

## **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 9 December 2024 at The George, Backwell**

**Present:** Heather Pitch, Rob Francis, Adam Evans, Michael Batchelor, Eric Sortwell, Jen Stallwood, Michelle Blackborow, Claire Daly

1 **Apologies:** Tony Slater, Jodi Moger, Tom Francis, Paddy Brading, Annabel Lewis

### **2 Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of 14 October 2024 were approved.

### **3 Matters Arising**

3.1 Jen Stallwood was congratulated on passing the Intermediate Theory Certificate with Credit. Along with Tony and Sandra Slater, the Branch now has 3 members at this stage.

3.2 The following dates and formats were agreed for the 2025 Committee Meetings:

- 17 February – Zoom – (this is the local schools' ½ term)
- 7 April – (note change as originally proposed date is Bank Holiday Monday)
- 23 June - Zoom
- 1 September – in-person
- 27 October (AGM planning meeting) – Zoom
- 8 December – in-person

3.3 In the meantime, Heather will try and source an alternative venue that is nearer to the majority of Committee members.

3.4 The AGM is booked for Saturday 15 November 2025, 14:00 hours at Churchill Memorial Hall with The Apiarist already booked for a remote lecture.

3.5 Eric will attend the 2025 Avon Association Meeting dates which are scheduled for: 11 March, 12 May, 8 September and 10 November.

3.6 The Avon Beekeeper's Association new draft constitution prepared in connection with its transition from a Trust to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) has been circulated to Committee Members. Comments were received from Tony and these were forwarded to Paul Moorhouse.

3.7 Heather will circulate NSBK's revised Constitution again to the Committee with a view to its adoption at the next meeting.

#### 4 Treasurer's Report

4.1 Michael had circulated his detailed report to the Committee on 5 December. In brief, we had an income of £8,830 against outgoings of £639. This mostly comprises membership fees and fees for the 2025 Introductory Course. Future outgoings will be our capitation fees to BBKA and ABKA along with any training expenses. The accounts are now with Mark Hunter (ABKA and BBKA Chair or Finance) for review.

4.2 Michael attached a note from Mark Hunter. At the ADM in January 2025, the BBKA Trustees will propose to the BBKA subscription costs as they have lagged behind the Cost and Prices Index considerably since 2021. Any changes would not come into effect until Spring Capitation in April 2026.

4.3 We received written approval of our 2023/24 accounts from Mark Hunter, ABKA Treasurer and BBKA Chair of Finance on 11 December 2024.

4.4 Michael is continuing his investigations into setting up a NSBK Sumup facility. Adam highlighted the need to comply with Payment Card Industry standards.

4.5 Michael suggested that all logins and passwords to NSBK accounts (OneDrive, Zoom and emails) should be shared with a copy retained on the Secretary's laptop. Heather will circulate what she has to the Committee.

#### 5 Membership Secretary's Report

Category	On Roll	Active	Awaiting Renewal
Country	6	1	5
Honorary	1	1	0
Junior	6	4	2
Local	10	0	10
Partner	12	7	5
Registered	218	142	76
School	1	1	0
	<u>254</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>98</u>

% Renewed 61%

## **Secretary's Report**

5.1 £132.50 has been raised from the sale of library books. Clare Eden has taken over custody of the library books. Tony has suggested allocating a modest sum of money each year for the purchase of new books that would be useful for BBKA modules. After discussion, it was agreed that we should purchase books from the BBKA's reading list and focus on the most popular modules (eg, 1, 3 and 6). The initial sum of £200 would start our modern library with £100 added each January. Tony to liaise with Clare.

## **6 Education Co-ordinator's Report**

6.1 Paddy had submitted a Report for the October meeting which was then deferred. There were 3 points for review:

- Proposed article for BBKA magazine. Paddy had written the article but was waiting for some pictures from Paul Spatchurst (Ashfield contact).
- Banners for Avon and NSBK. Agreed to ask Ashfield to produce a banner for us which should include: North Somerset Beekeepers' name, logo, website address and QR code linking to website address. Paddy to action. Rob will contact Paddy to discuss the production of the Avon banner.
- Display Boards. We will continue to use our existing boards but agreed to purchase leaflet display holders which are less than £20 each. Paddy to action.

6.2 Heather reported on the status of the 2025 Introductory Course: 28 in total, 24 paid in full, still chasing 4 for their balance. The training team will hold a planning meeting tomorrow (10 December) via Zoom. Michael has checked the club laptop and it is in full working order. However, he suggested that all the PowerPoint presentations should be installed on it and also on a shared OneDrive.

6.3 2025 Improvers' Course. Rob said that he had 18 on his list and had now requested payment. It is likely that many will pay at the first meeting.

## **7 Apiary Manager's Report**

7.1 There are currently 8 Club hives (3 were lost) and 10 hives belonging to new beekeepers. Tom had gas vaped all the hives on Sunday 8 December and will repeat the process again on 15 December. There are still ample supplies of fondant and varroa treatment which is all well in date. The same team will be

used on the 2025 grass rota and Eric will take the lawn mower to be serviced. Mentors have been allocated to the new beekeepers when they take their colonies off-site.

- 7.2 As this will be Jodi's last year as Apiary Manager, Heather stressed the need to identify suitable members to work in an Apiary team with one who will attend the Committee meetings. While Jodi is currently indisposed, Eric has agreed to run the Apiary as before.

## 8 Programme Manager/Webmaster's Report

- 8.1 **Website:** Adam said that the GoDaddy and Square (Weebly) invoices had now been paid. He then circulated some Google Analytics which reported on the following: location of those visiting our website, which pages they visited and how they arrived at our website (through social media or via a search engine). He invited the Committee to let Heather know if any further information was required. It would be helpful to know how many people visited the Swarm Collectors' page but not quite so interesting to have the demographics analysis. Adam to action.
- 8.2 Michelle asked if there could be pages that are more child-centred, eg, word searches, bee-related activities, simple recipes. Rob suggested that the page could contain relevant links to other sites (eg, BBKA website) rather than invent something new. Adam said this was possible and asked if Michelle would make some suggestions.
- 8.3 Heather said she would send Adam the 2025 Programme to be uploaded to the website.
- 8.4 **Programme:** Heather said all the halls had been booked and the programme would be:
- 18 January – Stephen Brain talk – “What could possibly go wrong?”, Churchill Memorial Hall (Rob to confirm new title with Stephen)
  - 15 February – Branch Honey Show, David Capon to Judge, Janet McCulloch, Show Secretary – Tickenham Village Hall – Claire agreed to help Janet on this occasion with a view to taking on this role
  - 22 March – Tom talk – “Nucs” – Tickenham Village Hall
  - 26 April – TBC – Churchill Memorial Hall – Heather to contact Lynne Ingram to talk on a topic of her choosing (Queen Rearing or Honey Adulteration)
  - 5 May – North Somerset Show (Sandra along with Michelle and Claire who will both take over this role in 2026)

- May – Annabel – Bee Safari (Heather to pin Annabel down to a date)
- 15 November – AGM – The Apiarist via Zoom, Churchill Memorial Hall
- 6 December – Christmas Meal

8.5 Heather had been in discussion with John Sutton and Matt Booker about some Beekeepers' Emergency first aid training which will initially be aimed at the Apiary Trainers. The content will also include defib training and anaphylaxis. They will run 2 sessions (10:00-12:30 hrs, 13:00-15:30 hrs) with 12 maximum in each on Sunday 9 February 2025 at the University of Bristol's campus. Eric is in the process of identifying the 2025 trainers and Heather will contact them. She will also firm up the details with John and Matt.

## 9 ABKA Rep's Report

9.1 Eric said that the Avon Spring Day will be held on Saturday 29 March 2025 at Shipham Village Hall. Bristol Beekeepers will be responsible for teas and coffees and NSBK for the lunch. Eric will use his regular caterer and Ruth Chadney, Michelle and Claire will help with setting up the tables.

9.2 Bath and West Show will be held on 29-31 May 2025. Eric will take the kit to the showground and then collect it when it finishes.

## 10 Members Without Portfolio

**Jen:** Jen had recently attended an AHAT meeting with the BBKA and its Outreach Worker and volunteer AHAT Co-ordinators. The focus now is not to spring trap but to step back, calm down and await further guidance.

**Michelle:** Michelle's husband works at a local radio station and would be happy to advertise our events and arrange interviews. Jen said that she would welcome the opportunity to talk about the Asian Hornet.

**Claire:** Claire suggested an Asian Hornet photo stand-in board which would have images printed on it (2 hornets, wasp and honey bee) and 4 holes through which people can poke their faces for photographs. This was unanimously welcomed and Claire agreed to make one. She also suggested rock/stone painting for children. A QR code linked to NSBK's website would be stuck underneath it. Once again, unanimously welcomed and Claire would source some stones and suitable paint.

## 11 Chair's Report

Heather said that our tree planting picture now features on the BBKA website.

## **12 Any Other Business**

**Rob:** Rob suggested resurrecting the Newsletter but this would be just one A4 page and distributed on the first of each month via eR2. He would be happy to co-ordinate this. Item carried forward to the next Committee meeting.

**Eric:** Eric reported that 40 people attended the Christmas Meal which was a great success with super food and service. He collected £78 in staff tips. The Pill Owls thanked him for their invitation and asked to provide their services in 2025. They have been booked for Saturday 6 December 2025. Eric suggested running another Bee Boot Sale next year too.

## **13 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 17 February 2025, 19:30 hrs, via Zoom.

The meeting ended at 21:20 hrs.