

North Somerset Beekeepers



Minutes of the committee meeting held on 19th March 2019 at the George Inn, Backwell

1.0 Present

- John Banks
- Tony Slater
- Rob Williams
- Eric Sortwell
- Janet McCulloch
- David Welham
- Jenny Wakenshaw
- Heather Pitch
- Paddy Brading

Apologies were received from Annabel Lewis, Garry Packer.

2.0 Minutes of previous meeting were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting

3.0 Matters arising

3.1 Action: Investigate potential for repairs for club extractor - RW

Completed

3.2 Action: Wax entry at Winscombe Michaelmas Fair: display or entries - AW. Not present

4.0 Chair's report

4.1 Action: Let Anne Rowberry know that ES will be the branch point of contact for AH. JM **Completed.**

4.2 Action: Encourage members to set traps, sign up to bee base via the newsletter. JM **Completed**

Four or five members have posted their trap localities and monitoring on our website

4.3 Action: Hold another Asian Hornet workshop in Feb/March. RW/JB

Completed

4.4 Action: Consider providing traps to all members - HP to estimate numbers and prices. Jamie Llewelyn may provide a location for delivery. Completed. No further action

See item 5.4. JW aware that Maisemore has a device for adapting a bottle.

4.5 Action: Discuss possibility of developing nucs for members at next Queen rearing group. TS

No progress to date. We are not close to breeding a good strain. However, we have 10 new beekeepers who may want colonies; as a branch we should be able to provide them with 2-3 frame nucs if we had an agreed process. See 4.6.

4.6 Action: Discuss plan with apiary manager. TS, ES.

ES has started to consider preparing nucs and in the interim has directed new beekeepers to Jamie Llewelyn. There are currently only three colonies of bees at the apiary. Stephen Brain has offered two additional colonies in polyhives. We may be able to make up nucs from frames donated by members.

Action: Ask members if they are prepared to foster a nuc and on which frames. JM

5.0 Treasurer's report

5.1 Finance report

The finance report had been shared in a new format and TS asked for feedback. It was agreed that the report was easy to read, informative and useful.

5.2 Action: Draft a paper describing the pros and cons of continuing under the auspices of ABKA. TS

The paper had been circulated by email and views had been sought. Some committee members had suggested we need closer links with the ABKA. The money we give to ABKA is relatively small, but the branch could encourage them to spend it. To help forge closer links with ABKA it was suggested we improve coordination of our meetings with the Avon Exec meeting which meets 4 times per year.

The committee accepted the proposal to remain a branch of the ABKA and forge closer links.

Action: Provide JM with the dates of the Avon Exec. DW

Action: Try to coordinate our meetings. JM

5.3 Review of operating the bank account - TS (paper attached)

TS has streamlined operating of the bank account through online banking. He has proposed that most payments could be made by the Treasurer alone, but if the Treasurer was unavailable for a period of time, there would be deputies who could make online payments in his absence.

It was also proposed that, in order to reduce the likelihood of serious mistakes, for payments over £500 there should be dual control via email.

The committee approved these changes.

Action: Implement changes to operation of our bank account. TS

5.4 Proposal to request ABKA purchases AH traps for members - TS

TS wrote to the chair of the Somerset branch to find out what they have done. They bought 500 kill traps (modified with paper or sponge). They issued the traps to members with a press release to raise awareness. It was agreed to explore this initially with ABKA, though the branch may decide to act alone if there is no progress on this.

Action: Write to Anne Rowberry to request provision of traps to members by ABKA. DW

Action: Continue to encourage use of a suitably modified trap in gardens, monitored daily and native species released. JM in newsletter, JB on website

5.5 Fundraising - TS

TS suggested that the committee should consider if there are any organisations that would provide some funds, e.g. supermarket charities. Thatchers, Yeo Valley have benevolent funds. Funding or sponsorship is usually tied to appropriate projects, such as the apiary development and the need to purchase land or essential equipment. Often, they want their sponsorship to be advertised, e.g. on notepaper or websites. The Coop previously funded the purchase of the hut for the apiary and this was acknowledged by a notice.

6.0 Membership secretary update

HP reported that all members are now on the eReturn2 database. HP is editor and TS is approver on the website. It was agreed that JB, JM should be added as users. Group emails can be sent out via the site.

Payments need to be completed by 31 March for spring period. Associate membership is now known as non-BBKA membership and fee has been reduced. There are 148 active members currently, in total we have around 170 members. It was agreed it would be useful for HP to have a deputy.

Action: Consider an appropriate deputy for HP. All

Action: Add JB and JM as database users. HP Completed

The committee gave a vote of thanks to HP for using her skills and diligence in getting our branch fully using the system, ahead of many other branches.

- 6.1 Action: Present how E-Return2 works at a future meeting. HP
Deferred to a future meeting.

7.0 Secretary's report

- 7.1 Action: Discuss minimum communication needs and process. HP/JM.

JM had shared the previously agreed welcome letter with HP, who had prepared a new email communication.

Action: Incorporate any missing information from the old letter into the new email. HP Completed

Action: Share revised information with the committee for approval. HP (Revised wording to be added as Agenda item for next meeting)

- 7.2 Action: Consider setting up a group to agree contents of a potential welcome pack. HP/JM.

No longer required.

- 7.3 Action: Share constitution with the committee. JM

Not yet completed. To be shared and comments from committee by email. JM

- 7.4 Action: Order required number of BBKA booklets. JM **Completed**

- 7.5 Action: Liaise with Jodi Moger and the provider re branded garments. JM
Jodi has agreed to liaise with the provider to agree terms. Then the garments will be advertised on the website.

- 7.6 Action: Purchase an external hard drive and back up files. JM **Completed**

- 7.7 Action: Explore a cloud provider, e.g. Google Drive in addition to the hard drive. JM

In progress.

7.8 Action: Explore costs of new badges and share by email. JM
No progress to date.

7.9 Action: Decide whether to support new badges based on costs. All
No progress to date.

7.10 Action: Liaise with Martin Gates re amending the branch logo. JM
Completed

7.11 Action: Upload draft minutes of AGM 2018 to the website. JM, JB, RW
In progress

RW requested that past committee minutes are forwarded to him for upload to the new website.

Action: Email past minutes to RW. JM

8.0 Apiary Manager's report

ES reported that they had a good day on Sunday; cleaning equipment and tidying the site etc.

Several committee members offered to help at the Sunday apiary sessions: PB, HP, JW, SB, TS volunteered. It was suggested that helpers should have name badges.

Action: Ensure name badges are available for all apiary helpers.

8.1 Action: Find out the estimated date of housing occupancy. ES.

ES reported that we can stay onsite until late 2019, however this may change.

North Somerset Agricultural Showground: The NSAS committee are happy to host us, but they are investigating other storage facilities for us, possibly a container or horse trailer which we could keep nearer the bees. They have been asked to explore the possibility of toilet facilities - even if basic.

However, should this option fall through other options are being explored:

- Jamie Llewelyn also has a site in Gordano valley.
- ES, PB and AL have a meeting with Langford Vet School on 26/03/19.
- ES and Ginny Gibbs are meeting with the Tyntesfield Estate manager on 22/03/19.

9.0 Programme Manager's report

We have had six events this year to date. The pub quiz went well and will be repeated next year. The next event is BBKA exams on Saturday.

RW had proposed that groups of NSBK members should meet for "Teas & Bees" sessions at each others' apiaries. There was discussion about the ground rules (establish local groups; max. size to be 8; each member hosts a meeting in turn and provides tea and cake; colonies to be inspected only if weather permits). Some committee members thought the rules too constraining and might be seen as elitist. RW offered to withdraw the proposal to avoid controversy. However, it was then agreed to try the scheme out, and judge the wider members' reaction.

**Action: Explore options for home apiary visits and arrange them.
RW**

The Christmas dinner has been booked for Gatcombe farm and will be publicised when the menu and prices are available.

Concern was raised that there had been some clashes of branch events, even committee, introductory course, winter cluster. Ideally this should be avoided where possible.

9.1 Action: Promote the UWE presentation on 19th February with the membership. JM/RW/JB/ DW volunteered. **Completed**

9.2 Action: Liaise with RW re dealing with wax. JW.

This will be included in next year's programme.

10.0 Education Co-ordinator's report

10.1 Action: Remind RF to write article on auction options in the next newsletter. AL

AL has spoken to Rob and he won't be doing any more with regards to auctions, so this action is now redundant.

10.2 Action: Discuss any further changes in course development of intro and improvers course with Anne Rowberry. RF, AL.

Action: Ask RF what result was. JM

10.3 Action: Purchase equipment to develop the schools teaching programme and resources. PB

PB has been collating equipment in a box that could be used by members for schools or public visits. Costing around £300, the equipment includes: 4 bee-suits for children of all ages (could be used at a show for dressing up), posters, presentations on a USB. This could be kept in the apiary shed, even after we move.

Action: Purchase an additional projector and screen. RW.

11.0 Swarm Liaison report - AW not present

Action: Consider required changes to website on swarm collection. JB, AL, JM

No progress on this to date.

It was agreed that if swarms are not needed by collectors, they could go to apiary.

Action: Liaise with AW regarding collection of swarms for the apiary. ES/AW

12.0 ABKA Rep's report

Nothing to report as there has not been a meeting for three months.

13.0 Web-Master's report

RW reported on the new website. We have just taken over the website from the student group. The committee needs to decide when we want to bring it online as this has a cost. The committee will need to see the dummy website when it is ready to go, then agree launch date. We also need to decide if we use PayPal and consider if it can be merged with other Avon websites.

Action: Table a short report with proposals at next meeting. RW

13.1 Action: Inform JB of forthcoming events as early as possible. RW

JB reported that this is complete, the website is up to date with the latest events etc.

13.2 Action: Update membership forms on the website. HP/JB **Completed**

14.0 Shows 2018

14.1 Action: Liaise with GP re sending formal thanks to all show coordinators and volunteers. JM **Completed**

JM reported that David Hounsell is giving away his beekeeping equipment and has an observation hive that might be useful for shows or teaching.

Action: Accept the offer of the observation hive on behalf of the committee. JM

15.0 Members without portfolio

15.1 Beeswax recycling - JW

JW proposed a system through which used wax from members' colonies could be collected, rendered and exchanged for wax for the apiary. This would ensure that this valuable resource is saved from disposal and used for the benefit of the branch. It was agreed that this was an interesting proposal.

Action: Outline a procedure for collection, rendering and exchange of members' wax, minimising any risks of contamination. JW

16.0 Any other business

16.1 Action: Circulate proposals for Christmas meal to committee members by email for agreement. RW

Completed The meal will be advertised when the menu is published.

16.2 Action: Continue liaison regarding essential items purchasing scheme. JB, JL

JB reported that he met JL and saw his large storage facility. JB proposed to continue to offer MAQs, Apibioxal, Apiguard. JL is able to purchase these in bulk, e.g. Ambrosia bought in 1.3 tons, fondant in 12K blocks; jars can also be bought cheaper. JL also purchases ready-assembled Hoffman frames.

There was some discussion as to whether the branch should purchase other items from JL e.g. should we purchase vapour? JL also has nucs for sale, but there was some concern that they are obtained from Denmark, they are prolific bees and the frames are for Langstroth hives.

Action: JB to obtain a list and prices and share with committee.

16.3 Action: Send information on the branch library to committee. AL
Completed

AL reported that Tony and Sandra Slater did a great job preparing and selling the books. Those we are not retaining have been given indicative prices and a list will go on website. The books to be retained by the branch are currently residing in the Slater household.

16.4 Swarm Coordinator/collectors - HP

HP reported that the eR2 system has a box to indicate swarm collectors. JM reported that AW had responded to a request from the BBKA confirming swarm collectors. HP agreed she will not tick any until she has spoken to Adrian.

Action: Liaise with AW regarding recording branch swarm collectors on the R2 system. HP

Some concern was expressed that the BBKA swarm liaison system does not relate to our local WhatsApp arrangements. It was considered that the two systems have worked well enough in the past and meets different needs.

16.5 Update on NSBK name - TS

TS reported that the change of name has now been confirmed with Avon Beekeepers. Our normal day-to-day name - and brand - is "North Somerset Beekeepers". In more formal circumstances the name is "North Somerset Beekeepers, a branch of Avon Beekeepers Association" (or, where appropriate, "North Somerset branch of Avon Beekeepers' Association". Where the charitable status is important, for example, in fundraising, the name becomes, "North Somerset Beekeepers, a branch of Avon Beekeepers' Association, registered charity 271717" (or, where appropriate, "North Somerset branch of Avon Beekeepers' Association, registered charity 271717").

16.6 Taster sessions

JM reported that members of the public often express interest in taster sessions during the summer. Stephen Brain has said that he is not currently thinking of delivering these this year. The branch may wish to consider alternative delivery of taster sessions if SB does not hold them this year.

Action. Discuss options for taster sessions for 2019 at next meeting. All

16.7 Matters arising at Avon AGM - DW

DW said it was noted that we are the only branch without a reserve fund e.g. for apiary development. It was agreed that we are considering this in light of the imminent apiary development.

It was also noted that we are the only branch whose apiary insurance has lapsed. BBKA has a system for insuring the site, vandalism, theft, fire etc.

Action: Explore insurance options with NFU or BDI. ES.

7.0 Dates of next meetings

- Monday May 13
- Monday July 8
- Monday September 9
- Monday October 7 - Pre-AGM meeting
- Monday December 2nd - **Please note this additional date**