigated; attracting potential volunteers; and providing a fresh and lively record of past activities.
8 Political engagement
The project has recognised the importance of keeping badger issues on the political agenda and actively seeks to engage with members of the Scottish and Westminster parliaments. The project launch on 23 August involved Christina McKelvie MSP and Dr Lisa Cameron MP, which resulted in:

- Ms McKelvie doing a write-up of the launch on her website; lodging a Parliamentary Motion in support of the project; writing a letter to local police expressing her concerns re policing of wild-life crime
- Dr Cameron speaking at the badger cull debate at Westminster.

Members of the project have attended high-profile events at the Scottish Parliament, giving them the opportunity to introduce and promote the work of the project to politicians; including Colin Smyth MSP, the Species Champion for the badger.

9 Overall Findings
A significant amount of effort and planning has been put into ensuring that the project is on track and working towards its ultimate aim.

The partnership working – an integral and vital part of the project – has helped the project to maximise the impact of their work and to build a sustainable network to support current and future activities. Representatives of these partnerships speak very positively about the relationship, which allows all parties to share information, resources and experience. Activities have fostered cooperation amongst various facets of the natural heritage landscape within the South Lanarkshire area.

One partnership reported that this has resulted in an ‘evolution of the relationship’; creating ‘a shared vision’; and is helping to promote a ‘legacy of volunteers and volunteering’ in the South Lanarkshire region. Another spoke of the project’s passion of ‘fighting for the common cause’ of wildlife safety.

Significant numbers of people regularly engage with the project as volunteers; undertaking training; helping with research and other areas. Some are very committed and put in many frequent hours work, whilst others come only once or ‘dip in and out’ of activities or events.

Although there is, currently, no structured monitoring process for the volunteer activities, volunteers are requested to write a short paragraph noting their experiences. Two examples of these can be found in appendix 4, together with a selection of further / additional benefits gained by other volunteers.

Focussed promotional activities have ensured that the events and activities are well-attended.

Contact with, and involvement of, politicians has ensured that the work of the project maintains a high profile and keeps the badger issues high on the political agenda.

The project has benefitted from very clear branding from the outset and this has helped to create a strong identity for the project and set it apart from the other work of the charity.

9.1 Notable Successes

- Development of the working relationship with SWT and the launch of the hub for badger conservation at Falls of Clyde, New Lanark.
• DNA research in collaboration with the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield.

• The work of mapping and identifying the badger setts has identified a number of sites that are potential nature reserves.

• All of the free *Badgers for Beginners* courses ran to full capacity and attracted participants from a wide geographical area.

• The autumn lecture was over-subscribed.

### 9.2 Areas for Development

Fewer people than had been expected have put themselves forward to become survey leaders. This role will involve advanced training and the gaining of qualifications, which may have put people off. But the project plans to continue to promote this opportunity in years two and three.

Develop the geographical reach of the public lectures.

### 10 Matching the Funding Objectives

The work of the project, carried out in year one of funding, has consistently matched objectives set down by The Lottery Heritage Fund and the following are examples of the fit within the three strands of heritage, people and community.

#### 10.1 Outcomes for heritage

**Heritage is in better condition**

The project is involving more local people, who are helping with the conservation of the area. As the volunteers are moving around the badger sites, they are able to report any significant destruction or dereliction of the landscape; fly tipping etc.

Volunteers are also coming across particularly invasive plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, which are recorded and reported.

**Heritage is identified/recorded**

160 previously unknown badger setts have been identified.

Through the badger surveys and monitoring, the sites are becoming more visible; revealing the extent and diversity of the wildlife. In the process of monitoring the badger setts, there have been sightings of bees, butterflies etc and these can recorded and reported to the relevant agencies.

The badger surveys have also revealed the incidences of wild-life crime, such as badger baiting, and evidence has been passed to the local police for investigation.
Heritage is better managed

Local people are taking on the management and running of local landscape projects and encouraging other people to join them.

Heritage is better interpreted and explained

By the use of guided badger surveys and monitoring events, local people have become more engaged with the landscape and are able to understand the badger’s place in the community.

With the interest in badgers as a starting point, people have become more aware of the other mammals in the area and how they interact with each other.

10.2 Outcomes for people

People have learnt about heritage

School children in South Lanarkshire have been alerted to the proximity of badgers in their community, gained a new perspective on the landscape around them and the wildlife that is accessible to them.

A range of people, not traditionally getting involved in community activities, have engaged with the project as new volunteers; gaining new skills and knowledge. A significant number have retained their contact with the work of the project and extended their interest into further research and studies.

People have developed skills and have had an enjoyable experience

Providing the access to increased skills and knowledge has helped to build confidence in individuals; many have gained qualifications and are moving on to take more responsibility, such as moving into the management of the project; forming and running their own groups; becoming self-sustaining, with support from council.

Individuals from specific support groups eg mental health, recovering drug and alcohol, bereavement, have been encouraged to get out into the open air and explore the landscape. For some, this has been physical work, promoting increased health levels.

Focused groups and work teams have been established, giving opportunities for social interaction, providing a base from which to form peer support groups and enlarge an individual’s social network.

People have changed their attitudes and/or behaviour

Through publicity and promotion of the activities, local people are becoming more aware of the beauty and biodiversity of their own area.

Individuals are more aware of the prevalence of wild-life crime and have volunteered to ‘watch over’ and monitor existing badger setts.
10.3 Outcomes for communities

More people have engaged with heritage

The number and diversity of the volunteers coming forward and the work they have carried out has created a firm base to ‘spread the word’ about the benefits and advantages of engaging with heritage.

The experience and knowledge gained through volunteering and training, has given the community the capability as well as the capacity to increase the availability of open spaces and parkland.

With greater numbers of people in and around the landscape, instances of illegal activities, such as badger baiting, will begin to reduce, creating a safer environment for the inhabitants and visitors.

The community is a better place to live, work or visit

With the work of mapping and monitoring of the badger setts, the area is becoming more attractive to visitors, who want to share this experience. Local residents also have a more attractive site to visit and this instils a sense of pride and a stronger sense of belonging.

The local economy is boosted

Volunteers are coming into the area from other locations and are able to report back to friends and family about the enjoyment they have experienced; thus encouraging others to visit the landscape.

The organisation is more resilient

Through working with the partner agencies, the project has been able to carry out more work; attract and engage more volunteers; provide a sound support structure for those people wanting to develop further in the area of heritage.

There is an opportunity to charge for some of the entry-level training, which will provide resources for further work and increase the viability of the project.

Donations are requested on the door at training events, which contributes to costs such room hire etc.

11 Conclusions

The project is clearly on-track at the end of this initial year of the grant. The activities have been well-planned and well-thought out and the results and outcomes have – in many cases – far exceeded expectations.
The number of volunteers that the project attracts belies its size and its continued success is due in no small measure to the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff members of the project.

This has been matched by the enthusiasm and hard work expended by all those involved, which has motivated mutual interest in the work amongst the key players and agencies.

This has promoted a greater awareness, by both professional and volunteers, of the huge biodiversity of the landscape of South Lanarkshire and the surrounding areas.

The partnership / cooperative methods of working have operated successfully for the project and significant mutual benefits have accrued.

The initial research and preparatory work carried out during the life of the application to LHF has ensured that the work of the project could commence in a timely manner following notification of a successful Lottery application submission. This has ensured that:
   a. the need for the proposed work could be clearly evidenced
   b. there was a clarity and focus around the work from the beginning, which allowed for targeted and professional promotion and marketing of the project
   c. the project would have the necessary support from other professionals
   d. individuals and groups would want to engage with it
   e. effective partnerships with other wildlife / countryside organisations and groups could be established and maintained.

12   Recommendations

Develop a more structured monitoring and evaluation process for volunteers.

Instigate follow up conversations with people who don’t continue as volunteers.

Build upon the success of the Badgers for Beginners courses and consider making a small charge for the courses in the future and to offer higher level and more comprehensive training topics.

13   Acknowledgements

The evaluator would like to express their thanks to everyone who contributed to this study.

J Clifton
Devon Associates
10.06.17
### Appendix 1: Partnership Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership Work</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Resources offered</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>Partnership agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Scottish Badger Week o 20 -28 May 2017; including a launch event at Falls of Clyde on 19th May with MSPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lanarkshire Council</td>
<td>Joint working</td>
<td>Land for training, meeting rooms and office space. Use of SLC land at Chatelherault and Eddlewood for DNA research Use of SLC sites for trail camera placement and use of indoor venue for viewing footage Talks and training at SLC venues/sites Use of SLC personnel</td>
<td>26 volunteer guided badger survey days 19 guided sett monitoring sessions Four Badger watches Badgers for Beginners courses at Chatelherault - Autumn 2016 (11 participants) Spring 2017 (15 participants) Registered Badger Worker Level One training at Chatelherault - Spring 2017 (11 participants) Basic Wildlife Crime Awareness course at Chatelherault - Spring 2017 (19 participants) Badger Awareness course for those undertaking practical conservation tasks, at Chatelherault Spring 2017 (15 participants) Scottish Badgers Autumn lecture at Chatelherault - Autumn 2016 (40 attendees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde &amp; Avon Valley Landscape Partnership</td>
<td>Co-operative working</td>
<td>promoting the project and events through social media Login rights to their events section to upload project events</td>
<td>The project has taken part in their Annual Wildlife Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSPB, Baron’s Haugh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilities on-site</td>
<td>Conducted volunteer survey work on site Badgers for Beginners course to take place on site in year two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix: 2 Year One: Inputs and Outputs

### Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>volunteering events [including badger surveys] delivered:</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training events delivered:</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth events delivered</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lectures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new volunteers recruited</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>badger setts located and recorded</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equivalent volunteer days:</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteer hours logged:</td>
<td>1056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers undertaking training</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young people engaged in events:</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badger setts showing signs of crime</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Example of feedback form for schools work

Scottish Wildlife Trust /Scottish Badger Mammal Roadshow Feedback Form

Dear Teacher,
We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill out our feedback form. Your views help us to continually innovate and provide the very best educational support we can.

Date of Visit: Name: School / Class:
How do you rate the visit in terms of (please circle/highlight appropriate):

- Content
- Links to Curriculum
- Quality of Teaching
- Suitability of activity
- Ability of staff to enthuse children

1 Poor 2 3 4 Excellent

On a scale of 1 – 10 how likely would you be to recommend us to a colleague/ another school?

Not likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Extremely likely

Did you plan our visit as part of the New Curriculum for Excellence?

Do you have any suggestions that would help us to improve further? Are there any materials that would help you plan our visit better?

What did the class find most useful?

Would you be interested in a follow up visit or further activities?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form.

Please return it to us before 3pm today

THANK YOU!
Appendix 4: Feedback from Volunteers

Feedback from volunteer A, who joined the surveys after a bereavement:
*Those who haven’t been out on the volunteer badger surveys yet don’t know what they are missing. When we are out on surveys it’s not only great to survey for setts but it’s really great as well to see the beautiful nature around us in a peaceful setting. We see deer, birds, and other wildlife and plants. I would highly recommend joining the badger surveys.*

Volunteer B
*Volunteering with Scottish Badgers has allowed me to learn so much about badgers and Scottish Wildlife more widely. It’s developed skills I never knew I had and has allowed me to really feel like the volunteering I am doing is making a difference to protect and raise awareness of these wonderful animals. I now edit the newsletter and help out at various events as well as getting out and about surveying setts and monitoring them, and I have made some really great friendships at the same time. I can’t recommend it strongly enough!*

**Wider/additional benefits stated from year one feedback:**

- Stress relief by being out in nature
- Taking their mind off recent bereavement
- Improvement in fitness & mobility (one volunteer used the surveys as part of a step challenge)
- Improved confidence being outdoors and navigating in the outdoors
- Making new friends
- Learning about other wildlife from leaders and other volunteers e.g. plants, birds, fungi etc.
- Opportunity to get involved in other aspects of the project that they hadn’t signed up for at the outset e.g. DNA research project, trail camera project etc.
- Access to additional training both outwith and through the project e.g. Basic Wildlife Crime Awareness through Scottish Badgers and water vole training through South Lanarkshire Council
- Recording for other initiatives and learning about those species e.g. invasive plant species, bees.
- Finding out about volunteering opportunities outwith the project and joining other volunteer initiatives e.g. Clyde Corridor Badger Survey
- Gaining the confidence to progress to Level One Registered Badger Worker training.