

MINUTES of the 136th AGM MEETING of the WORCESTERSHIRE BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION
Held on Saturday 7th April 2018 at Chaddersley Corbett Village Hall
Host Branch - Kidderminster

PRESENT – Kim Holmes (Kidderminster), David Mills (Kidderminster), Susan Limbrey (Kidderminster), Jim Dyas (Hagley and Stourbridge), Zoe Skidmore (Kidderminster), Barrie Philips (Hagley and Stourbridge), Jane Newsome (Kidderminster), Ken Beddoe (Kidderminster), Michael Holland (Kidderminster), Brenda Rea (Kidderminster), M Langford (Kidderminster), Malcolm MacGarrow (Worcester and Treasurer), J Nicholls (Malvern and Upton), Brian Nicholls (Malvern and Upton), Chris Reynard (Malvern and Upton), Lyndon Corbett (Hagley and Stourbridge), Nick Templar (Hagley and Stourbridge), Justus Klaar (Hagley and Stourbridge), Tim McGuire (Hagley and Stourbridge), Lorraine Chapman North East and Secretary, Sue Mullan (Evesham) Graham Mullan (Evesham), Tim Vivian (North East), Pauline Grundy (Kidderminster), Stephen Brandswood (Worcester), Richard Higgins (Evesham), John Gowar (North East), Dave Edmonds (Great Witley), Helen Knight (Great Witley), Gill Bolton (Upton and Malvern) Roger Bolton (Upton and Malvern), Rhona Toft (Evesham), Richard Neary (Worcester), R S J Day (Malvern and Upton), G Jameson (Malvern and Upton), Rob Greenaway (North East), Andy Bucklitch (North East), David Salt (Kidderminster), Ann Murphy (Kidderminster), Mary Murphy (Kidderminster), Neil Proffitt (Kidderminster), Liz Coozier (Kidderminster), N Morris (Kidderminster), John Alexander (Evesham), Martyn Cracknell (Evesham and President), Sharon Cartwright (Kidderminster), G Meadows (Kidderminster), Alex Bignell (North East), James Lowe (North East), Paul Smith (Kidderminster), Lynne Ingram (Somerset BKA and Guest Speaker).

Chairman: Martyn Cracknell

1. Welcome and introduction

The meeting was opened by Sue Limbrey from the hosting branch; Kidderminster.

Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting. She also gave a preliminary introduction to our guest speaker, Lynn Ingram and her presentation about The Importance of Drones, to be given after the main meeting.

Apologies

The following members sent apologies for absence:

Carolyn Price	Hagley and Stourbridge
Anne Carter	Kidderminster
Richard Toft	Evesham
Richard Murgatroyd	Kidderminster
Sally Wadsworth	Evesham
Watty Sleightholme	Kidderminster
Alison Burton	Kidderminster

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were approved. (David Mills was the proposer and Sue Limbrey seconded).

Matters arising:

- Quarterly report. This hasn't happened due to time constraints. It's an interesting idea. We discussed the possibility of putting something on the website but the question was raised of whether it is a worthwhile thing to do, given that by the time it reaches people

it will most likely be out of date.

- Questions were raised about missing reports from branches. There was a very short turnaround and few replies were received with one branch having an email issue. With Easter being very early this year, we suspect everyone was caught out. Also, the last WBKA exec meeting was delayed by a few weeks due to the bad weather

3. Annual reports

President's report

The president thanked all organisers and volunteers for helping out with events the WBKA has supported during the year, mentioning the most recent event, Countrytastic which was sold out and supported by lots of families with children. The event was limited to 6,000 over 2 year olds. The children seem to really enjoy this event and remember the exhibition, commenting that it is what they remember the most about the entire show. Our involvement in this event started 10 years ago, with John Gower's help (North East Worcestershire) and is a positive contribution for the children who attend. Worcester Branch are organizing the Spring Show in Malvern in May.

The president announced that our regional bee inspector has moved out of our area. Keren Green started as a beginner on one of our beekeeping courses 8 years ago. She has now moved to Cornwall and while she will be sadly missed, we all wish her well in her new adventures.

Evesham has a new master beekeeper (Sally Wadsworth), so we have a home grown assessor for the basic exams and several members who have the microscopy certificate with other working towards master beekeeper status. We need a new home grown honey judge. Honey judges are quite scarce across the country generally, so it would be great to find someone locally to help at our events.

Honey yields were disappointing last year with honey sticks now virtually exhausted. This may impact our shows where we usually sell honey. But our finances are buoyant because of our healthy membership and some cost cutting. For example, the executive now meets in the Community Room at Waitrose in Worcestershire which is free to hire. The president also gave a special mention to Chris Broad who has been running beekeeping courses at Webbs for several years now, which generates quite a bit of income.

Secretary's Report

Lots of telephone enquiries last year but mostly about bumblebees. There were well over 100 calls to the secretary in a three week period. Thankfully, the numbers dropped back by mid-summer. We have a blog featured on The Archers website to follow one of their plot lines. At our executive meetings we have discussed: the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers, Asian Hornets, Data protection regulations and the new BDI/BBKA joint membership. This is in addition to the county events and other topics which branch representatives can feed back to their own membership. Tim Vivian (North East) represented us at the BBKA delegates meeting, reported on in the BBKA News. We were invited to a lecture on breeding local bees by BIBBA, which was unfortunately cancelled due to the snow, but we hope it will be rescheduled.

We are proposing to hold a bee diseases day in 2019 and since there is no Midlands conference planned, we are also discussing the possibility of a 2019 Worcestershire conference.

The executive committee meetings are held on the first Friday of June, September, December and March. We meet in the Community Room at Waitrose in Worcestershire at 7pm. All are

welcome.

Treasurer's Report

We received some sad news that our accounts auditor, John Hill, died in February just a few days after reviewing our accounts for the year. ~Condolences were sent to his wife on behalf of the WBKA and he will be sadly missed.

As a result we need a replacement. We are required by law to have an independent examiner who produces a certificate that verifies that the association has been properly run with no abuse of funds. This person must be a chartered accountant.

Our membership has been fairly static with a total of 621 members, taking into account juniors, honorary members and partners. There will be no increase in membership fees in 2018. Income from capitation was £14,519. The Spring Show generated a similar level of income from honey sales as in the previous year. The Autumn Show was disappointing mainly due to bad weather. We have had an increase in gift aid due to it being more visible as a tick box on the membership form. And Chris Broads Webbs courses generate a substantial and regular income. This year, we reimbursed Chris £300 towards the cost of bee suits for his courses. BDI is launching a new system for recording membership this year which should be much easier to use. It will be launched on Friday 13th April in conjunction with the BBKA. In the past, there has always been a problem with lapsed members which might be avoidable under the new system.

We have had a slight change in our bank details. HSBC is still our bank with a slight name changes to HSBC (UK) which has happened as a result of the changes the bank has had to make to move its investment section to a different arm of their business.

It was noted that there was a slight error in the account as shown in the yearbook on page 10. The orphaned sentence under the membership details is part of a sentence started on the following page under junior membership.

It was announced that members badges were on sale at £4 each.

David Mills proposed that we adopt the accounts and John Gower seconded, members voted unanimously in favour of the motion. David sent a vote of thanks to Malcolm for his work as our treasurer.

County Honey Show Report

This report was presented by Dave Edmonds. Last year we made a loss. We were charged for the services of the honey judge and the location was hard to find. Prizes to be awarded later in the meeting

Spring Garden Honey Show

This report was presented by Dave Edmonds. This show will be held in May. We are in a marquee by ourselves and need volunteers to help and also honey to sell for £6 a pound.

National Honey Show

Martyn Cracknell mentioned that 2 years ago, we received a bill for our membership but we were unclear what it was for. We were asked for a contribution which was based on the number of members. But in fact, we didn't get anything back for this contribution and discovered that membership was irrelevant to our individual members. We indicated that we would be willing to pay this fee if we could see a benefit to it. So at the moment, we aren't members and can't send a delegate to the meeting but we haven't had cause to make a contribution at their AGM in our memory.

The report was given by Rhona Toft. Rhona started by saying that this is a great event and encourage members to consider attending if they haven't already been. It's not just a honey show, it's also a trade show. It last for 3 days and there are a small number of Worcestershire members who regularly attend. The workshops and lectures are outstanding in quality and very good value for money. It is held at Sandown Racecourse. Any member who wants to enter but can't attend may find there is someone willing to take you entry there for you. Our own honey show stands up very well alongside this one in terms of the quality of entries. So anyone who currently enters ours should feel confident that their entry stands a very good chance at this show. We had lots of firsts from our county and special mention was given to Rhona Toft, Ken Beddoe, and Rebecca Day.

Examinations

This report was given by Martyn Cracknell. We would like to encourage more people to take the exams available. We only had one candidate in the spring. Over a 10 year period, 84 people have taken exams and we estimate that this is about 15% of our membership. We are probably lagging behind the national average and would particularly like to encourage people to take the basic course, because it is important for people to have basic competence in handling bees. Dates for entering are shown on the back of the 2018 Yearbook. Perhaps branches may like to nominate potential examinees and hold gathering to give people the confidence to go ahead and take the exams. The comment was made that it is particularly important to be able to demonstrate basic competence when keeping bees in a public area. Course can be paid for either by cheque or by bank transfer to the BBKA. The receipt details are shown on the examination form.

MSWCC

This report was given by Rhona Toft. This year's conference was held in Cirencester. The future of this event is in some doubt. In our executive meetings, we have been talking about holding a conference of our own in 2019, separately from the MSWCC. We don't have a confirmed date or location yet. We are still at the ideas stage. The executive is in favour of doing this and is looking into options. We do know that we'd like to include some practical sessions and lectures and we will need contributions from each branch to make the event a success. More information will be passed on via the branch representatives as it becomes available and we are happy to receive ideas from members. A show of hands was requested in answer to the question would you attend this event. There was a good show of hands from members.

4. Change to the constitution

The change we want to suggest is related to section 3bii as shown on page 7 of the yearbook. The Charities Act says we must have an accounts examiner not an auditor but our constitution states we must present 'audited accounts'. We would like to change the constitution in line with what is required by the Charities Commission. This would not change the quality of the service provided, it's a simple change the wording which we would like to change to say:

"Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act."

To effect this change, we are required to seek the agreement of our members at our AGM. This change was put to a vote of attending members who voted unanimously to make the proposed change to our constitution.

5. Election of officers

The following officers agreed to stay for another year:

President – Martyn Cracknell
Vice President – David Mills

Secretary – Lorraine Chapman
Treasurer – Malcolm MacGarrow

They were proposed en-bloc by Tim Vivian and seconded by Neil Morris. The proposal was passed unanimously.

We need to appoint an independent examiner of accounts and Keith Minett, who examines the accounts of the Kidderminster Branch was suggested. It was agreed that we should approach him and ask him whether he is willing to take on that role.

6. Election of County Honorary Members

It was proposed by David Mills that Martyn Cracknell should be made an honorary member. Martyn has been the president of the WBKA for 10 years and has made a major contribution to beekeeping in Worcestershire. The motion was seconded by Sue Limbrey and was passed unanimously.

7. Any Other Business

Bee diseases day

We are hoping to invite a bee inspector to help us to host a hands on learning day in 2019. We haven't set a firm date yet or decided on a location. To make it viable, we will need to have a minimum of 68-80 attendees. The venue must be capable of being sanitized given that live viruses will be being handled, so definitely no carpets. It was mentioned that one large room with several satellite rooms for specific demonstrations would be the best layout. Car parking would also be needed. Chaddesley and Peopleton village halls were suggested and Pershore College.

There will be ongoing discussions about this at future meetings of the Executive Committee.

WBKA Website

Nick Templar spoke about some improvements he has been making to our website to make it more user based rather than branch based. It has the same look and feel but there are some new features. There is a mass email facility for branch secretaries and there is a new events manager that makes it easier to see what is happening in Worcestershire. There is a section about becoming a beekeeper which gets around 200-300 hits in a year which has been improved so that details can accurately get to the relevant branch secretary. The swarm section has a 'truth tree' leading to the postcode search facility. There is a new section for the buying and selling of equipment. We have also been given permission to feature the BBKA news article about the Asian hornet. Nick encourage members to contact him if they have problems using the site or have an idea for an improvement.

There was a question from the floor about swarm list sign up and problems to do with the list not corresponding with who was available in previous years. Nick said that these concerns have been addressed with a reorganization of that area so it should not be a problem going forward.

8. Presentation of County Honey Show Cups and Examination Certificates

Certificates were presented at previously held branch events. All trophies were presented as detailed in the yearbook.

The meeting was adjourned for coffee and a buffet tea, followed by the Marjorie Homer Memorial Lecture from Lynn Ingram about 'The Importance of Drones'.

Meeting ended at 15.50pm

