

St Albans and District BKA Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 28th July 2022

Chirst Church

New Greens

AL3 6DJ

	Apologies for absence - Richard Peterson, Patrick Maxwell, Kyle Riley , Caroline Williams
1	Members present: Les Riley , Adrian Small , Andrew Crossley, Julian Griffiths , Alison Holloway, Richard Grimwade, Richard Tavener , Stuart White
2	Approval of minutes - May's meeting approved by Les Riley and seconded by Richard Tavener
3	Matters arising - none
4	<p>Chair's report</p> <p>I have few words this month bar one or two in respect of the weather.</p> <p>Record high temperatures and low rainfall make it clear to even the most sceptical that our climate is changing. As beekeepers we are helping our environment but it is also clear that our craft will need to keep pace with the change. We need to make sure our bees have access to a water source, if the hive is in full sun provide shade and any of you will have discovered at your last inspection that propolis heated at 40 degrees makes a formidable glue...</p> <p>The autumn is going to be early. The blackberries have already flowered and there is little forage apart from watered gardens and a hose pipe ban looming.</p> <p>If you are taking honey off the hives, be mindful of the lack of forage and keep an eye on their stores.</p> <p>Looking forward I have two dates for your diaries:</p> <p>Saturday 3rd September is the Herts Honey Show in Welwyn.</p> <p>Sunday 11th September is our next Social at Christchurch, New Greens in St Albans.</p>
5	<p>Secretary's report</p> <p>On Sunday 3rd July we held our BBQ and social at Links academy. Approximately 24 members joined us on the day. We had catered for 44 - so there was plenty of food.</p> <p>It's been agreed with Link Academy to hold our September meeting at Links academy on Sunday 18th September - start time TBA. Kyle will be presenting on a topic related to Darwinian Beekeeping.</p>

	<p>A local wildlife photographer wants to photograph honey bees. In return for allowing him access and loaning him a bee suit we will have access to these shots to use on the new display boards being worked up. Just need to gain permission from a beekeeper at either Oaklands or Prae Wood to allow this to happen, and to gain a written disclaimer for our image Rights usage.</p>
6	<p>Treasurer's report Our current bank balance is £9677.30 as at time of writing this report on 27/7/2022 To date we have active members, 142 full, 17 country & 2 junior, an increase of 3 full, & 1 country & 2 junior. Varroa treatments - Purchased 300 treatments from Thornes. (After speaking to Gary Hammond - Bee1st Bee Supplies, he could not supply them cheaper, but would cost slightly more.) I have reserved 75 treatments for the association apiaries & the remaining stock is on sale at £6.10 per treatment to members in the shop area of the website. Sales have begun well. The monies for the treatments at the apiaries will need to be collected at the apiaries, not via the shop on the website. I have taken delivery of another pallet of 60 jerry cans of Invertbee syrup, giving us a good stock of 87 jerry cans ready for the winter rush. the price remains at £16.50 We still have a good stock of Ambrosia fondant at £3.30 per 2.5kg pack</p> <p>The autumn capitation is due at the end of August.</p> <p>Here end the treasurer's report for this meeting</p>
7	<p>Education and training report - Hives For All Ten people eventually signed up for HFA, all now have colonies of various strengths and sizes at the Association apiaries. (7 at Oaklands, 3 at PW)</p> <p>The three HFA people at Prae Wood appear to be settling in well, with weekly help from Anne Wingate and Richard Peterson's merry band.</p> <p>The mentoring of new beekeepers at Oaklands has continued the weekly sessions, with some comings and goings at the apiary as some of the second year people have found alternative sites. The Oaklands mentoring is shared between Adrian, Anne W, Maria Flegg and myself.</p> <p>One of last year's beginners has entered for her Basic Assessment next month.</p> <p>Bee Awareness Session</p>

	<p>We have had just over 25 enquiries so far for the Autumn Bee Awareness session. This was held previously at the Links Academy on the 21st October and was presented by Adrian and myself. Last year saw 25 people in attendance, approximately half of which went on to sign up for the following Spring's Beginners Course.</p> <p>Andy</p> <p>A specific meeting to hand over training would be the preferred way of introducing the new person to the role.</p>
8	<p>Public events report</p> <p>There have been a number of events since the last meeting: Herts County Show Oaklands Summer Festival Harpenden Carnival Larks in the Park Redbourne Primary School Fair Shenley Fete Wildfest Herts Primary School Day</p> <p>By and large the events were successful. Honey sales were steady and there was considerable interest in the observation hive.</p> <p>There were a few issues with Herts County Show. First, their admin was such that the tickets for stall holders / helpers were not available until the morning of the event. The other problem was with Welwyn. Everything went well on the day and Gabriela was easy to work with. However, Welwyn dealt with the honey sales and had a card reader. Their treasurer refused to pay the money to me, rather than the Association and offered to pay the beekeepers directly, after deducting a donation of 15%. This was finally resolved but raises the question as to whether we are prepared to share an event with Welwyn again. I am also still waiting to receive the 'expressions of interest' from Welwyn, despite chasing this. Finally, I believe that Herts BKA will not be paying for the stall next year. It is now all too clear that we need a card reader.</p> <p>The volunteers tend to be from a small group of people (my thanks to all who volunteered) and there were times when people had to do long sessions or that we were stretched for cover. I am not sure how to encourage the wider membership to help.</p> <p>There should be a few more events in September and I will confirm these shortly.</p> <p>Les explained that the Trustees have changed the Association rules to allow us to be an Agent for the card sales.</p> <p>Les agreed to purchase a card machine.</p> <p>Stuart White agreed to co-ordinate the Herts show if we agree to run the show as a St Albans event next year. He also agreed to run the scoring for the Honey tasting competition.</p>
9	HBKA report
10	<p>Prae Wood and Oaklands Business</p> <p>Report for Prae Wood for July 28 committee meeting</p>

AS it seems that I have not written an apiary report for Prae Wood for some time I thought that I would start with a short resume of what we have achieved so far this year.

At the beginning of the year we managed to give the shed a fresh coat of 'Barrettine' as we need to look after our investment and keep the weather out of the timbers.

One of our younger members dug a long trench along the front wall as we needed to install the wire netting to prevent rodents from taking up residence under the floor but we discovered that some rot had set in where the installers had buried the supporting timbers below the ground. This rot we have treated with preservative and are monitoring and we are giving some thought as whether or not to back fill the trench with gravel or leave it exposed.

We are at present getting together some materials to construct a rolling platform on which to house the association's ride-on mower to make it far easier to get into and out of the far doors of the shed: I hope that we will accomplish this in the not too distant future.

As I am sure you are all aware we have had two trees felled; one a very large cherry or plum that had become dangerous and a silver birch that the electricity board felled for us as it fell across the power lines at the nursery end of the apiary. We are very much in debt to those members who helped cut these up into movable logs.

A few weeks ago we managed to get the mowing done. We were in a dilemma over this as we needed to wait until the blue bells had finished blooming which resulted in the rest of the apiary getting very overgrown and it took the combined efforts of the apiary and my ride-on mower as well as the two pedestrian machines to cut it into submission. Whilst doing the mowing it became evident that the surrounding vegetation has become increasingly over grown and we will need to employ a small working party in the autumn to address this.

Moving on: the apiary this year has provided some of its beekeepers with a surprising harvest of honey in view of the fact that we did not have a significant amount of rape within easy reach, some hives netting over a hundred pounds each so I should not have any difficulty on purchasing enough honey to pay the rent.

Finally I must add that we are very much in debt to Calin Satmareanu for the sharing of his knowledge with us and him recently overseeing Les grafting eggs into artificial cells for our queen rearing project and the result that about ninety per cent were a success is a credit to them both but I guess that Les will like to elaborate on this give the chance.

Richard Peterson Apiary manager

The year has continued apace, with Oaklands at one point a couple of months ago having every hive base occupied, meaning that we were completely full and were wondering how we would cater for any more hives. However, luckily (but also sadly in many ways), there has been a sudden outflow of a number of beekeepers, meaning that the apiary is now about 2/3 full. One beekeeper has moved to Prae Wood; the others have gone to out apiaries in various locations. Nonetheless, the remaining beekeepers are keen to help with the general admin duties (mowing, strimming and making tea) as well as helping at events which, as we have emphasized, cements their own learning.

Other items of note

- this year's "crop" of new beekeepers has also brought some more interesting hives, with Oaklands now boasting a Drayton hive and a Slovenian A-Z hive, both of which bring a new type of challenge because they aren't extensible like the hives that we are used to working with, meaning that the beekeepers have to work with a finite amount of space.

- About an hour after we had explained swarm collecting to everyone, a swarm kindly emerged and settled at a suitable height in a nearby tree, meaning that everything that had been explained could be demonstrated later the same afternoon
- Our “two-mower” solution is working well and having two people mowing at the same time has taken quite an edge off this particular chore

Other than that, there isn't much more to add and we are looking forward to honey crops of various sizes before too long
Adrian Small

11 Update on Website and social media sites

12 Update on Out Apiaries:

Just a few things have accomplished over the last few months

New Apiary sites.

Jacqueline Gentle now at Whitewalls Kinsbourne Green

Caroline and Richard Williams at Highfield House, Tyttenhanger

I have set up at Grove Farm Flamstead, with one new beekeeper, not at the moment with St Albans

The Bedmond site wants another beekeeper, the only problem being the location, however Anne is going to see if there is another more accessible.

Hyde Farm Nash Mills

I am going to help Lynne Macmillan resurrect her original hives, if possible, possibly get some bees next year. The problem is she would like a beekeeper on her site, with their own bees and at the same time look after hers. She says the proceeds from her colonies will belong to the beekeeper? It's a good opportunity for a competent beekeeper, so we need to find one for her.

School presentations.

We had a fabulous time at each of the schools visited, some of those children are well switched on, on a couple of occasions I nearly sat down and let them do the presentation. The Schools visited.

Roundwood Primary

Edge Grove Prep School Aldenham

Clore Shalom School Aldenham

Lockers Park Hemel Hempstead

2nd Harpenden cubs

Warner brothers site Leavesden

Leavesden Community projects

Melvyn Beaumont the chair of the Leavesden community group are proposing to build a learning site for local schools and children. The theme is ecology, plants and Bees is as far as I went.

Melvyn wants us to be part of the advisory team at least and probably get involved with supply, management.

Warner Brothers own the site and I get the feeling as ecology and in particular bees and pollination, together with a few kids in the mix, it becomes a good local project. The angle as far as I can see is

	that Warner are planning to build a new stage and this project may help them jump the hurdles. I will keep you informed.
12	A.O.B. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Training - who will do this? Mignon Seaton has had a serious fall and may not be available2. The wildlife photographer will need to sign a disclaimer so we can have Rights to use his images3. Gazebo - slow going. Need a trolley to manage 4 gazebo leg weights each around 12.5 Kgs4. Good news via Luke Adams that Bre will still be able to be used for storage for another 2 years5. General hunt needed for a social apiary within our area. Richard Grimwade suggested a possible location in Redbourn
13	Date of next meetings: Thurs 29th Sept. Thurs 24th Nov. venue Christ Church New Greens Talk and social meeting Sunday 18th September at Links Academy, Honey tasting social Saturday 12th Nov. Christ Church New Greens St Albans
14	Meeting closed at 9:09pm