

South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 5th February 2014
Woodcote Community Centre

Present: Caroline Bushell, Linda Clarke, Reg Hook, Kate Malenczuk, Margaret Moore, Tim Selwyn, Meryl Toomey, Max Stone, Max Vine, John White

1. Apologies:

Sue Remenyi, Bev Woodford

2. Minutes.

Committee minutes for 6th November 2013 were approved with the following amendments:

Agendum 5, penultimate paragraph: *Margaret questioned whether paying some volunteer expenses might encourage more people to actively participate, but this was not a view generally supported by others present.*

Margaret felt this did not accurately report her comments, and it was agreed the sentence could be deleted.

3. Matters arising.

Agendum 11, Edwin Lock's bees: Reg is in possession of three cheques for £100 each, with one to come from Alan Johnson. When this is received, Reg will pass the cheques to Mrs Lock to distribute as she chooses.

4. Treasurer's report.

The treasurer reported all subscriptions and skep course fees had been paid in, resulting in the following balances:

deposit account £2194.42

current account £2818.61

total balance £5013.03

petty cash £102.15

The estimated capitation fee is £1232.80, the same as last year, with BDI costing £267.30 and Beecraft costing £631.80. Subscriptions minus cost give us a net gain of £983, or £9 per member.

John asked if there was minimum threshold maintained, which engendered discussion on how much money should be held in order to ensure viability of the association. Max Stone reported that a minimum of £5,000 balance would be needed in order to apply for charitable status. Reg commented that the apiary will be self-funding, as it runs with voluntary labour and makes returns from honey sales. Margaret said speakers may require expenses, usually about £50 (though not all speakers request expenses), but if there are sufficient funds she could enquire about bringing in speakers from further afield. It was agreed that sufficient funds should be

maintained to enable recovery from any apiary disaster occasioning wiping out the hives or shed, in addition to normal annual expenses, and that £2,500 seemed a reasonable figure. Spare funds could be used to run courses or buy a microscope. Margaret has some microscopes for sale at £380, which she will bring to the next meeting.

Caroline reported that there are 102 members: 77 full, 12 partner, 2 country, 11 associate. There were 96 renewals with 5 new joiners; 9 did not renew from 2013, giving a 12% loss- lower than last year, which suffered a 15% loss. There are also 2 life members.

Margaret told us that 10 of the 15 places have been taken up for the skep-making day, which should start to make a profit. Kate will advertise it at the BCA courses.

5. Association Apiary.

Reg said the shed move was executed very well, being dismantled, moved and re-erected within an hour with no hitches. The shed is leaking slightly, needing repair, and we have yet to buy materials for construction of a lean-to extension. Reg will request voluntary work-party help when required, and request return of cleaned equipment when it's completed.

The hives were moved by Dave Moss and Simon Woodford onto new slabs and the bees are flying well in their new sunnier position. The old slabs will be used for the extension base.

Linda will be shed monitor, looking after the mixture of national, 14x12, commercial (16x10), Smith and Langstroth equipment. Further volunteer work parties will be needed for making up frames, bottling honey and strimming the site, and Reg will request these at the appropriate times.

Kate reminded us of previous discussions about purchasing an association observation hive. Previously we have borrowed Reg's own commercial size one, and it would also allow us to have a stand at more than one venue when show dates clash. The summer experience could be an opportunity to teach people to use it, as it needs setting up each time with the queen in the glass window portion. A unanimous vote was passed to purchase one, either through John Belcher or the forthcoming BeeTradex show.

6. Federation update.

Max Vine recapped on the reasons behind the SCBKA proposal to wind up the Federation and distribute its unspent assets to the member associations. There has been some email correspondence from the other member associations showing support for retaining the Federation, and other methods for distributing assets. Its reserves are £3950 at present, from which could be deducted the capitation fees of £757 and the advertising revenue of £731 for the past four years. A counter-proposal has been received from Jon Davey of Reading BKA, to keep the Federation but still share out its assets. This will be tabled first at the next Federation AGM on 22nd February, and if carried, the SCBKA proposal will be withdrawn. The Federation may ask that we prove we have members' support for our proposal, so Max Vine will email all our members to ensure this. As Max Stone will miss the Federation meeting, John agreed to take his place as our delegate, proposed by Max Vine and seconded by Max Stone. Caroline will check

with our accounts auditor, Richard Bushell, to ensure the 50p capitation fee is properly included in the SCBKA accounts.

7. Any other business.

Tim requested a new library book rubber stamp as the old one is worn out, and he has sourced replacement at a cost of £35 - £40. The proposal was agreed unanimously.

Max Vine related the current locations of the association's three extractors, and queried whether this distribution was appropriate for our membership. They have not been borrowed extensively, and a further extractor and peripherals acquired from Edwin Lock's estate have been refurbished by Reg. John offered to create a map of member's locations based on postcode to fuel further discussion.

Max Vine reported that Sue Remenyi has offered the use of her workshop if needed for small courses or presentations.

Caroline was our Federation delegate at the BBKA ADM, and has written a comprehensive summary in the February newsletter detailing the extraordinary procedural confusion that occurred. The budget is always contentious as at the time of voting for approval, it has already been running for four months; this makes approval assured, and the budget data obscure. *After* the budget was approved a motion was passed not to increase capitation fees for the next financial year, causing great confusion and the collapse of the meeting. The electronic voting button numerical system was changed for the election of officers, with the attendant confusion resulting in the non-election of the only candidate for treasurer, who then withdrew. The BBKA declared they would have to employ a salaried treasurer instead. The motion not to increase fees was overturned later in the meeting. BBKA has an income of £1m, but has been running in deficit for some years, draining reserves. It routinely subsidises BBKA Enterprises, which runs at a loss. Linda voiced the committee's grateful thanks to Caroline for being our delegate for a difficult and complex matter, as she has done a marvellous job.

Reg expressed dissatisfaction that decisions about the teaching apiary taken in the proper manner at the last committee meeting were later aired for discussion by email, and the possible closure of the apiary mentioned by email was unnecessary and inaccurate. Max Vine explained that the intention had been to take the high workload off Reg and Linda, and highlight the importance of the apiary. He apologised for the shock tactics, which were not intended to be offensive. John complimented the SCBKA committee on being so much more open than other associations, enabling such matters to be discussed frankly and resolved.

Kate reported that there will be a Trainers' meeting in Reading in 6th March, which she and Reg will attend. She explained that David Blower is paid by the BBKA to organise groups of trainers in geographical units, to encourage entry to BBKA exams. SCBKA offers non-exam training, though members can choose to take BBKA exams if they wish; members need to have kept bees for a year before taking the basic exam. Caroline asked Kate to write up some notes of what passes at the meeting. Reg felt that taking exams doesn't automatically make someone into a good

beekeeper, and the BCA courses he and Kate run concentrate on imparting sound knowledge in preference to exam-passing skills. John has done the BBKA basic exam with the Reading association, and found it very useful and helpful to follow a set syllabus.

Max Vine told us that Dave Moss has put on the SCBKA website the constitution, last year's accounts, and the newsletters, and will be sending out dates for the Summer Experience.

Winter meetings scheduled in the Pavilion Room, Woodcote:

19th February Dr Michael Keith Lucas; the birds and the bees, 7.30pm

22nd February Federation AGM, 10.30am. – CB, MV, JW, SR

19th March Dr Thomas Breeze; the decline of England's bees, 7.30pm

29th March Martin Buckle, skep-making course, 10.00am

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 2nd April, 7.30pm