

THE HEXHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7:30 pm Tuesday 5 January 2021

Virtual meeting held via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Judith Stewart, Jane Hughes, Jonathan Storey, Neill Wylie, Sue Robinson, Paul Mingard, Martyn Farrer, Trish Scratcherd, Dave Cowings, Barbara Storey, Neil Dawson, Sam Burnish, Peter Dodman, Dorian Pritchard, Helen Hill, Helen Schooler, Jane Lewis, Mike Lewis, Jola Weaver, Jilly Halliday, Dot Coe, Ian Robinson, Claire Dickinson, Darrell Jackson, Sandra Knowles, Sheilagh Matheson, Stephen Dowson, Wendy Gregory

Apologies: Mark Robinson, Allan Ranson, Bill Hunter, Philip Latham, Peter Judge, Ann Howorth, Bev Bookless, Amanda Gray, Mary Greening, Lisa Ormston, Meg Middleton

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. Jonathan Storey welcomed everyone to the AGM.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. Jonathan Storey recorded the apologies as noted above.

3. Minutes of AGM held 7 January 2020

3.1. There were no further matters arising from the minutes of the 2020 AGM and they were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1. Judith Stewart summarised the key messages from her written report which had been distributed with the Agenda papers. She reflected on a difficult year due to the disruption caused by the global pandemic which resulted in the cancellation of virtually all of the season's meetings and training events.

4.2. She acknowledged the support of the Committee – particularly Bill Hunter who is standing down after several years of service. She encouraged members to come forward to replace Bill on the Committee – the commitment is not too onerous and can be particularly rewarding.

- 4.3. She also thanked Sue and Ian Robinson for their many hours they have spent in maintaining the teaching apiary at Wylam during 2020. A full account of events there can be found in the Hermitage Sisterhood on the HBKA website. Judith applauded the general membership of 178 for largely renewing their subscriptions in 2021 when, hopefully, something approaching 'normal service' can be resumed. She was particularly hopeful that the customary Beginners' Sessions can be delivered in 2021 – albeit with some degree of social distancing, as necessary.
- 4.4. Judith highlighted the need to relocate the teaching apiary during 2021 in order to accommodate the new owner's plans for the development of the High Hermitage caravan site. Any suggestions for additional or alternative apiary locations would be most welcome.
- 4.5. Our winter meetings programme will continue with an 'Ask the Panel' session to be held on 2nd February 2021. Further details will follow shortly by e-mail and posted on the website.

5. Treasurer's Report

- 5.1. Jane Hughes reported that the Association remains financially sound thanks to the continued support of the members. The accounts for the year ended 31 October 2020 show a surplus of receipts over expenditure of £956.65. Consequently, the Association's finances reveal a strong cash balance of £9,416.89 which we expect to need to call upon in order to fund the costs of relocating the teaching apiary.

6. Subscriptions 2022

- 6.1. Jane Hughes explained that the BBKA is proposing to increase the capitation fees by £2 in 2022 at the forthcoming ADM. She therefore proposed an increase the HBKA subscription by this amount, acknowledging that we currently have the lowest subscription of any Association in the region. This proposal was agreed unanimously.
- 6.2. Ian Robinson asked how any increase in the Bee Disease Insurance (BDI) element of the subscription would be addressed. Jane responded that we would have to meet such an increase from HBKA funds and/or call an Extraordinary General Meeting in order to seek an increase in the members' subscription rates.

7. Membership Report

- 7.1. In a written report, Neill Wylie noted that the Association membership reached a peak of 178 during 2020. The new eR2 membership system is proving to be effective in managing individual records and communicating with members.

8. Apiary Report

- 8.1. Similarly, Sue Robinson reported that she and Ian had maintained the Wylam apiary during 2020 and eleven strong colonies had been taken into the winter with the prospect of resuming beginners' sessions in 2021.

9. Education and Training Report

- 9.1. Also in a written report, David Wilson noted the cancellation of virtually all training activity in 2020. Various on-line training resources have since been made available and he remained optimistic that we will be able to support Basic Assessments in 2021.

10. Election of officers

- 10.1. Jonathan Storey explained that the existing Committee (with the exception of Bill Hunter) was prepared to continue for 2021 and that no other nominations had been received.
- 10.2. According to the Constitution, Judith Stewart is required to stand down as Chair, having already served a term of three years. However, given the curtailed nature of HBKA activities in 2020, it was proposed that, exceptionally, she should be invited to continue as Chair for one further year until the next AGM. This was agreed unanimously.
- 10.3. Consequently, the list of Officers proposed by the Committee was also agreed unanimously.

11. Appointment of Auditor

- 11.1. Brian English was re-appointed as Auditor for 2022.

12. BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting 2021

- 12.1. Paul Mingard is Hexham BKA's representative at the BBKA Annual Delegates' Meeting to be held via Zoom on Saturday 16 January 2021.
- 12.2. Paul highlighted the three more important propositions on this year's ADM agenda –
- **Proposition 9** – Surrey BKA is proposing no change to the voting system until new rules are agreed for the admittance of new Associations
 - **Proposition 10a/10b** – BBKA Guidelines/Rules for the admission of Area Association members
 - **Proposition 11** – BBKA proposal for a new single weighted voting system to replace the current dual Delegate and Membership voting systems.
- 12.3. Paul explained the background to these three propositions. He referred to recent correspondence from BBKA which suggested that a suitable compromise had been reached which would satisfy the concerns of Surrey and other large Associations while permitting progress to be made on a revised weighted voting system.
- 12.4. It was acknowledged that a single unified voting system would be a welcome improvement on the proceedings of the ADM. No further comments or questions were forthcoming.

13. Any other business

- 13.1. **Honorary Life Member** – Sue Robinson proposed that Dorian Pritchard should be become an Honorary Life Member of Hexham BKA.

- 13.2. Dr Dorian Prichard is a well-known figure in the world of beekeeping – nationally and internationally as well as here in the North East. He has been a member of Hexham BKA since 1979 and over the years he has held positions of Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Treasurer and Chairman. For ten years he was Convenor of the North East Beekeepers' Convention.
- 13.3. Dorian is best known in our region for the 'Introduction to Beekeeping' course at Kirkley Hall which he taught from 2003 until 2014. During his tenure he taught more than 300 prospective beekeepers, many of whom have gone on to become involved in their local Associations. He is a regular speaker on a wide range of topics from honey production for shows to his beloved native bee. One of Dorian's greatest skills is his ability to communicate with a wide range of people. He inspires them to go on to become the best beekeepers that they can be and work for the common good of the honeybee - preferably native. His well-known work speaks for itself, but it is the passion and enthusiasm he has engendered in his students that has enabled them to go on and spread the word.
- 13.4. Sue's proposal was seconded by Martyn Farrer and agreed unanimously.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1. Jonathan thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 8:15pm