

Minutes of the Leiston & District Beekeepers' Association AGM held on Saturday 15 February 2014 at 14:30 at the United Reformed Church Hall, Saxmundham

PRESENT: Penny Robertson, Sally Shave, Sue Sharples, Peter Girling, John Symes, Brian Fisher, Pat & Ken MacDonald, Graham Owston, Richard Piercy, Anji Hart, Laurie Wiseman, Joyce Taylor, Mary Anne Woolf, Vaughan & Caroline Ash, Marian Wishart, Steve Smith, David Jenkins, Sandy Sutch, David Burns, John Blakesley, John & Lindy Mackinnon, Chris & Elizabeth Poupard, Martin & Pauline Quinn, Rachel Esling, Martin Warnes, Barbara Bentley, Paul Shepherd, C & A Hurlock, Michael Stigwood.

APOLOGIES: Linda Serpell, Dale Gibson, Roger de Lacy Spencer, Mike Mayhew, Myrtle Turner, Jill Hills.

MINUTES OF THE 20123 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 welcomed everyone. It was noted that it had been a busy year. Honey was supplied to the World Land Trust exhibition in Halesworth in February 2013 and the Sizewell Farmers' Market. Honey was supplied to a mead maker, which should be ready for the December social. Penny and Linda demonstrated honey extraction to GreenerSax. There was also an apiary safari in May 2013, a BBQ at Brick Kiln Barn at Sibton, and a fish and chip social. Donations were received from Southwold (Sole Bay) Lions for £100 – two junior bee suits were bought. Also donated were a polystyrene nucleus box (Jill Hills) and a refractometer (Dale Gibson), and a digital projector for the laptop (Steve Smith).

SECRETARY'S REPORT – Penny Robertson

Another busy year. Phone callers included a number who did not want bees – that were trapped in walls, chimneys or compost heaps – killed. Majority of calls were about *Bombus hypnorum* (the tree bumble bee). Swarm collection requests continue, and Penny reminded us that novice beekeepers could accompany an experienced 'collector' if you give her your name. Names of swarm collectors for the five Suffolk branches are those who haven't opted out via this year's subs form. However, if you want to be on the BBKA website as a swarm collector for a wider area of Suffolk you need to apply through Ian McQueen, the County Secretary. There will be two apiary safaris again this year. The August one is planned, but a host is needed for the May safari. The website, which has dates of forthcoming events, is good, and bringing in new members. It features 'at the apiary' reports, describing what is going on at our teaching apiary from week to week. Penny urged more committee and other members to contribute queries, comments and observations and apiary reports to the website.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Mary Anne Woolf

The Treasurer reported that the figure of £5786.00 was £100.00 more than last year, with more in stock than cash. Subscriptions and honey sales are up. The Treasurer's role will be augmented by Jill Hills this year.

MEMBERSHIP – Marian Wishart

Membership has reached 100 with one junior (the only one in Suffolk). Generally, looking very good.

STOCK – Brian Fisher

Brian continues to get us good deals on stock via Thornes etc.

EVENTS AND SHOWS – Sandy Sutch

Four thousand 7-9 year olds attended the School and Farm Country Fair at Trinity Park on 25 April 2013; this has been held every year since 2001. Great for children to see where their food comes from, and to see animals and machinery at work. At the Suffolk Show on 29-30 May, activities on the children's table were our branch's responsibility, and made £87.45. Overall for the whole show there was a surplus of £52.36, compared to last year's loss (due to the event being held on only one day last year). In July, the Heveningham Hall Country Fair, held over two days, generated a lot of interest, and £160.05 was made from club honey sales, candle rolling and commission from sales. Attendance at the Stonham Barns conservation day on 4 August was a first, and we made £58.55 from honey etc.

APIARY REPORT – Peter Girling

We now have a four-frame wind-up honey extractor available to members, which will be easier to transport than the old big one. There are now four different types of hive at the apiary; a good choice for members to experience. 29 March is 'tidy-up' day at the apiary, and the season starts on 5 April. Gates open at 2pm; stock sales from 2-2.30pm, inspection of bees at 2.30pm and more stock sales at the end.

WEBSITE – Anji Littler-Hart

This is hosted under the 'onesuffolk' umbrella, and is our 'ad to the world'. An events calendar is on the home page, as are names of members and committee members. Anji is keen for pictures, to keep the website fresh, and stories. Messages are to be encouraged to ensure the website is communal. Penny now does an 'apiary blog'.

COUNTY REPORT – Peter Girling

£1,800 was redistributed to all six associations that make up the SBKA (£300 per association). The AGM of the SBKA will be held on 5 March at Halstead near Bury St Edmunds.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING – Penny Robertson

While membership growth has put pressure on experienced members to provide adequate learning opportunities and support for new beekeepers, as well as ongoing development for existing members, the Leiston branch has

tried hard to meet this challenge. Penny has met 80% of our members at the apiary or events. Repeat of the successful woodworking session will take place on 1 March; ¼ of our members came to Roger Patterson's lecture on queen performance last April; 15 people went on the May bee safari; at least 20 attended social events; there was consistently good attendance at the teaching apiary; Martin Warnes' talks on bees and beekeeping in January 2014 were well attended, focusing on bees in general and their biology. Weekly sessions at the apiary are great ways of keeping up to date, sharing information, getting support. Training in bee health is still anticipated. Finding a date acceptable to Keith Morgan (bee inspector) has been a drawback, particularly as May 2014 is to be BBKA's Bee Health Month. Our apiary will try and offer training sessions, starting with Nosema testing on 14 April at the URC hall at 7pm.

No one from L&DBKA took their Basic Assessment in 2013. This is regarded as a shame, as it is a confidence booster and a gateway to other BBKA assessments. A study group could be set up, and it only costs £15.00 to enter the assessment. David Burns and Paul Shepherd have been taking some of the BBKA exams. David described his experiences to encourage those who have passed the Basic to have a go.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The following members are continuing in office for 2014:

Chair	Peter Girling
Secretary	Penny Robertson
Treasurer	Mary Anne Woolf
Membership secretary	Marian Wishart
Committee	Vaughan Ash, Brian Fisher, David Jenkins, Linda Serpell, Sandy Sutch, Joyce Taylor (rejoining), Jill Hills (to assist treasurer)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting was followed by a short film on the Varroa mite, followed by a discussion on the whys and wherefores of treating bees against them.

Tea and cakes were enjoyed by all.

The meeting closed at 4.30.