

1923 - 2017



MBKA

Medway
Beekeepers
Association

Celebrating over 90 years of support for beekeeping
And beekeepers in and around the Medway Towns



Newsletter March 2017

The new season is arriving fast and we have much planned for the year ahead so don't miss out and come and join us!

Past Event:

MBKA AGM
18th February 2017
2 – 5pm Wainscott Community Hall
16-18 Holly Road, Wainscott, ME2 4LG

The Annual General Meeting was held on 18th February, 22 members attended and there were just 11 apologies for absence. Last year's minutes were unanimously accepted as accurate and the business of the day began with a discussion of the Annual Report. Under the ADM section it was interesting to note how many Associations were asking to split up, Yorkshire and Derbyshire being examples where the size of the counties undoubtedly causes travel problems. However fragmentation of this kind has quite major cost implications for the BBKA as was pointed out in our discussions. The Report, however, was accepted unanimously.

Next we turned to the somewhat vexed issue of the new constitution.

The Chairman commented that the Committee had worked hard over the last 2 years to bring to the AGM a new constitution, which was more fit for purpose than the existing one. After some quite valid comments were made it was proposed and accepted unanimously that we run with the proposed Constitution and that if there were any suggested amendments, that these be submitted to the Secretary for consideration by the new committee and then put forward as proposals for change at next year's AGM. This is a very sensible compromise and gives the Association a positive way forward.

The Treasurer's Report was explained and accepted. It was agreed to keep the level of subscription at the 2016 level and that a new Junior Membership be introduced by the Committee.

On a question from the floor, the Treasurer reported that the number of renewals outstanding was quite high at 30 and this was perhaps partly down to the fact that renewal notices were sent out via email. It does appear that some members failed to read the email or simply forgot to act upon it. However on a very positive point, this new method has saved around £180 when you include the distribution of this year's AGM documents.

We then moved to the election of officers. Richard 'Dickie' Andrews retired as President after many years of stalwart service and it was proposed that he be made an Honorary Vice President. He accepted graciously to a round of applause!

Richard Blaxland was elected as President. 'Pip' then took the Chair and we re-elected the Chairman, Officers and Committee Members en-bloc.

Finally the Chairman thanked the Committee and all those who had worked hard during the past year to help run meetings and events. The meeting was then closed.

Please note that this is only a short report of the proceedings based on my own recollections, draft minutes of the AGM will be posted on the website soon and you can read a full account there.

Paul Lawrence

MBKA Apiary Site:

Following on from the AGM Elaine Laight, gave a short presentation about the apiary site and how we as an association wish to use it for a range of educational and training activities.

These include:

- Organising open sessions when experienced beekeepers will open the hives examine the bees and deal with any identified issues. These sessions will be on the 2nd Saturday of the month between 3pm-4pm.
- Initiating a mentoring scheme to allow experienced beekeepers to consolidate their knowledge whilst supporting new beekeepers. New beekeepers will be able to gain experience and resolve problems at either, their own, the mentors or the apiary site.
- Providing a venue for beekeepers to meet socially.
- Loaning Beekeeping equipment e.g. extractor, refractometer, virtual-hive and suits. Tables, display boards and a gazebo are also available. All items can be booked through Jen Ferry, email her at: jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk and arrangements can then be made for collection and return.



The Association Apiary swings back into action this month as weekly inspections begin. It will be open for members to join in on Saturday 8th April and the following meeting will be 13th May. These dates and others will be included in future newsletters and on the website under 'Events'. Any member can attend, take part, get hands-on experience and perhaps try out a procedure that you have never had the confidence to attempt.

However, as Elaine explained, the apiary is a resource available to all members but which relies on volunteers to maintain both the site and the colonies of bees,

Currently a small team of 10 members undertake weekly bee inspections in accordance with a published rota. We would very much like to increase this number. The more we have the less each volunteer will need to do.

One of the members (inspectors) must be the holder of the basic certificate but this will be covered in the rota arrangement. You will never be without support!

This is an excellent opportunity to learn and even share your knowledge and experience. Even if you can offer only 1 or 2 dates, Elaine would be very pleased to hear from you. Please e-mail her at: elaine.laight@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

We would also welcome any donations of garden furniture and plants for the garden and pond.

Paul Lawrence

Next Indoor-Meeting:

Thursday 9th March 2017 (Please note this is a change to that previously published)
Alien Invaders – Small Hive Beetle and The Asian Hornet
A talk by Kay Wreford (Seasonal Bee Inspector)
8pm Wainscott Community Hall
16-18 Holly Road, Wainscott, ME2 4LG

The International Meeting of Young Beekeepers

BBKA are looking forward to hosting the 'International Young Beekeepers' in July and are busy raising funds. The total cost is expected to be £80,000. Fund raising is going ahead although they have been quite disappointed with the lack of funds available from corporations. The Brexit vote came at just the wrong time and led to more caution from many companies. However, they have successfully applied to national charities.

Local Associations have been asked to contribute £1 per head towards the cost of the event. The MBKA is contributing £100. The agreement is that this will be asked for once £30,000 had been raised and the good news is that there is now an anonymous donor who has guaranteed this amount. If as an individual member you would like to make a contribution, you can do so through the Just Giving website. To contribute an amount, no matter how small, you can use the following link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/bbka/ourfutureinyoungpeople>

Sheila Stunell

Kimber's Corner:



Hi everyone, well it has been very quiet so far this winter. This is the first winter I have attempted to keep bees in my garden, but this has been a lot easier than keeping them in an out apiary. When it comes to regular checks and keeping an eye on them, it is so much less hassle to just walk out into the garden and look at what is going on, or not going on!

Luckily everything so far, seems to be good. That was until I read the BBKA news column on 'Hive Autopsy'. This talked a lot about checking that the colony has enough stores by hefting the hive regularly. They even suggest opening up the hive on a warmer day, in order to move any frames of stores nearer to the cluster of bees. I feel that I ought to be doing more, but then I find that they emerge quite happily on the morning after a frosty cold night and this is very reassuring. Perhaps I should trust my bees more and worry less.

The first full inspection of the new season is now on the horizon and I am feeling a bit apprehensive as to what I'm going to find. But of one thing I am sure and that is any questions or concerns that I may have, my fellow beekeepers will be on hand to help me with an answer. I also need to consider buying some extra equipment as I'm hoping to split my colony during the year, possibly as a swarm prevention measure, that's if they have survived! This year, I might even get some honey, so I had better add honey jars and labels to the shopping list as well. I need to do a little thinking about what my first full season might involve and make a plan! Next month could be very interesting!

Talk to you all next month
Peter

Bee Chat:

The Bee Chat session for March will be Wednesday 22nd at 7.30pm at The Pier, Lower Upnor, ME2 4XA. All welcome. Exams will be over, the season will be starting and there will be lots to chat about. Please call Jen Ferry for further details. 07990 581858.

See you there.
Jen Ferry

The 2017 winter and spring meetings program is on the website:

www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/events

Many thanks, to all of those who have contributed to this newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing you at the winter and spring meetings, more will be posted soon.

If you have any news, ideas or comments about the website or for future newsletters, please get in touch with me, Paul Lawrence at the address shown below, we really do appreciate your input.

Contact Details:

Chairman

John Chapman
john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Newsletter and Website Enquiries

Paul Lawrence
paul.lawrence@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk