

**Minutes of the 96th A.G.M. of the Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association  
held at Flitwick Village Hall commencing at 10.00am  
on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019.**

**1. Chair's welcome**

The Chair, Colin Hall, warmly welcomed members to the 96<sup>th</sup> AGM of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association, adding that participating in the AGM and voting is open to all current members and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. He described housekeeping arrangements and referred to the various services on offer to members around the room. He then outlined the nature of the business meeting in the morning, including the topic of CIO. He noted that the afternoon session would include the guest speaker Celia Davies, on the topic of "Nuc It!"

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Sheila Guymer, Paul Lawrence, Caroline Luxford, David Smith, Sue Shepherd-Smith, Paul Smith, Peter Tomkins, Helen Vaughan, Richard Sherwood, Anna Green, Andrew Ulyett, Ray Jenkins, Phil Goodman, Danny Lang, Peter Cook, Philip Penman, Robin Dartington

**3. Minutes of the 95<sup>th</sup> AGM**

A copy of the minutes of the 95<sup>th</sup> AGM were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record following a show of hands in agreement.

**4. Matters arising from the minutes.**

Last year's resolution (item 6.1 in 2018) read; "Any member who wishes to stand for a position on the Executive Committee shall inform the Secretary no later than the first of January, giving the names of two other members who agree to act in writing as proposer and seconder." Michael Bunyan recently contacted the Committee through the President to express concern that the requirement to communicate "in writing" might be discriminatory. The Chair thanked Michael for drawing this to the Association's attention and agreed that this was against the spirit and principles of the Equal Opportunities Policy, and that therefore it was agreed to drop the two words "in writing". The Chair said that he hoped that members were in agreement.

No other matters were arising.

**5. Chair's report**

5.1 I have some key matters to report on:

- **Crisis and heartbreak.** It became quickly apparent that many colonies had died during the winter and spring of 2018. It was very uneven: some apiaries were very badly affected or died out completely; others survived intact. Some very experienced beekeepers lost the majority of their colonies. The Committee tried to establish the extent of the problem and conducted a survey. That suggested that an overall loss of around 37%: huge, perhaps a slight over estimate, but still huge. Going forward we would like to do a more systematic online survey and the Chair encouraged members to complete it.
- **What help?** Because of the protracted winter and "beast from the east" at the end of February and early March – after the AGM, remember – most people's bees were set back, and many hives were in a weak state, including in our teaching apiaries. So, it was very difficult to offer help. We did what we could, providing a nucleus hive of bees to each of the worst affected members, when they became available. We were conscious that it was not

enough.

- **Learning Points.** Let's try to have local bees available on a much bigger scale by raising queens and nucs as widely as possible and over-wintering them, maybe in polynucs which seem to work very well. Hence the topic selected for Celia Davies. We can act to ensure good techniques for successful over-wintering, about which there is much expertise in the Association. Nosema is a likely cause of colony dwindling and death, a stress related, disease condition to be more aware of.
- **A golden summer.** If your bees were strong enough, May was exceptionally warm, and some members did well on the OSR. Then of course it all turned into a perfect summer from the bees' point of view: heat, sunshine and light winds through June, July and even into early August. The BBKA survey reports average honey crops of 41 lbs and 36 lbs for the East of England and South East respectively. What else to recall; lots of wasps, more European Hornets than I have ever seen before, and very low rates of swarming, which made re-stocking harder.
- **Pests and diseases.** We still do not suffer from foulbrood diseases in Bedfordshire, or exotic pests such as Small Hive Beetle, and Asian Hornet - as far as we know. Clearly the Asian Hornet is a growing concern in southern England. At our next Committee meeting, we will consider how best to monitor for the Hornet and what actions we should take. Look out for an email about this very shortly.
- **Environmental crisis.** Most of us will have been shocked to read about the prospect of "Insect Armageddon" – the probable extinction of insects within a hundred years unless the human race changes its ways. As beekeepers, we have a very special vantage point. We manage honeybees, yet they remain essentially wild creatures, who give us a deep sense of connection with nature. So, we are at the interface between human civilisation and agriculture on the one hand, and nature and ecosystems on the other. Our insights, our actions and advocacy will be much needed in addressing the environmental crisis.
- **As trustees.** Trustees can report that the Association has remained true to our twin objectives (objects) as a charity: "to further the craft of beekeeping and advance the education of the public in apiculture." Our Committee has again met seven times this year (more than the five times required), with a huge amount of work done in subgroups and informally. I would like to pay tribute to the excellent range and quality of services that we provide. Members have been wonderful too in helping in our many activities. Our accent remains on teamwork and fulfilment through service to others.
- **Membership.** Membership has increased, moving towards 500. Our Membership Secretary Peter Bracey will report to you on this.
- **Finances.** We continue to be financially sound and very well run. We do a very great deal in terms of all our services activities on behalf of members, bees and the public. We run lean, with a very low subscription, and without anyone receiving any payment for what they do. Our Treasurer, Maurice O'Connell, will present the accounts and provide more detailed commentary.

5.2

Last year in my report I suggested that we should embark on a review of the Association, with a view to assuring its long-term future. Such a process of self-evaluation is actually encouraged by the Charity Commission in its advice to

trustees – and changing the objects of the Charity in the light of changing times.

We formed a subgroup to kick-off this process of review, beginning with an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats: this is termed a SWOT analysis. We identified many strengths and also important opportunities.

The most momentous decision that came out of the review was for research and then to seek Charitable Incorporated Status (CIO). A huge amount of work has gone into this move, on the part of a subgroup and by the whole Committee. We are indebted to David Goodridge, an accountant who has specialised in working with charities, for guiding us. I commend the move to CIO to you. It is essential to taking the Association forward. Technically, it means creating a new Association and dissolving the current one, and that is why we have referred to this AGM also as an EGM, required by the current Constitution (clause 13). In practice we aim to keep all the strengths and character of the present Association.

5.3 The Committee is undergoing some major changes of personnel this year.

- Adrian Lake is standing down as District Advisor for the Shefford District. We are grateful to Adrian for consenting to fill a gap when he has so many demands on his time. Dave Corbett, who has been on the Committee as an Elected Representative, has agreed to take on the role.
- John Eeuwens is standing down as DA for the NE Beds District. John has been a kind and thoughtful member of the Committee, and we all have benefited from his expertise, based on very successful practical beekeeping, and admired his fine exhibits at the Honey Show. David Chapman has volunteered to replace him.
- Fiona Eelbeck is standing down as DA for the Kempston District. Fiona is one of only a handful of Master Beekeepers that we have in the Association: the highest qualification in beekeeping. She has been a deeply caring and very supportive presence on the Committee, and very keen to contribute to training. Karen Glasse has kindly agreed to take on the role.
- Peter Bracey is stepping down as Membership Secretary, a key job that involves systematic record-keeping, dealing with queries and enrolling new members through the year. Peter has loyally supported our major events during his six years in post. We have valued his willingness to ask searching questions and pursue issues. His wisdom and humanity will be missed. We feared that we would not be able to replace Peter, but some members have responded to a plea for help by email, and we hope that the gap can be filled in due course.
- Maurice O'Connell, our Treasurer, has also decided that it is time to step down after five years. The post of Treasurer is of course fundamentally important to the organisation. Maurice has done so much for us in all kinds of ways. We have been extremely fortunate to have his high-calibre services in dealing with our finances and keeping the accounts for this period. Maurice is not (even) a beekeeper, and so we appreciate his generosity all the more. We will miss his kindness, wise advice, patience with us – and that certain twinkle in the eye. Chris Higham has kindly agreed to act as our new Treasurer.

We thank Adrian, John, Fiona, Peter and Maurice for their service to the Association.

5.4 Lastly, we turn to Wally Thrale, our Secretary since 2000, but now departing. We have had two previous long-serving secretaries in my time, Richard Sherwood and Ian Beatty, both great people who have guided and shaped the Association. Wally likewise has been heart and soul for the Association, and in so many ways a great driving force for the common good and our development as an organisation. He is ultra-conscientious, a terrific organiser, a true friend, doing so much quietly behind the scenes. Running sixty or seventy hives, he has developed huge beekeeping knowledge and expertise – passed on to others in many training sessions and in his emails to members, with their distinctive “voice”. He is also a wise strategist and innovator.

It is not our custom and practice to give gifts to post-holders. However, we cannot let this very special occasion go by unmarked. Wally, the Committee would like to express the gratitude of the Association for all your work on our behalf with this small gift from us [a garden token].

This is “thanks” not “goodbye” to Wally. Happily, he wishes to remain on the Committee. And his topical emails on beekeeping will continue.

Simon Barrow has indicated his willingness to become our new Secretary.

So, we are passing through a stage of change, but not turmoil. We go forward with confidence. You will have seen the brief self-portraits in words by the candidates for the vacant posts in Paper B. Really helpful: thank you for doing them.

5.5 At this point, two members said that they had not received due notification and papers for the AGM. The Chair noted that the Committee assumed the notes had been sent unless that we learned otherwise. Five others also indicated that they had not received their AGM papers. Simon Barrow pointed out that key text was being projected on the screen. The Chair noted that if emails had been received, the information was sometimes on attachments which could easily be missed. However, the email distribution system will be checked.

The effect of the resolution that we passed at last year’s AGM is that no new nominations can be made after 1<sup>st</sup> January, and that the process of proposing and seconding is already complete. Voting should be greatly speeded up.

5.6 It is with great sadness that we have heard of the deaths of John Shelton, Peter Dixon, John Dawson and Bart King. May we please stand in silence to remember members who are no longer with us.

A member commended Gill Brewer for a superb article on how to keep bees alive, stating that this was “Just the sort of thing that was needed from the Association”. Gill noted it was on the website as a Good Practice document. The Chair recommended members to read the several Good Practice documents to be found there.

**6. The Chair noted that the next agenda item was to consider the following recommendation from the Executive Committee which will be voted on as a single resolution:**

- 6.1
- a) To approve the creation of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the proposed constitution including the name Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association, the proposed charitable purposes and the initial trustees;
  - b) To authorise the trustees to submit to the Charity Commission an

- application to register the CIO, and agree any amendments requested by the Commission to complete such registration;
- c) To resolve that, subject to the Charity Commission having registered the CIO, the current Association's assets and undertaking should be conveyed, transferred or assigned to the CIO and to authorise the Association's trustees to effect such conveyance, transfer or assignment of the current Association's assets and undertaking;
  - d) To resolve that, immediately following the conveyance, transfer or assignment of the current Association's assets and undertaking to the CIO, the current Association should be dissolved and the Charity Commission should be contacted to remove the current Association from the register.

Simon Barrow and David Goodridge presented the topic. Simon's presentation in favour of moving to CIO status can be found as Appendix A of these minutes (page 26).

David Goodridge continued, taking us through the four-part resolution. He explained that the logic was firstly that the Association needed to approve the creation of the CIO, adding that the proposed constitution had been circulated before Christmas. Following this approval, the membership would therefore authorise trustees to make a submission to the Charity Commission on behalf of the Association to register as a CIO. The Charity Commission might then come back with questions - for instance typically questions about being a charity, or whether the Association was financially sustainable.

David added that once the Charity Commission had given the go ahead, then everything from the Association would need to be moved to the CIO - like the existing things we do, stock and assets etc. Once moved and the current Association was 'empty', it would then be "struck off" and the new CIO would go forward. Hopefully the whole process would not take more than about two months

A variety of questions were asked, with detailed answers and discussion. A key point made was that in order to encourage unpaid Committee members and trustees to volunteer and freely give of their time, it was important that they were legally secure from financial risk, assuming no intentional malpractice. Clarification was given with respect to the Association's trustee liability insurance and the impact of potential claims on both the Committee and members. It was also confirmed that the move to a new charitable status was irreversible with no cooling off period.

In addition, the objects of the new CIO were reviewed. Simon compared and contrasted the old and new objects, noting that the existing objects had been enhanced.

The Chair confirmed that according to our present Constitution, the resolution would be passed only if there was a two thirds majority of those present and voting. The vote was taken, with raised hands counted twice to check. The result was as follows:

In Favour - 95  
Abstained - 4  
Against - 0

The Chair then formally declared the resolution carried. He thanked all present for their support in taking the Association forward, and David and Simon for their

presentation.

**7 To Consider any Motions Duly Submitted by Individual Members**

7.1 No motions had been received by the 1<sup>st</sup> January.

**8 Treasurer's report**

8.1 The annual accounts for the Association were prepared by myself and have been reviewed and examined in accordance with Charity Commission's regulations. The review this year was carried out, as was last year's, by Neil Blakemore, one of our members, a qualified auditor with many years' experience. Sincere thank you to Neil for doing this for us.

<b>PROFIT/LOSS 2018</b>		
	<b>Actual Full Year 2018</b>	<b>Actual Full Year 2017</b>
	<b>GBP</b>	<b>GBP</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Subscriptions	5,257	4,538
Bulk purchase scheme	20,480	18,002
Training	2,700	2,365
Events	808	790
Apiary sales	1,591	1,576
Donations	51	95
Interest earned	19	12
magazines	981	1,310
Other revenue	15	0
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>31,902</b>	<b>28,687</b>
<b>COSTS</b>		
Bulk purchase scheme	19,218	16,398
margin %	6.2%	8.9%
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
subscriptions	517	453
Print & Post	2,412	1,930
committee	326	357
Events	2,832	2,733
Training	1,589	1,337
Apiary	668	369
Insurance	1,339	1,321
Donations	1,500	1,500
bank charges	147	108
Depreciation	963	1,383
magazines	973	1,267
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>13,265</b>	<b>12,756</b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(582)</b>	<b>(467)</b>

- 8.2 Overall revenue of £31,902 was some £3,000 up on 2017. Membership subscriptions were £5,257, an increase of about £500 over the previous year. This is a reflection of the increased membership and a record high Gift Aid claim.
- 8.3 The bulk-purchase scheme generated £20,480, an increase of almost 2,500 on last year. This year's figure, however, included, for the first time, sales of nucs of over £5,000. On a like-for-like basis, bulk purchase sales were well down on last year, a reflection of the poor season experienced by many of our members.
- 8.4 Training at £2,700 was £400 up on 2017, showing that we were again very

active in putting on courses catering to both beginner and more advanced beekeepers. Gill Brewer will give you later a breakdown of the different courses provided.

- 8.5 Events revenue was £808. This is made up of honey festival entry fees and payments for the Christmas Social.
- 8.6 As in 2017, sales of honey from the Stockwood Apiary performed strongly bringing in revenue of nearly £1,600.

<b>BALANCE SHEET 31 December 2018</b>		
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>GBP</b>	<b>GBP</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
fixed assets	3,862	3,584
cash	25,904	24,700
stock	4,735	4,133
debtors	494	1,495
creditors	(3,104)	(1,439)
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,891</b>	<b>32,473</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>		
surplus b/f	32,473	32,940
Loss for period	(582)	(467)
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,891</b>	<b>32,473</b>

- 8.6 The margin on the bulk purchase scheme of 6.2%, down from over 8% last year. This drop was primarily due to our selling the nucs to members at cost price.
- 8.7 Turning now to expenses, overall expenditure of £13,265 slightly higher than last year.
- 8.8 I'll run through the more significant areas of expenditure.
- 8.9 Printing & Postage, £2,412. made up primarily of the cost of producing and mailing the yearbook (£1,700) and a mailshot in connection with proposed change of status of the charity (£550)
- 8.10 Events, £2,832: This largely the cost of the Honey Festival, hall hire and providing speakers at occasions, such as this AGM and winter talks, promoting the Association at third-party fairs and events and the Christmas Social.
- 8.11 Training costs, £1,589 This consisted largely of hall hire for the Beginners and Improvers courses run during the year.
- 8.12 Insurance, £1,339: The Association provides public and product liability cover for all members along with Professional Indemnity for all Trustees of the Charity, i.e. all Committee members.
- 8.13 Donations, £1,500: As in previous years, we made a donation of £1,500 to the EARS research project.

- 8.14 The net result of this was that the association incurred a deficit of £468 similar to 2017. Though, it's the second year in a row that we've clocked up a deficit, the underlying trend is that we generate a small surplus. In fact, the net effect of the results of the past 5 years is a surplus of just over £2,000.
- 8.15 Moving on to the balance sheet, the noteworthy figures are
- 8.16 Fixed assets: Capital expenditure for the year was just over £1,000, consisting of 2 extractors for use by members, one in the Leighton Buzzard area and the other in the Ampthill area. After depreciation, the book value of our assets was £3,861.
- 8.17 Stock at £4,700 is somewhat higher than previous years, most likely due to slower than usual sales of jars during the summer.
- 8.18 Creditors at £3,100 consists of 2019 membership subscriptions paid in 2018 along with some accrued expenses.
- 8.19 Debtors, at £494, are primarily amounts owed to us by Stockwood Park for honey supplied by the Apiary. This has now been received.
- 8.20 Our cash balance remains healthy at just under £26,000.
- 8.21 On other developments, the number of members paying their subscriptions has been increasing steadily. This brings significant advantages in streamlining the renewal process.
- 8.22 As you may be aware, delivering this report will be just about my last task as treasurer of the Association as I have decided to resign. I am glad to have been help out over the past 5 years. I have been involved with other charities and clubs in the past and I can confidently say that the level of commitment and amount of work put in by your trustees "is amazing and second to none." I am grateful to Chris Higham who has agreed to be nominated to take over the role from this year. I have no doubt he will do an excellent job on your behalf.
- 8.23 Finishing his report, Maurice then asked for any questions.
- A member asked, "We have a lot of money coming in with not much going out. Why is this?" The Treasurer stated that the aim was to balance revenue and expenses – a small deficit of £500 that had been reported was as close as you can get.
- In response to a further comment that the bank reserves had crept up, the Treasurer stated that this was explainable, due to creditors.
- The Treasurer received a spontaneous round of applause for his excellent services.
- The adoption of the accounts was proposed by both the Chair and Treasurer; and seconded by Anne Cross. The accounts were accepted unanimously.
- 8.24 That concludes the Treasurer's report. **Maurice O'Connell**
- 8.25 There was one more question from the floor. Michael Bunyan commented that the cash balance had increased by about £3,000 in the past few years and shouldn't the Association be using its funds to further its aims rather than accumulating cash. I explained that though the balance had indeed increased, we

also had unusually high outstanding creditors of approximately £3,000 at the year-end so effectively our available cash had not markedly changed.

## **9 Secretary's Report**

- 9.1 Having read back through my previous reports since my first session of secretary and again for my second period, it strikes me that they are quite similar in content.
- 9.2 So for my final report I have decided to change the style. Honeybees have existed on earth for about 100 million years or so, perhaps not in their current form but as a type of vegetarian insect. We know that honeybees swarm and it was one of these swarms that landed in an apple tree in Luton one warm June evening in 1988. So a human was asked to go and deal with the swarm and remove it if possible. The human who attended was of short stature with a goatee beard. After a period of two or three hours most of the bees had moved into a cardboard box which was placed above the swarm. In fact the local council had contacted me as in those days you could place your name with the council and they would let you know when a swarm was available. So began my involvement with honeybees, beekeeping and Beds BKA. The previous winter I had attended a Beginner's course so of course I was an expert!
- 9.3 What a learning curve! You never forget the first time you find a super full of honey and bees running out of space, seeing queen cells on an inspection and then panicking on what to do. Carrying out an artificial swarm but which box does the queen go into? Could I find the queen? Or the first time you lose a swarm and spending an hour walking alongside the wood where the hive was located looking for the swarm. And then wondering what to do with a honey crop. The reason I wanted to keep bees was because I found the idea so fascinating but I overlooked the fact that they would produce a surplus, and as I don't have a sweet tooth I don't eat honey!
- 9.4 So then the search for outlets and, when they were established, the realisation that there was not enough honey to supply them year round. So more colonies were needed but they in turn produced too much. So another outlet was needed and so on it went. Eventually I joined the Bee Farmers Association as my operation had reached that scale. When I retired from the day job I decided I needed a dedicated honey facility so a brick facility was built which is generally insect proof. Wasps do try to enter via the keyhole but I place material in there to keep the blighters out.
- 9.5 So back to the beginning - being a member of Beds BKA was a great help with a network of people willing to share, advise and help out. Without that assistance at the start of my beekeeping career I could not have progressed and may have given up after a while. So joining the Committee after a while was the obvious route for me. I'm a team player and enjoy working with others for a common goal.
- 9.6 It was obvious the Association was successful because so many activities took place during the year. People like Richard Sherwood and Ian Beattie were the leading lights at the time and built the foundations for where the Association is today.
- 9.7 When I joined the Committee there were only two ladies present and i'm pleased to say that one of them still attends and that person is Audrey. Audrey has been a member of Beds BKA for more than 60 years! But this was quite an imbalance between the genders and it is something that I have tried to change over the years by encouraging more female involvement on the Committee. It has been

quite noticeable that more women are taking up beekeeping in that many of the attendees on our Beginner's courses are female. Having a better gender balance is good for decision making within Committee. Incidentally, I have worked with four Chairmen over the years and I'm pleased to say that we had good relations over Association business. However, they were all male!

9.8 In recent years society has started to recognise the importance of pollinators for our wellbeing and the wider environment as well. This has been reflected in the level of interest for the Beginner's courses. When I first joined the training team we were lucky to achieve double figures between the Luton and Bedford courses. These days we have tens of people each year. In fact a few years ago we had around 100 between both courses! Membership has more than tripled since 2000! With this increase in numbers many people have come forward and either joined the Committee or help out at the various activities the Association engages with each year. It is really gratifying to see this coming together for the joint aim of promoting a vital natural resource. My thanks to everyone who help to make Beds BKA such a successful group.

9.9 As I have been Secretary for quite a while I have decided that I would like to step back from my Committee involvement as it is time for others to take the Association forward. But I shall not retire completely as I am standing for Sandy DA today. If you would like to help keep Beds BKA a vibrant group please come along and talk to us. There is a wide breadth of experience and backgrounds within the membership which could be of useful to run the Association. So do please consider giving back a little. Remember, all the training and coaching that you received was carried out by volunteers who gave of their time to pass on their knowledge and experience.

9.10 Finally, a brief word about CIO. I do hope the meeting today agrees with the motion to convert to a CIO. Doing this will give extra protection to the trustees without which some people have indicated they would not continue. The way the Association currently operates will remain unchanged and members will enjoy the same rights they currently have: so effectively no change.

**Wally Thrale**

A very long and hearty round of applause followed with a spontaneous comment from the floor commending the Secretary and commenting that it was people like him that made the Association.

## **10 Officer Reports**

### **10.1 Membership Secretary**

10.1.1 2018 saw further growth in our membership rising from a total of 433 in 2017 to 470 which is an increase 37 members or 8.5%.

10.1.2 Looking back over the three previous years the average increase per annum was 14 members.

10.1.3 The reasons for this larger increase than the average is because in 2018 we recruited 77 new members which is the highest number of new recruits since 2010 when the number was 113.

10.1.4 It was around 2009/2010 when the interest in beekeeping increased probably due to press coverage on the plight of pollinators which resulted in higher numbers of new members at that time.

10.1.5 In 2018 we had 40 members who did not renew membership for various reasons,

which is lower than previous years, the average for the three previous years being 47.

10.1.6 So the question is "are we about to see another surge of interest in beekeeping?"  
The breakdown of different membership classes is as follows:-

Year	Honorary	Full	Associate	Junior	Total
2017	7	380	41	5	433
2018	8	405	50	7	470

**Peter Bracey**

## **10.2 Bulk Purchase Scheme Trading Manager**

10.2.1 It is a shorter report for this AGM as the Bulk Purchase Scheme ran well in 2018 with stock available throughout the year, due in part to having a lower requirement than normal for foundation and frames.

10.2.2 Everything we offer is sold to us at a preferential price as we purchase in bulk, however for foundation we depend on our wax exchange to be able to offer an even better price to members.

10.2.3 At the end of the last AGM we received 200lb of wax in excess of our requirements, but as the 2018 season wasn't very good we may have to exchange this to balance our order of foundation for this AGM.

10.2.4 We have been able to hold the price of foundation to members at the same level as last year which is good news. I hope that this is able to continue. In part it is because of the activity of the 60 or so members who do exchange wax that we can keep the foundation price low. Please would those members keep exchanging wax, and others please join them.

10.2.5 I must give huge thanks to all the stockists around the county and the helpers on the stall at the AGM; these are the volunteers who willingly give their time and garage space who make Bulk Purchase Scheme possible.

10.2.6 I don't propose to review the financial aspects of trading as Maurice has already covered that in his report, other than to say that we will continue to review the prices we get and maintain our desire to offer great discounts for members across the products we offer.

**Simon Barrow**

## **10.3 Honey Show Secretary**

10.3.1 The Honey Show was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018 at Woburn Abbey Gardens, as part of the Honey Festival. The show attracted 214 entries from 32 entrants. This was slightly down on last year, but a few of the people who usually enter several classes were not able to attend. Entries were received in all but one class. Disappointingly, there was only one junior entrant, as we had been hoping to encourage more entries from our junior members – suggestions on how we encourage interest in this area are welcome. However, overall the show went off very well.

10.3.2 There were some high quality entries which the judges said were of National Honey Show standard. I had produced more information sheets about the different classes and members of the public were seen taking time to read them. In an attempt to obtain feedback for entrants I introduced a card system, where every entry was given a card and the judges were asked to provide some constructive comments so that entrants could learn how to improve exhibits for future years. Stewards could either write comments or use one of a variety of

stickers that I had produced. I have not asked for feedback on this yet, but hopefully it was of use to exhibitors. I would like to thank the stewards Matt Alabaster and Sue Lang for the help on the day and Simon Barrow for efficiently dealing with all the entries and results and for all his help on the day.

10.3.3 It was Beds BKA turn to stage the Federation Cup. Despite lots of chasing this only attracted entries from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Buckinghamshire. Peterborough and District had hoped to attend but they only had a couple of keen members, who let me know before the show that they were not in a position to enter. Hertfordshire had initially shown interest and then failed to reply to my correspondence. Cambridgeshire won this competition, with Bedfordshire coming second. There are a few keen individuals who have a lot of enthusiasm for the Federation Cup but overall the Associations are not interested. I suggest that the keen individuals should enter the National Honey Show instead.

10.3.4 At a committee meeting earlier in the year Dave Corbett suggested that we ran a Schools Art Competition as part of the Honey Festival. I drew up some rules and thought about the format of the competition but left the liaison with Bedfordshire schools and co-ordination to Dave. The only entries received were from a single school (Etonbury Academy) and these were displayed on the day with public allowed to vote for their favourite. Unfortunately, none of the children or staff from the school came on the day (or if they did they did not make themselves known). I therefore posted the prizes and certificates to the school. Although I requested an acknowledgement that they had received the package I have not had any response.

10.3.5 Woburn Abbey Gardens close on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 for a year to allow for a major restoration and refurbishment project. The Woburn staff are keen that we continue to work with them and have already started preliminary discussions with The Woburn Hotel. A small group will be visiting the venue to assess suitability by the end of this year. If it is suitable I would like to propose that this is the venue that we use for 2019 and that we arrange to have 1000 advertising leaflets printed as soon as the venue and date have been agreed. The printing costs would be paid for by Beds BKA.

10.3.7 **2017 Honey Show Results**

**Class 1** Open: Two 1lb jars of light, medium or dark clear honey

<b>First</b>	<b>Alan Frost</b>
<i>Second</i>	Ray Smith
<i>Third</i>	Andrew Eelbeck

**Class 2** Open: 1lb jar judged on aroma and taste alone (foil covered)

<b>First</b>	<b>Hamish Symington</b>
<i>Second</i>	Andrew Eelbeck: George & Vince Kindred
<i>Third</i>	Chris Rodgers:Mike Holt
<i>Highly Commended</i>	Annie Bygrave:Colin Hall

**Class 3** Open: Honey Cake

<b>First</b>	Rob Jellis
<i>Second</i>	Matt Alabaster
<i>Third</i>	Anne Hall
<i>Highly Commended</i>	Janet Southwood

**Class 4** Open: Honey Sweets

<b>First</b>	<b>Andrew Eelbeck</b>
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*Second* Sue Lang Jenny Higham *Third*  
*Highly Commended* Martin Bullock

**Class 5: Two 454g jars of light clear honey** (11 entries)

**First** Colin Hall  
Second Beverley Underwood  
Third Chris Rodgers

**Class 6: Two 454g jars of medium clear honey** (15 entries)

**First** Hamish Symington  
Second Colin Hall  
Third Chris Rodgers  
Highly Commended Beverley Underwood/Ray Smith

**Class 7: Two 454g jars of dark clear honey** (6 entries)

**First** Ray Smith

**Class 8: Two 454g jars of creamed/soft set honey** (6 entries)

**First** Hamish Symington  
Highly Commended Rob Jellis

**Class 9: Two 454g jars of naturally crystallised honey** (3 entries)

*No awards*

**Class 10: Gift Class: One 454g jar of honey to be donated to Sue Ryder**  
(14 entries)

**First** Matt Alabaster  
Second Barry Underwood  
Third Ray Smith  
Highly Commended George and Vince Kindred

**Class 11: Novice – Two 454g jars of clear or creamed/crystallised honey** (2 entries)

**First** Barry Underwood  
Second Mike Holt

**Class 12: Six matching 454g jars of honey** (9 entries)

**First** Beverley Underwood  
Second Matt Alabaster  
Highly Commended Ray Smith

**Class 13: One piece of cut comb (170g – 227g)** (4 entries)

**First** Colin Hall

**Class 14: One shallow frame of honey suitable for extraction**  
(4 entries)

**First** Beverley Underwood  
Second Andrew Eelbeck

**Class 15: Six matching beeswax blocks (25 -30g)** (3 entries)

**First** Andrew Eelbeck  
Second Sue Lang  
Third Caroline Luxford

**Class 16: Three matching beeswax candles** (4 entries)

**First** Andrew Eelbeck

Second Sue Lang

**Class 17: One bottle of dry mead** (1 entry)  
**First Colin Hall**

**Class 18: One bottle of sweet mead** (4 entries)  
**First Colin Hall**

**Class 19: One bottle of wine based on honey** (5 entries)  
**First Hamish Symington**  
Second Rob Jellis

**Class 20: Three craft items using bee products** (5 entries)  
**First Annie Bygrave**  
Second Caroline Luxford  
Third Beverley Underwood  
Highly Commended Sue Lang

**Class 21: Practical item related to bees/beekeeping** (6 entries)  
**First Barry Underwood**  
Second Jenny Higham  
Third Ray Smith  
Highly Commended Stella Macdougall

**Class 22: Photo of bees/beekeeping** (13 entries)  
**First George and Vince Kindred**  
Second Barry Underwood  
Third Beverley Underwood  
Highly Commended Jenny Higham

**Class 23: One photomicrograph of bees, diseases or pollen** (2 entries)  
**First John Macdougall**

**Class 24: One microscope slide of bees anatomy or pollen** (4 entries)  
**First John Rhodes**  
Second Fiona Cook  
Third John Macdougall

**Class 25: Junior – 3 decorated cupcakes**  
*No entries*

**Class 26: Junior – One 454g jar of honey** (1 entry)  
Second **Thomas Capper**

**Class 27: Junior – Craft item with a bee theme** (1 entry)  
**First Thomas Capper**

**Class 28: Six biscuits made using honey** (6 entries)  
**First Alan Frost**  
Second Matt Alabaster  
Highly Commended Sue Lang

**Class 29: One 454g of honey marmalade** (6 entries)  
**First Martin Bullock**  
Second Anne Hall  
Highly Commended Sue Lang

**Class 30: A honey label** (5 entries)

**First** **Fiona Cook**

**Class 31: An interesting or instructive exhibit relating to bees/beekeeping** (5 entries)

**First** **Alan Frost**  
Second Beverley Underwood  
Third Sue Lang

**Class 32: Two decorative beeswax candles** (2 entries)

**First** **Fiona Cook**  
Second Sue Lang

**Class 33: A beeswax model** (2 entries)

**First** **Sue Lang**  
Second Andrew Eelbeck

**Class 34: Decorated honey sponge** (4 entries)

**First** **Fiona Cook**  
Second Martin Bullock

**Class 35: Two 454g jars of chunk honey** (2 entries)

*No awards*

10.3.8 **Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association Honey Show Trophy Winners 2018**

1. The Lew Ellison Shield Rob Jellis
2. The Don Waterhouse Trophy Hamish Symington
3. The David Cook Trophy Beverley Underwood
4. The Richard Sherwood Shield Andrew Eelbeck
5. The Jennings Craft Trophy Barry Underwood
6. The Ian Beaty Trophy Annie Bygrave
7. The Alan Sunman Cup George & Vince Kindred
8. The Bill Inskip Trophy Matt Alabaster
9. The Linslade Cup Barry Underwood
10. The Federation Cup Beverley Underwood
11. The Jennings Junior Trophy Thomas Capper
12. The Jennings Senior Trophy Colin Hall
13. The Wilf Ruff Shield Shefford
14. The National Honey Show Blue Ribbon and the Bedfordshire Cup Hamish Symington

10.3.9 In response to a question, Sue Lang reported that the Federation Cup competition was being moved to the National Honey Show – the best of the best will go to the National.

The Chair asked the Honey Secretary whether she needed further volunteers. The Honey Secretary noted that Sue Lang had volunteered but anyone who could help would be welcomed.

**Fiona Cook**

**10.4 Communications**

10.4.1 The Communications Officer has sent his apologies. The annual survey had been launched late the previous evening.

10.4.2 The Chair confirmed that the database records [in WebCollect] would be double-checked considering earlier comments by individuals who thought that they had

not received communications.

## **10.5 Bedford Apiarist**

10.5.1 We started the year with the uncertainty of whether or not we would be able to carry on using the existing Apiary at Priory Country Park. With potential cuts in Bedford Borough Council parks department, there was the chance we would have to seek a new location. Thankfully, for now, this threat has been lifted and we continue to have a lovely secluded area where the bees seem to thrive.

10.5.2 We went into the new season with 10 hives, however we lost one soon after. It was not a strong hive going into winter '17 and so it was not such a surprise it never made it through. Compared with the rest of Bedfordshire losing just one hive (10%) was well below average. We set off the season with the aim of doing as much as possible to help replenish the lost stocks of many members who had sustained heavy losses, rather than trying to achieve a good honey harvest. To that end we produced 13 Nuc's during May and June. In spite of that strategy we did in fact increase our honey harvest from 11 to 13 buckets. A win-win result.

10.5.3 The beginner's course had a potential 25 new beekeepers who could possibly attend the Apiary. However we would only expect half that number normally at most. As it happened we had several previous attendees and about 8 from the course who attended many of the Sunday sessions. Numbers did drop towards the end of the year, but that is quite normal.

10.5.4 Due to the creation of the Nuc's we had no swarming throughout the season, so we didn't get to show the new recruits an artificial swarm, as we have in previous years. Previous course members are always encouraged to attend subsequent years, so they get to see as much of the variations from year to year and then in turn help educate new comers. This has worked really well in the last few years.

10.5.5 The honey extraction evening at Richard Smith's was again a great success. We had about 20 beekeepers enjoying the fruits of their labours. As usual Richard's wife Maureen provided a wonderful refreshment of tea and coffee with some glorious cakes. Not good for the waistline, but never to be missed.

10.5.6 We will be holding the Disease Recognition Day at the Bedford Apiary for the practical session and at the Bedford Athletic Stadium for the talks and examples of frames with disease. With the potential for the spreading of the various diseases always possible, I would highly recommend members take advantage of this course provided by the association. If you've never actually seen disease in real life, how are you going to spot it if it gets into your hive? Pictures in magazines do not do the real thing justice. The course will be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> July with exact details to follow nearer the time.

10.5.7 I would again like to thank Jon Bishop and Steve Binnington for all their help last year, and especially Richard Smith, the brains of our group, who provides invaluable experience, wisdom and knowledge, which he shares with great enthusiasm.

**Matt Alabaster**

10.5.8 No questions, although an appeal was given to attend the disease recognition day at the apiary on the 28<sup>th</sup> July. Bee inspectors would be present with samples of foul brood which would be very instructive.

## **10.6 Stockwood Apiarist**

10.6.1 I have to report that the apiary suffered some colony losses due to the difficult spring weather, mainly due to the *beast from the east*. It seemed that colonies

could just not cope with the cold. Starvation was never the problem.

- 10.6.2 The meetings were well attended with many beginners from the classes. Colonies were slow to build up owing to the weather and the spring honey crop suffered as a result. Swarming was not a problem, as many never even attempted it.
- 10.6.3 Drone laying queens became bit of a problem later in the season, which suggests that they did not mate well; was this due to the hot weather, who knows? The summer honey crop did very well and as in the past the honey is sold in the Discovery Centre, where it sells well.
- 10.6.4 Disease was not a problem. Chalkbrood, sacbrood and nosema have not been seen for some time now. Varroa is an ever present pest that needs to be kept under control. Our autumn treatment was apivar, which is new to us, hence it's use in the apiary. The mite drop survey we did before Christmas showed no mites, so the treatment has worked well. No oxalic acid treatment was used over winter.
- 10.6.5 Wax moth seemed to be on the increase and was found invading spare honey supers, so we treated them with sulphur strips. Our colonies all seem to be flying well and still have plenty of food stores.
- 10.6.6 We all need to watch out for the Asian hornet and we in Luton will do our bit. My thanks as ever to the helpers who turn out each week.

**Mike Niemann**

## **10.7 Training Officer**

- 10.7.1 Why? Why do we need training as beekeepers? Because;
- We will understand and care for our bees better
  - Keep our bees healthy
  - Produce more honey
  - Enjoy our beekeeping more
- 10.7.2 At training sessions, as well as increasing your knowledge and practical skills, you will;
- Meet other beekeepers
  - Exchange ideas
  - Make beekeeping friends
- 10.7.3 As you become more experienced and qualified;
- You will become an ambassador for bees
  - You may help with training yourself, passing on your skills
- 10.7.4 Sorry! Sorry I have not got pictures to show you of;
- Beginners' Classes
  - Apiary training
  - DA visits
  - Improvers' Groups
  - Microscopy meetings
  - Anaphylaxis Courses
  - Nosema Clinic
  - Refresher Days
  - Study Groups and exam rooms
- A picture speaks a thousand words, but all this goes on.
- 10.7.5 Thank you! Thank you to everyone involved in providing all this training, in all

sorts of ways; up front and behind the scenes.

- 10.7.6 Please! Please read your emails!  
Email is how we advertise and organise our training.
- Someone in Marston read an email (and the attachment) - and got a free full-page advert in the village magazine for our Beginners' Course starting next week.
  - If you read an email a couple of weeks ago, you'll know there's an Anaphylaxis Course on 13<sup>th</sup> April and you'll know who to contact to enrol.
  - If you are interested in trying the BBKA Basic Assessment, look out for an email about coaching sessions. The Basic is like passing your beekeeping driving test. We have a 100% pass rate for the people we have coached. Your reward will be an engraved hive tool.
- 10.7.7 Please sign up for training events.  
It really helps us organise things if we know who is coming. We know how many chairs, biscuits, beesuits or handouts are needed.  
Please put your contact details in the Yearbook.
- Don't be scared off by GDPR
  - Be proud to be associated with our Association
- 10.7.8 If we have your contact details we can:
- Send you course information and handouts
  - Return your lost property
- 10.7.9 **Finally...** Finally, a training opportunity which only comes around every four years. A chance to study beekeeping from the beginning. A BBKA Module 1 Study Group will be starting in September 2019. Details will be sent by email!  
**Gill Brewer**
- 10.8 Librarian**
- 10.8.1 Currently, there are 647 books, 739 journals and magazines and 42 DVDs and videos in the library.  
9 books were added to the library last year.  
24 books and 2 DVDs were loaned last year to 16 different members.  
The library is available digitally and can be emailed to members who wish to browse for what is available.  
Books may be taken out for 12 weeks, DVDs for 2 weeks. This may be extended if no other member is waiting to borrow them.
- 10.8.2 I can bring a selection of books to the various talks so if you would like to borrow something please phone or email and I will bring it along. Alternatively, books can be couriered through a committee member, district advisor or through the trainers at the association apiaries.
- 10.8.3 Last year, after over 20 years of service, Ray Smith wished to stand down from his role of librarian. As the only volunteer, I started collecting the books from Ray last summer and it took several evenings over several weeks to complete the task. The books occupied most of Ray's front room and I had to smile when Ray's wife was going round behind us filling in the gaps before Ray could put something else there.
- 10.8.4 The library is now digitized (list available via the website, fairly soon??). Meanwhile, I do have the spreadsheet or there is a hard copy if anybody would like to check if a book is available.
- 10.8.5 In total there are 590 books, 739 journals and magazines some going back to

1951 and 34 DVDs and videos. There appear to be 20 books missing from the original library catalogue, although cross referencing was interesting in places due to some spelling mistakes and misalignment of authors to books on the written catalogue. I think illustrated spelt ukkustrated was one of my favourites. In the process of cataloguing the books, I came across a couple of novels, a book of poetry and, what I have to say was a surprise to me, a book by Barbara Cartland.

10.8.6 Due to the transfer of guardianship only 4 books were added to the library last year and 2 were donated. 19 books and 9 DVDs loaned last year to 18 members. I believe this is down on previous years.

10.8.7 I will be bringing a selection of books to the various talks and if anyone would like to borrow something please phone or email and I will bring it along.

**Angela Newberry**

## **11 Committee for 2017/18**

11.1 The Chair stepped down and handed over to the President, Richard Smith. Richard thanked Simon and David for their excellent communication earlier in the meeting in explaining the CIO. In addition, the President added a special thanks to Wally who had given so much to the Association.

The Committee for 2019/2020 was then agreed as follows:

Position of Chair, Richard Smith proposed Colin Hall, seconded Wally Thrale – carried unanimously. Colin resumed as Chair.

Position of Secretary. Wally Thrale proposed Simon Barrow, seconded Gill Brewer – carried unanimously

Position of Treasurer. Maurice O’Connell proposed Chris Higham, seconded by Wally Thrale – carried unanimously

District Advisor for North East Beds. John Eeuwens proposed David Chapman, seconded by Debi-Sara Wilkinson – carried unanimously

District Advisor for Kempston. Fiona Eelbeck proposed Karen Glasse, seconded by Gill Brewer– carried unanimously

District Advisor for Shefford. Andy Johnston proposed Dave Corbett, seconded by Chris Jenkins – carried unanimously

11.2 Committee members standing for re-election, en bloc;

Assistant Secretary	Helen Vaughan
Honey Show Secretary	Fiona Cook
Librarian	Angela Newberry
Yearbook Editor	Andrew Ulyett
Bulk Purchase Manager	Simon Barrow
Stockwood Apiarist	Mike Niemann
Bedford Apiarist	Matt Alabaster
Lecture and talks organiser	Chris Saunders
Training Officer	Gill Brewer
Assets Manager	Christopher Jenkins
H & S Officer	Caroline Luxford
Communications Officer	Paul Lawrence
Publicity & O/D Events	John MacDougall
Safeguarding Officer	Jennie Tysom

#### District Advisors

Ampthill  
Bedford  
Biggleswade  
Dunstable  
Leighton Buzzard  
Luton  
North West Beds  
Sandy

Gill Brewer  
Matt Alabaster  
Richard Dowsett  
Anne Cross  
Jennie Tysom  
Colin Hall  
Ray Smith  
Wally Thrale

#### Elected Representatives

Richard Medcalf  
David Goodridge

All proposed by Sue Lang, seconded by Peter Tomkins – carried unanimously after agreement to vote for them as a single block.

## **12 Examination Results**

12.1 The people that passed exams or received certificates from BBKA during 2018 are as follows:

12.2 Basic Assessment:

- Bruce Wootten, Credit
- Oonagh Standen, Credit
- William Wolfe, Credit

12.3 Module 5: Honeybee Biology

- John Macdougall, Credit
- Simon Barrow, Credit
- Dave Corbett, Credit

12.4 Module 7: Selection and Breeding of Honeybees

- John Macdougall, Credit
- Simon Barrow, Credit
- Dave Corbett, Credit

12.5 Module 8: Honeybee Management, Health and History

- John Bussey, Pass

12.6 Advanced Theory Certificate

- John Bussey, Pass

**Fiona Cook**

## **13 Date of next AGM**

13.1 Saturday 29th February 2020.at Flitwick Village Hall.

## **14 Any other business**

14.1 Michael Bunyan asked if the craft centre was still an ongoing item being considered, and requested that a proper business plan be formulated, with location, budget, and maintenance, to be brought forward at the next AGM. The Chair responded that the Association listened to all suggestions, but he could not promise this as there was further work to be done on the feasibility, nature, and desirability of such a centre.

14.2 Grant Harrison said that he was giving away bumble bee nesting boxes and anyone interested should contact him. The Chair noted, "With our new objects we are supporting all pollinators and so this initiative is aligned to this – thank you."

14.3 Tim Henderson asked how the queen rearing exercise had gone this year. The Chair responded that Dave Corbett had run valuable sessions, with a plan to

potentially run them again. In addition to Dave's training, Paul Walton was promoting queen rearing in Association with a professor in the Netherlands. They had jointly put together a breeding plan, and he was going to be a mentor to three new beekeepers in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Finally, the Chair noted that there was a talk coming up shortly on 21<sup>st</sup> March at Flitwick. Chris Saunders commented that perhaps the different initiatives could work together.

14.4 John Leech revealed that the previous winter he had lost four hives and nearly given up beekeeping. But through the generosity of this Association in providing a nucleus free of charge he had started again.

14.5 Audrey Buxton offered a special vote of thanks for the conduct of the meeting.

**15 Closing**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12.10

Signed ..... Date .....