

St Albans and District BKA Committee Meeting

Minutes

Thursday 10 September 2020 @ Christ Church Hall, 7.30pm

Present:

Julian Griffiths (JG)

Michael Abbot (MA)

Adrian Small (AS)

Ben Sutton-Jones (BSJ)

Luke Adams (LA)

Les Riley (LR)

Andrew Crossley (AC)

Jane Pendlebury-Green (JPG)

Patrick Maxwell (PM)

1	Apologies for absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">Richard Grimwade
2	Approval of minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">11 June (online meeting) Proposed: LR, Seconded: RP Agreed
3	Matters arising <p>12d(i): £1000 from Verulam Point – JPG to find out where it is (maybe ask Anne Wingate)</p> <p>12d(v): de Havilland Museum – may not be the best site as public around. John Heeley already has bees there too.</p>
4	Chair's report <p>Well Autumn is here already and it is time to clear up and make preparations for winter.</p> <p>To call 2020 strange would be to do the year something of a disservice and we can but hope for a more normal 2021 -whatever that now means. As an Association, we seem to have managed to deal with social distancing pretty well but one casualty of the year has been the training course. With a little luck we will be able to reschedule that but any plans may be subject to change at short notice!</p> <p>The lack of events means that many members are sitting on a good deal of stock and we have not been able to meet the public at any of the usual events. St Albans Business Improvement may be able to assist.</p> Schools and Education <p>We have received approaches from schools through the year asking for presentations from beekeepers. I am mindful that at least one of our members has started a business doing this but would like to see if we can put together some presentations and volunteers who would be willing to go and speak. If members would be interested please email chair@stalbansbees.org</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discussion: Can we get a group of people together to arrange educational visits. Maybe some members could prepare age specific presentations whilst others could deliver the talk. Ensure school pay petrol money for visiting speakers so our members not financially out of pocketAction: JPG to send out request to membership Meetings, Socials and Honey Tasting <p>It seems doubtful that we will be able to hold a physical winter meeting or honey tasting this year with things as they are. Again, we will have to look forward to 2021 and see where we have got to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Action: Luke Adams to investigate running a socially distant (Rule of 6) event. Smaller jars could be used as only 5 judges would be tasting. Luke would do the scoring. United Reform Church hall is booked Artisan's Market <p>Finally, St Albans BID have been running a small Artisan's Market in the High Street (opposite the clock tower). Mindful that some of you are awash in stock, I would like to gauge interest in members who would like to sell their honey on a stall. Gazebos are included in the £20 cost but this is a turn up and sell it yourself situation so you would need to be equipped with a cash float and or card machine, paper bags etc. Getting a small group together to share the cost and the work would make sense so you can stop for a cup of coffee</p>

during the day! Again, if of interest, email chair@stalbandsbees.org and we will try and put something together.

- **Action:** Julian to send out information about Aritisan’s Market to members.

5 Secretary’s report

a) Key results of the honey price survey by HBKA: The survey was open for 5 weeks from 11 June to 16 July with a total of 151 responses spread across 82 postcode areas and several counties.

- Runny honey sold in 1lb jars is by far the most popular package.
- Half of respondents sell set honey, 18% sell comb honey and 10% sell chunk honey
- Retail and wholesale prices are shown:

Retail price	Responses	%	Median	Mean	Min	Max
1lb	107	71%	£6.00	£5.83	£2.50	£8.00
12oz	60	40%	£5.00	£5.03	£3.80	£9.00
8oz	65	43%	£4.00	£4.07	£2.50	£8.00
4oz	14	9%	£3.00	£2.89	£2.00	£3.90
Other	10	7%				

Wholesale	Responses	%	Median	Mean	Min	Max
1lb	41	27%	£5.00	£4.82	£2.50	£6.00
12oz	27	18%	£4.00	£3.99	£2.50	£7.00
8oz	16	11%	£3.55	£3.71	£2.50	£5.00
4oz	2	1%	£2.50	£2.50	£2.00	£3.00
Other	4	3%				

- Bulk honey prices range from £90 for a 30lb bucket up to £125.
- Word of mouth and selling from home are the biggest outlets, with very few people selling online (only 5%)

Sales method	Responses	%
Home	86	57%
Word of mouth	88	58%
Farmers Market	17	11%
Local Events	35	23%
Shops	51	34%
Online	7	5%
Other	11	7%

Most Popular	Responses	%
1lb	87	58%
12oz	33	22%
8oz	7	5%
Runny	100	66%
Runny & Set	12	8%
Runny & Soft Set	4	3%
Set	5	3%
Soft set	3	2%

b) JPG is about to send out an email to all members:

- some literature from BBKA about their photography competition
- ~~a request from Juliet Voisey for members to sign a petition to St Albans DC re their use of pesticides~~ Discussion about pesticides and herbicides led to decision **not** to include this in the membership email
- online study support group for module 1

c) Winter Talk: Friday 16 October: Sean Stevenson has agreed to do our winter talk on Queen Rearing. Sean is willing to do it in person or online. Diary date has been sent out to the membership. Given the latest government rules on “Rule of 6” online delivery is looking most likely at this time.

- **Action:** JPG to ask Sean to focus on:
 - Why bother with Queen Rearing?
 - Different methods
 - Starting off
 - Queen introduction
 JPG to publicise event to membership

d) Honey Tasting and social: Friday 13 November: Do we postpone or wait and see?

e) Request from Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted for a visiting speaker

f) Requests from public re buying honey, the honey map doesn’t seem to be working?

- **Action:** JPG to amend the honey map page and remove reference to contacting secretary

<p>6 Treasurer's report (prepared 9/9/20)</p> <p>a) Once again things have been fairly quiet on the accounts front, with the main income being the sales of honey jars & the Varroa treatments, we have received 3 donations of £20 since our last meeting, I believe from being on the back of collecting swarms.</p> <p>b) Our bank account balance is currently £12296.27 with outstanding lodgements of £129.55 from website purchase as @ 09/09/2020</p> <p>c) Membership currently stands at 130 members, made up of 116 full members, 12 country members & 2 junior member. This is an increase of 3 full members & 1 junior since last committee meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The 3 new members all joined on 1st September, they enquired end of July/August, & after explaining to them that if they wait until 1st September, they will get maximum benefit, as their membership will now run until 31st December 2021. If joining before then, they will have to renew in the new year when the renewals take place. ii. The junior member is at Prae Wood & is currently doing his DofE award. <p>d) The MAQ's Varroa treatment was taken up by a good number of members, with a total of 147 treatments being purchased, leaving us with 3. (If anybody hears of anyone needing any treatments, send them my way). The purchase cost after speaking to Gill Smith, the director at Thorne's & gaining some discount, was £783.70, we sold them for £5.50, bringing in a total of £797.50, making £13.50. (I still have the cash at home ready to pay in to the bank (total of £124.50))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Next year MAQ's to be sold via the website. Cost to be the same as the retail price Thornes are charging. Charge for credit card transaction to be added to the cost. Delivery of food and treatment isn't included in the "free delivery" offered by retail outlets and so members will be saving the delivery charge as well as it being convenient <p>e) Our insurance will be up for renewal at the end of the month and I will probably stay with our current providers arranged through the BBKA</p> <p>f) Capitation paid includes £86 of which £10 is to HBKA and £76 to BBKA. Extra £8 for Bee Disease Insurance for a new member.</p> <p>g) BBKA have proposed that their subscriptions are increased by £2 as from the end of 2020</p>	<p>7 Education and training report</p> <p>a) Oaklands apiary visits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. In July an apiary visit was offered to all those who attended March's Beginners Course. Out of 47 attendees, only 22 replies were received. Two people declined the offer but the other 20 were keen. ii. Visits started on July 25th and initially were held in two sessions on Saturdays & Sundays. There has been generally a good response from the Oaklands beekeepers to the Beginner visits, with most of them offering hives to observe during the sessions. iii. Some Beginners have asked to do more visits, and there is now a core of 5 or 6 who have been several times and seem to be eager to progress. <p>b) Bee Awareness Session – October (may be subject to change after the regulations announced 8/9/20).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. I have spoken to Sarah at Christ Church about the possibility of holding the Bee Awareness next month. The Church is happy to hire the hall, subject to the usual requirements for cleaning etc as we have for tonight's meeting. Hall hire is £45 for 3 hours (charity rate). ii. There are currently around 30 people who have enquired regarding the courses, so the lack of public events doesn't seem to have diminished the public's interest in bees and beekeeping. iii. I suggest we hold the Bee Awareness on Tuesday 20th October or Tuesday 27th October at 7.30pm. iv. We have previously charged £5 to attend. Both North Herts and CASH (Welwyn) hold their session free of charge. Possibly limit to 30 people? (Hall capacity – 100) v. (New regulations from Monday 14th Sept – "Education and work settings are unaffected, and organised team sports will still be able to proceed, as will weddings and funerals up to 30.")
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Andy Crossley to consider how the Bee Awareness Session could be delivered given the current rule of 6 <p>c) Beginners Course 2020</p> <p>We had hoped to be able to restart this year's Beginners Course, but it is looking increasingly likely that we will have to abandon that idea and combine it with next year's course in the Spring. Most of the Beginners that have been attending the apiary sessions seem resigned to not completing the course this year.</p>
8	<p>Public events report</p> <p>a) Ayletts apple day - cancelled</p>
9	<p>HBKA report</p> <p>a) As we know, Mike Goodhew stepped down from the HBKA training role, although we advertised to our members of the position, no one from St Albans enquired. Nick Leach from CSHBKA (Welwyn) has not taken the role.</p> <p>b) HBKA AGM, will be held on 18/10/2020, @ 7.30pm using BIBBA Webinar licence, Celia Davis will give a presentation after, scheduled for 8pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: JPG to send out information to membership <p>c) Surplus funds & "what we want from the president role" to be discussed when the meetings are held face to face</p> <p>d) Lady Davison Cup, St Albans currently has it, is this the cup given out at the honey tasting, if not, can we ask Anne Wingate is she knows if it's whereabouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: JPG to ask Anne Wingate and Eileen Green to see if they know the whereabouts of the cup <p>e) New HBKA member to represent SABKA is needed. Approximately 4 meetings per year. Doesn't necessarily have to be on the SABKA committee, although could be co-opted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: JPG to send request for representative out to the membership
10	<p>Prae Wood and Oaklands Business</p> <p>Oaklands: Adrian Small (Apiary manager)</p> <p>a) Access to the apiary: No serious access issues have been encountered. The East gate has occasionally been closed (although it might not have been locked) very early in the morning but the main gate has been found to be open, so there have been no problems in getting to the apiary. More recently, a huge square flowerpot was put in the apiary approach road for reasons that remain unknown. It was still possible to squeeze past it in a car; it has recently been moved again to completely block the road but it is possible to get to the gate and into the apiary via the newly-built car park just to the left.</p> <p>b) Training and mentoring: New beekeepers remain paired up with more experienced beekeepers and the season has generally progressed well, with no major problems being reported. There have also been a series of visitors in the recent weeks (Andy Crossley can provide more detail, as the visitors fell under his jurisdiction).</p> <p>c) Varroa treatments: MAQS was put on all hives on Friday 4th & Sat 5th Sept</p> <p>d) Visit of Seasonal Bee Inspector: Peter Folge is booked in to visit the apiary from 14:00 on Monday 14th Sept</p> <p>e) Asian Hornet traps: After consultation with the manager of Prae Wood, it was decided not to put up AH traps at Oaklands for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. There haven't been any recent reports of AH on the mainland, suggesting that the threat is low ii. Non-target species may also get trapped iii. There is an admin overhead of putting the traps out and checking them, which doesn't seem to be justified by the apparent low threat

	<p>f) Next season: The extension that was installed last year has provided plenty of space for new hives. Some beekeepers are also planning to move their hives out in the spring. More robust and prompt action may also be necessary to deal with any colonies which become aggressive, as it seems that an unpleasant strain may have been introduced at some point which is working its way around the apiary.</p> <p>g) Roof replacement: Work continues to find a reliable company to replace the roof. One company didn't show up, resulting in an hour wasted waiting for them; another company visited the site but hasn't yet provided a quote; a third company is hopefully due to visit soon. Other companies will be contacted in due course.</p> <p>Discussion: A felt roof should provide about 15 years of service. A rubber roof could also be a possibility</p> <p>h) Honey collection: Honey is being collected which will form part of the "tithe" for Oaklands College. To be given to the college once it is complete and "compensation" will be sought from the association.</p> <p>Prae Wood: Richard Peterson (Apiary manager)</p> <p>i) We continue to meet from around 11.30 am and the attendance, if you look at the book, has been exceptionally good with the vast majority of members respecting the social distancing requirements and this is something we need to adhere to as many of our more senior beekeepers fall within the vulnerable category.</p> <p>j) Again, we continue to mentor as we have always done but I should hasten to add that this is extremely difficult at the present time wearing a mask.</p> <p>k) The whole apiary completed the varroa treatment last Saturday in about three hours with Les playing the role of 'Doctor Death.' The system we used seemed to work extremely well and so we will start the feeding programme at around 3.30 pm next Saturday. I have advised members to fill their feeders as late as possible in the day and to avoid spilling syrup around their hives or anywhere else.</p> <p>l) It was decided to dispense with the apiary inspection this year as there has been no indication of disease within our stocks and there was not a window of opportunity when supers had been removed to do it between treating and feeding as there was when we used 'Apiguard.' Possibly we should do things a little differently next year.</p> <p>m) I received an email from Adrian about Asian hornet trapping and agree with his finding and like him feel that with the threat extremely low around these parts at present, that the collateral damage incurred would prove to be counter-productive.</p> <p>n) As for honey yield: it has been very patchy within the apiary with the hives in the beginners area doing vastly better than those in the older section. What that's all about I can only guess.</p> <p>o) We have set up an association hive for the bee breeding programme with a colony supplied by Les who it to head the project supported by a small team of interested members.</p> <p>p) Unfortunately the grass has got a little out of hand again as both the association and my mower got damaged through beekeepers leaving bricks and equipment on the ground and them getting hidden by long grass when it was left untrimmed. I was able to repair my mower quite easily but it is another case for the association mower as I am finding it extremely difficult to locate spares for an ancient Harry 22-inch mower but if nothing comes up I will endeavour to come up with a solution for its repair.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Update on Website and social media sites</p> <p>a) Gill Reay has resigned from the SABKA committee. Julian Griffiths thanked Gill for her support of the association. Ben Sutton Jones is going to "hold the fort" in the void until a replacement can be found</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Update on Out Apiaries: Richard Grimwade</p> <p>a) Available Sites: I still have some nice sites available for members wishing to have an out Apiary</p> <p>b) Verulam Point: The Apiary has had its ups and downs, but overall proved a nice project site. Its been lonely with no one in occupation, but there is a nice surplus of honey for them to share on their return. Regarding next year, all being well there should be another £ 1000.00 donation, could the committee agree a project that this could be allocated to.</p>

	<p>c) Dawn Hipwell: I have met up with Dawn and her husband. There are a couple of nice sites at the edge of her two-acre wood, facing S x SE, with cover and no access to the public. It would be good to find a good Beekeeper who want a site in the Chiswell Green area. Dawn is going to contact me in order, to provide contact and access details.</p> <p>d) de Havilland Museum: There has been no further contact with the Museum</p> <p>e) Bev Mc Nicholas: Bev has worked with me this season and now is considering her own Apiary site. Bev lives in Hemel Hempstead and we have an offer of a site in that area to look at. Bev is likely to be with me next season also.</p> <p>f) Sandridgebury Farm: Jamie Burrows has been most helpful in offering two nice sites on his farm. Jamie has topped an area which I will strim. The site is gated and car access to the Apiary. Caroline Williams has taken this site with her four colonies and hopes to expand to eight next year.</p> <p>g) Sisk Builders Frogmore: Following a couple of meetings at the Sisk offices with Sarah-Jane Davies, their sustainability manager, I have issued costs on the line of Verulam Point, these have been approved subject to landlord's approval, I await results.</p>
12	<p>A.O.B.</p> <p>a) MAQS/Varroa treatment next year (AS) – Decision to continue with MAQS as only been offered by SABKA for one year so far</p>
13	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 19 November</p>

Meeting closed 21:00