

# BCT – how is it doing?



## The results

### Overview

The exercise in January/February 2007 to obtain feedback and opinions about BCT was, we estimate, circulated to around 6,000 people across the bat world (a circulation greatly assisted by many individuals passing the questionnaire on to others). From that exercise we received 1,193 replies for analysis, a level of response which is simply outstanding for a mailed questionnaire (with around 15% of BCT members and around 14% of bat group members responding) and means that the conclusions we can draw from the results can be taken as being representative of the bat world.

Although there were a number of respondents unhappy with various aspects of BCT, overall there was a high degree of satisfaction with BCT and how things were operating. Interestingly, however, there was also a high belief that although things were OK there was still room for improvement in a number of areas. The principal areas of concern identified across the questionnaire covered:

- Working relationships** – especially that between BCT and bat groups
- Communication** – between BCT and the bat world (both ways)
- Consultation and representation** – clearly linked with communication
- Support** – especially for active bat workers

Other areas of concern were also identified and information on these can be found in the detailed reports.

It is worth noting that although 23% of respondents identified issues which they believe BCT need to have reviewed, only 11% of respondents indicated that these issues **must** be reviewed, even if that resulted in other conservation work being under-funded or sidelined (this percentage rose to 15% for BCT members and to 19% for bat group members). Although this falls far short of a majority, the survey has highlighted crucial areas of concern, especially with regard to how BCT and the bat world currently work together and how they communicate and exchange news, views and ideas, which are key aspects of any relationship.

### Next steps

Therefore a review will take place with the aim of developing a working relationship which improves communication and consultation between BCT and the various constituents of the bat world, with a particular focus on BCT members and bat groups along with volunteers and others whose main employment involves bats who may not be part of these two groups. This review will also look at what model of representation would best suit this revised working relationship, what the responsibilities of all parties should be and the type of support required to make it all work.

This is clearly an ambitious project which it is believed will require 12 months to complete. It will require the appointment of an individual who can dedicate their time to this review and a project team (whose structure has yet to be determined) to manage it. The project team will report to the BCT Board of Trustees. The final brief

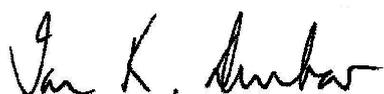
for this review is currently being drawn up so as yet we do not have any costs and they could be quite high. Therefore external funding for this review is to be sought. However, the BCT Board of Trustees has agreed that this project should go ahead, regardless of whether external funding is available or not.

One inescapable fact revealed by the survey is that, not unexpectedly, views around the bat world differ and in some instances they are diametrically opposed. It will, therefore, be impossible to establish a workable system which enables anyone, or any body, to claim they represent **everyone's** views, so there will be situations when decisions are made and opinions expressed with which others disagree, sometimes strongly. What is important, however, is that whatever system is put in place it operates quickly and efficiently and enables individuals and groups to make their news, views and ideas known and reassures them that they have been heard and their views considered. This, the BCT Board of Trustees accepts did not work with regards to last year's Defra/rabies issue, a fact that a number of respondents refer to in their completed questionnaires, and the Board has acknowledged that, in hindsight, some aspects of its communication with regard to this research could have been better.

## Thank you

We are indebted to all of you who helped distribute the questionnaire and to all of you who took the time to complete as much of the questionnaire as you felt able to. We recognise that it was not a simple questionnaire, but it presented an opportunity to explore a number of issues and we took advantage of that opportunity.

We are also grateful for the time given to the project by the working group, particularly for their painstaking analysis of the text box responses.



Ian Dunbar  
Chair, BCT Board of Trustees



Nick Tomlinson  
Chair, Bat Group Forum

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NB. Three reports have been produced from the questionnaires. One presents the key findings (BCTQuestionnaire2007-keyfindings.pdf), one the analysis for the questions which provided a pre-selected range of answers (spilt into two files, BCTQuestionnaire2007-tables.pdf and BCTQuestionnaire2007-tables-appendixQ9&Q21.pdf) and the third report presents the analysis of answers entered in the text boxes (BCTQuestionnaire2007-textboxentries.pdf).