



The Scottish Beekeepers' Association

The SBA is a Scottish Charities Incorporated Organisation, SCO 09345

ABA Secretary's Manual

Updated by AW/ABR June 2024

This manual has been compiled in two sections.

Section One

Provides Secretaries of SBA Affiliated Beekeepers Associations (ABAs) with a list of recommended actions to ensure a smooth transition at the point of changeover.

This will ensure information is passed between you and your successor/predecessor and provide the correct communication channels with the SBA to enable the uninterrupted operation of your ABA.

Section Two

This section enables you to access information on how to carry out your secretarial duties.

Included is a list of duties, access to resources and information about the Insurance & Compensation Scheme, the SBA and other organisations.

Secretaries Manual	1
Section One	3
Section Two.....	3
General	3
Duties	3
1. Organise	3
2. Members Lists	3
3. Programme	3
4. Equipment	3
5. Keeping Minutes	3
6. Annual General Meeting (AGM):	3
7. Compliance with the Law	3
8. Spray Liaison Scheme.....	3
9. Honey Show Committee	3
10. Beekeeping Equipment	3
11. SBA Outreach Officer.....	3
12. SBA Membership:	3
13. Examinations	3
14. The Moir Library.....	3
15. Communications.....	3
16. SBA AGM & Secretaries Meeting:	3
The Scottish Beekeeping Association	3
Structure	3
Area Representatives	3
Meetings.....	3
Shows and Events	3
Association Nominated Awards	3
The Insurance & Compensation Scheme	3
Education.....	3
Other Associated Organisations	3
BeeBase.....	3
Scottish Government Rural Payments & Inspections Directorate.....	3
CONBA.....	3
BIBBA	3
BFA.....	3
IBRA	3
Apimondia.....	3
Risk Assessment Guidance.....	3
Five-step risk assessment	3

Section One

Below is a list of keys tasks required to ensure a smooth transition during a changeover of an ABA secretary.

1. Your association will probably hold an inventory of items. Check if it is up to date and all items are correctly listed and accounted for.
2. Copies of at least the last three committee meeting minutes are required to obtain and check the status of all action items.
3. Obtain a copy on your association's current constitution and read it carefully. Make sure that your association is following the aims laid down in it and that you understand any procedures and timescales stated within it.
4. Does your association have a spray liaison officer in post? Some associations appoint their secretary to this post. If that is the case, make sure that you are aware of the tasks involved and contact your members to remind them of your role in reporting any incidents.
5. You need to advise the SBA of the new position you now hold. At the moment you need to email the Membership Officer (so that you receive a copy of the magazine and SBA emails) and the Education Officer (so you receive certificates as your members pass SBA exams). The SBA systems will be updated to display the change on the SBA website at

<https://scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/about-the-sba/abas/>

Their contact details can be found on the SBA website under About the SBA.

Section Two

General

As a secretary of an SBA Affiliated Beekeeping Association (ABA) you hold a key position locally. Handled properly, you will gain the satisfaction of knowing that the successful running of the association is largely due to your organisation. It is not simply a case of writing up the minutes and any letters required. It is to help you to gain that satisfaction that this manual has been written. It is based on considerable past experience, but the SBA trustees are always seeking ways to improve what is offered.

If you have suggestions for this manual, please pass them on to the SBA Outreach Officer.

Duties

Below is the list of the principal duties that most ABA Secretaries need to carry out.

- 1. Organise** the smooth running of the Association generally. A good Secretary can often lighten his/her burden by delegating some responsibilities to capable local members, but it is sensible to maintain overall control.
- 2. Members Lists** need to be maintained, to include all members and their type of membership. Ensure that your use of membership records is in compliance with the Data Protection Act. This means you must inform your members of what records you keep, and you must not disclose any member's retained details without their written consent.
- 3. Programme** events for the months ahead and arrange speakers and venues. This is normally done at a committee meeting, but suggestions should also be invited from the members. The interest of the members must be maintained at all costs, by establishing a regular pattern of meetings. Some associations divide the year into two parts, summer/winter. This allows greater flexibility in the type of meetings held.

In Summer on-site meetings at the association's apiary, visits to members' apiaries, and visits to professional beekeepers or suppliers of equipment in the district may be held. However, if theft or vandalism is present in the district many beekeepers may be unwilling to reveal their sites, so discretion is needed. Winter is the time for indoor activities, talks from visiting speakers/online talks, demonstrations by the more expert members, quizzes, and inter-association meetings.

The SBA provides a list of approved speakers. This list is available from the SBA General Secretary and when updated will be emailed out to secretaries.

If you would like your events to be publicised, please send your association's finalised programme to the editor of *The Scottish Beekeeper*, for inclusion of

your meetings in the Events section of the website. (Aim to send it when you circulate the information to your members – then you won't forget!). In this way a useful melting pot of ideas accumulates, reflecting the calendars of events of different associations.

Please try to carry out this important task.

- 4. Equipment** needed at meetings should be made available and someone designated to be present to take charge. This is especially important at outdoor meetings where bees are being handled, and where inexperienced people may be present.

A risk assessment must be completed before any such apiary meeting involving bees (see example form page 13). You should advise those involved of the Insurance & Compensation Scheme terms with regard to any accidents or loss of equipment or bees.

Any refreshments customarily provided should also be arranged, and any costs collected and accounted for.

Arrangements with speakers should be confirmed well in advance. Also arrange any accommodation required for the speaker, ensure that speakers have their expenses paid promptly, preferably before they leave the meeting.

- 5. Keeping Minutes:** A record should be kept of the attendees and conduct of each business meeting in the form of minutes. This avoids any disagreement later, on the course of action decided at that meeting. At the start of the next business meeting the minutes of the previous meeting must be approved, either having been read at that meeting or, alternatively, after they have been circulated to the members before the meeting.

- 6. Annual General Meeting (AGM):** You are advised to check the association's constitution to familiarise yourself with its requirements regarding the AGM. Arrange the time and place for the AGM and circulate all members as to the arrangements, giving advance notice as required. An agenda should be prepared and sent out with this notice. One of the items could be an invitation to make suggestions on future meetings or speakers. At the AGM it is also universal practice to present the accounts for the past year, so it is important that the association's treasurer is warned of this well in advance, and is able to prepare his/her final accounts and report in time.

- 7. Compliance with the Law:** Ensure that your association is in full compliance with the laws governing its activities.

If any of your association meetings are attended by young persons under the age of eighteen or by vulnerable adults, and there are any occasions on which any such person is not accompanied by an adult with the duty of a parent or

carer for that young person or vulnerable adult, then in the eyes of the law, that duty of care devolves on those running the meeting, who are deemed to be a "*in child care position*". That duty involves submitting themselves to full checking for any criminal record through Disclosure Scotland, and possibly undergoing an approved training programme.

This can be a costly process but as an ABA you are eligible to free Disclosure Scotland checks through the SBA.

For further information see the SBA website or contact our General Secretary.

- 8. Spray Liaison Scheme:** Set up a suitable liaison scheme between the association and all spray contractors in the district to try to forestall the risks involved in spraying. Your own association spray liaison officer will find it helpful to keep in touch with the SBA's markets convener (see trustee list) who monitors the situation with regard to spraying throughout Scotland.
- 9. Honey Show Committee:** Should you normally run a local honey show, ensure this committee is appointed at an AGM or committee meeting, to take charge of organising the local honey show for your members. Many ABAs have contacts with a local horticultural show or other body which will house a honey show, but otherwise the task may fall entirely on your association. This can become an onerous task and is better left to a sub-committee whose members can refer to the main committee as required.

The SBA website has a list of approved honey judges to assist with this. Again, this is available from the SBA General Secretary.

- 10. Beekeeping Equipment:** You may wish to appoint someone to organise bulk purchase of consumables for your members. Be on your guard to ensure that all money is collected on receipt of the equipment – i.e. cash and carry. Many associations make this attractive to members by running it on a non-profit basis but that is up to the individual association.
- 11. SBA ABA Outreach Officer (SBA OR):** Maintain contact with your SBA OR so that news of events or requirements can easily be passed on. The SBA OR will arrange regular online or face-to-face meetings with ABAs and you should provide them with a copy of your annual programme. Your SBA OR will require updates from you on activities throughout the year so they can, in turn, report to the trustees.
- 12. SBA Membership:** Encourage all members to become full SBA members to achieve maximum benefit from our organisation and the assurance of insurance and compensation cover.
- 13. Examinations:** Encourage members to sit the SBA examinations and assist them by arranging courses or training/mentoring using the Beekeeping Basic Certificate syllabus as a guide. When members pass the SBA's examinations the certificates will be sent to you. It is worthwhile making an occasion of the presentation of the examination certificates so that others can

see that the examinations are readily attainable by ordinary beekeepers. An ABA AGM may well be a suitable occasion.

14. **The Moir Library:** is owned by the SBA and holds one of the world's finest collections of beekeeping books. These are divided into two sections, the Rare Books and the Lending Collection. The Moir Rare Books are held on long-term loan and are housed for us by the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, EH1 1EW. The Moir Lending Collection is also held in Edinburgh and these titles can be seen and used by members of the SBA. Help promote use of this library. Many local members are unaware that it exists and boxes of books can be lent to Association.

See the SBA website or the Scottish Beekeeper magazine for the contact details of the Moir Library.

15. **Communications:** Ensure that information from the SBA and/or the Scottish Government bodies are passed on to all members as soon as possible after receipt. This is particularly important for information on diseases and changes in legal requirements. Keep a file of all such information and be sure to include anything new that has come in with your next circular to your members. Urgent matters may need to be communicated immediately.

Keep lines of communication with other ABAs open. The ABAs are listed in the SBA website – with names and contact details of all secretaries.

16. **SBA AGM:** Whenever possible attend the SBA AGM (usually April). This offers your association opportunities to raise any subject in a Scotland-wide forum, and to keep abreast of developments. Failing that, instruct your SBA OR on any point which your association wishes to raise.

The Scottish Beekeeping Association

Structure

Set up as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) the SBA consists of its members and a board of trustees. The board of trustees, elected by the members, meet regularly throughout the year. The current list of trustees is published each month inside the front cover of *The Scottish Beekeeper* magazine and is available on the SBA website. This list includes the email address and contact details of all trustees, most of whom have specific responsibilities, also listed.

SBA Outreach Officer (SBA OR)

The SBA OR is a SBA trustee, on the board, and acts as an interface with the associations and membership within each area.

It is important to foster good relationships with the SBA OR who can then serve as your first point of contact when you require help or advice.

Before each SBA board meeting your SBA OR will request an update from you so that they can prepare their report for the SBA trustees. After such meetings, they will disseminate salient information back to the secretaries within their respective areas.

Meetings

The financial year for the SBA ends on 31st December and audited accounts for that year are made available at the following AGM. This is normally held in April. Notification of the AGM is given in *The Scottish Beekeeper* magazine and on the SBA website. All members are welcome to attend and asked to bring their membership cards with them for voting purposes.

The SBA has a comprehensive website:

<https://scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/>

In the membership section you will find a list of the various categories of membership. These include full individual membership, family, life and affiliate membership, and the current subscription charges which may be adjusted from time to time.

ABAs pay an annual subscription to SBA, reduced for those ABAs with 20 or fewer members.

Shows and Events

Three principle events are run by the SBA each year:

1. **The Royal Highland Show**, based at Ingliston, Edinburgh has a Honey Tent that is run by the SBA. The Honey Show (held in the Honey Tent) is an official Highland Show event. SBA and SBA ABA Volunteers staff the tent for the duration of the show providing interaction with the public on all matters Beekeeping.
2. **The Scottish National Honey Show**
The Scottish National Honey Show may be held in conjunction with other events such as the SBA Convention. It is an open show and anyone can submit entries.
3. The **SBA Convention** is generally held in September in a suitable venue. With a variety of speakers and trade stands it is a great way to end the season and catch up with fellow beekeepers from around the country and further afield.

Association Nominated Awards

The SBA has several funds laid aside, some of which are specifically to provide prizes and awards to those who are judged to have served some particular aspect of beekeeping in an outstanding manner. Those nominated by ABAs are:

The Dr John Anderson Memorial The object of this award is to stimulate education in beekeeping throughout Scotland, to further the work of research in practical beekeeping and to perpetuate the memory of the late Dr John Anderson. It is to be awarded to members of the SBA 'in recognition of special work or service for the furtherance of beekeeping in Scotland and beyond'. The recipient of this award is decided by the Trustees.

The Local Association Award is presented in recognition of outstanding service by a member of an ABA. This award is intended to complement the Dr John Anderson Award, previously listed. The recipient will merit recognition because of the quality of their contribution to their local association and their active promotion of the art of beekeeping in the environment of that association.

They must have been a member of the SBA for not less than 7 years.

Bar to the Local Association Award, this is given for ongoing services to a local association. When a recipient of the Local Association Award continues to give outstanding service to their association, a "bar" can be awarded, adding to their original award. It is expected that the recipient will have contributed for no less than 5 more years after having received the Local Association Award

Local associations are invited annually to nominate candidates for these awards. Notice of this will be published in the *Scottish Beekeeper* magazine. Nominations are to be sent to the SBA General Secretary by 31st December. The SBA trustees

will then review these nominations and awards will be presented at the next SBA AGM.

The Insurance & Compensation Scheme

The Insurance and Compensation Scheme offers cover for individual members and ABAs. Secretaries are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the policy terms and conditions, especially in relation to apiary meetings involving bees where non-SBA members may be present. For further information see the Insurance and Compensation section of the SBA Website.

Education

The SBA trustees have always been keen to encourage beekeepers in Scotland to improve their skills and knowledge. We openly encourage members – old and new – to get involved in the examination system.

The first step is the Basic Beekeeping Certificate, or for those under 16 the Junior Beekeeper certificate (Juniors may sit the BB if they prefer) These are both practical and oral exams. The syllabus can be found on the SBA website and many ABAs use this as a template for beginners' courses.

A full list of the examination modules, each with its own syllabus, is published on the SBA website along with the examination application form.

Bee Health

One of the SBA trustees is appointed to the role of Bee Health Officer. This trustee advises the SBA board on all aspects of honey bee biology and issues such as the detection and control of bee diseases. He/she may represent the board at official meeting on these subjects including being an active member of the Scottish Government's Bee Health Improvement Partnership. The Bee Health Officer also informs and advises members on various beekeeping matters via articles, courses, emails and personal contact.

Other Associated Organisations

There are many other beekeeping and governmental organisations with which the SBA maintains close links and with whom we co-operate in trying to promote the interests of beekeepers in Scotland and beyond. Listed below are some of these organisations.

BeeBase

It is strongly recommended that all beekeepers in the UK register on the BeeBase website:

www.nationalbeeunit.com

The service is free-of-charge and confidential to the Inspectorate. This enables the Scottish Bee Inspectorate to make contact with, and advise, registered beekeepers with apiaries within an area currently affected an outbreak of a notifiable disease.

Scottish Government Rural Payments & Inspections Directorate (SGRPID)

This Scottish Government Department covers much the same area as The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for the Westminster Parliament for England & Wales. In Scotland the Scottish Government's Bee Health Team deal with all things relating to Scotland's honey bees and beekeepers, their email address is bees_mailbox@scot.gov

This department has recourse to a legal framework to help to control the spread of the more serious bee diseases. They also support a bee diseases laboratory in Edinburgh: Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) provides free diagnostic services to all beekeepers in Scotland who provide samples of suspected bee material. They also deal with suspected incidents of pesticide poisoning. Samples of dead bees, colony debris or other suspect material may be sent, for the attention of the Entomology Manager, to SASA, 1 Roddinglaw Road Edinburgh EH12 9FJ.

Currently there is also a Bee Adviser based in the Scottish Rural Colleges (SRUC). whose details are included in the Speakers List. Their lectures are available to associations in Scotland and this is supported by the Scottish Government.

Scottish Native Honey Bee Society (SNHBS) This Scottish charity was set up to promote the conservation, maintenance, breeding and study of the native Scottish honey bee.

CONBA

The Council of National Beekeeping Associations (CONBA) is the over-arching organisation of all beekeepers' associations in the UK and Ireland. Formed in 1978, CONBA represents the views of beekeepers in the UK and Ireland on several committees of the European Union which decides on EU support for beekeeping throughout Europe.

BIBBA

The Bee Improvement & Bee Breeding Association (BIBBA) was formed in 1964 and its main aim is to promote conservation, restoration, study, selection and improvement of the native or near native honey bee of Britain and Ireland.

BFA

The Bee Farmers' Association (BFA) of the UK is primarily for beekeepers who derive some or all of their income from the production of honey or bees. BFA liaises with CONBA and also has representation at the Scottish Government's Bee Health Improvement Partnership.

IBRA

The International Bee Research Association (IBRA) is a not-for-profit organisation, set up in 1949 to "increase the awareness of the vital role of bees in the environment and encourage the use of bees as wealth creators". IBRA now has an international membership.

Apimondia

Apimondia is the International Federation of Beekeepers Association with a broad membership of beekeeping associations representing many countries of the world. They hold an international congress every second year throughout the World.

Risk Assessment Guidance

Before beginning any practical procedure, you need to identify the *hazards* that may be encountered and evaluate the effect of exposure to these hazards. You should minimise the *risk* of injury, accident or ill-health to yourself and to those around you.

A *hazard* is anything that could cause harm – e.g. chemicals, smoker fire, diseased or flying bees, heavy objects, sharp instruments, steps or uneven ground. *Risk* is the chance – high to low – that somebody could be harmed by these hazards. You need to evaluate how serious the harm could potentially be, including anaphylactic shock.

You need to give special consideration to young people and those with disability. When working with the public or other beekeepers, risk assessments must be recorded in writing and reviewed regularly, especially if circumstances change. Controls should be aimed at preventing accidents and stinging by bees.

Five-step risk assessment

These are the five steps to take in completing your risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who could be harmed.
3. Evaluate the risk and assess appropriate controls
4. Record your findings, in tabular form, simply and clearly.
5. Review your risk assessment on a regular basis.

See the following page for an example of a risk assessment for a practical beekeeping event.

EXAMPLE: Beekeeping Risk Assessment

Association & Host:

Location:

Assessor & date of Risk Assessment:

Assessor & date of updated Assessment:

What are the Hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Existing measures to control risk.	Level of Risk	Is further action necessary?
Slips and Trips in apiary due to rain, or uneven surfaces	Host, participants and onlookers risk fractures or bruises if they trip over objects or slip and fall	Obstacles removed from pathways. Host, participants and onlookers advised to wear adequate footwear.	Low	- No further action for now.
Contact with washing soda	Host, participants and onlookers risk skin irritation or eye damage from direct contact with washing soda.	Brushes, sponges and rubber gloves are provided and used. All cleaning activities are undertaken outdoors.	Low	- No further action for now.
Contact with hot smoker.	Host and participants risk being burnt by lighting or holding a bee smoker.	The host will be responsible for lighting the smoker. The host will demonstrate the safe holding of the smoker to the participants. The host will only use a smoker in good condition.	Low	- No further action for now.
Lifting Heavy Boxes	Host and participants risk injure by lifting boxes more than 20KG	The host will be experienced in the safe lifting of bee keeping equipment. The host will show the participants how to safely lift any equipment	Low	- No further action for now.
Stings	Host and participants are at risk being stung by bees.	The host will ask the participants if they are allergic to bee stings before the course starts. Appropriate safety clothing will be worn at all times including veil and gloves. The host will manage the risk by judging the aggression level of the bees during the inspection. The host will have emergency phone numbers for the participants and the grid reference of the apiary site in case an ambulance is required. The host will know what action to take in case of anaphylactic shock.	Medium	- No further action for now.