

South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association Committee Meeting

Wednesday 17th September 2014

Woodcote Community Centre

Minutes

Present: Caroline Bushell, Reg Hook, Linda Clarke, Margaret Moore, John White, Max Vine, Max Stone and Sue Remenyi

1. Apologies received from Meryl Toomey, Tim Selwyn, Kate Malenczuk, Ron Crocker and Bev Woodward.
2. Minutes of last meeting
Committee minutes for 11th June were approved with one further amendment to the minutes of the meeting held on April 2nd:
Agendum 10: Three are lendable (remove location)
3. Nothing arising from the previous minutes.
4. Treasurers report:
Balances reported:
Deposit account - £2194.97
Current account - £3471.81
Petty Cash - £283

The overall balance of around £5,900 was discussed and it was felt some of this should be spent for the benefit of members. Various possibilities were discussed and the following were voted for and passed unanimously:

1. The cost of refreshments at winter meetings will come from Association funds. Bev will continue to purchase the goods and will reclaim expenses.
2. Reg requested lighting for the shed in the Association Apiary and approval was given for an expenditure of £200.00 (+/- 25%).
3. Max Vine was given permission to spend £100 on membership software from Webcollect.

Other areas discussed and to be reconsidered at future meetings included more expenditure on guest speakers and training.

5. Membership Report
Membership currently stands at 127. There has been a steady increase in new members over the summer.
The acquisition of an automated membership system was discussed and the committee were asked to evaluate a system called webcollect.com which Max Vine thinks will work well for us. This system would need some tailoring for our needs, but as Fleet BKA already uses the system, Max is going to ask whether we can use their application as a basis for ours and what they would charge us. The cost of the Webcollect software is approximately £100 per annum and approval was given to Max to spend this amount.

6. Association Apiary:

Reg reported that it has been a very good year in the apiary and the Sumer Experience had enabled members to observe a lot of techniques and procedures. There is concern that the numbers dropped considerably from 25 people signed up to an average of 9-10 people attending during the second half of the course. Kate and Reg are going to send a questionnaire to those who signed up to try and find out why and will report on this at the next meeting.

7. Dorchester Abbey Event: Report from Linda

We had a brilliant time, and thanks must go to all who helped, to Reg for his bees and knowledge; to Kate for the monks outfits and table coverings; to Max Stone for obtaining the new tables (three 4ft and one 6ft); to Duncan B for his skep making skills; and to Tim for his mead. Thanks also to John, Caroline, Jemima and Dave. We were really well looked after with plenty of tea, coffee and homemade cakes and packed lunches provided. We were also invited to a supper on Saturday night hosted and cooked by the rector for all to get to know each other.

8. Swarm report

Max Vine reported that he had logged 21 calls and responses over the season. Everyone who had requested bees were looked after. The 13 collectors were kept busy.

9. Communication to members

Max Vine reported that there have been a number of problems with the way we communicate with our members by email. The problems are twofold. 1) As more than one person sends emails to our members it has proven difficult to keep the list up to date and 2) On occasion, emails have been sent out in duplicate or without clarification as to who they are from and who they are intended for.

Max suggested that we needed to revert to the system whereby one person is responsible for email distribution and this person would liaise with the membership secretary to ensure that the list was kept up to date.

Although Ron Crocker used to manage email communications, this task was split when Sue Remenyi took over the newsletter, because one of the regular emails to our members is the distribution of the monthly newsletter.

It was noted that Ron keeps a close eye on the beekeeping press and passes information onto our members when something relevant and/or interesting is brought to his attention. The committee felt that this is a very valuable source of information and they would like to ask Ron if he could do a bit more of this and accept the role of Information Researcher and Coordinator. In this role Ron could forward interesting items/articles to Sue for direct distribution, as a mini-newsletter to our members, or to be held for publication in the newsletter. Ron would also be asked if he is willing to continue to respond to enquiries that come via our website web form.

Max agreed to invite Ron to take on the role of Information Researcher and Coordinator and to suggest that this commence after the AGM.

10. Basic Assessment

John White suggested that we should assist our members who are interested in doing the BBKA Basic Assessment by directing them to appropriate resources. For example, Reading, Wokingham and Slough all have courses designed to help people pass the Basic Assessment. As Reading has a well-established course John said he could investigate a formal arrangement whereby we could direct our members to their courses. We voted on this and the vote was passed 6 for and 1 against.

11. Any Other Business

Forthcoming meetings:

Due to a double-booking of the Hall the AGM has been moved to 22nd October.

The honey show will be on 19 November

The Christmas meeting will be on 10 December

Winter meetings are confirmed for 21st January, 18th February and 18th March. Speakers have been invited but not allocated to dates yet. Topics are the Medical use of honey, Bumble bees and Trading standards and environmental health. There was some concern that our members might be overwhelmed by what trading standards might say, but Margaret assured the committee that she did not think this would be the case.

12. Date of next committee meeting is 5 November.