

North Somerset Beekeepers



Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 13 June 2022 at 19:30 hrs at The George, Backwell

Present: A Lewis, H Pitch, T Slater, J Moger, E Sortwell, P Brading, R Williams

- 1.0 Apologies:** D Capon, G Packer, J Davies, S Ames
- 2.0** The minutes of meeting held on 11 April 2022 were approved.
- 3.0 Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.
- 4.0 Treasurer:** Tony reported the balance currently stood at £7,353 after purchasing the gazebo, flags and the cost of the apiary opening. This compared to £4,153 last year. The total cost of the apiary opening was £1,055 and sales of honey were £160. David said that the amount spent on hospitality at the apiary was considerably more than anything of this nature spent in the past. He asked how we stood with the charity commission on this. Tony said that what we spend should be fulfil the aims of the Association and in the circumstances, as this was a once in a decade, the spend would be permissible.
- 5.0 Membership secretary:** Membership numbers are currently: 10 country, 1 honorary, 1 junior, 38 local, 16 partner, 144 registered, 1 school. 212 in total. This compared to 188 in June 2021. Two members of staff from Bristol Grammar School have registered to keep bees there.
- 6.0 Secretary:** David tabled his report in advance of the meeting. He said that he had sent out a considerable number of communications to the membership via eR2 and that the booking system for the Sunday apiary sessions seemed to be working well. His other comments on agenda items will be dealt with as the meeting progresses.
- 7.0 Education:** Paddy said that bookings for the 2023 Introductory Course were going well. She said she is going to send out requests for the £20 deposit in the next few days. The hall at Flax Bourton is booked: the speakers have yet to be confirmed.

Paddy said that people have been asking for bee talks, eg, the Rainbows and some WI Clubs. If people contact Paddy, she is happy to give the talks as well as Gary (a STEM Ambassador). It was noted that Gary had an article in latest BBKA News.

There had been an issue at the Bath and West Show because someone had moved some display boards. Paddy has sent a full report about this to Avon for them to investigate and no-one has taken responsibility for the issue. Eric confirmed that Avon bought the last set of display boards and North Somerset stored them. The virtual hive belongs to North Somerset but all resources are available for the Avon branches to share.

8.0 Apiary Manager: Eric reported that all is going well with busy sessions every Sunday morning. Each week an increasing number of people are bringing their own hives. The University has finally rid the apiary of the moles. The rota for the rest of the year has been rewritten and Eric has asked David to circulate it. Rob asked for a copy for the website.

It was agreed to take the items Eric raised for Any Other Business at this point.

8.1 Should the apiary opening become an annual event, a chance for club members to meet up?

In his report, David said the apiary opening was a one-off event. We already have a President's barbeque and Christmas meal where members can meet for a purely social event. Any extra event would need to be self-funded and not rely on branch finances.

It was agreed that the President's BBQ was not well supported and it was suggested amalgamating it with a BBQ at the apiary instead. There was some discussion around our awareness of the Charity Commission rules and we need to keep our objectives in sight. Any money coming into the Branch must be for the education of beekeepers. So the event would either need to have an educational slant to it, eg, a talk followed by a social. Alternatively members would need to pay for it. Eric suggested a charge of £5 per head as he could source a commercial BBQ, and rent some tables and chairs.

The Committee agreed that it should be a combined training and education event and suggested a Sub-Committee be arranged to agree guidelines, budget and planning for a trial event next year. Annabel agreed she would speak to Gary.

8.2 Should the display boards used at shows have more pictures and stories about the apiary and members of the club tending their bees?

In his report, David said that the show equipment resources are for anyone to use at appropriate events as they belong to the branch. Anyone can add to these resources. Those that co-ordinate the shows decide which materials to display.

The current show displays do not feature North Somerset's beekeepers and Eric thought we should include pictures of the apiary and our

members tending their bees. Eric was happy for his pictures to be used and there was some historical materials in the shed. There appear to be plenty of resources available: a pamphlet written by Wendy Welham, the archive section of the old North Somerset website which had lots of digitised copies of magazines. Paddy had already prepared and ordered her pictures for the We Need Bees display.

8.3 Should the format of the beginners' (introductory) course be changed?

In his report, David said that Paddy has now taken on the role of organising the beginners' course. In the past presented have adapted and updated the presentations. He suggested that a small group of organisers and main deliverers of the course should consider this further. He also thought that those who had already delivered the course should reflect on what worked well and what could be improved for 2023. David already has some ideas about how the initial 2 or 3 apiary sessions could be more structured to give a better learning experience.

Annabel had received some feedback and the team had already talked about reviewing the sessions. She said that the BBKA has an Education Team reviewing the Course in a Case presentations and that Lyn Ingram (from Somerset) was involved with this initiative.

8.4 Are we look at bulk buying this year?

In his report, David said that if we do operate a bulk purchase scheme it should be along the lines of how it used to be organised. Someone needs to collate the orders from individual members and then make a bulk purchase at the best available rate. He did not think we should just buy up bulk buys with the hope of selling them on.

Annabel said we had talked about this last year and discussed moving it back to this kind of ordering system to avoid any shortfall and wastage. Rob confirmed that a simple form could be added to the website. It was suggested that we offer Apiguard, syrup and fondant. Jamie Llewellyn would not be interested in offering anything else.

Eric suggested that we write to Bristol Bottle Company to see if members can have a discount for jars and lids. He will also ask Neil Campbell at Bristol to see if they want to join in. In the meantime, it was agreed to get something out to the membership.

8.5 Second hand sale and unwanted equipment

Both Ivor and Stephen indicated that they have equipment they no longer require and Stephen would like to donate some of his to the Branch. Tony noted that any takings should not go through the Branch funds: takings would go to the vendors. The event would run like a car boot sale on Saturday 13 August 2022, starting at 0900 hrs. Eric will speak to the

university with a view to using the car park for the event. It was decided to obtain an expression of interest first.

9.0 Programme Manager/ Web-Master:

Rob reported that the visit to Blackberry Farm on 28 July 2022 has nearly reached the minimum of 16 members. He had spoken with Maureen and Ken Basterfield and they are expecting us.

However, the Teas and Bees events are not going so well with only 8 guests signed up out of possible 32. Four locations have been identified: Backwell, Clevedon, Portbury and Congresbury. If there continue to be insufficient numbers, the events might be cancelled.

Eric asked about plans for the Christmas function this year and it was agreed to have this on the agenda for our next meeting.

10.0 ABKA Rep: Eric said there had not been any meetings and so nothing further to report.

11.0 Committee Terms of Office and Continuity:

Annabel reported that the term for the following roles expires in November 2022: President, Chair, Secretary and Assistant Apiary Manager.

David will not undertake a second term as Secretary and will stand down from the Committee. He would consider taking on the post of Show Equipment Co-ordinator as a non-Committee role.

Annabel has already John if he might be interested in the role of Secretary as she did not feel it was a role for her. She would also email Sue. Failing that, there might be other members in the Branch who already have this experience. Annabel would also discuss with Mark Hunter.

Annabel had already spoken to Heather who is willing to take on the Chair as well as Membership Secretary. The Committee unanimously agreed with this appointment.

Gary now completed 6 years as President and Annabel was wondering about approaching Rob Francis as he is stepping down as Avon Education Secretary.

Annabel agreed to stay on the Committee as a Member without Portfolio which would be good for continuity.

The role of Apiary Assistant was discussed and Jodi will think about this before making a decision. She definitely wanted to step down from Committee and Annabel agreed to take on Jodi's role as Member without Portfolio.

12.0 Members without Portfolio: Jodi had no items to report.

13.0 Chair's Report: This had already been covered in the items above.

14.0 Any Other Business: Tony asked about the swarm collection protocol.

In his report, David said that the current system works very well, thanks to Adrian's efforts. The WhatsApp group is extremely effective. He agreed with Tony that if anyone is contacted via the BBKA website then a message should be added to the WhatsApp group to avoid duplication. David's main concern is the large number of group members who are never available to collect a swarm but magically appear when you offer one.

Tony stressed that we undertook this huge task for public. We currently have 2 systems: WhatsApp under Adrian's leadership and phone calls from BBKA website. Only a small number of people in the WhatsApp group actually collect the swarms and we need a means of disposing of them. He wondered where they were coming from and was there anything that could be done to prevent them. It was noted that Weston and Clevedon seem to be the busy spots. It was agreed that if any swarm calls were generated from the BBKA website, they should also be registered on the WhatsApp group. It was also agreed that the focus of training at apiary should be a practical session on swarm control at the beginning of the season. Rob suggested that different members should describe their favoured method of swarm control.

15.0 Date of next meeting. Monday 5 September 2022, 1930 hrs at The Dungeon.