

Leiston Beekeepers' AGM

Annual General Meeting L&DBKA – February 11th 2017

Present: Peter Girling (Chair), Penny Robertson (Secretary), Marian Cannell (Membership Secretary), Jill Hills (Treasurer), Elizabeth Poupard (National Honey Show rep.), Sandy Sutch (Events), Vaughan Ash (Stock), Linda Serpell (Apiary grounds), David Burns (Education) & 24 members listed in minutes book.

Apologies: Gill Horrocks, Martin & Pauline Quinn, Brian Fisher, Dilys Hall, Mike Mayhew, Janet Watson, Paul Shepherd, Steve Smith.

In the Chair: Peter Girling

The Chairman welcomed members. The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read & approved. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report: it had been a mixed year for the bees with some colonies lost but the area contained such a mix of terrains that losses were not surprising. LDBKA was established in 1946 & there were still some long-standing members. Membership had increased from a handful to 122. He encouraged members to volunteer for the committee even if not experienced beekeepers.

Secretary's Report: in 2016 there had been a number of swarm calls but fewer regarding tree bumblebees. The Honey Show & Winter Social evening had gone very well & she thanked Marian Cannell for organising the tasting & Zak Blackmore for judging the honey exhibits. She would like suggestions as to how LDBKA should celebrate its 70th anniversary honey show in 2017.

Social media takes up more time than it used to, particularly Facebook, & she would like someone to help her.

Our previously free website is now £30 per year. Anji Littler has done a fantastic job of managing it for us, even though she doesn't have her own bees any more. We could do with someone to take over this role, as Anji may be moving soon.

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.

Anyone who could help was asked to contact her.

Treasurer's Report: in 2016 income from membership subs decreased but donations increased. We received a donation of £430 from Waitrose, many individual donations & the sale of equipment donated by members retiring from beekeeping. LDBKA had about £7,000 in the bank & almost £3,000 in stock – in total about £1,000 more than 2015.

The committee had discussed how to spend some of the money without success – members were encouraged to put forward ideas.

Membership Secretary's Report: Membership fees would not increase in 2017. In 2016 we lost a number of members. She paid especial tribute to:

John Blakesley, a previous bee inspector who had been secretary of the association & had now moved out of our area.

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Christopher Bindloss: a very early member who had died unexpectedly in 2016. He had helped the Association in many ways.

John Wallis: who had come to our area from Australia to be near family in his old age. He had brought an Australian hive back with him & had been delighted to receive a swarm from us to put into it. He had died aged 90.

The Association had benefited from the sale of these members' donated equipment.

Report Events and Suffolk Show: In April 2016, the LDBKA was present at the School Farm and Country Fair attended by 4500 primary school children. Honey tasting organised by Marian Cannell proved to be a very successful addition to the exhibit.

The Association was responsible for providing candle rolling at the Suffolk Show where 2000 candles generated £690 in revenue. The Association also had an exhibit at Heveningham Hall in July where the County Fair Trust has distributed £200,000 to local communities. The sum of £177.50 was raised from sale of honey & candle rolling. She asked for more volunteers to help at shows – no need to be an experienced beekeeper – & for any dead bumblebees, hornets, wasp nests etc. for the exhibits.

Apiary: The Chairman reported that the owner of the apiary site had died during 2016 but the family had decided to allow the apiary to carry on. The introduction of Taster Sessions on the first Saturday of the month had been successful. Members wanting to buy stock were asked to keep to the selling time of 2pm – 2.30pm. A top bar hive is to be introduced in 2017. He thanked Linda Serpell for keeping the apiary tidy.

Education and Training: Penny reported that Beginners' Training had been concentrated at the apiary. For Improvers, there had been queen-rearing sessions & we had at last been able to sell nucs to members.

A study group for the BBKA Basic Assessment had been run. It was attended by 8 people, of whom 4 took the exam and passed. As a result, LDBKA will be awarded a County cup for the Association with the greatest number of passes. The Association paid half the fee of those who took the exam – Martin Quinn, Judith Raven, Chris Poupard, Will Webb – & £10 was handed to each along with their certificates. The study group will run again in 2017 & the LDBKA will pay half the exam fees again.

David Burns has passed the BBKA's General Husbandry exam & can now be a Basic exam assessor. During the year, he was appointed a Seasonal Bee Inspector. Elizabeth Poupard has also continued to pass her BBKA exams.

Members went on a successful Apiary Safari to visit other people's bees. Thanks were given to Paul Shepherd and Judith Raven who hosted us. And there had been a session on 'What to do with Beeswax', which attracted good response.

Attention was drawn to courses run by the County & by the Ipswich and East Suffolk Association, & there was a brief discussion as to whether members would find a Food Hygiene Course helpful.

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SBKA: This is our conduit through to the BBKA. The Chairman had been attending meetings held in Stowmarket. The AGM is 9th March in Stowmarket.

Elizabeth Poupard has agreed to be one of the County representatives on the National Honey Show committee.

Review of Branch Rules: The Branch rules had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that Clause 3(b) should be changed so that it now read 'Normally no officer may serve in the same post for more than three consecutive years but for reasons of continuity and balance the membership may invite an officer to extend their service.'

It was further agreed that the title 'Model Branch Rules' should be changed to 'Constitution'.

Election of Officers:

Chairman: Christopher Poupard was nominated, seconded & elected

Secretary: Penny Robertson re-elected.

Treasurer: Jill Hills re-elected.

All current committee members were re-elected & Gabriel Maughan was nominated, seconded & elected, bringing the total number of committee members to 12.

In the chair: Chris Poupard

Chris began by thanking Peter Girling for all his efforts as Chair over the last 5 years; he would be a hard act to follow.

Any Other Business: Several members had supplied honey to Cornucopia Festival at White House Farm in Gt. Glemham. The organisers are looking for more suppliers of their Spring Festival. Does anyone have honey left?

The question of the Association providing a mentoring system was raised. Penny agreed to raise this for discussion with the Committee.

Penny reported on the BBKA's Annual Delegate's Meeting (ADM) and attention was drawn to a full report from the County Rep. Laurie Wiseman, which is on our website.

The meeting closed at 3pm & was followed by a talk on **The Asian Hornet** given by **David Burns**.