



Trustees Annual Report

1st Feb 2025 – 31st Jan 2026

The South of Scotland Beekeepers' Association (SSBKA) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) that was registered in April 2018. Prior to this the SSBKA operated as a constituted organisation for many decades, providing support and education to beekeepers throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

Objectives & Activities

The Charitable purposes are:

- The advancement of education in relation to training supporting, monitoring & continued development of new & experienced beekeepers.
- The advancement of environmental protection in relation to beekeeping, by promoting the importance of the honeybee as a major pollinator to enhance food production & biodiversity, & to arrest the decline of the economically important pollinating activities of honeybees.

The charities main activities include:

- Supporting those with an interest in beekeeping in most of Dumfriesshire. Monthly meetings usually attract 30-40 members.
- Summer meetings involve practical activities usually at the hives weather permitting.
- Winter meetings involving educational lectures, honey shows, practical workshops such as candle making.
- Delivery of Beekeeping Beginners Courses involving a mixture of classroom theory work & practical hands on training at the training apiary.

Structure, Governance & Management

The charity is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). It was registered in its current legal form on 28th April 2018. The Charity was previously a constituted unincorporated association but changed its legal status to a SCIO on 24th April 2018.

It has a two-tier structure:

- The **MEMBERS** who have the right to attend members meetings (including any Annual General Meeting) & have important powers under the constitution; in particular, the members appoint people to serve on the board & take decisions on changes to the constitution itself.

- The **BOARD** who hold regular meetings, and generally control the activities of the organisation; for example, the board is responsible for monitoring & controlling the financial position of the organisation.

The full constitution can be found here - <https://membermojo.co.uk/ssbka>

Trustee Recruitment & Appointment

The trustees meet every 8/12 weeks. Trustees are elected to The Board at the AGM by the membership, and the Trustees from time to time may appoint an eligible person to the Board. Office bearers will be recruited at the first Trustee meeting following the AGM. The maximum number of Trustees is 12 and the minimum 6. The Board comprises people with a wide range of skills, knowledge & experience required to run the charity.

Charity Trustees 1st Feb 2025 – 31st Jan 2026

1. Mr John Mellis
2. Ms Debbie Parke
3. Mr Phil Collett
4. Ms Esther Papworth
5. Mrs Zoe Roberts
6. Miss Lorraine Johnston
7. Mr. Daniel McGarva
8. Mr Brian Roger
9. Mr Robbie Johnstone

Office Bearers as of 10th December 2025

1. Ms Debbie Parke – Chair
2. Mrs Zoe Roberts – Vice Chair
3. Mr Phil Collett – Secretary
4. Mrs Esther Papworth - Treasurer

Achievements and Performance

Meetings and education

Members meetings

Monthly members meetings are split between winter and summer meetings. The summer meetings were held at BeeSpace and included practical demonstrations in the apiary of various beekeeping procedures. Phil Collett ran these meetings in his capacity as Apiary Manager with the assistance of Trustees and members.

Winter meetings were held on the evening of the second Wednesday of the month in February, March, April, October, November and December 2025 and in January 2026.

These meetings included:

- February 2025 – Natural Little Bee Company
- March 2025 – Andrew Card - Loch Ness Honey Company

- April – August 2025 - Summer meetings at BeeSpace Apiary
- September 2025 – Visit to John Mellis Honey House
- October 2025 – Willie Robson - Chainbridge Honey
- November 2025 – AGM and SSBKA Honey Show
- December 2025 – Members visit to Northumberland Honey Co.
- January 2026 – Video and discussion/chat

The AGM was held on 8th November 2025.

SBA AGM

The Scottish Beekeepers Association held their AGM at the SRUC Barony Campus on Saturday 26th April. Lorraine helped organise the venue and SSBKA members made up the volunteers on the day.

2025 Beginners Course

Twelve enthusiastic new beekeepers signed up for and completed the beginners course which consisted of 4 classroom sessions in Jan 2026 and one practical apiary session in May 9. Included in the beginners was one youngster 8 years old.

SBA Exams

In 2025 the following SSBKA members studied for, sat and passed the SBA Basic Practical Exam;

- Peggy Race
- Tessa Hutchings
- Abdullah Ewas
- Joanne Lupton

Lameece Ewas completed the SBA Junior Beekeeping Exam.

Module exams – Two SSBKA members passed module exams during the year. Angela Dodd passed Module 2 in March 2025 and Abdullah Ewas passed Module 1 in November 2025.

Congratulations to all the members that passed their exams!

Swarm Control Workshop

Linda Robertson from West Galloway Beekeepers Association held a swarm control workshop at BeeSpace for SSBKA members. Sixteen members attended the workshop where they spent a full day learning about effective swarm control techniques.

Bee Health Workshop

Ten members attended a workshop covering hive autopsy, nosema and practical microscopy in February 2025.

The Apiary

Phil continued to work as apiary manager and finished the year with seven full colonies and one extended 12 frame nuc. Phil provided updates to the members by email to let them know what was happening in the apiary. All of the summer meetings were held at BeeSpace in the training apiary.

Nuc Production

Seven nucs of bees were produced as part of swarm control within the apiary. These nucs were offered for sale to members. One nuc of bees was donated to North West Community Campus (NWCC) school group.

Association honey

We produced approximately 350lbs of honey from 6 productive hives. Phil gets mileage expenses for apiary management paid in honey and which this year was approx. 210lbs of honey. The remaining honey was bottled and 186 x 12oz jars. Forty-two jars were given to speakers, neighbours, helpers and as rent to the landowner. The remaining 144 were donated to local charities and foodbanks, with each Trustee picking a cause. Those getting honey included Kate's Kitchen (Annan), River of Life Foodbank (Dumfries), Thornhill Community Food Initiative, Lothlorien Community, Kirkton Soup and Pud, Summerhill Community Centre and South Machar's Community Fridge.



Robbie presenting honey to Summerhill Community Centre

Jar and feed sales

The SSBKA used their bulk buying power to provide members with the opportunity to buy honey jars and winter feed at a very good price. With the price of jars and feed increasing so much, this enables our members to take advantage of our ability to buy by the pallet-load, resulting in lower price per unit. The organisation of this, and the distribution of the jars to all the members that have bought stock, is a very time-consuming undertaking and relies on our Trustees to co-ordinate everything. Thank you to Phil and John Mellis for continuing to order the jars and feed for us and to Esther for organising the sale and collections. This year 156 jerricans of ambrosia syrup and 109 boxes of honey jars were bought through the association by members.

Use of BeeSpace Facilities

Friday Afternoon Club

Phil set up a Friday Afternoon Club during 2025 for members to come along and join in with tasks around the apiary, swap tips and advice, drink tea and generally have a blether about bees. Thank you to everyone who has come along and helped. It meant that all the equipment is prepped ready for the 2026 season, getting us ahead of the game!

Hedge Laying

A big thank you to member Edward Kyrke who laid the hedge that surrounds the apiary at BeeSpace using traditional methods. He had help from Bob Robson with this and managed to include a day's instruction for SSBKA members plus 2 days instruction for D&G Woodlands members. This was all in January and February 2026.



Apiary hedge before and after being laid

Extraction and honey production equipment

Extraction facilities at BeeSpace were used by numerous members during 2025. BeeSpace has two large extractors, one suitable for national frames and the other fits Langstroth frames. It is possible to extract both blossom and heather honey. In addition, the honey warming cabinet, heather honey strainer and smaller extractor were all loaned out to be used elsewhere. Thank you to Robbie for co-ordinating the loan of the portable extractor to members.

External Visits

Western Galloway Beekeepers' Association visited BeeSpace on Saturday 30th August. 10 of their members came across for an afternoon, getting a look at BeeSpace facilities, an outline of how it was funded etc and a session in the apiary.

BeeSpace Garden

The garden at BeeSpace is cared for by Kath Aitken, Zoe Roberts and Bob Robson. This is no small task, and they meet every Tuesday afternoon to weed and tend the garden. Many thanks to everyone that has helped to keep our bee friendly, wildlife garden looking so wonderful!

N.B. Help on Tuesday afternoons is greatly appreciated.

General upkeep and maintenance

BeeSpace requires regular maintenance and upkeep to keep it functioning and looking good. To that end, the outside of BeeSpace was repainted during the summer of 2025 by Graeme Irving, which has made a big difference to the appearance of the building.

Unfortunately, in the spring of 2025, we had two minor disasters. Firstly, Storm Éowyn blew down a number of large trees surrounding BeeSpace. Thankfully, there was no damage to the building but they took out the electricity lines running next to BeeSpace. SPEN came and put in new poles and Sam, the forester from Cowhill, cleared all the fallen trees and remaining stumps.

Secondly, mice chewed through the plastic pipes that had been fitted into the walls when BeeSpace was renovated, causing a major water leak. Luckily, no major damage was caused to the building or any of our equipment but new pipes had to be fitted between the kitchen and the toilets. We also had the hot water heater replaced with a smaller more cost efficient model at the same time. Iain Lewis Plumbing managed to get us back up and running within a couple of weeks so we could resume members meetings and events.



Trees down after Storm Éowyn



Carpark cleared and new poles up

Swarms

Many members have helped provide a free service to the public by collecting swarms. Thanks to our swarm co-ordinator Daniel for organising this. Please don't forget that you can opt into be on the swarm collection list through the membership portal - [Sign In to membermojo](#)

The Trustees would like to thank all our members for their input to the association. Everything that is accomplished is done so by trustees and members volunteering their time and everyone's dedication and contributions are greatly appreciated.

Debbie Parke
Chair
South of Scotland Beekeepers Association
Scottish Charity: SC048334