

North Somerset Beekeepers



Autumn 2020

Welcome to the latest edition of our branch newsletter. We hope you are all coping with the COVID-19 lockdown, and current restrictions; and have been keeping well and avoiding its devastating effects as much as possible.

The pandemic has had a disastrous effect on our branch events too, and severely curtailed our opportunities to meet each other over recent months. However, we do have a few events coming up that we hope you will join and enjoy together.

Brains Trust, Sat 10th Oct, 14:00-15:00 (Zoom version)

The annual NSBK Brains Trust has always been a useful opportunity to pose questions to the Expert Panel and enter into discussion about your beekeeping problems and concerns.

This year we will be using the Zoom video conferencing app, which you can access via any PC, tablet or smartphone. You will be sent a link to join the meeting soon. Any software required is automatically installed when you click on the link, so no technical expertise will be required to join the meeting.

There will be a panel of four: Annabel Lewis, Jamie Llewelyn, Meg Seymour, and David Capon. The question master will be Tony Slater.

To assist the smooth running of this event, it would be helpful for questions to be submitted in advance. You will still be able to ask questions on the day but, if you have a burning issue you would like discussed, please email it to Tony at tony.slater@tstax.co.uk

We hope to meet up with as many of you as possible on the day, but a recording will be made available afterwards on the club's blog.

Branch Annual General Meeting – 14th November, 14:00

This year's branch AGM will be held on Saturday 14th November at 14:00. For the first time it will be a virtual meeting held via Zoom.

Ken Basterfield, Master Beekeeper of Blackbury Honey Farm will be giving a talk prior to the business meeting.

Papers will be sent out by email ahead of the AGM and all are invited to take part in the meeting.

Most committee positions are continuing this year; however, David Welham is reaching the end of his term as our rep on the Avon committee. Eric Sortwell has joined the Avon committee recently and has indicated that he would be happy to act as our rep, but if anyone else would like to be considered for this position please let David Capon know as soon as possible.

We also have an ongoing vacancy for an Education Officer, again if you are interested in this please contact David, Annabel or any committee member.

National Honey Show 22nd – 24th October

This year's National Honey Show will be held online, welcoming beekeepers from around the world. Everyone is welcome to attend the event, which is free of charge.

The show will feature a series of lectures and demonstrations, followed by live online Q&A sessions, with the opportunity to ask questions via the 'chat' facility.

Lectures include: Medhat Nasr: *Wintering honey bees - but not as we know it*, and Jeff Pettis: *Long live the queen, please!, why are queens failing?*

There will be demonstrations by Chris Park, *Skep making* and Gwyn Marsh *Making Beeswax wraps*

Plus *Bill, Bob and Bees* an interview between Bill Turnbull and Professor Robert Pickard, and much more.

Registrations can be made from 12th October, via this link: <https://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>. Also visit the website to view the programme.

Membership renewal – Heather Pitch

Subs will be due on 1 November 2020 and the Treasurer and I urge you not to pay before then!

I intend to send out the automated email from the BBKA system on 1 November. If you don't seem to receive it, make sure to check your Spam or Junk Email folders for noreply@membershipservices.org.uk

Please check the details on the form very carefully, paying special attention to two areas. Tick the check box if you agree to Gift Aid being claimed on eligible items and also remember that your basic subscription includes up to 3 colonies. You only need to give the additional number of colonies if you intend to have more than 3 next year (this includes nucs). Please use the notes for membership secretary box for any additional information. If you complete the online renewal, I will not need a paper version of the Membership Form.

Once again this year we welcome bank transfers. Please add a note if you wish to use an alternative method of payment.

Apiary update – Eric Sortwell

It's just a year ago we were looking for a new apiary site; we explored many possibilities and finally decided on our site at Langford. A lot has happened this year. We started to move in the Autumn of last year and the new site was finished by May of this year, ready for this year's new beekeepers.



And then COVID 19 struck and all training was postponed; it was a real disappointment that we were unable to welcome our new trainee beekeepers to the club's new apiary.

Throughout the summer, the club hives have been looked after by a small but dedicated team of experienced beekeepers, and other club members

assisting with grass cutting and general maintenance jobs.



The season is now coming to an end, all the hives have been treated with Apiguard and checked to ensure they have sufficient stores to take them through the winter; and topping up if needed.

In December we are considering treatment for Varroa using the Gas-Vap oxalic acid method that we tried last year, and which appeared to be very effective.

I am pleased to say we are going into winter with ten strong colonies of bees ready for next year when hopefully we shall be able to start our training sessions again.



We were able to invite small groups of members to the apiary to look at the facilities we have to offer and, of course, a chance to chat about bees.

Looking forward to inviting all members of the club to the apiary next year and a successful year of beekeeping. Just keep on Buzzing as our bees do.

Membership survey – summer 2020 – Janet McCulloch

Thank you to those of you who completed the online survey in the summer. Unfortunately, we didn't have many responses, so it is going to be difficult to generalize the results and draw conclusions. However, there were some suggestions made and issues raised that the committee felt were worth exploring further.

So, I will be convening a small task and finish group to consider the results of this survey and the previous one and make some recommendations for future development.