

Leiston & District Beekeepers Association AGM

February 10th 2018 held at Saxmundham URC, meeting opened at 2.05 p.m.

Present: Chris Poupard (Chair), Penny Robertson (Secretary), Marian Cannell (Membership Secretary), Sandy Sutch (Treasurer & Events), Elizabeth Poupard (National Honey Show rep.), Vaughan Ash (Stock), Linda Serpell (Apiary grounds), David Burns (Education) and 31 members listed in the minutes book.

Apologies: Gill Horrocks, Fran Cousins, Steve Parrish, Jan Packard, Mark Haines, Laurie Wiseman, Michael Stigwood, Vaughan Ash.

In the Chair: Chris Poupard

The Chairman welcomed members. The minutes of the last AGM were taken as read & approved.

Matters arising: The Secretary had been asked about bespoke food hygiene courses for honey processing. Following contact with Food Standards, it was apparent none are available, a general course should be attended that if passed will earn a food hygiene certificate. It was noted that a specific course is run at the national conference.

Chairman's Report:

Last year we had lows, specifically the AFB outbreak in our area, and highs - the 70th honey show. We had 28 novice entries and 49 in the Open Classes, nearly as many entries as the Suffolk Show last year, so that was a great result and thank you to everyone who entered, and all those who helped organise.

The Chairman said that one of the main purposes of the LDBKA was to help members become better beekeepers. He outlined various local and national courses and events which would help build on the Basic qualification and our own winter workshops.

He reported on the Suffolk County meetings which he attends with Laurie Wiseman, one of our members and, County President and also the Suffolk representative to the BBKA's Annual Delegate Meeting. The main thing to report is that the Suffolk Show (May 30 & 31) has a new organiser, and Gabrielle Maughan has agreed to organise the volunteer rota for that. Last year we won the cup for most entries to the Basic exam.

We are hosting the County AGM this year on Weds 14th March at 7.30. Venue changed to Fromus Centre in Saxmundham as it is a bigger hall with better parking. Derek Jones from DJ Wines is giving a talk and tastings and we will provide free refreshments and food. Hope plenty of our members will come along.

There are 10 people currently on the committee which is great but we need to start succession planning, as some of these have been on for many years. We need one or two more people, hopefully with good computer skills, and particularly someone who would be willing to take on the website as Anji Littler has stepped down. If you are interested please put yourself forward, or if you would like to nominate someone please let us know that as well. However, we don't want the committee to get too big though so we can't guarantee all volunteers will be taken on this year

Secretary's Report – Penny Robertson: Although the Leiston area is relatively small the 'and District' part of the LDBKA covers a large geographic area from just south of Lowestoft to Orford. This represents a challenge to cover the swarm season. There were a lot of swarm calls this year and 27 swarms were collected and passed on. Swarms in buildings present a particular problem. If the colony cannot be tolerated people are generally disappointed when options are limited to either damage to the building to remove the bees or destruction of the colony. Beekeepers were asked to be thorough with their swarm prevention, as swarm calls are often taken from locations that later turn out to be close to a registered beekeeper.

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The secretary holds a list of potential apiary sites, please make contact to determine availability and location.

We also regularly receive requests for beekeepers to give talks, take bees to village shows etc. & more members were asked to volunteer to help if they can.

More communication of general interest to the members and the public is undertaken via Facebook now, although specific association topics are still distributed via email.

Treasurer's Report – Sandy Sutch: The treasurer took up post part way through the year. She went through the accounts report. No questions were forthcoming from the meeting. LDBKA had about £8,900 in the bank & almost £2,000 in stock – in total about £1,000 more than 2017. The treasurer asked for advice on representing stock values on the balance sheet. (thanks to Ian Watson who stepped forward to offer help on this at the end of the meeting.)

Membership Secretary's Report – Marian Cannell: We have lost a few members and are now at 121. An apology was given regarding the distribution of members e-mail addresses to all other members, as part of the initial call for subs to be paid. This was an error due to an unfamiliar system and will not be repeated.

It was emphasised that whilst part of the fee covers insurance, members should be very careful regarding the terms and conditions. One member has had problems claiming due to an outbreak AFB this year. If 3 hives are insured (for example) a simple split in one of them would result in 4 colonies – as this is greater than the number insured ALL COLONIES would have no cover, and any subsequent insurance claim (e.g. loss due to theft, disease etc.) would probably be denied. Please check your cover, and do not assume that the insurance company will be lenient.

Following advice from the BBKA on Data Protection there are further formalities to be covered, additional form filling will be required by members, the membership secretary will be in touch.

It was reported that this year several families whose beekeeper within had unexpectedly and unfortunately died had been supported by L&DBKA committee members Penny Robertson and Linda Serpell. It has become apparent how much this support has been appreciated by the bereaved family members as they were unable to cope with the bees that had been left untended.

Reports

Events and Suffolk Show – Sandy Sutch: In April 2017, the LDBKA was present at the School Farm and Country Fair attended by 4500 primary school children. Honey tasting proved to be a very successful.

The Association was also present at the Suffolk Show and also had an exhibit at Heveningham Hall in July. She asked for more volunteers to help at shows – no need to be an experienced beekeeper and generally a four-hour stint on the exhibit would be rewarded with an entrance ticket the organisers of the show. Dates will be circulated in due course.

Education and Training – Penny Robertson & David Burns: Penny reported that she, David Burns and Paul Shepherd had run a 6-week Beekeeping for Beginners Course in Feb/Mar 2017. This had been attended by 14 people with all but three going on to get their own bees. Other training had been concentrated at the teaching apiary and a good number of members attended every week. For Improvers, there had been successful queen-rearing sessions at the apiary during the season.

A study group for the BBKA Basic Assessment had been run. Five members took the exam and all passed. The Association made a contribution to the fee of those who took the exam – John Mackinnon, Gabrielle Maughan, Ian Watson, Frank Burton and Viv Marshall – and this was handed to each along with their certificates. Viv was the first member of the BBKA to take the Basic Exam on a top bar hive, it had looked as if it would not be possible, but with some pushing the BBKA relented and are now excited by the

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development. This was recently reported in the BBKA journal. The Basic study group will run again in 2018 and the LDBKA will again contribute to the exam fees.

More than 20 members went on a successful Apiary Safari to visit other people's bees. Thanks were given to Penny and Linda and Peter Girling. Three winter talks have taken place and were well supported.

There have been lots of requests for attendance at shows, events, groups. One of which was from 'Root Camp' a week long residential 'field to table' cookery school for 14 to 21 year olds. Penny agreed to take this on when it became apparent that no other association within the county would be able to support this event. It was a lot of work over four days teaching the origins of the honey on their plates, but although tiring it was rewarding. She thanked David Burns, Chris and Elizabeth Poupard for their support.

Election of Officers:

Chairman: Christopher Poupard was re-elected

Secretary: Penny Robertson re-elected.

Treasurer: Sandy Sutch elected.

All current committee members were re-elected, bringing the total number of committee members to 10.

In the chair: Chris Poupard

Chris asked members to come and see him if they would like to be involved in the committee.

Any Other Business: It was asked if the committee would consider a system of buddying to enable members to gain experience in the various roles prior to any elections. This would be considered.

New business cards have been printed with contact details for the association. If any member feels they would be useful the Secretary has stocks.

The BBKA has issued revised health and safety/legal guidance for swarm collection, if anyone wished to be on the BBKA list please contact the Secretary.

Pauline Quinn thanked the committee for everything they do on our behalf and a well-deserved round of applause was given for their hard work this year.

The meeting closed at 3.05pm & was followed by a talk on **Foul Brood Diseases and an update on The Asian Hornet** given by **David Burns**.