



# North Somerset Beekeepers

(a Branch of Avon Beekeepers Association Reg Charity No 271717)

## **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2024 at The George, Backwell**

**Present:** Rob Francis, Heather Pitch, Tom Francis, Eric Sortwell, Michael Batchelor and Jen Stallwood

**Start time:** 7.30pm

**Venue:** The George Inn, Backwell

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tony Slater, Annabel Lewis, Paddy Brading, Jodi Moger, Adam Evans.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of 8 April 2024**

These were approved with no amendments.

### **3. Matters Arising (not covered below)**

Heather said that the Minutes of the 12 February 2024 meeting had been amended, approved outside the meeting and were now on the Branch's website.

### **4. Treasurer's Report**

Michael reported that the Branch was £4,000 better off than this time last year with £12,0509 currently in the bank; last year there was approximately £8,350. Larger expenditures included apiary expenses (£1,300) and the BBKA Save the Bees Donation (£500). Year to date: £14,000 income and £13,000 expenditure.

The All Risk insurance for the Branch's assets has now been paid but some of the policy's wording needs amendment and Michael is still in discussion with the brokers.

## 5. Membership Secretary's Report

Category	On Roll
Country	6
Honorary	1
Junior	2
Local	14
Partner	12
Registered	202
School	1
Lapsed	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>

Heather had analysed the reasons for members not renewing their membership and these are given in the tables below:

Lapsed this year	
Local	8
Junior	2
Partner	4
Registered	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>

Deceased	1
No longer keeping bees	5
Moving house/moving away	3
Not paid by 31 January 2024 deadline	22
Withdrew from 2024 Introductory Course	2
Husband/wife/parents are beekeepers	3
Not renewing	2
Lost bees in winter	1
Enjoyed Intro Course but decided not to keep bees	2
Sold bees - time constraints	1
No reason given	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>

Rob wondered how many beekeepers fail to renew after their first 4 years. The data is available and Heather said she would investigate this further.

## 6. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report.

## 7. Education Co-ordinator's Report

In Paddy's absence, Heather noted the following from her written report:

- Support for the Ashfield Prison bee project continues with monthly visits. The provision of on-site support will be reviewed in the autumn.
- Paddy has received fewer enquiries about the 2025 Introduction to Beekeeping Course but would like to set up a small meeting to discuss the feedback from the 2024 cohort. All present (except Tom) would be happy to join this meeting. Nine people to date have paid their £35 deposit.
- Paddy will be setting up a NSBK stand at the Chew Valley Nature Fest on 30 June 2024 which will be held at Chew Valley School.

## **8. Apiary Manager's Report**

There are currently 21 colonies at the Branch apiary (13 club hives and 8 from new beekeepers). Four more new beekeepers are still waiting for their bees and Tom said he would be able to provide another 7 more in July. Both David Capon and Annabel have also provided nucs for the beginners. Eric commented on the fact that he had received good support from the trainers for this year's good crowd of new beekeepers. Some of the 2022 cohort are still actively involved with the apiary sessions.

Bristol Vet School will be holding a 75<sup>th</sup> Celebration Community Fun Day on Saturday 20 July 2024 and Eric has agreed to organise a NSBK stand.

Eric will start to find prices for this year's bulk purchase scheme. Products will include: Apivar, Apiguard, Fondant and Invertbee.

Eric's main concern continues to be the successors to the Apiary Manager's and Assistant Manager's roles as both he and Jodi have been in post for 6 years. Rob suggested that there should be an apiary team of 4-5 people led by one person. This team could comprise new beekeepers. This item will remain on the Agenda until replacements are found.

The Christmas Dinner will be held on 6 December 2024 at The Old Farmhouse, Nailsea with invitations now possible for 80 people.

## 9. Programme Manager/ Webmaster's Report

### Programme:

- Michael agreed to draft a “heads up” dates for diary email for circulation in eR2. This would include the current show dates and the named individual responsible for them.
- Unanimously agreed not to pursue the Dan Basterfield/Anne Rowberry session pencilled in for July. Heather will let Anne know. It was suggested that we follow this up for 2025.
- The following talks were agreed:
  - 18 January 2025 – Rob to ask Stephen Brain for another “kick start” session at Churchill Memorial Hall, 14:00-16:00 hrs (Heather will book the hall once Stephen agrees)
  - March – Tom on “setting up nucs” at Tickenham Village Hall, 14:00-16:00 hrs (Heather will book the hall once Tom confirms a suitable date)
  - Late April – David Capon to be asked if he would run a session on “wax processing”. Rob to contact David for suitable date and venue.
  - May/June – Heather will contact Annabel to see if she will run a “bee safari”

**Website:** The Programme and Introductory Course page still contains the 2024 Application Form. Adam will get the latest version from Paddy and upload it.

## 10. ABKA Rep's Report

Eric reported that the Bath and West Show was another success this year although both he and Tom thought the Avon inspection hive left much to be desired especially when compared to the Wiltshire Association stand.

The next Avon meetings are scheduled for 16 September and 25 November. Neither dates clash with our Committee Meetings.

## 11. Members without portfolio

**Jen:** AH spring trapping season is now over and locally there is nothing new to report. As soon as there is/if there is a local incursion, we hope that our efforts to alert the general public will step into place.

**Tom:** Reinforced Eric's comments about the Avon stand at the Bath and West Show.

## **12. Chair's Report**

One *Tilia cordata* was planted by Ivon Davis on 28 April 2024. This event was marked by an article in the Mendip Times, June 2024, page 18.

The draft Social Media Policy was circulated to the Committee and was agreed outside the meeting. It has now been uploaded to the website and an email sent to all Branch members.

## **13. Any Other Business**

Eric asked if NSBK was a caring Branch and should we appoint a Branch Almoner. After some discussion it was decided to think about this issue and discuss at a later date.

## **14. Date of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 16 September, 1930 hours, The George, Backwell.

The meeting closed at 20:39 hrs.