

St Albans and District BKA Committee Meeting

Draft minutes

Thursday 21st September 2023

1	Apologies for absence: Patrick Maxwell, Alison Holloway, Kyle Riley , Richard Grimwade
	Members present: Caroline Williams , Andy Crossley, Adrian Small , Cath Robinson-Card, Richard Tavener, Stuart White, Les Riley, Simon Morriss , Julian Griffiths (part)
2	Approval of minutes - of the last meeting were approved but note matters arising. Proposed: Adrian Small Seconded : Caroline Williams
3	Matters arising -the date of the Honey tasting competition should be Saturday 11th November A request out to members to provide more pooled equipment resulted in no correspondence. This offer has now been withdrawn.
4	<p>Chair's report</p> <p>View from the Chair</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>With the change in the weather we can finally say Autumn has arrived -something most members bees decided weeks ago when most things gave up flowering. While I can understand hives out in the countryside might have started to struggle, I also had to give an early feed to a large colony in the middle of St Albans. Members will need to keep an eye on the level of stores going into winter especially if we end up with another long and mild Autumn this year.</p> <p>I have made some progress with branded clothing for the Association but we need to decide what we are going to provide and on what basis. Do we order stock in advance as we do with jars or wait until we have accrued sufficient orders to place one ourselves? The latter could lead to a fair delay before delivery. Some of you will have noted in the BBKA newsletter Nottinghamshire have just completed this task. They have two clothing shop openings in March and October for orders to be placed. The shop closes at the month end and the goods are ordered with a 2-4 week lead time for delivery. Depending on the Committee's decisions and support from local suppliers, we can always speak to the firm supplying Notts.</p> <p>We decided that branded association clothing was a good idea. We will work up designs for a T-shirt and baseball cap. The aim is to have 2 orders a year on a pay first basis to alleviate stock keeping. Julian is working with various suppliers to work on quality, colours and costs as well as minimum order requirements.</p> <p>Events</p> <p>The food festival on Sunday where we applied for a charity stall and have been given one at a commercial rate of £91. I have tried to contact the markets team by email and phone and got no response. In consultation with Les and Alison, I have proposed that we ask those selling their honey to make a contribution to the cost. Otherwise, we are using Association funds to benefit specific individuals rather than the membership as a whole.</p> <p>On Saturday the 30th we have the Herts Autumn Honey Show and I note that St Albans is currently well in the lead with entries. I detect some encouragement from Anne going on.</p> <p>Our Winter Meeting on 21st October will be fascinating with Anne speaking of her lifetime of</p>

	<p>beekeeping experience and we have our own Honey Show on the 11th of November.</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities</p> <p>In other news Simon is making good inroads into taking over the training role for next year but speaking of planning, we need to reassemble our Asian Hornet Action Team.</p> <p>We have been lulled into a false sense of security with the lack of initial incursion but those times appear to be over and with increasingly mild winters the issue is going to get worse.</p> <p>We need to appoint a new AHAT Coordinator and I suggest we establish sentinel apiaries using Vespa Catch traps for spring 24. As these require regular checking being kill traps, I suggest we place them with members with bees at home around the area. Each trap with 5 lures is £7.60 from Thornes. Depending on the scale of this we can also buy the traps at £6 and a 1 litre bottle (100 doses) of attractant which would need decanting to each apiary. This should at least give us some warning.</p> <p>Les has details of another style of trap £23.99 subject to bulk discounts of 5 or 10%. We decided to trial both types to see which is most effective. We will write to members with pricing details encouraging them to order up a trap of either type for their garden's.</p> <p>Julian will write to membership asking for a volunteer to be our SABKA Asian Hornet Coordinator.</p>
5	<p>Secretary's report</p> <p>It's now been widely reported in mainstream media about the dramatic increase in Asian Hornet sightings in the UK. Best practice has been shared and BBKA's strategy is to inform and educate the public. At the local level, we have been asked to engage with local media to increase awareness.</p> <p>BBKA is funding a bus advertising campaign to increase awareness in Southern England in coastal port areas. It's unlikely that we will see these adverts in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>There has been some discussion among members about the price of a jar of honey. At the events that we, the committee run, we have decided the pricing policy. But it's a free market and members can charge what they think is suitable.</p> <p>The honey tasting competition will take place on Nov 11th. We decided that 8 oz jars be used. Communication will go out with details about jars and a prize raffle (£25 Bee first voucher) on the night. A call for another helper along with me - to help speed up entry on the door on the night - answered by Les offering to help out.</p>
6	<p>Treasurer's report</p> <p>Our current bank balance is £9729.76 as at time of writing this report on 20/9/2023</p> <p>To date our membership stands at: 133 full, 15 Country & 4 juniors. An increase of 2 full members, 1 country members & 1 Partner Member.</p>

	<p>Autumn capitation has now been paid along with the Bee Disease Insurance premium BBKA = £279 HBKA = £34 BDI = £24.70</p> <p>A limited number of Formic Pro Varroa Treatments was sourced, after deducting the amount needed for the association apiaries, the remainder were sold on the website, & sold out extremely quickly. I also purchased some Apiguard for the HfA nucs for 2024, & a small number for the website, all of which have also now sold out. The monies collected for the Varroa Treatments, & bee food are still to be paid in to the account, I will do this next week as I have been asked by a couple of members for some fondant for which they wish to pay cash for on Saturday.</p> <p>I would like to thank Adrian for managing the collection & payment for the treatments at Oaklands. We now have plenty of fondant & syrup in stock.</p> <p>After a recent conversation on the Google Group about the price charged for honey, & as we as a committee agreed to charge £10 for a 1lb jar at events we attend, I would like to propose that we, as an association should also pay £10 for the jars of honey that we purchase from members towards the apiary rent for the Gorhambury Estate & Oaklands. It was agreed to reimburse £10 a jar.</p> <p>Here end the treasurer's report for this meeting</p>
7	<p>Education and training report</p> <p>10 poly nucs complete with frames have been provided & distributed by Anne Wingate to members who were willing to raise nucs for the HfA Scheme 2024.</p> <p>The members who are preparing nucs are: 14 x 12 National: David Brown Richard Tavener Les Riley Caroline Williams, Richard Grimwade, Polly Cockburn ,Alison Fraser, Anne Wingate,</p> <p>Standard National: Luke Adams, Anne Wingate</p> <p>All members have also been supplied with 10 bags of sugar to feed the nucs for winter & Apiguard Varroa Treatment (passed onto Anne Wingate for distribution to members)</p> <p>23 signed up for the Bee awareness day on Thurs 19th October at Links Academy.</p> <p>Hive for all scheme has 6 members - 4 at Oaklands and 2 at Prae Wood</p> <p>No space at Oaklands for HfA scheme so will need to use Prae Wood next year. A new WhatsApp group will be set up for all mentors.</p>
8	<p>Public events report</p> <p>There have been no events since the last meeting. We have a pitch at the St Albans Festival this coming Sunday (24th September). At present, we have been asked to pay £90, in spite of having applied for a charity pitch. This is still being argued.</p> <p>If we have to pay, I have suggested that we ask for a £5 donation from honey-sellers to offset the cost.</p> <p>We decided to split the cost of the stand equally amongst the members who man the stand on the day. A donation of a one pound jar of honey FOC rather than a monetary contribution was agreed to have a presence on the stand and for your honey to be sold.</p> <p>The Apple Day at Oaklands, also on Sunday, is not happening - there are no apples.</p>

	<p>There are no further events in the diary. If anyone hears of anything suitable, please let me know.</p>
9	<p>HBKA report</p> <p>Majority of the meeting was spent discussing the Autumn Honey Show. St Albans will be manning the audio desk Herts BKA are also looking for 2 members to take on the Training Role for the county & also an exams secretary. More information for either role can be obtained from John Palombo who will also be putting a request out at the Autumn Honey Show.</p>
10	<p>Prae Wood and Oaklands Business</p> <p>Prae Wood: not provided</p> <p>Oaklands: Visit by seasonal bee inspector Peter Folge visited on 18th September and inspected all the hives as he has done in previous years. Unfortunately, the inspection was interrupted by heavy rain and the apiary manager (Adrian) left halfway through due to work commitments. However, Jo Clarke and Carol Males continue taking notes about the colonies which will be distributed to the beekeepers in due course.</p> <p>Training succession We have started to approach second year beekeepers for their help in training next year's intake. However, it is felt that Prae Wood have more mentors than Oaklands and should take a sizable proportion of the new beginners whilst Oaklands has a year to consolidate.</p> <p>Season so far Generally, the season has gone well with the new beekeepers learning plenty and the bees providing plenty of variety. It rather appears as though there is one particular hive location which the bees simply do not like for reasons best known to themselves as previous beekeepers have had lots of problems with colonies on that site; we may well avoid using it in the future. Honey yields have generally been fairly low although some people have had a good crop.</p> <p>Our two mowers have been slightly temperamental; the weld on the front wheels of the mower purchased in February last year has broken and it is currently in the shop being repaired. The second mower, which was donated a couple of years ago, either fails to start or to keep running and will also need to be taken to the shop for a service. A ramp will be made so that both mowers can be taken out of and returned to the shed more easily.</p> <p>We are now preparing for winter and all the varroa treatments have now completed. We are also planning our annual maintenance day to ensure that the apiary is in good order before winter starts.</p>
11	<p>Update on Website and social media sites</p> <p>Some updates to the website – more pictures, a new beekeeping calendar page (please review and let me know of any additions/amendments I should make) and the shop has received a bit of an</p>

	<p>overhaul to better categorise our products. I'm also slowly populating the resources page in the members area with minutes and other important documents.</p> <p>I've asked Anne if she'd kindly put together some information about the history of the Association for a 'History of SABKA' page I'm hoping to build. More on this in time. If anybody else would like to contribute with text/images please feel free. I'd also like to build a members event page which will feature the latest member events we've hosted.</p> <p>Andy Crossley requested access for the training page and I had a look but I could not work out how to provide specific page access to committee members, so going forwards any updates requested by the committee can go to the webmaster@stalbansbees.org email and I'll get that updated asap.</p> <p>Pages to look out for in the coming weeks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A pests and diseases page ● A pollinators page, with information on other bees and other pollinators. <p>Display boards</p> <p>Progress has been slow, my apologies. But I am getting there and I have sourced good quality images of different bee species for the 'other types of bee' board. You can see these here www.stalbansbees.org/pollinators</p> <p>Now I just need to finalise some other information boards, such as the waggle dance and the fun facts board and then complete a brief for Gary who will go away and design the boards. I aim to have a first draft sometime in October, which I will share via email for your thoughts and comments, to which we'll go back to Gary and then get a second draft/final product ready for the next committee meeting in November. I'll get them printed on A3 so we can see them in the flesh. The final print size will be A2.</p>
12	Update on Out Apiaries: not provided.
13	<p>A.O.B.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asian Hornet Response teams - covered by Chairman 2. Honey tasting competition jar size and costs of jar to enter - covered by Secretary 3. Oaklands Apple Day 24.9.2023 – there are no apples due to wind falls -we will not be attending this year.. 4. Oaklands have given us a small strip of land at the gate to "plant". Is there any budget for apiary improvements / maintaining our environment ? approval for wild flower seed and this to be expensed. 5. Is the log book in an edit form available? Simon Morriss will use OCR on photocopier to provide a Word file. Images and layout to be managed by Cath Robinson-Card. 6. We should ensure that both Oaklands and PW have a training structure and mentors in place ready for the HFA. Simon Morriss has this in hand. 7. We could cut the reading of your own report out at committee meetings and go for "I hope you all read my report, any questions" would give us more time to discuss. We largely adopted this at tonight's meeting.
14	Date of next meeting: Thursday 23rd November
	Meeting closed at 9:21pm

