

Minutes of the Leiston and District Beekeepers' Association AGM held on Saturday 14 February 2015 at 14.30 at the United Reform Church Hall, Saxmundham 1P17 1BJ.

PRESENT: Peter Girling, Penny Robertson, Marion Wishart, Mary Anne Woolf, Sandy Sutch, Rosi McIsaac, Barry Preston, John Blakesley, Keith Wilkinson, John Symes, David Jenkins, C&A Hurlock, Dilys Hall, Elizabeth and Chris Poupard, Dale Gibson, Sally Shave, Sue Sharples, Steve Smith, Graham Owston, Caroline Ash, Vaughan Ash, Michael Stigwood, Jill Hills, Andy Wells, David Burns, Lily Hunter Green, John Rogers, Pam Bridges.

APOLOGIES: Ruth Hatchett, Richard Quarrell, Judith Raven, Rachel Esling, Alison Mudd, John and Lindy Mackinnon, Tanya Newton, Fran Abrams, Anji Littler Hart, Theresa Curtis, Sue Smith.

MINUTES OF THE 2014 AGM: The Minutes were presented and accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING: There were none.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Peter Girling.

Peter Girling, having served 4 years as Chair, was invited to stand again for re-election by Penny Robertson. John Symes seconded this and Peter agreed to stand again.

Peter welcomed everyone and noted that 2014 had been good year, blessed with fine weather and honey surpluses. He reported that the Association was in good shape, with a Membership of around one hundred. He attributed the success of the Association to an enthusiastic Committee in formal and social activities. He noted that there were several changes to the composition of the Committee, specifically with Vaughan Ash stepping in to take over responsibility for the Apiary stock and equipment supply from Brian Fisher, who, sadly, was unwell. Peter also noted that Jill Hills would be taking over the duties of Treasurer from Mary Anne Woolf and that David Burns would join the Committee as Education Co-ordinator, taking over from Penny Robertson. Peter wished to thank all those Committee Members who were stepping down for their service to the Association and welcome the new Members to their positions. Peter stressed that Committee positions were open to all Members of the Association and that Members were encouraged to volunteer themselves.

Peter noted that 2014 had seen a successful Safari to his own Apiary and then on to Linda Serpell's Apiary in Knodishall where we also had an excellent picnic. Peter had heard good reports of the Fish, Chips and Film evening. Samples of the Association's own mead were to be made available for tasting after the AGM.

Peter announced that donations to the Association had been received from Paul Heiney (a small extractor and a settling tank), from Louie Wilshere (wax foundation) and several cash donations, included approximately £100 from swarm collections.

The Association's teaching Apiary is perceived as one of its great strengths and Peter recognised Penny Robertson's sterling work as the previous Education Co-ordinator and welcomed David Burns as her replacement.

Certificates were presented to Elizabeth Poupard (Module One with Credit and Module Two with Distinction), to general applause.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Penny Robertson

Penny noted that 2014 had been a busy one, with the usual range of coordinating events, taking minutes, dealing with emails, phone calls and texts as well as meeting with lots of really nice people.

As mentioned in 2014's report, as Secretary of the Association, she receives a lot of phone calls from members of the public about bees. During May and June 2014, she received 106 calls. 36 were about honey bees, 59 about bumble bees and 11 about other bee-related matters. For the third year

running the majority of calls were about *Bombus hypnorum* 'the tree bumble bee' and Penny pointed out that there was a really useful article on *Bombus hypnorum* on the Leiston and District Beekeepers' website: <http://leistonbeekeepers.onesuffolk.net/>

Members who had collected a swarm were encouraged to go out with an experienced swarm collector to see how it is done – members are welcome to contact Penny about this.

Penny remarked that she was compiling a list for Members who wanted to buy or sell bees and beekeeping equipment and that Members should contact her with regard to such matters.

Regarding social networking, Penny noted that Leiston and District Beekeepers' now has its own Facebook page (thanks to Fran Abrams) and that the website continued to be an excellent way of bringing in new members. Laurie Wiseman's newsletters are posted there, as well as dates of forthcoming events.

Members of L&DBKA were reminded that they are also Members of SBKA and BBKA and once a year we also send our list of members to BeeBase the national database of The National Bee Unit. This means you will be informed if you are within 5km of an outbreak of a Notifiable Disease. BeeBase is an excellent website (www.nationalbeeunit.co.uk) where you can update records of your own apiary and can also download fact sheets and find out all sorts of up to date beekeeping information, such as the progress of the Small Hive Beetle.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Mary Anne Woolf

Mary Anne drew attention to copies of the Accounts which had been distributed to the AGM and noted that in the entry for "Bank Account/Stock Held" there was small discrepancy between the "notional" and "actual" figure. The "actual" amount was higher than the "notional" amount and this was explained by the small profit created in the sale of stock to Members. Ian Watson, a member of L&DBKA and professional accountant, will be looking into the figures, with a view to resolving this issue and Mary Anne expressed her gratitude to him.

In 2014, the Association added approximately £1,000 to its assets, as income rose and expenditure stayed roughly similar to the previous year. Stock sales had risen for several years and were approximately £6,700 in 2014 and thanks were due to Brian Fisher and Vaughan Ash for this important aspect of the Association's profitability.

Mary Anne noted that she was stepping down from her role in 2015 "to spend more time with my bees" and welcomed Jill Hills as the new Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP: Marian Wishart

Marian reported that Membership had reached 104 in 2014 and currently stood at 96 (74 regular, 14 country, 7 partner and 1 junior) and that a number of new Members had joined the Association in 2015, with just 15 non-renewals to date.

There had been no increase of Membership fees from £26 in 2014, despite a recommendation from the BBKA that an increase of £1 would be in order. The Association had sufficient funds to forestall any rise in 2015, but Marian cautioned that a rise in 2016 looked inevitable.

STOCK: Vaughan Ash

Vaughan noted that he had some stock for sale at the back of the hall and was taking orders on behalf of Members after the AGM.

EVENTS AND SHOWS: Sandy Sutch

Sandy noted that 4000 children attended the Suffolk Agricultural Association's School and Farm Country Fair at Trinity Park on 24 April 2014. This event provided a good deal of education about the working of the countryside as well as an introduction to bees. At the Suffolk Show on 28/29 May

2014, the L&DBKA provided a “touch table”. Sandy requested that Members might like to consider donating or lending exhibits for 2015’s Suffolk Show and noted that there had been no entries in the various competitions at the Show by Members of the L&DBKA and urged Members to consider offering Honey and other related products for sale at the Show. The Heveningham Hall Country Fair on 12/13 July 2014 was a great success and it was noted that over £200,000 has been raised for local charities over the last 10 years by the Halesworth Lions and the Trust which organises the Fair. A total of over £2,000 was raised on the L&DBKA stall from the sale of honey, candles and related items. At Stonham Barns, home to the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary, the conservation day was held on 3 August 2014 and was a great success. The L&DBKA raised £41.50 was from the sale of honey and commissions.

Sandy requested that Members volunteer to attend these annual events and bolster the L&DBKA’s presence. All assistance is welcome and the events are well advertised by e-mails to Members well in advance.

In 2015, the Suffolk Agricultural Association’s School and Farm Country Fair will be held at Trinity Park on 23 April, the Suffolk Show will be held on 27/28 May, the Heveningham Hall Country Fair will be on 11/12 July and the Stonham Barns conservation day will be held on 2 August.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: David Burns

David was keen to explain that his role would be conducted largely outside the teaching Apiary, where Peter Girling, Penny Robertson and Linda Serpell would be prominent, although he looked forward to being present there on occasions. He wanted to advertise his Beginners’ Courses and Basic Assessment Training. A Beginners’ Course had already started in the United Reform Church Hall, Saxmundham the previous week and a session on Swarm Control was planned for 18 February 2015 and another on the topic of Honey, Queens and Queen Introduction was planned for 4 March 2015 in the Hall. A course on Disease was being planned for May 2015.

David thanked the Committee for all their hard work and Penny Robertson for organising the Hall venue.

APIARY REPORT: Peter Girling

Peter characterised the Apiary as “the heart of the Association”, noting that it provided an hands-on introduction to beekeeping for novices. He was pleased to announce that the Apiary was now composed of a “manageable” 5 colonies, housed in 4 different hive formats. Apiary attendance was encouraging and Members were invited to assist Peter, Penny and Linda in their hive inspections.

Peter also remarked that Brian Fisher had done an excellent job in stocking equipment at the Apiary and was delighted that Vaughan Ash had taken over the role and reconfigured the Stores area. Basic stock is for sale at the Apiary from 14:00 to 14:30 and then again after all hive inspections have been completed. Apiary “Tidy-Up Day” would be at noon on 28 March 2015 and the Apiary would open for 2015 on Saturday 4 April 2015 (weather permitting). Peter also wished to thank Linda Serpell for keeping the Apiary spick and span and for cutting the hedges.

WEBSITE: Penny Robertson (in the absence of Anji Littler Hart)

Penny stressed that it was important for Members to send Anji pictures, articles, links to other websites of interest and YouTube clips – all of these could be of interest to fellow Members and would keep interest in the website ticking over.

COUNTY REPORT: Peter Girling

Peter noted that there had been some changes to the Suffolk Beekeepers’ Association, with a new Chair and a new Treasurer and new co-ordinators for the Suffolk Show. He also remarked that a re-branding exercise for the SBKA was underway, with a new logo completion, on which Members could now vote on-line. The SKBA had given £1500 for a new banner for the Suffolk Show. The AGM

for the SBKA would be held on 4 March at Martlesham Community Centre, Felixstowe Road, Martlesham IP12 4PB.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following Members will be in office in 2015:

Chair	Peter Girling
Secretary	Penny Robertson
Treasurer	Jill Hills
Membership Secretary	Marian Wishart

Additional Committee Members: Vaughan Ash, David Jenkins, Linda Serpell, Sandy Sutch, and David Burns.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dale Gibson invited Members with over 5 years' beekeeping experience to participate in a 15-question survey on Forage.

Penny Robertson reported on the initial research findings of the EARS at Sheffield and Keele Universities, which suggested that the varroa mite is able to change its odour at will, in order to pass un-noticed when on the bees (phoretic) and in the brood cells. This ability to mimic host odour was a fascinating addition to our knowledge of this parasite of honeybees.

The Icen Microscopy Study Group will be holding two days of training course at Burgh Apton village hall, near Norwich, Norfolk NR15 1AA. The first day will be on July 4th and second day on 12th September 2015 and Members were invited to subscribe to this intensive study course.

The meeting was followed by an enjoyable 20-question quiz on bees and beekeeping, compiled by members of the committee and moderated by David Burns.

Tea and cakes were enjoyed by all.

The meeting was closed at 15:50.