



BCT-Bat Group Relationships Frequently Asked Questions

This document should be read in conjunction with the Partner Agreement, Network Agreement and associated appendices, which are available from the BCT website http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/resources_for_bat_groups.html.

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1. What are the formal BCT-Bat Group relationship options?

Bat Groups may wish to become either a BCT Partner Group or a Network Group.

BCT and Partner Groups have a shared understanding that, by working together (or at least maintaining a close relationship so that we can better understand each other’s work), both BCT and the Partner Group can achieve more for bat conservation.

Network Groups, on the other hand, are those that simply wish to stay in contact with BCT.

Both of these relationship options are underpinned by memorandums of understanding, known as Partner and Network Agreements, which are reviewed and signed annually. These agreements set out expectations (in terms of collaborative working and communication) on both sides of the relationship. They also provide a mechanism by which BCT can ensure information about Partner and Network Groups is up to date, thereby facilitating a greater ability to support and communicate with those groups.

2. How is this approach different from BCT affiliation?

The Partner and Network Agreements supersede BCT affiliation.

During extensive consultation with the bat world between 2008 and 2010, it became clear that there was much confusion regarding the term affiliation: some viewed it as symbolic of a close working relationship, whilst others aligned affiliation more closely with insurance cover.

The Partner and Network Agreements facilitate far greater transparency and ensure that relationships are annually reviewed and updated.

3. Are Partner and Network Agreements legal documents?

No. The Partner and Network Agreements are memorandums of understanding. Whilst they do require a signature, their main purpose is to help both sides be clear about expectations in the working relationship.

If either party does not meet those expectations, there will be an opportunity to discuss why/address any underlying problems at the annual meeting (for Partner Groups) or over the phone (for Partner and Network Groups). In a worst case scenario, one or both parties might agree that a different relationship category is more appropriate. However, there will be no legal repercussions.

4. What is the benefit of becoming a Partner Group?

A summary of what Partner Groups (and Network Groups) can expect from BCT is provided in Appendix 2 of the Partner/Network agreements. However, the agreements are not only about what each group gets from the agreement; they ultimately represent a shared understanding that both parties can achieve more for bat conservation by working cooperatively.

5. What does it cost to be a Partner or Network Agreement?

Nothing. Bat groups can sign up to either agreement free of charge.

If a group requires cover under BCT's third party liability insurance (i.e. if the group does not have cover elsewhere) we do ask for a donation towards associated administration costs, however. The suggested donation amount is based on the group's average annual income, and the type of agreement they are signing up to (i.e. Partner or Network). More detailed information is provided in the agreement appendices.

6. You say it costs nothing to be a Partner Group, but then ask Partner Groups to contribute to the annual Bat Group appeal – how does this work?

We only ask groups to consider making a contribution that's affordable to the group.

Bat group projects, equipment and training must take priority. However, we do ask that if the group has any excess funds in a year, it considers donating to the bat group appeal. This is because we really struggle to find match funding for projects such as the Investigations Project, which is important not only because it provides an Officer who can respond quickly, and provide support advice, where bat crime is suspected, but also because through this project, Wildlife Crime Liaison Officers are trained in bat ecology and bat law, so are far better placed to act when cases do arise. And we are wholly reliant on the kind donations of bat groups to keep these kinds of projects going.

Therefore we do ask groups to keep these projects in mind when looking at future spending.

7. Will Network Groups be given a separate 'Network Group' BCT logo?

No, there will only be a 'Partner Group' BCT logo. If groups that were formally affiliated to BCT opt to become a Network Group, they will be asked to phase out the use of the old logo.

8. Partner Groups are asked to provide an opt-in tick box on membership leaflets so that details can be shared by BCT. What will these details be used for?

BCT membership leaflets have an opt-in tick box that states “would you like your details passed on to a local bat group”. When our members tick “yes” we then send their details to the group, who can in turn send details of forthcoming events and/or bat group membership. We ask Partner Groups to phase a similar sentence into new membership leaflets.

If contact details of a bat group member are sent to us as a result, we will send that person a general introductory email/letter with information about the National Bat Monitoring Programme, training courses, resources on our website and details of how to join information. Their email will not be stored on file, so they will not be contacted further, unless they approach us to do so.

9. How are Partner Group Nominated Trustees nominated and selected?

There may be up to four partner group nominated trustees on the BCT Board at any one time. When a space becomes vacant, existing trustees will contact all Partner Groups and ask for nominees.

If there is more than one nominee, and only one position, Partner Groups will be invited to vote for their preferred candidate. Once a preferred candidate has been agreed, this will be put to the BCT member vote at the AGM.

Please note that the group can nominate anyone as a regular trustee at any stage and this will not require a Partner Group vote. In such cases, the nominee will be invited to meet with representatives from the Board. If the Board agrees with the nomination, the vote, again, will be put to BCT members at the subsequent AGM.