

North Somerset Beekeepers



Minutes of Committee meeting held on 7th Dec 2020 at 19:30 via Zoom

Present: A Lewis, D Capon, J McCulloch, G Packer, H Pitch, T Slater, R Williams, J Moger, E Sortwell

1.0 Minutes of meeting held on 5th Oct were approved

2.0 Matters arising: David reported that the PowerPoint presentations had been sent to Introductory Course members, and that a Zoom licence had been bought for the Branch.

3.0 Treasurer: Tony reported that the current balance was around £4.5k, there was still money to come from subscriptions. It was felt that we were in a less advantageous situation than recent years as we had spent a lot of the reserves built up on our apiary, and although we had completed most of the capital expenditure there were still ongoing costs. Tony explained that as a condition of our charitable status we were expected to keep one year's expenditure in reserve to mitigate any unforeseen circumstance. *(Secretary comment post meeting: I think that what we have experienced this year falls exactly into the category of unforeseen, and with the loss of income from our Introductory course, we would be fully justified in using some of this contingency reserve; these are the very circumstances they are there for).* It was agreed that we need to be careful with expenditure and that all major areas, e.g. Apiary, talks programme, secretary, shows, should submit an estimate of projected expenditure and equipment requirements for the coming year.

4.0 Membership secretary: Heather reported that 75% of the membership had renewed already; we currently stand at 144 active members, with another 50 pending renewal. There was some discussion about the joining fee and membership fees. The mood of the meeting was that membership fee should be scrapped, and that there was room for an increase in the branch membership fee, this had not gone up for many years. A decision to be made during the coming year.

5.0 Secretary: David felt that there were many things that happened in the branch that had evolved over time, and although people became aware of the working practices over time, there was no single reference point for them. New committee members had very little guidance as to what happens in the branch. He proposed drawing up a Working Practices Document that would bring together all that happens in the branch, along with recommendations for nuc preparation, honey and bee sales etc.

Each committee member would produce a guidance sheet of what their job actually involved in practice over the year. The document would be updated annually at the December committee meeting. David would act as main leader for this project and had produced some preliminary ideas. He would bring these to the Feb meeting.

- 6.0 Apiary Manager:** Eric reported that oxalic acid treatment at the apiary had been underway for some days and was ongoing. There were problems with the strimmer and mower. The strimmer had been declared unrepairable, and the mower was not working efficiently despite a recent service. Eric had sourced replacement Honda mower and Stihl strimmer/hedgecutter for a total of £759. It was agreed these were essential items so Eric should go ahead and purchase. Eric thanked all the team, Jodi, Annabel, and Fran with the bees, and John Molesworth, Mike Batchelor, and Richard Ellis with maintenance of site.
- 7.0 Programme Manager/ Webmaster:** There was a discussion about the poor attendance at the recent talk by Julia Common. It was felt that it could have been better publicised via website etc. It was agreed to push publicity for Dec 17th talk. Several people had contacted Annabel to explain clashes with the time, Garry also pointed out that many people are spending a significant amount of their working day in Zoom conferences, so may feel disinclined to tune into more in the evening. Rob had made initial contact with a number of speakers for next year's programme, but many were reluctant to commit in the current situation (for the benefit of anyone reading this in 2050 we are in the middle of a coronavirus pandemic!)
- 8.0 Communication Officer:** Janet reported limited progress on the questionnaire follow up, but was hoping to get a small discussion group together shortly. It was suggested that we produce a short newsletter before Christmas, if nothing more than to send season's greetings to our members. Committee members were asked to send a brief piece to Janet by Friday 11th.
- 9.0 ABKA Rep:** Eric had attended one Avon meeting, but had nothing that needed feeding back to us.
- 10.0 Members without Portfolio:** Nothing to report
- 11.0 Chair:** Annabel was organising the Improvers course with Rob Francis, and Heather had offered to help with the management of Zoom for this. It was felt a similar role for the remaining parts of the Introductory course would be helpful, Annabel to contact Frances Dawes who had offered to help.
- 12.0 AOB** Heather suggested that we use the 'What Three Words' app at the apiary, and the words be put on the sign alongside grid reference. This was thought to be a good idea. Garry suggested the app may prove very

helpful when it comes to swarm collection in the summer. David questioned the level of third-party insurance at the apiary, e.g. did it cover someone accidentally slipping and injuring themselves, Tony to investigate.

13.0 Date of next meeting 8th Feb 2021, probably via Zoom

Meetings for 2021: 8th Feb, 12th April, 14th June, 6th Sept, 11th Oct, 13th Nov (AGM), 6th Dec

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

D Capon