



**Draft minutes for Committee meeting 13th Feb 2023 at
19:30 at The George**

**Present: Heather Pitch, David Capon, Annabel Lewis, Eric
Sortwell, Tony Slater, RobWilliams, Jen Stallwood.**

- 1. Apologies Garry Packer, Paddy Brading, Judith Ralfs, Jodi Moger**
- 2. Approval of minutes of Dec 5th: Approved**
- 3. Matters arising (not covered below): none**
- 4. The Hive update:**

Heather, Eric and Annabel had met with Angela Hicks from The Hive. The Hive support local businesses and want to support us. It was agreed that they would sponsor a training hive at apiary; we have a new commercial hive which would be badged accordingly. They were prepared to donate £5 - 600 which would cover the cost of the hive plus membership of the Branch for one of their number, Angela Hicks may sign up for the Introductory course next year outside of this. They will advertise themselves at the apiary and we could provide some kind of display for their offices, but we need to consider the logistics of this, who provides display boards etc. It was agreed to invoice them for £600 and establish a point of contact to liaise. Discussions to be carried forward.

5. Extractor Hire update:

Heather had written to Mark Hunter to ask for finance from Avon, she was confident that they would provide the money, and we were assured that any extractors would be for the exclusive use of our branch. Rob and Heather met with Sheila James and discussed options. Our current extractors are all working: two s/steel and one

plastic. We currently charge £5 for 4 days, but it was agreed to increase the price. It was decided that we would buy one new electric extractor, and one new manual one. Rob to investigate, but he suggested a Hungarian Konigin at £7-800 and new manual one. Laminated instructions to be produced for all extractors including methods of cleaning. We would charge £10 for manual, £15 for electric, payable in advance. Annabel asked about PAT test. This doesn't need to be done for 12 months from new, but 6 monthly test required thereafter, Rob to arrange this.

The question of insurance was raised, third party was covered by BBKA with a signed disclaimer against personal injury. Sheila James was happy to continue with management, although it was noted that we have a significant number of members at the opposite end of the county. Going forward we will have a total of five extractors. Rob Williams and Sheila James to take this forward.

6. Barbecue/Training Event update:

Annabel, Heather, Eric and Jodi had held a meeting to plan this event. Saturday 17th June was agreed as the date. The plan is to hold a barbecue midday, either side of this a number of short training sessions. Suggestions for possible topics included testing for hygienic behaviour, products of the hive and wax processing, queen rearing, Tom Francis to lead? Use of apidea (Dan Basterfield to lead?).

The initial thought was to have training sessions 10am - midday, barbeque midday - 2pm, training 2pm - 4pm; although it was felt in the meeting this might be a bit protracted and attendance may well fall off, the timings would be discussed further by the working group.

Eric reported that he has a sponsor to provide sausages and suggested we cook it ourselves? Annabel stated she would be more comfortable to pay for someone with full qualifications and insurance to prepare and cook the food. Eric said he could secure the services of a qualified chef. Eric will pursue this. It was

questioned as to whether we should charge for the event, or fund it from club funds? It was felt that if we are paying chef, we will need to charge people. Tony outlined charity rules and gift aid arrangements, and felt people should pay. It was agreed that there should be no alcohol available, only tea, coffee, soft drinks etc.

Secretary's note: We will need to produce a full written risk assessment for this event, including aspects such as: layout of various demonstrations to ensure smooth traffic flow, logistics of potential hive disturbance inside the apiary alongside non beesuited activities adjacent to the apiary. We would also need to include assurances of the provenance of all food supplied, and public liability insurance for anyone involved in cooking the food.

7. Treasurer's report.

Tony reported that we had £14,500 in bank. Up on last year, no anticipated change in expenditure. Paddy had asked Tony to provide figures for the Introductory course; the gross income was £3340, expenditure on the hall £450, and books £198. Clarification was needed on the nett surplus from the course as there was confusion over the membership level of attendees. We had agreed for 2023 that the course fee included full membership of the branch and BBKA, but this had not been fully incorporated in the figures. It was agreed to freeze the course fee at £120 for 2024, with a need to review costs next year for the 2025 course.

The improvers course provided an income of £400 but Tony could find no perceived outgoings for hall costs for the course. Tony would check this with Brian Campbell.

8. Membership secretary update:

Current membership 155 registered, 6 country, 1 honorary, 2 junior, 34 local*, 12 partner, 1 school. Total 211. *Local members on Introductory course to be upgraded to registered.

9. Secretary's report:

In the absence of any volunteers to take over as secretary, David agreed to continue in the role. He suggested we set up a WhatsApp group for committee.

10. Education Co-ordinator's report: Paddy was unable to attend the meeting, but sent the following:

1. Introduction to Beekeeping Course

29 registered on the course

26 @ £120

2 @ £60 (Jack Smith, Paul Spatchurst)

AL Bane £100

Total £3340

I received an email from Al Bane last week. He had an accident involving a deer en route to the course !! and is unsure whether he can get along to the course this year. I have advised him that if he didn't want to attend this year, he might wish to Be added to 2024 waiting list still owing £20, or obtain a refund of £100. I am waiting to hear from him.

I will book the hall for 2024 for 10 weeks starting 15th January until 25th March unless advised otherwise

The course is going very well with many questions from the floor at the end of the session. End of session questions sent out every week to be discussed at the beginning of the next session also going well.

Enquiries about the course running next year received frequently. 10 people on the waiting list for 2024.

2. Future projects:

a) Beekeeping for scouts.

After a number of conversations with Rob W. I will contact Pip Riley, a friend of mine who is Scout leader for Blagdon Scouts. She has been a leader for many years. I had spoken to her some weeks ago about what might be involved if we wished to include beekeeping into their activities (she thought I meant immediately and had a pen

and paper out to book me up) Chatting to Rob on Saturday at the Honey Show, we thought it might be a good idea to approach Pip with the possibility of beginning a beekeeping course. This would involve bringing 4 of her scouts to the apiary at Langford. Meanwhile we would look into insurance at the apiary etc. Early days but it might just have legs. I will talk to Pip in the next few weeks and see how this may get off the ground. Blagdon is not very far away, and they have a minibus.

b) Ashfield Prison, Pucklechurch.

Paul Spatchurst is a prison officer at Ashfield. During a conversation with him one evening at Flax Bourton he suggested that I may like to visit the prison with the aim of starting to keep bees. I had run a beekeeping club at Chew Valley School with the help of Rob Francis, and aimed the venture initially at disaffected pupils. I told Paul that these young people, after initial reluctance, grew in self-confidence, self-esteem and their behaviour in school improved considerably. He was very enthusiastic and had contacted Anne Rowberrow too. Anne and I visited the prison last Friday. We were shown around the prison, had lunch, and looked at a site Paul had thought might be suitable for beekeeping. This venture will get off the ground. Anne is on board to help, and I would mentor Paul initially. We met the prison governor who said any equipment etc Paul may need he would willingly fund.

I think this could be an amazing project with benefits for those people who find themselves in prison for whatever reason. We met 2 men who would help Paul to learn about bees. They cannot leave the prison at any time, but Paul would learn from us how to progress.

I will keep NSBK informed of progress. It will take a while.

Paddy Brading

11. Apiary Manager's report:

Eric reported that he and the team had been busy preparing the new hives and was replacing all existing hives. Nineteen member's hives have been, or will be removed to their permanent home.

There are currently eight club hives, and two of last year's group are going to keep their hives on site for initial sessions.

Eric had recruited some new volunteers to help at the apiary this summer and would shortly send out a new rota.

12. Programme Manager/ Webmaster's report

Rob would contact Dan Basterfield to agree a topic for his talk on Mar 4th.

13. ABKA Rep:

Eric noted that a representative of the Weston branch had attended the most recent Avon committee, and wondered whether he should approach them with a view to considering a merger as Weston is a relatively small branch, and we have a number of members who were in Weston. Agreed that Eric should make an approach asking Weston if they would consider combining with us

14. Members without portfolio:

Annabel had attended a South West forum meeting to discuss BBKA delegates proposals. The delegates meeting in Jan was adjourned as disputes arose which may deem it unconstitutional. Annabel also said that as a result of her job change, she would not be able to continue as Avon's rep on this forum. As David Welham had been the previous rep it was felt that it may be time for one of the other Avon branches to find someone to take on this role.

Meg Seymour had updated on bee inspectors, three new ones had been recruited with one remaining vacancy to fill, with all the training required, inspectors will be stretched initially, so branch needs to be diligent in checking for brood disease.

The BBKA Asian hornet conference alerted that Asian hornets, once established, would create major problems for all pollinators, not just bees. Possibly in September. (Not sure what this was, can you enlighten me Annabel)

15. Chair's Report:

Heather reported that Adrian Wells was happy to continue as swarm coordinator, we need to ask for swarm collectors.

She reminded the committee that we should use blind emails when contacting anyone outside the committee and club to comply with GDPR, and avoid revealing email addresses.

Heather requested that the June meeting be moved to Monday 19th as she was unavailable for the 12th, agreed.

16. Any other business:

Eric questioned whether the committee felt the Brains trust was successful, he had had negative feedback from some of audience who couldn't hear very well. This was unfortunate, as microphones were available, so if members of the audience couldn't hear, then they should have asked panel members to use the microphone. It was felt that engaging a panel from outside the branch gave a different perspective than the last couple of Brains trusts.

Secretary's Note: Maybe we need to look at next year's programme at the next meeting, and consider whether we repeat the Brains trust and other annual repeating events, or maybe rest them for a year or two and come up with something different.

Eric also informed the meeting of the Avon Spring School on 15th April at Flax Bourton Hub

Secretary's Note: Has this been advertised at all? I can find nothing on Avon's website, or in my emails.

17. Date of next meeting: Mon 24th April 7.30pm at The George

**18. Meeting closed at 9.20pm
D Capon**