

The Scottish Beekeepers' Association (SCIO)

Development Plan 2022-2024



Supporting Scotland's Bees and Beekeepers



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Background

1. 2022 marks the 110th anniversary of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association. During this time, the Association has seen and responded to many changes. However, in the three years since the last development plan, the scale and pace of change have, arguably, been greater than ever, as humanity has responded to changes, both expected and unexpected, in the climate, the environment, and society. The SBA Development Plan 2022-2024 describes how the Association will achieve its mission and objectives in this dynamic future world.
2. The challenge is considerable. Climate change is altering weather patterns and raising temperatures globally, affecting all living things, including bees and the plants they feed on and pollinate. Human activity is putting ever more pressure on the environment, threatening the existence of the habitats and ecosystems that support pollinators. The risk to apiculture in Scotland posed by diseases such as European Foulbrood (EFB) and American Foulbrood (AFB), pests such as Varroa, and invasive non-native species, e.g. Asian Hornet, remains as high as ever. At a political level, the departure of the UK from the European Union has changed how international animal health and pest control, including beekeeping, must be conducted. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the ability of beekeepers to engage in their craft. Restrictions in travel and socialising have necessitated new ways of working. Many of which will change traditional operating practices permanently.
3. However, there are also positive signs for the future. Society is now much more aware of the impact for humanity if the damage being caused to the environment continues unabated. This understanding includes the vital role bees perform in sustaining critical functions such as food production. As a result, there is increased engagement by people of all ages in protecting the natural resources and ecosystems that support life, including beekeeping. This engagement is being reflected in an increase in the investment by governments and industry in environmental protection and sustainability. Scotland has played its part in this response, conducting two events in 2021 that will inform the future of beekeeping. Internationally, the UN climate talks at the Conference of the Parties 26 (COP26)), held in Glasgow, achieved significant commitments from the global community to tackle climate change. Nationally, the Scottish Government, in partnership with the Bee Health Improvement Partnership (BHIP), completed a ten-year review of Scotland's inaugural Honeybee Health Strategy and is due to publish their plan for the next ten years shortly. Finally, advances in technology are helping beekeepers conduct their craft more efficiently and effectively. The use of digital platforms and social media enabling them to gather, share, and access information more quickly and in greater quantities than ever.

Our Vision

4. The SBA was founded to promote interest in honeybees and beekeeping and act as a central focus for all local beekeepers' associations in Scotland. It is dedicated to advancing the art and science of beekeeping and assisting all who pursue and support it. In addition, it encourages

healthy beekeeping practices in Scotland, provides education and information about apiculture, and represents beekeepers on issues affecting their interests. Our vision for the future is to be:

A forward-looking organisation, structured and organised to meet the needs of its members now and in the future, championing apiculture locally, nationally and globally to safeguard the future of beekeeping in Scotland, promote ethical and sustainable practices, and support the protection of the environment.

Purpose

5. The SBA's purpose is to support honeybees and beekeepers, improve the standard of beekeeping, and promote honeybee products in Scotland through the advancement and promotion of:

- Education in relation to the craft of beekeeping.
- The heritage, culture and science of beekeeping.
- Environmental protection by the conservation of the honeybee.

Objectives

6. The work of the Association is focused on delivering four primary objectives:

- Providing a range of activities, events, services and education to the Association's members and supporters as appropriate to their needs.
- Providing a range of activities, events and services to the general public.
- To consult and engage in dialogue with our members, supporters, the public, other organisations and agencies.
- To promote and encourage the research and dissemination of knowledge and information on the environmental and economic importance of Scottish honeybees and beekeeping.

Values

7. The SBA conducts its business ethically and in full compliance with all appropriate laws and regulations. It operates to a strict code of values that govern and guide its actions and decisions. These values are:

- **Inclusiveness.** We recognise the interdependence of all beekeepers in Scotland and strive to include everyone, whether they keep bees for enjoyment or commercial purposes.

- **Responsiveness.** We are committed to responding quickly and thoughtfully to any urgent issue that could potentially affect beekeepers or the well-being of honeybees.
- **Engagement** - We are committed to ongoing dialogue and engagement through a variety of means with our members, local associations and supporters to further the mission of the SBA.
- **Collaboration** - We work in partnership with a broad range of organisations, agencies, charities and initiatives locally, nationally and globally to strengthen our strategic impact.
- **Science-based research and information** - The information and training we support are based on the most up-to-date research and analysis from Scotland and globally
- **Environmental responsibility** - We are committed to strategies and policies that support and advance a sustainable environment, including rich, diverse and connected habitats that can support pollinators.

Future Development

8. The SBA understands that while the needs of bees have remained constant over time, the needs of beekeepers are continually changing. The Association commits to continuing to cater for the needs of all beekeepers and meeting the expectations of the wider community and regulators. It seeks to achieve its vision, fulfil its purpose and deliver its objectives over the next three years by developing its capabilities across the following lines of development.

- **Membership.** The membership is the lifeblood of the SBA. The Association will seek to grow and diversify its membership, helping sustain the future of honeybee stocks and beekeeping in Scotland and supporting individuals throughout their beekeeping life. This approach will include providing members greater control and access to their accounts and data, widening the scope, quality and availability of services offered by the Association, and expanding the awareness and appeal of the SBA to other areas of society, particularly young people and education establishments.
- **Service Delivery.** The SBA will exploit the benefits of technology, simplifying and streamlining its business processes to improve operational efficiency and enhance the overall experience of its members and the general public. The key to this will be implementing a web-based platform called 'Magentrix'. This initiative will rationalise existing systems and provide new capabilities that will significantly improve the delivery of the Association's outputs. It will include using modular and video systems to deliver online beekeeper education and training, including assisting teachers in the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) Nat 5 education system. The SBA will also capitalise on the advances in communication made during COVID-19, enhancing our use of social media, online platforms and electronic messaging to meet the changing

information needs of stakeholders.

- **Engagement.** The SBA champions beekeeping locally, nationally and globally by engaging with its members, supporters and followers, as well as numerous committees and forums. The Association will expand its influence and further its aims through these channels, building and securing the support and resources the SBA needs to fulfil its development objectives now and in the future. It will continue to raise awareness of the charity and its purpose with individuals, groups, organisations, and funding bodies and develop innovative new partnerships with stakeholders across many sectors, e.g. apiculture, environment, education and industry.
- **Governance.** To meet the management challenges, legal and regulatory requirements and ever more congested schedules of the future, organisations will need to be increasingly agile, flexible, and responsive. The SBA will improve its governance by establishing new structures and processes that will enhance decision-making and better define and delegate responsibilities to offer more satisfying and fulfilling roles to its volunteers and supporters.

Summary

9. As we embark on a new Development Plan and look ahead to the next three years, honeybees, beekeepers, bee farmers, and other stakeholders will continue to face many changes and challenges, whether environmental, economic or regulatory. The SBA is determined to meet these challenges. Over the last three years, the Association has done excellent work in unprecedented and uniquely difficult circumstances. The lessons we have learned from this experience form the springboard for the SBA's future development. The central pillars of this development are improving service delivery through technology, strengthening our membership, raising awareness and expanding partnerships, and improving governance. These initiatives will be developed by sub-committee groups to ensure the SBA successfully achieves its goals and that honeybees and beekeeping in Scotland thrive.