

South Chiltern Beekeepers' Association Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 4th February 2015, 7.30pm

Woodcote Community Centre

MINUTES

Present: Caroline Bushell, Linda Clarke, Reg Hook, Margaret Moore, Sue Remenyi, Filipe Salbany, Tim Selwyn, Max Stone, Meryl Toomey, Max Vine, John White.

1. Apologies: Ron Crocker
2. Minutes of 5th Nov 2015 committee meeting approved
3. Matters arising:
 - Minute 5a) scanned signatures have been removed from the website
 - Minute 8) Reg reviewed the Mid-Bucks training material and feels it is better than that produced by the BBKA.
 - Minute 10) Linda reported that Dave Moss registered SCBKA with a company providing free seeds.
Filipe has contacted local radio stations to increase public awareness of what to do when a swarm is found, and was interviewed by Claire Wooding; the interview will go on air twice. John suggested Filipe should have contact details of swarm collection co-ordinators in neighbouring associations to pass on swarm calls as appropriate.
Action: FS
We also need to update our swarm collector list for our website and for the BBKA
Action: MV
4. Treasurer's report
 - Deposit account: £2195.37
 - Current account: £5337.10
 - Cash: £93.79
 - From this total of £7626.26 we have yet to pay BDI and Beecraft fees.
 - Failed attempts to enable Caroline to have read-only access to the bank account online necessitated a personal visit, where it transpired that the bank have no record of Max V as a signatory even though they have been honouring cheques signed by him; and they still have three former signatories listed which should have been deleted. Max S will see if we have any acknowledgement from them of receipt of the correct forms amongst his records, and in the meantime will set up another two signatories from the current committee – Caroline and Meryl – as we need two signatures out of a possible four for each cheque. Caroline's online access request will be re-submitted.
Action: MS
5. Membership report
 - Out of last year's 127 members, the 44 who have not renewed have been sent another chaser. Our membership currently stands at 92, of which 9 are newcomers:
61 full; 7 partner; 3 country; 11 associate.
 - Beecraft data must be submitted by the end of February, after this anyone renewing late is asked to subscribe direct. BDI and BBKA payments are also due on 1st March, and our subscription year-end is December to accommodate late renewers before this date.
 - We currently levy a £5 late renewal charge, which Reg feels is unreasonable and we may lose people. Caroline's feels the renewal data does not corroborate this; she has never received any objection,

and it is standard practice in other BKAs. We could though start to alert members about renewal earlier, say November.

About half of the renewals were made by bank transfer. Some problems experienced with the electronic renewal form were related to different versions of Adobe, and Filipe offered to investigate other possible software.

6. The next Federation meeting has not yet been arranged, but will be added to the end of our March meeting in Woodcote Village Hall. Action: CB

7. BBKA's SDM in December 2014 resulted in no change to the Trustees; BBKA were not prepared to pay arbitration fees. The possible next step is legal action, incurring fees which may have an impact on the BBKA's levy on BKAs.

The BBKA are holding a meeting in June to consider the proposed budget for the coming year, which will for the first time enable comment on the budget BEFORE it comes into operation.

- 7a. Max V proposed a new operating procedure; that despite what our current constitution says, all committee members should have a vote.

Vote: carried unanimously. 11 voting members now present.

8. Proposal by Max V to vote on compulsory registration of members with National Bee Unit.

Figures from RBI Nigel Semmence showed South Chilterns had 40 times the area average of EFB outbreaks, attributed by Nigel to importation of stock. Our Ordnance Survey grid square SU68 has historically shown AFB outbreaks, possibly attributable to the presence of a honey packing company in Wallingford, which imports honey from other countries. At the ADM, BBKA were requested to lobby the Environment Agency to enforce reducing contamination at honey packers. BBKA is asking associations to report any disease concerns where it may be attributable to poor sugar waste or honey storage. Max V will discuss this with Nigel, but feels we should consider compulsory registration of members on NBU's Beebase. Margaret feels it's no different from registration of all other farm animals in the UK, and can only help to prevent disease spread; from 2018 the EU will require registration. Reg feels that as inspectors always ask if there are other hives in the area there is no need for compulsory registration. Our current Data Protection policy allows supply to BBKA of members' personal emails, but does not supply data to the NBU. Caroline will ask what policy the other Federation members follow. BBKA's Facebook shows no consistency amongst associations. Filipe reported that New Zealand has had compulsory registration since 1913, but John thinks it may be too prescriptive to enforce data supply to the NBU.

Vote: not carried by majority.

9. The Summer Experience went well despite losing attendees towards the end of the season. The questionnaire results will be discussed with the other instructors. Previous minutes suggested detailing topics in advance, but this is not always possible as it depends on what is happening in the hives at the time. An approximate programme can be prepared, but will be subject to change in response to hive conditions. Summer meetings at members' apiaries can also have a specific topic, to be sent out to members with the invitation email, but may again be subject to change.

10. Apiary report: All hives have been treated with oxalic acid and two have been supplied with fondant. Hive no. 4 colony failed in the summer despite repeated attempts to re-queen it. It may be replaced by a new project, as a tree that was cut down on the site had a colony in residence. The branch was cut out and taken to the apiary for re-housing in the spring. A work party will be organised for cleaning kit, and Henrik will check the leaking shed roof.

Action: RH

11. Training co-ordinator.

8 members are taking the Basic Assessment this year, to be arranged at a mutually convenient time. John will identify a suitable venue with 3 or 4 national hives and an assessor, and call a meeting of applicants. We can use the Mid-Bucks training material, but John is mindful that it shouldn't be too academic, as it's a practical exam. Action: JW

The first winter workshop in Sue's "bee barn" on hive types was a sell-out, and feedback was positive – basic knowledge can't be reinforced too often, and it's better than an apiary visit with large numbers where it's not possible to get close enough. Reg feels that the technical data presented was too much for beginners. Attendees were sent the presentation as a resource for later reference.

Bee Health Advisor day is provisionally on 8th June; Reg, Kate, Jemima and John are our BHAs. Training is currently being organised by John, Sue and Caroline as well as Reg, so to enable feedback and liaison with BBKA we need a Training Co-ordinator. Sue was proposed by Max V, seconded by Caroline.

Vote: carried unanimously, Sue appointed Training Co-ordinator.

11a. Swarm co-ordinator.

Filipe volunteered to talk to the public, take calls, forward to collectors, and hand on swarms. He was proposed by Max V, seconded by John.

Vote: carried unanimously, Filipe appointed Swarm Co-ordinator.

12. Name badges.

Sue reported that name badges were much appreciated at the winter workshop, and could be used at all meetings. Pin badges are better than lanyards when working with hives, and she is willing to make members one each at the outset; she will be reimbursed for the cost. Margaret suggested handing them in each time to reduce losses, but as this is logistically difficult, people will be asked to look after them and bring them to all meetings. Action: SR

13. Association library.

As Tim has formally retired as Librarian, Max V formally proffered our thanks for his hard work during his 30-plus years of service in this role. The library, comprising 150 volumes and an antique box given by Eric Morris, the SCBKA founder, are now housed in Sue's bee barn. Tim will write some provenance notes. Sue requested a formal budget for purchasing books and replacing lost copies; Tim used Northern Bee Books and Darren Bloodworth in Hereford to source second-hand replacement copies. Filipe suggested a subscription to the IBRA journal and offered précis software. Sue was proposed as Librarian by Max V, seconded by Meryl.

Vote: carried unanimously, Sue appointed Librarian.

Vote to create a library budget: carried unanimously.

Vote to allocate £100 per annum: carried by majority.

14. Proposal by John to make a donation to Deformed Wing Virus research.

Professor Martin at Salford University appealed for £800 to support the work of mapping the incidence of DWV using donated samples. It was suggested at a previous committee meeting that we propose that the Federation could donate, with the members sharing the cost.

While this can still be discussed with the Federation, we could set the example. Filipe asked why, if we are not prepared to insist on compulsory Beebase registration, we should support this. Max S confirmed that we had previously donated £150 to Professor Ratnieks, and it's in our long-term interests to have an annual honey-bee research budget. John pointed out that

we can submit samples for analysis free under this research, rather than having to pay for such a service. Reg commented that it would not be necessary if everyone routinely treated for varroa. A £200 annual honey-bee research budget was proposed by Max V, seconded by Max S.

Vote to create a honey-bee research budget: carried unanimously.

This year's research sum will be donated to the Salford DWV programme.

Action: JW/MS

15. New members' leaflet.

John created the copy and Sue created the layout for a draft introductory leaflet to show the committee. Following suggestions on changing the content, Sue will send a copy of the current draft to all committee members for comment. A vote to produce a "Beginners Guide" was proposed by Max V, seconded by John.

Vote to create a new members' leaflet: carried unanimously

Action: SR/ all ctte

Programme brochure.

The last winter programme leaflet was produced in 2009/10, as all meetings need to be fixed for more than a year in advance in order to publish a programme. Margaret requests suggestions early in the year, so a printed programme may be subject to change. A summer programme would also be welcomed, but under Data Protection laws will not be able to carry member's names and addresses without permission, so would have to be followed up by email invitations. A vote to produce both a winter and a summer programme was proposed by Max V, seconded by Meryl.

Vote: carried unanimously

Action: MM

16. Any other business

- Max V reported that Harry Jessop's funeral was well-attended by beekeepers from several associations. As Chairman he wrote to the family and received thanks. Harry previously collected the door key for committee meetings, and Helen Walkington who lives in Woodcote is willing to do this in future.
- Max V reported that the BBKA yearbook, which costs £10,000 per annum to produce, contains many errors – 20% of the entries are still wrong after supplying corrections. The SCBKA details are correct, and Sue Remenyi's name will be supplied as Training Co-ordinator. Caroline feels we don't need it, as the data is on the web. Max suggested that we remain in it while it exists, but that feedback to BBKA should request they reconsider publishing it at all in view of its high cost and poor quality.

Action: MV

- John suggested a simple winter survival survey across our members to find out how many hives died, and why, in order to find out whether we have a problem; and if so, how we can help members better prepare for winter. He proposed a vote to send out a simple survey in March, seconded by Max V.

Vote: carried unanimously

Action: JW

- Linda mentioned a "business card" that had been discussed previously, carrying the SCBKA web address contact details for use as giveaways at show stands. Linda and Sue will liaise over the relative usefulness of this versus a beginners' leaflet.

17. Date of next meeting: 7.30pm, 1st April 2015, Woodcote Community Centre