



## Scottish Beaver Trial

### Local Stakeholders Forum meeting

Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, 10.30am

Present and apologies: See end.

Abbreviations:

- ABC** – Argyll and Bute Council
- BSWG** – Beaver Salmonid Working Group
- FCS** – Forestry Commission Scotland
- RZSS** – Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
- NSRF** – National Species Reintroduction Forum
- SBT** – Scottish Beaver Trail
- SG** – Scottish Government
- SNH** – Scottish Natural Heritage
- TBSG** – Tayside Beaver Study Group

#### 1. Welcome and introduction from the Chair.

In the absence of Sandy Taylor, Andrew Taylor (SG) stood in as Chair and welcomed everyone and introductions were made all round.

#### 2. Minutes and Action points from previous meeting.

- **Action point 4 – Simon Jones SJ to liaise with local accommodation providers regarding the potential collection of SBT visitor data from guests.**  
SJ – This is connected with independent monitoring and will be covered during the meetings presentations.
- **Action point 1 – SJ to look into issue regarding local name places RE: Achnamara**  
SJ – Wording has been changed on the SBT website to accommodate local place names  
Jane Allan JA – happy with changes
- **Action point 2. SJ to forward draft of Visitor Welcome Pack.**  
SJ – the Welcome pack is now the Tourism Tool Kit available now on the SBT website

JA – Stated that the bench on Lochan Buic (Seafield Loch) has been replaced

SJ – Asked if the bench was FCS replacement?

Ian McKee IM – replied yes however the jetty is a different matter

**ACTION POINT 1: IM to liaise with angling club in regards to upgrading/repairing the jetty on Lochan Buic**

JA – Stated that the jetty is getting to a stage that it is dangerous

- All Parties agree that the minutes are a true and accurate account of the last meeting.

### 3. Overview of Scottish Beaver Trial actions and progress to date – SBT partners

#### **Presentation from Rob Needham RN (SBT)**

- 3 Dubh Loch kits are missing presumed dead
- Yearling on Lochan Buic named “Woody”
- Yearling on Loch Linne named “Logan “
- Next fieldwork survey will begin in April
- Accidental trapping of badger at Dubh Loch in Bavarian Trap. First time this has happened in 2 years of trapping, badger was released unharmed
- Lodge watches for any 2013 kits will begin June and July
- Lodge on Loch Coillie Bharr appears to be no longer used, beavers have moved to Dubh Loch
- The final year of the Trial will include a full sweep of the area for any dispersed animals
- New lodge on Lochan Beag
- New canals on Dubh Loch and field signs – full sweep of area in April
- Beaver Husbandry Guide will be published by the end of next month
- Beaver Genome Project nearing completion. This will inform of the genetic health and diversity of a range of beaver populations across Europe.

Mike MacIntyre **MM** – Is there an update on dispersed adults?

**RN** – No, no signs of any of these animals. Any reports or potential sightings from the public are immediately followed up by a visit from the SBT field team, but not other signs found to date except old (2 years +) field signs from island of Shuna.

#### **Education, liaison, Media and Marketing presentation from Simon Jones SJ**

Education summary. Since start of SBT in May 2009:

- 300 Events with 13,148 participants
- 74 schools and colleges with 3616 students (18 Argyll schools involved)
- 2 Teacher training days
- Development ideas for high school children
- SBT ranger appointed in April 2012
- 41 volunteers/student placements

Liaising

- 3 ministerial visits arranged for 2013
- New lesson ‘Beavers at Home’ developed for schools, based on feedback received from teachers
- Adoption certificate for the girl who named “Woody”
- Website changes – aimed at main visitor season (Easter – late Summer).
- ‘Scottish Beaver Trial Tourism Toolkit’; now more information and easier to access available through SBT website including; photographs, video, guides and Virtual Guided Tour. Based on feedback from local businesses
- Regular updates and news on SBT Blog, Facebook page and Twitter
- ‘Scottish Beaver Trial Beaver Tourism Experience’ held at Cairnbaan Hotel on 28<sup>th</sup> February. SJ keen to get feedback from businesses who attended the event on business details

Media

- Ray Mears “Wild Britain” will be aired on STV soon (already aired in England and Wales 8/2/13), SJ will release the date once known
- Great British Winter programme aired 7/3/13
- Potential new ITV Natural History series at early stages
- Easter bookings coming through
- Joining up with European wide festival ‘Beaver Spring’

## Final year Plans

- Continued development of field work and education programmes
- Working together with the Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance
- Will carry out an end of trial public consultation exercise, focusing on previous respondents and stakeholders
- End of **SBT** = May 2014
- “Holding phase” with beavers remaining in place and reduced monitoring over 2014 -2015
- SG decision due to be announced in 2015

## Questions

Robin Malcolm **RM** – Worried about the end of the trial – in regards to numbers of staff left to monitor/look after the beavers, concerned that catch or removal of dispersed animals will not be able to be completed.

**SJ** – should SG decide to remove the beavers, then probable that humane destruction will be carried out by skilled FCS stalkers.

Issues – missing animals – there are continuous efforts in place to search for dispersed animals, there are no field signs at present and so it is unknown if the animals are missing or dead.

**SBT** partners have a responsibility to search and remain to deal with dispersed animals and any management issues. The end of the project will mean a reduction in staff but there will still be a **SBT** staff presence on the ground along with staff resources from FCS and SNH.

## 4. Update on access and recreation within the trail area – Forestry Commission Scotland

### **IM supplied copies of viewing platform to all**

- Flag posts have been moved in Dubh Loch area which were previously around Loch Coille Bharr
- People counters have now been fixed
- New people counter for cars was installed at Barnluasgan car park in November 2012
- Some work completed in the nearby Oakwood Trail – (2 of the 3 sides) Paths upgrades with stones steps replacing old ones, 3<sup>rd</sup> side will be completed winter 2013
- Plan of new viewing platform (overleaf) with work beginning 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April 2013 at a cost of £26,500. £21, 500 supplied from FCS wildlife viewing budget and remaining £5000 from **SBT** partners. Due to be a mid-May finish.

## 5. Update on Beaver Trail Monitoring Programme - Scottish Natural Heritage

### **Information delivered by Karen Taylor KA (SNH)**

**KT** – noted that Prof. Dominic Moran of Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC, formerly SAC) who is leading on the socio-economic monitoring of the **SBT** was unable to attend, but SNH would continue to seek a way to present the work undertaken by SRUC to the Forum.

Monitoring is in its final year and all field work is on track with 12 Interim Reports published so far. However there is a slight backlog in the QA / publishing process for some of the interim reports which SNH will deal with in the coming months. Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April saw the annual Research and Monitoring Coordination Group Meeting

**SNH** and **SG** will look at how to present the final results. Deadline for all reports, results will be May 2015. **SNH** reports and recommendations will be delivered to **SG**.

Final report will also include information and findings from **TBSG**, **NSRF**, **BSWG**, Beaver Genome Project and various European experiences.

Biodiversity review will be part of the SNH report, looking at the recorded impacts of beavers on other biodiversity. Beaver ecology and population modelling review will also be included.

**SNH** currently looking at how to present all of this to **SG** in time for 2015.

#### 6. Open Q and A session – Chair

**MM** – Timing and output, do you monitor July – September of 2014?

**KT** – Yes, some specific monitoring activities may happen over these months. To be agreed in discussion with SBT and the Independent monitoring partners.

**MM** – Time to publish, will it all be published by May 2015?

**KT** – Some reports are still to be published but will be done by 2014. Final year reports deadlines everything will be submitted by May 2015

**RM** – main gap – concerns regarding: damage (effect from beavers) on other businesses. Here in Knapdale the damage done by beavers is limited but how is the damage by Tayside beavers being monitored?

**AT** – Tayside damage is being monitored by new TBSG, monitoring is now in conjunction with Knapdale Beavers. Work on mitigation methods to local areas

**RM** – Will SG take TBSG into account?

**AT** – Yes, will monitor along with SBT and other experiences in Europe.

**DB** – Will the full scientific reports be available to the public or be confidential?

**AT** – Published reports are available at present but future publication releases will be decided later.

**JA** – What is the timeframe for decision due to numbers of animals on Tayside?

**AT** – Decision unknown at this time

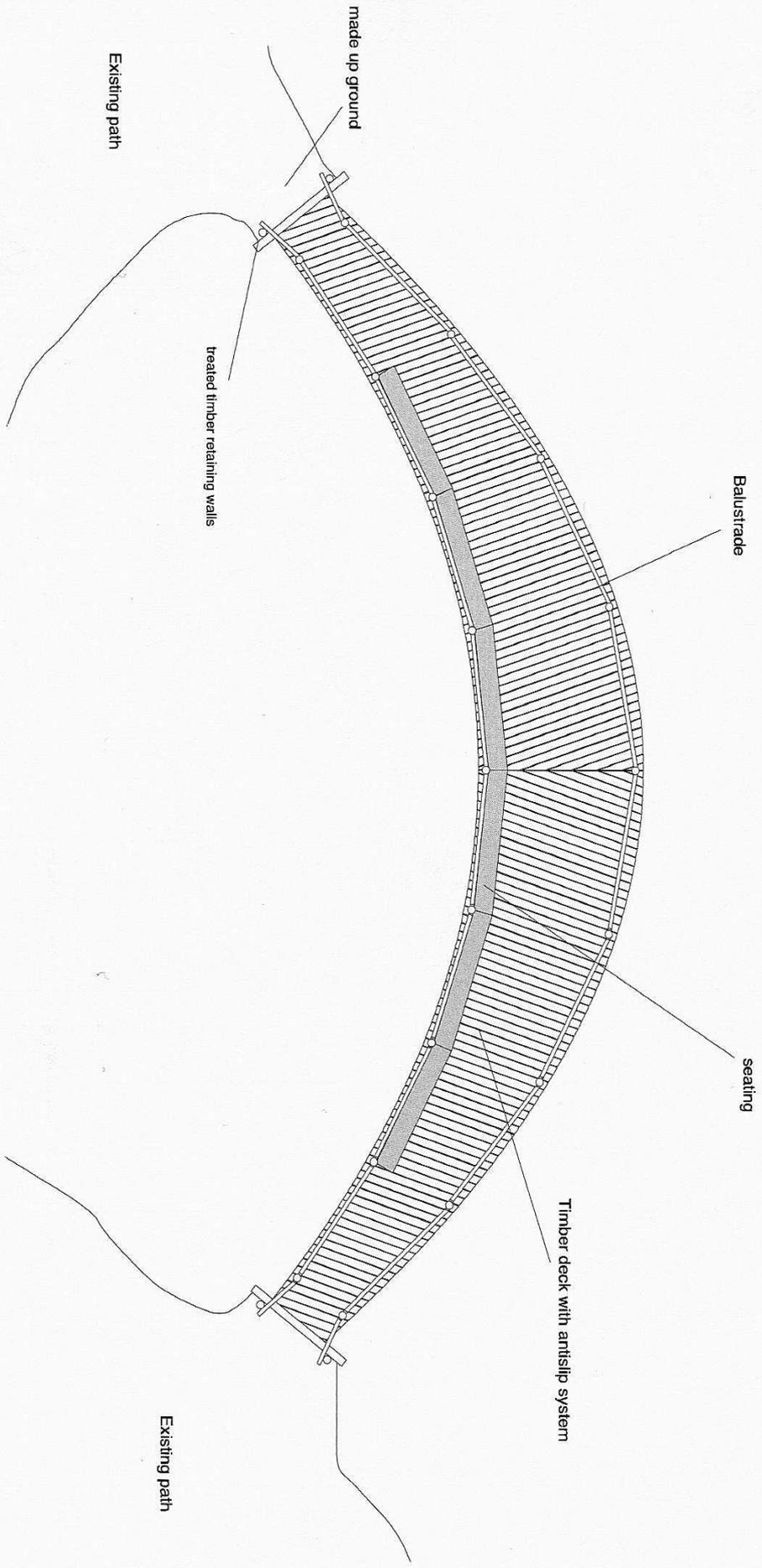
#### 7. AOCB – Chair

None

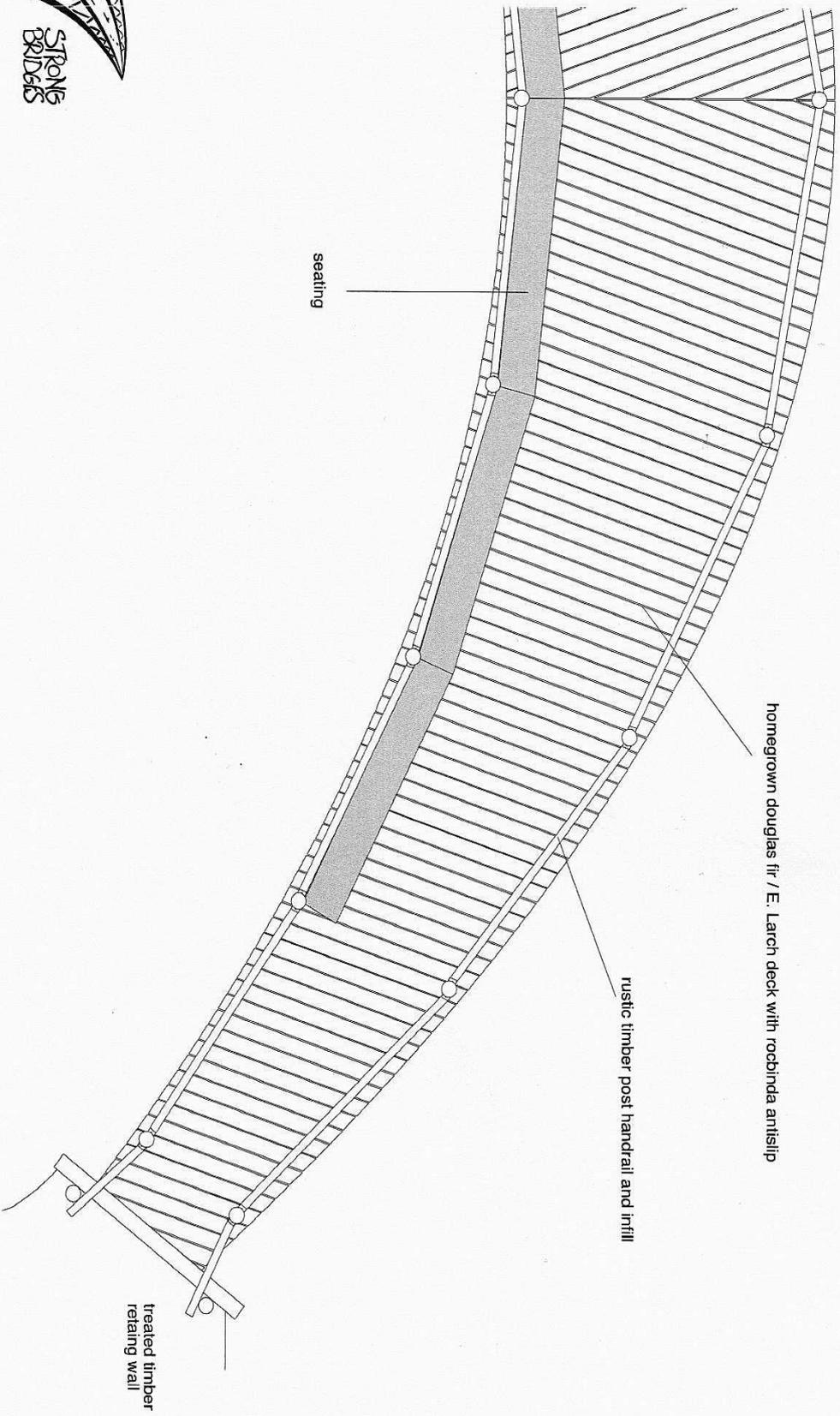
#### 8. Date of next meeting

Thanks to all attending, SJ proposes pre/post site visit to coincide with next meeting which will be held on September 2013 to observe new viewing facility.

Beaver trial viewing platform, plan view - general arrangement



Beaver trial viewing platform - plan view - more detail



Attendees:-

Andrew Taylor – Scottish Government  
Simon Jones - Scottish Beaver Trial  
Robert Needham – Scottish Beaver Trial  
Tracy Lambert – Scottish Beaver Trial (minutes)  
Patrick MacKie – Argyll and Bute Council  
Andrew Wilson – Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance  
Mike MacIntyre – Neighbour  
Dave Batty – Natural History and Antiquarian Soc. Mid Argyll  
Jane Allan – Seafield Farm Cottages  
Marina Pugh – Scottish Natural Heritage  
Karen Taylor – Scottish Natural Heritage  
Robin Malcolm – Neighbouring Farmer  
Ian McKee – Forestry Commission Scotland

Apologies

Lady Fiona Campbell Byatt  
Roisin Campbell-Palmer SBT/RZSS  
Gidona Goodman – Royal Dick Vet  
Councillor Sandy Taylor – Argyll and Bute Council  
Marina Curran Coulthart – Argyll and Bute LBAP Officer