

THE HEXHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7:30 pm Tuesday 7 January 2020

Hexham Cricket Club, Eilansgate, Hexham NE46 3EW

Minutes

Present: Judith Stewart, Jane Hughes, Jonathan Storey, Neill Wylie, Sue Robinson, David Wilson, Paul Mingard, Trish Scratcherd, Dave Cowings, Martyn Farrer, Barbara Storey, Peter Hogarth, David Dawson, Neil Dawson, Sam Burnish, Majbritt Mann, Peter Dodman, Dorian Pritchard, Helen Hill, Helen Schooler, Jane Lewis, Bill Watson, Ann Howorth, Dot Coe, Ian Robinson.

Apologies: Bill Hunter, Philip Latham, Mike Lewis, Peter Judge, Geoff Purcell-Smith, Elizabeth Purcell-Smith, Mark Robinson, Allan Ransome, Liz Cowings, Jola Weaver, Val Butcher,

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. Judith Stewart welcomed everyone to the AGM.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. Jonathan Storey recorded the apologies set out above.

3. Minutes of AGM held 8 January 2019

3.1. There were no further matters arising from the minutes of the 2019 AGM and they were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1. Judith summarised the key messages from her written report which had been distributed with the Agenda papers.

4.2. She reflected another successful year for HBKA and paid tribute to the support that the various committee members had provided during that time.

4.3. The Association staged a number of interesting indoor meetings and events which had been well attended. There had also been some excellent outdoor meetings and apiary visits which had generally been less well supported. Judith appealed to members to provide feedback and offer suggestions for future meetings and speakers.

- 4.4. The Bee Mart scheme has been operating successfully during the year helping members buy and sell bees from/to other members.
- 4.5. Judith closed by highlighting the forthcoming County Show to be held on 25 May 2020 which will take Bees and other pollinators as its major theme. HBKA will be providing its usual 'offering' but there will also be a range of other bee-related exhibits which will require additional support to help set up and manage on the day. Any members who are able to assist in any way would be most welcome.

5. Treasurer's Report

- 5.1. Jane Hughes reported that the Association remains financially sound with the accounts for the year ended 31 October 2019 showing a surplus of receipts over spending of £307.65. Consequently, the Association's current account stands at £5,960.24 with the deposit account remaining at £2,500.00. This was after spending more than £1,000 on much needed equipment for the teaching apiary.
- 5.2. Jane advised that the Hive Loan Scheme had been offered again but no suitable candidates have applied for 2019. Gift Aid continues to be a valuable source of extra income and Jane thanked all those members who have made the appropriate declaration thereby enabling HBKA to recover it from HMRC.
- 5.3. Once again, Jane plans to arrange the bulk purchase of fondant and syrup in 2020 for sale to members 'at cost'.

6. Subscriptions 2021

- 6.1. Jane Hughes explained that there is no immediate need to seek an increase in membership fees, given our healthy financial position. It was therefore proposed to set our fees for 2021 at the same level as 2020 - but we seek members' permission to increase them by any amount the BBKA might subsequently impose by increases to the capitation fees. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

7. Membership Report

- 7.1. Neill Wylie reported that the Association membership reached a peak of 181 during 2019 – the highest level achieved in recent times. Neill paid tribute to the work in the teaching apiary to support and attract new members into beekeeping. He also noted the wide geographical spread of our current membership from Kelso to the Isles of Scilly.
- 7.2. Neill reported on the use of the new membership system to renew subscriptions and confirmed that 97 members have already done so successfully. Neill will be pursuing the remainder who have yet to renew.

8. Apiary Report

- 8.1. Sue Robinson presented her apiary report for 2019 highlighting the impact of the unseasonal weather that we all experienced once again last year.

- 8.2. Thankfully, the excessive temperatures of 2018 were not repeated and one Sunday session actually had to be cancelled due to torrential rain.
- 8.3. Nonetheless, we averaged 14 beginners per session which is a good number to manage in four groups. Sue recorded her thanks to the various demonstrators who willingly gave up their Sunday afternoons to help and run these sessions. She also acknowledged the regular apiary working party sessions where some serious gardening and cleaning was done as well as some essential beekeeping.
- 8.4. We ended the year with 12 colonies which have been treated with oxalic acid and are now battened down for the winter.
- 8.5. Some members continue to fall back on the additional apiary site at Bywell although this continues to be much overgrown and there are additional concerns that the availability of forage is likely to decline significantly in 2019 due to changes in farming practice. It is essential that members inform Sue of any hives they maintain at Bywell and that those hives are properly labelled with contact details should any problems arise.
- 8.6. All in all, our Apiary and Beginners Sessions go from strength to strength and we intend to continue with this well-tried model for 2020.

9. Education and Training Report

- 9.1. David Wilson reported upon our successful examination candidates for 2019. Four of our members had successfully completed their Basic Assessment with Helen Schooler achieving a Credit. David paid tribute to the excellent revision classes provided by Sue and Ian Robinson which had once again been instrumental in achieving a 100% success rate. He presented Helen Schooler and Sam Burnish with their certificates to general applause.
- 9.2. The Association intends to continue to offer revision classes again in 2020 and any members who might wish to participate were encouraged to do so with a view to completing the Basic Assessment examination.
- 9.3. David also reported a number of the Redesdale beekeepers had expressed an interest in undertaking a microscopy course and other HBKA members were encouraged to come forward with a view to arranging a suitable course nearer to home.

10. Election of officers

- 10.1. Jonathan Storey explained that the existing Committee was prepared to continue for 2020 and that no other nominations had been received. Consequently, the list proposed by the Committee was agreed unanimously.

11. Appointment of Auditor

- 11.1. Brian English was re-appointed as Auditor for 2020.

12. BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting 2020

12.1. Paul Mingard confirmed that he will be representing HBKA at the forthcoming Annual Delegates' Meeting in Warwick next Saturday 11 January 2020.

12.2. Paul proceeded to canvass members' views on the various Propositions which had been submitted by the BBKA Executive Committee and by other local Associations for consideration at the ADM.

- **Proposition 1** – Ratification of Annex C to the BBKA CIO Constitution. This was agreed.
- **Proposition 2** – The position of Honorary Treasurer is no longer required. This proposition caused some concern amongst members regarding a potential loss of personal accountability. Paul was asked to seek further reassurances at the ADM prior to the vote.
- **Proposition 3** – Clauses 21.1 of the BBKA CIO Constitution be amended. This is a technical change to facilitate the collection of subscriptions and was agreed.
- **Proposition 4** – Clauses 14.4 and 14.5 of the BBKA CIO constitution are replaced. This proposal should greatly streamline the business at the ADM when electing Trustees and was agreed.
- **Proposition 5** – Proxy voting is only activated when there is physical attendance of 90%. Members found it difficult to understand how this proposal could work in practice and consequently it was not supported.
- **Proposition 6** – BBKA amend the title of Chairman to Chair. This is already happening and was supported.
- **Proposition 7** – New Area Association Members should have a min of 50 paying members. Taken with Proposition 8 it was felt that any limit should lie between 50 and 100 paying members.
- **Proposition 8** – Districts applying for Area Association Membership should have a minimum of 100 full members. See comment above – 100 was felt to be too high a limit which would prevent smaller associations from applying.
- **Proposition 9** – A resolution put to the ADM should be decided by a registered membership vote. This was not supported.
- **Proposition 10** – Reintroduction of a Year Book. This was supported acknowledging the new sensitivity regarding personal data since the introduction of GDPR.
- **Proposition 11** – BBKA should refrain from allowing members to register as Full members of more than one Association. This was not supported.
- **Proposition 12** – Public & Personal Liability Insurance cover for designated members searching for Asian Hornets. This was noted but unlikely to have an immediate impact upon local members.
- **Proposition 13** – BBKA should raise pollinator awareness amongst planning and landscaping professionals in training. BBKA's response suggests that further work is required to develop this proposal further before it can be formally considered.
- **Proposition 14** – BBKA mandate CONBA to pursue UK becoming a member of Apimondia. Taken with Proposition 15 it was noted that BBKA is unable to apply for membership of CONBA/Apimondia without the agreement of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish BKAs.
- **Proposition 15** – BBKA apply for membership of Apimondia. See the comment above.

13. Any other business

13.1. **North East Beekeepers Convention** – Dorian Pritchard reported that the 2020 convention is still intending to go ahead but the organising team is down to only two people and there is a desperate need for additional support. Jonathan Storey agreed to contact Helen Symonds with a view to sending out a formal request for volunteers.

13.2. **Future Meetings and Events** – Judith Stewart reminded members of our forthcoming events:

- **Wednesday 5 February 2020** – Open Meeting on ‘From Bees to Bottle – Mead in the Making’ – Luke Hutchinson from Northumberland Honey Co to speak.
- **Tuesday 3 March 2019** – Open Meeting on ‘My Experience using the Flow Hive and a Bee Vac’ – Nick Athey to speak.
- **Tuesday 7 April 2020** – Open Meeting on ‘An Overview of the BBKA Examination System’ George Eames to speak.

Further details are available from the HBKA website.

14. Meeting closed at 9:20 pm.