

THE HEXHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7:30 pm Tuesday 9 January 2024

Village Hall, Wall, Northumberland NE46 4DX

Minutes

Present: Martyn Farrer, Jonathan Storey, Jane Hughes, David Wilson, Judith Stewart, Sue Robinson, Mike Higgins, Wendy Gregory, Karen Cumberledge, Victoria Nicholson, Malcolm Nicholson, Ian Robinson, Dorian Pritchard, Tom Jamieson, Claire Dickinson, Helen Hill, Frank Mann, Majbritt Mann, Matt Ford, Penny Giddings, Bill Hunter, Peter Dodman, Jola Weaver, Steve Percy, Sheilagh Matheson, Micky Macgregor.

Apologies: Barbara Storey, John Dickinson, Michelle Pow, Paul Edwards, Hazel Edwards, Iain Huzzard, Niki Black, Lisa Ormston, Pam Peart, Roger Massey, Carol Moffit, Sam Burnish, Colin Armstrong, Tom Whitfield, Jeni Brownlee, Andy Bennett, Karen Bennett, Mike Lewis, Jane Lewis, Barry Bailes, Sandra Knowles.

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. Martyn Farrer welcomed twenty-six members to the 2024 AGM.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. Twenty-one apologies had been received as noted above.

3. Minutes of AGM held 10 January 2023

3.1. No matters were raised regarding the draft Minutes of the 2023 AGM and they were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1. Martyn Farrer summarised the key messages from his written report.

4.2. He acknowledged the support of the Committee and from other members over the last year. Martyn reiterated the invitation for members to come forward to support the development of the Website, the management of the Library/Archive and the coordination of the Bee Buddies scheme. Assistance is keenly needed in all three areas.

4.3. Hexham Beekeepers was represented at all the customary county/village/agricultural shows in 2023 as well as organising a full programme of meetings and events. These culminated with the Rachel Lowther Lecture which was delivered by Chris Wren. The year ended with a slightly smaller than usual gathering for Christmas Dinner at the Beaumont Hotel, Hexham.

- 4.4. Martyn reported the increasing use of the teaching apiary with the introduction of Skill Workshops for the more experienced beekeepers. He also highlighted notable successes exam successes achieved in 2023 in Module 1 & 2 of the BBKA written papers.
- 4.5. Martyn reported some useful collaboration with university research teams over the year and his ambition to see further research activities develop within the association.
- 4.6. He concluded by highlighting the imminent threat posed by the Asian Hornet and urged everyone to participate in the various activities that are being arranged to raise awareness.

5. Treasurer's Report

- 5.1. Jane Hughes reported that the Association finances for 2022/23 which continued to reflect the return to 'normal' operating activities following the apiary move. This had resulted in a healthy surplus of £1,829 for the year.
- 5.2. Jane highlighted the use the Gift Aid funding of £883 to re-build the Association's reserves to meet future commitments. She also acknowledged the contribution of £282 from members' honey sales at the various shows.
- 5.3. The Association ended the year with total resources of £8,342 and the Accounts were approved unanimously.

6. Subscriptions 2025

- 6.1. Jane Hughes confirmed that no further increases in BBKA capitation rates are anticipated for 2024. However, the Association faces increasing operating costs across all of its activities and she therefore proposed a modest increase of £1.50 in full member subs to take effect in 2025. This would be in addition to any increases that BBKA might impose at the forthcoming ADM. This proposal was agreed unanimously.
- 6.2. Jane reminded members that the subscription rates as presented did not reflect any increases in the capitation fees which BBKA might yet impose. She sought approval for any such increases which might be applied by BBKA. This was agreed unanimously.
- 6.3. In addition, Jane alerted members to the possibility of BBKA seeking to impose an Asian Hornet 'Levy' across all its members in 2024. No firm proposals have yet emerged but a figure of £5 per head has been mooted in various meeting. Given the threat posed by Asian Hornet there was general support for this and Dorian Pritchard proposed that the Committee be given authority to collect such a levy of up to £5 - should the need arise - before the next AGM. This proposal was also agreed unanimously.

7. Membership Report

- 7.1. David Wilson reported that the Association membership attained a peak of 188 in 2023 with several new members waiting to join the Association in 2024.
- 7.2. David will be following a similar renewal process to that introduced in 2022 and the relevant e-mails have been sent out to members.
- 7.3. David thanked those members who had already renewed their subscription and he urged others to review any standing orders they might have in order to avoid paying twice.

8. Apiary Report

- 8.1. Sue Robinson began her report by commenting upon the extraordinarily unpredictable weather which had been experienced in 2023. This had ranged from heatwave conditions in May/June to a prolonged cold and wet spell in July/August.
- 8.2. We have begun to capitalise on the extra space available in the new apiary by running Skills Workshops on Shook Swarm, Queen Rearing and Queen Marking.

- 8.3. We took 15 colonies into the winter – each set up with a full super of honey. We are trying to reduce the use of chemical treatments in the Apiary. All the hives have been treated with Apibioxal but, other than shook swarm, that has been their only treatment.

9. Education and Training Report

- 9.1. David Wilson gave his report on Education and Training for 2023.
- 9.2. Five members were presented with their Certificates for passing their Basic Assessment – Karen Cumberledge, Matt Ford, Wendy Gregory, Mike Higgins and Majbritt Mann.
- 9.3. Five members had also succeeded in passing Module 1 of the BBKA written exam syllabus. Certificates were awarded to Martyn Farrer, Judith Stewart, David Wilson, Ian Robinson and Jonathan Storey.
- 9.4. Once again, Wendy Gregory and Mike Higgins will be coordinating the 2024 Beginners Sessions working in close collaboration with Sue Robinson as Apiary Manager.
- 9.5. Tom Jamieson thanked those members who had contributed to the WhatsApp messaging group which had proved to be very useful in supporting less experienced members.

10. Election of officers

- 10.1. Jonathan Storey explained the proposed Committee Members for 2024 and confirmed that no other nominations had been received.
- 10.2. The list of Officers as proposed was agreed unanimously.

11. Appointment of Auditor

- 11.1. Brian English was re-appointed as Auditor for 2024.

12. BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting 2024

- 12.1. Jonathan Storey is Hexham BKA's representative at the BBKA Annual Delegates' Meeting to be held via Zoom on Saturday 13 January 2024.
- 12.2. Jonathan highlighted the more important propositions on this year's ADM agenda.

13. Any other business

- 13.1. **Death of Ian Homer** – Dorian Pritchard reported the death of Ian Homer on Madeira on 13 December 2023. Ian had been a prominent member of Hexham Beekeepers Association and was also a former Trustee of the BBKA. Our condolences go to his widow Ruth.
- 13.2. **Town Twinning Visits to France and Germany** – Micky Macgregor informed the meeting that Hexham is twinned with towns in France (Noyon) and Germany (Metzingen). In particular, he highlighted the opportunity for Hexham beekeepers to participate in a forthcoming visit to Noyon in France to learn of the measures being taken by French beekeepers to minimise the impact of the Asian Hornet. Further details will be circulated for those who might like to participate.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1. Martyn Farrer thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 8:50 pm.