

South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

33rd Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 22nd October 2014
Woodcote Village Hall, Woodcote

1. Apologies: Ron Crocker, Filipe Salbany
2. Minutes of 32nd AGM (2013) were approved with one amendment: Agendum 9 – delete second sentence, and replace with “The £25 subscription was increased to £26 for full members and pro-rata for other types of membership”.
3. Matters arising: agendum 6 was completed.
4. Chairman's Report: a successful year was demonstrated by the increased membership, the 26 meetings held, the improvement of the website and its members' area, marketplace, forum, library and committee information by Dave Moss. The many members who haven't yet registered for the members' area were urged to do so. Good honey harvests were reported, with 50 extractor loans. Our member Paul Jenkins was awarded the BBKA Basic Assessment certificate. After a two-year battle the Federation agreed to redistribute funds to the member organisations. Caroline Bushell's chairmanship of the Federation helped simplify its role and operation, and she also attended the Annual Delegates Meeting of the BBKA on our behalf. Sue Remenyi continued to provide an excellent Federation newsletter to all 500 members. Margaret Moore ensured winter meetings were full and varied, and held a very successful skep-making class. The Honey Show has been moved to November this year as it is a more popular time. The Apiary moved location to a better spot, for which thanks to the many volunteer helpers, and to Peter Mikic for continuing to allow us to use his land, and to Chris Bergman for the grass-cutting mower. Reg Hook's hard-working Summer Experience team had positive feedback, including a request for a published programme and more hands-on opportunities. Thanks go to all the members who hosted summer apiary visits, for which the PA system was in use. The committee was asked to consider how to enable members to see more at the “frame face”. Reg Hook and Linda Clark, with some helpers, ran stalls at 6 public events through the year, including the new venue of Dorchester Abbey. The Chairman particularly wanted to record grateful thanks to Reg and Linda for all the practical help and advice they have so generously given to all members throughout the year. Following a previous committee discussion, it was agreed that two people communicating with the membership was less efficient and effective, so we are reverting to having one communicator. Ron Crocker has kindly agreed to take on the role of Information Researcher and Co-ordinator on behalf of the members, as well as answering web-site enquiries, for which we are very grateful. The Chairman also thanked the committee for their time and hard work, and he feels the Association is making good progress. As Kate is standing down from the committee, the Chairman gave her a small gift and thanked her very much for her time and effort; her wise counsel will be missed.
5. Treasurer's Report: we currently have a surplus of £2244 (£883 last year). Two events helped raise this total; the skep-making course organised by Margaret and the Dorchester Abbey event, for which we received £500. £400 of this is earmarked for the purchase of equipment to enable a more effective stand presentation at such events, and some items have already been obtained. We also had from the Federation £250 grant funding for equipment, and £628 from the redistribution of Federation funds. Both honey sales and donations from members were up. Apiary running costs also increased, and we moved and extended the shed. Fees will increase by £1 over all categories of membership for next year; this year we absorbed half of the BBKA increase of £2 per head, so the staggered increase is now complete. Accounts will

be signed off shortly by the auditor, and will be posted on the web site. Current cash in bank, including reserves brought forward from last year, is £6152.

6. The accounts to be adopted at the next committee meeting after auditing.
7. The following officers were elected:
 - Chairman: Max Vine (proposed Sue Remenyi, seconded Caroline Bushell)
 - Vice Chair: John White (Max Stone; Max Vine)
 - Treasurer: Max Stone (Richard Bushell; Guy Simpson)
 - Membership: Caroline Bushell (Sue Remenyi; Richard Bushell)
 - Secretary: Meryl Toomey (Caroline Bushell; Max Stone)
 - Programme Secretary: Margaret Moore (Caroline Bushell; Linda Clark)
 - Librarian: Tim Selwyn (Dave Moss; Max Vine)
 - Apiary: Reg Hook (Guy Simpson; Linda Clarke)
 - Federation Newsletter Editor: Sue Remenyi (Max Vine; Richard Bushell)
8. Non-voting Committee Members:
 - Linda Clarke (Max Vine; Caroline Bushell)
 - Social Secretary: Bev Woodford (Dave Moss; Margaret Moore)
 - Swarm Co-ordinator: Filipe Salbany (Max Vine; Caroline Bushell)
9. Membership Report: good news, our membership has increased to 127, of which 90 are full members (and some are members of more than one association) and we are still keen to attract more.
10. 2015 Subscription renewals: as BBKA increased their fees, we have to increase that portion of the subscription by £1 for full and partner categories. As we have strong funds, we will make refreshments free in future. Caroline is working on an electronic payment facility. 2015 renewals are required by 31st December and will be accepted on paper, or as an editable pdf file emailed to Caroline. Payment can be by cheque or by electronic transfer, with the date and member's surname quoted as a reference in order to make it possible to reconcile payments. In order to save the enormous administrative time required, for 2016 we propose to enable electronic payment via the website, in order to simplify the procedure. This was put to the vote, and passed unanimously. Where they have the ability, members will be urged to use this method.
11. AOB:

Basic Assessment:

As part of the committee's brief to make the association open and inclusive, we plan to make it possible for any member who so wishes to take the BBKA Basic Assessment practical exam in the summer. Any member who has been keeping bees for at least a year is welcome to take it, and 5 members have already expressed an interest. Material to inform members of the topics covered and help them prepare is available, and anyone interested should contact John White.

Winter workshops:

Sue Remenyi has offered the use of her heated barn in Kidmore End to hold informal 2-hour bee-free winter workshops for up to 10 people. Following an email to elicit potential interest, about 12 members have already responded to this idea, with proposed subjects of: bee hive types; honey extraction; artificial swarm. Reg expressed strong misgivings that discussing and demonstrating the artificial swarm manoeuvre would interfere with the Summer Experience. The ensuing discussion reassured that this was not intended as a substitute, merely an opportunity for repetition and reinforcing learning in a stress-free environment without bees or time constraints, at a time of year when we are less busy with our hives. It was stressed that

consistency is essential in order to avoid causing confusion, as we already have a variety of information sources available to us on this particular topic. The meeting voted on trialling a winter workshop to see if the idea is viable, with 25 for, 2 against and 5 abstentions; winter workshops will be a topic for the agenda of the next committee meeting.

Summer meetings:

Following very successful summer meetings in 2014, Margaret is working on the schedule for next year, and is looking for two more locations to visit; any members willing to offer an apiary for a summer meeting is invited to get in touch with her, please.

Change of membership category:

In view of the time taken over membership issues, Bob Busby asked for the best means of changing membership category from associate to full member at whatever time during the year the bees were received. Caroline said for this the workload was small, and anyone in this position was welcome either to contact her at the relevant time, or to take up full membership at the start of the year if they prefer.

Date of next committee meeting: 5th November 2014, Woodcote Community Centre