

## **AGM Leiston & District Beekeepers' Association**

8 February 2020

URC Hall, Saxmundham

The Chair, Chris Poupard, welcome everyone and thanked us for coming.

**Apologies:** John Mackinnon, Judith Raven, Richard Court, Mark Beckham, Calum Thomson, Jude Chin, Sue Brett, David Burns, John Mackinnon, P.Newton, R.Rusack, D.Lacey, Alan Witherby, J and M Packard, M.Stigwood, J.Dawson

The minutes of the 2019 meeting were agreed.

### **Chair's report:**

Chris Poupard reported that the past year had been a good one for most of us, and another record year for some in terms of honey production.

He had continued to represent L&DBKA on both the Suffolk BKA and Suffolk Show committees, and thanked Frank Burton for standing in at some of the County meetings when he was unable to attend.

The Suffolk Show was blessed with fine weather and 14,000 people visited the bee tent over the two days.

Elizabeth Poupard represented the County at the National Honey Show, and again, she and Chris were the only entrants from Suffolk. Chris has persuaded the Suffolk Committee to sponsor a Suffolk Class next year which he hopes will encourage more Suffolk members to enter.

Chris went on to report that our Association now boasts two Master Beekeepers in Mark Butt and David Burns. This is a real achievement as it involves not only passing seven BBKA modules but also the General Husbandry and Advanced Husbandry, which are really testing practical assessments.

David had sent his apologies, but Mark was presented with his certificates and received congratulations and much applause.

Finally, Chris thanked the Committee, our two webmasters, John Mackinnon and Martin Quinn, and the members for their continued support.

### **Secretary's report:**

Gabrielle Maughan reported that she had found it quite a challenge to manage the work of Secretary for the group. There have been difficulties sending group emails and remembering when something needs to be done. She asked that the group remember this and if there is something that needs to be done or hasn't been done please remind her. She also pointed

out that we are all getting older and some younger committee members are desperately needed if the apiary is to continue to flourish.

We tried to get various speakers to talk to us this year but this was disappointing. Bug life sent some leaflets but this was not much of a substitute for a talk from someone involved in setting up "Bee Lines". Planting more trees and hedges wherever possible is essential for our environment and if anyone has any spaces where they think trees might grow please let Gabrielle know as she has been working with the Woodland Trust on this issue.

BBwear discount is no longer available to members except those on Beginners Course. Last year we were waiting for Darsham Village Hall to open and now it has so many of our meetings will most likely be there, certainly the next one is.

#### **Website report:**

Martin Quinn reported that our website doesn't get many visits but those that do have a look are generally interested in events and dates. There was a show of hands to support carrying on in this manner.

#### **Show report:**

Sandy Sutch reported on our annual visit to the School Farm Fair where 4,500 seven to nine year olds find out where their food comes from. She also reported on our attendance at the Heveningham Hall Country Fair where we raised £245.60 on candle rolling and honey sales.

Sandy thanked those members that volunteer to help on our stall when we go to these events.

#### **Membership report:**

Penny Robertson reported that we had 116 members in total at the end of the 2019 season. Of these 15 were new members who had joined after coming on our Beginners' Course or to the Teaching Apiary.

She reported that so far this year we've had 92 renewals and nine messages from people who won't be renewing for various reasons. Thanks were given to Paul White of the County BKA for his help as we have moved over to the online system for membership renewals.

Lastly, Penny mentioned Ken Macdonald who has died at the age of 96. Ken was the Treasurer of L&DBKA for many years from the early 1990s until 2006 when he handed over. He was a very supportive member of the committee and did wonderful work at the Apiary. L&DBKA has made a donation in Ken's name to his chosen charities, St Elizabeth's Hospice and the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

#### **Education report:**

Penny Robertson reported that, as usual, most of our teaching had centred on practical sessions at the teaching Apiary. There had been good regular attendance throughout last season. Thanks were given to all those that volunteer to help on the rota.

The 2019 Beginners' course had 13 attendees of whom over half went on to get their own bees or work with someone who already had them. A couple of the others will be starting their own hives this year.

After last January's 'Beyond the Basic' workshop three of our members went on to study and take the BBKA Module One. This study group will continue to study further modules in future years.

David Burns and Penny ran our annual Study Group for the BBKA Basic assessment. This was attended by three members all of whom passed. Their certificates will be in the post.

We held a Bee Improvement seminar with Kevin Thorn last March and 25 members attended. We went on to form a Queen Rearing/Bee Improvement group that met at Linda's field in Knodishall.

Penny then mentioned other courses and educational events that several of us had been to, and stressed that the BBKA Spring Convention and the National Honey Show are worth attending.

#### **Stock report:**

Linda Serpell reported that when she took over at the start of last year a big stock order had already been made but she felt we needed even more so placed another order. We just "squeaked" through a very busy year and didn't run out of stock when people needed it most.

This year we will be having a tidy up at the Apiary on 15 March and the stock cupboards will be open for people to buy frames and foundation to get ahead before the season starts.

#### **Treasurer's report:**

Sandy Sutch reported that our accounts need a final check but she is confident that they are correct. We started the year with £9,069, had an income of £8,734 and outgoings of £10,363. Our income comes from stock and honey sales, Heveningham Fair candle rolling, membership subscriptions, the beginners' course and donations. Our outgoings are Suffolk BKA and British BKA fees, stock purchases, apiary running costs and general committee and event expenses. Questions from members were answered to explain why we pay money to SBKA.

We ended the year with £3,370 of stock, £50 cash and £7,441 in the bank, a total of £10,861. Ideas were requested for how to spend it.

#### **Elections:**

The following officers of the Association were elected.

- Chair - Chris Poupard
- Vice chair - Frank Burton
- Secretary - Gabrielle Maughan
- Treasurer - Sandy Sutch
- Membership and Education - Penny Robertson

- Stock and Apiary - Linda Serpell

Plus other members of the committee.

- Mark Butt
- Peter Girling
- Elizabeth Poupard
- Judith Raven
- John Symes

**Extraordinary item:** The Chair, Chris Poupard, asked all present 'To consider a proposal to change the name of the Association' from Leiston & District Beekeepers' Association to Suffolk Coastal Beekeepers' Association.

Chris explained that our members stretch across a wide area which more closely relates to the old Suffolk Coastal council area, and that when visiting national shows, such as the BBKA Spring Convention, few people know where Leiston is. Most of the comments he had received in advance of the meeting had been positive although one member had suggested the name East Suffolk BKA would be more appropriate. Chris pointed out that sadly that name was already in use by the Ipswich group so wasn't possible.

Discussion and a show of hands followed and the motion was carried. One member said he thought it was a sad day. We agreed that we would be known as Suffolk Coastal BKA formerly Leiston & District for some time until people got used to the new name.

**Any Other Business:**

There was none.

There was then a break for refreshments followed by an interesting talk from Mark Butt on the Varroa Mite.

Thanks were given to Mark for his talk and to those who had made cakes for the occasion.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.