



THE FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

The Federation, its Council, and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.

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The Future of The Federation

Traditionally there has not been a Newsletter in January – being a quiet time both for bees and for beekeepers. However, at the last Federation Committee Meeting there was considerable discussion concerning the future of the Federation. The discussion came about because most of the current Committee Officers are going to stand down at the next AGM (in February 2013) and despite asking each of the Associations to put forward replacement candidates, no one has come forward. This therefore suggests that the Federation is perhaps no longer seen as an essential body by the individual Associations.

It was felt important to give everyone in the member associations the opportunity to have an opinion on this matter and so this extraordinary January Newsletter gives a little history of the Federation and outlines how things would change for the individual associations if a decision is made to wind up the Federation.

There is some urgency as there will need to be an extraordinary AGM to formally determine whether to dissolve the Federation from 2014. If there are no officers elected in February 2013 then the Federation would need to be dissolved and each of the four Berks member associations would need to request (via the proposition process at the 2014 ADM) individual membership of BBKA. Most of the current officers have indicated that they would be prepared to stay in office to oversee the dissolution process.

Therefore, I would urge you to please take a few minutes to read this now and send me any feedback you may have.

History of the Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Associations

The Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Associations was formed in 1953 by the reorganisation of The Berkshire Society of Beekeepers. The individual Associations at that time were Newbury, Wantage, Reading, Maidenhead, and Wargrave. Wargrave no longer exists, Slough & Windsor transferred from Bucks to the Berkshire Federation on the adjustment of county boundaries. Maidenhead was absorbed into Slough when there was no one willing to run it. South Chilterns was formed when the Reading Association was approaching 200 members. The main purpose of the Federation's formation was to collectively represent these regional Associations to the BBKA.

By forming a Federation, it was felt that the small local groups could work together for the benefit of beekeepers in the area. Furthermore, the Council of the Federation – comprised of two representatives from each Association, would act as liaison between the British Beekeepers' Association and the Federation member associations.

The stated aims of the Federation, as published on the Website are:

- to promote throughout Berkshire and other affiliated association areas, public interest in becoming members of local beekeeping associations, learning the craft of beekeeping and becoming practicing beekeepers.
- to promote and protect throughout Berkshire and other affiliated association areas, public interest in and positive understanding of bees and the role of beekeeping
- to promote and facilitate effective communication in both directions between the British Beekeepers Association and the Federation's member associations

Members of Associations within the Federation benefit from:

- Contact with other beekeepers in the area
- The Federation monthly newsletter
- Grants from the Federation to member Associations

Some 20 or so years ago, Newbury felt that they had grown in membership to be able to represent themselves and so together with Wantage, they left the BBKA. Consequently, they could no longer belong to the Federation. They have subsequently directly re-joined the BBKA in their own right, principally for insurance purposes.

The remaining four members are now strong Associations in their own right with healthy and increasing membership.

How the Federation interacts with the BBKA

When someone joins one of the member Associations and starts keeping bees, his/her membership subscription is comprised of a number of different components, namely:

BBKA capitation:

Currently the capitation rates are Full: £ 15.00, Partner: £ 9.90, Country: £ 7.50 but are proposed to rise by 13.3% for 2014.

This is the amount paid to the BBKA which, depending upon the category of membership subscribed to (Full, Partner or Country), provides the member with Third Party and Public Liability Insurance plus the monthly BBKA newsletter (one per address). Associates are not members of the BBKA. Capitation is remitted to the BBKA.

Bee Disease Insurance premium:

£2 per person (up to 3 hives) sent directly to the BDI

Federation Fee:

50p per Full, Partner and Country member remitted to Berks Fed

The remaining amount:

Retained by your local association to cover its expenses.

NB. BeeCraft Magazine- where discounted subscription is offered as part of your association's membership fee, this amount is paid directly to BeeCraft on your behalf.

1. The membership secretary of the Association collects forms and fees at the renewal date and then receives the BBKA's own membership spreadsheet from the Federation.
2. The BBKA's spreadsheet is revised with changes to the previous year's membership data and is returned to Federation.
3. The Federation sends an invoice to the association for the amount due
4. The Association sends a cheque for the invoice amount to the Federation

5. The Federation sends a cheque for the BBKA capitation to the BBKA
6. New subscriptions thereafter are dealt with in a similar manner on an ad hoc basis until the end of August. Although membership details are supplied, payment of capitation etc in respect of these "post April" subscriptions is only made at the end of August

What would be different if the Federation is devolved?

1. Each of the membership associations would no longer have a conduit to the BBKA and would have to apply for direct membership in their own right. If the application was not accepted, and if the Federation is devolved an association could find itself outside of the BBKA and lose the associated benefits.
2. On the assumption that an Association is granted direct membership to the BBKA, it would then be responsible for sending its membership subscription details and fees directly to BBKA. The process would be the same as described above with the spreadsheet and fees being sent directly to the BBKA instead of to the Federation.
3. There would no longer be a Federation Newsletter, but associations could continue to issue their own. Arrangements could be made between associations to share their newsletters.
4. If accepted as a direct member association of the BBKA, each association would appoint its Delegate to attend subsequent BBKA ADMs and vote on its behalf.
5. Federation funds would be distributed to member associations on a basis to be agreed and its bank account closed.
6. The continuity and history of a long running organisation since 1890's would be lost.

The current secretary does not advocate the dissolution of the Federation, which is only being considered now (in his opinion) because of the lack of candidates for key positions of Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman and Membership Secretary from its member associations.

Associations will need to call Special General meetings of their members to approve the recommendations of their Committees, once consensus has been reached at the February Federation council meeting.

If you have any comments or views on the proposal to dissolve the Federation and apply for individual association memberships of the BBKA, please email them to your local Association Secretary who will, no doubt, pass this information to your local association Committee. Each Committee can then decide, in principle, how to proceed and mandate its Federation representatives in time for the next Federation council meeting, planned for February 2013.

If you would be interested in standing for one of the Federation Officer posts please also indicate this to your Association Secretary.

I would also like to let you know that whilst this issue continues to be a focal issue of the Federation there will be a full February Newsletter so please remember to send me contributions by 7 February 2013. We will keep you up-to-date with the future of the Federation in this newsletter which will be distributed after the Council Meeting.

I wish you all a very happy 2013.

Sue Remenyi
Editor