

ESSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION - ROMFORD DIVISION

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 11th March 2021

Video Meeting held via Zoom

Present: Dawn Doyland (DD), Robert Hyde (RH), Angela Mander (AM), Norman McDonald (NMCD), Jim McNeill (JMcN), Julie Mugglestone (JM), Filippo Negri (FN), Lorna Pattle (LP), Sue Richardson (SR), Terry Watson (TW), John Whittard (JW), Paul Wiltshire (PW).

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Pat Allen.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting 20.1.21:** amendment made, agreed, to be signed as a true record.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda:**

The Essex Beekeeper: PW has spoken to Jane Ridler about PDF being sent over early to allow PA more time to get editions printed, but to not avail. Now the editor is resigning so we will have to see what happens. Good printing of March's edition, which was large due to EBKA AGM details.

Divisional Bank Account: JMcN now has card reader and is able to log on online. Unsure if BM has passed treasurer's files over to RMcC. Bills still to be sent to PA for paying at the moment. Council Tax bill for Havering Apiary will still be sent to BM, SR to email BM to ask to send on to SR or PW. Not to be paid.

Action SR.

4. **Correspondence not otherwise on agenda:** SR had letter from Peter Coyle –see below. Email from Cassie Cayne, "The Local Honeyman, asking if any Romford members would like a job in his company. More information needed, not sure who he is. **Action SR.**

5. **Spending of Divisional Funds:**

Beekeepers basic assessment and further modules to be paid for by Division; on completion by member course fees would be reimbursed. This would encourage members to take modules. Agreed.

Fruit basket to be sent BM awaiting operation, and Tom Keeper and his wife.

National Honey Show tickets could be bought for members – uptake could be large?

Division used to pay for nuc for beginners, could reinstate this, £140 from Ted Grad. Division could buy bees to ensure that they come from a reputable source. Pay for 20% of beginners first 1 or 2 hives, or roof, floor, and stand. Equipment to be bought from good company only. Could pay half of the cost of changing comb to encourage more frequent comb changes and increase bee health. Peter Coyle wrote to suggest sum of money could be given to winner of test after beginners course; on proof of hive purchase beginner to be reimbursed for bee suit, half of first year's subs, probably not feasible, for grant towards equipment.

Donation to bee charities: NMCD suggested £5,000 to each of Bees Abroad and Bees for Development. This is a large sum and would need agreeing by members and possibly CEC/EBKA too. May be better to donate smaller amount over 5 years rather than large sum all in one go. DD to see if she can arrange talks by either or both of these charities to give members an idea of what these charities do and then decision on donations would be more informed. Donations of large amounts would need EGM.

Some money needs to be kept in reserve for emergency replacement of equipment, or we could look into getting insurance.

Covered shelter for equipment at teaching apiary, would need approval by Thames Chase. PA to chat?

6. **Updating the Website:** members area now in place, with password, email to be sent out to members. Noted that old items still on the website, Padraig has said that these will disappear as new items added, so need to keep updating content. Members to be asked to contribute to blog via committee. Some items are quite old, SR to ask if these can be removed. Minutes to be added once approved. **Action SR.**

7. Regular Reports

7.1 Trustee/DVM: CEC meeting is next week. County AGM is on Saturday 20th March, via Zoom. Details in March Essex Beekeeper, assume email to be sent out to members with zoom link to join, via eR2 system. Tony Gunton is giving a talk on solitary bees after AGM business. No news on Essex Honey Show, may not be at Orsett as not very good last time. Show committee meeting due to be held.

7.2 Chairman: nothing additional to report.

7.3 Secretary: nothing additional to report.

7.4 Treasurer: no report.

7.5 Show Secretary: AM has booked hall via BM and also has another contact for hall. Judges Sue and Bill have been booked.

7.6 Apiary Wardens

7.6.1 BT London Road: Lorna and Angela have moved their hives to BT. Nothing else to report.

7.6.2 Havering: The notice board was damaged and is now repaired. A new lock has been bought and fitted. The old lock has now been repaired. Rose and Rosanna have moved their hive to Rosanna's garden. Peter Hart, Jim and Terry are the only beekeepers with hives on site now.

7.6.3 Hornchurch: 12 hives started the winter but unfortunately 6 hives have now been lost. 1 of these was weak going into winter. Mark Wood's hives are OK, they get the sunshine first. Simon Perchard's poly hives are also OK. 1 of Norman's hives has died. It has been very wet around the apiary and NMCD suspects damp to be the problem. The car park has been very wet and muddy with cars getting stuck.

7.6.4 The Chase and Bee Garden: all OK and bees have been flying in the good weather. The bee garden is tidy. RH asked about buying a strimmer to keep on site as he has been borrowing his allotment one. Norman does have a strimmer and brush cutter which RH could borrow instead of buying another one. RH said it would be more convenient to have one on site. Query raised about keeping it secure if left at the apiary as they are expensive. Might better stored at RHs? RH to get a price for one and report back. **Action RH.**

7.6.5 Teaching Apiary: report via email. Bees – I have ordered 3 colonies from Ted Grad at a cost of £120 each. I have delivered 3 bee-less hives to him and Jim has kindly agreed to take me to collect the colonies when they are ready. Ted thinks it will be a week or two.

8. Programme 2021:

July – DD to enquire about speaker from Bees for Development. August – Sara Robb – Soap making still booked in at the moment. DD has now managed to update the EBKA calendar again after issues.

9. Courses 2021: report via email.

Beginners Course: There are 30 students booked. (**Sue** - including Abdel Rezkallah who has finally paid a sub, so he will have to go back on the list.) We give each student a book, usually Ted Hooper's *Beginners Bee Book*. As there are 8 partners, I need 8 different books for them. They are entitled to a book as they have paid a full course fee. I suggest a Green Guide called *Keeping Bees*. Both seem to cost £10 and I have 2 of Ted's book already so I would need to order 20 of Ted's book and 8 of the Green Guide, total £280. Is that OK? Yes – agreed by committee; (I will check with the students if they have either before ordering.)

Re format of the Beginners Course: The theory sessions will need to be Zoom – is that OK, Paul? Yes – agreed. I have adjusted the presentation a bit to shorten the sessions. Should we postpone the start of the practical sessions by a couple of weeks as there will be a limit on numbers meeting even outside till at least 17th May? In the first practical we give out the gear and info about equipment, etc, and light smokers, and do a dummy inspection with the virtual hive. It would be difficult to split this over different sites to be 'legal', though one possibility is that we have two sessions on different days, half the students each time. This would probably not be a problem for me as I am only over the road, and there are enough tutors for it to be a different one of you each evening if we did this. Your thoughts please. Change in practical dates agreed.

- 10. Bulk Buys 2021:** have now been delivered to JM and will be sorted out this week. LP suggested checking all boxes as unpacking to make sure all items delivered. National Bees have charged for shipping. £5 surplus. Will need approximate numbers for MAQS, note to be put in next newsletter. **Action JM.**
- 11. AOB:** Jean Smye wants to step down from doing the honey jar ordering. She has obtained a discount of about 40% off normal jar prices for ordering in such large quantities. We need to see if anyone would be willing to take this over.
- 12. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 13th May 2021, via Zoom.
Meeting finished at 9.15 pm.

Paul Wiltshire

Chairman