

ESSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION - ROMFORD DIVISION

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 11th January 2024, 7.30 pm

Via Zoom

Present: Pat Allen (PA), Roger Honey (RogerH), Rob Hyde (RobH), Norman McDonald (NMCD), Rose McCarthy (RMCC), Jim McNeill (JMcN), Julie Mugglestone (JM), Filippo Negri (FN), Sue Richardson (SR), Alan Sansford (AS), Terry Watson (TW), John Whittard (JW). Paul Wiltshire (PW)

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Doyland (DD Dawn), Angela Mander (AM), Adam Ozbek (AO), Lorna Pattle (LP),
2. **Minutes of previous meeting 23.14.11:** Minutes agreed and to be signed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda:** none.
4. **Correspondence not otherwise on agenda:** various numerous emails have been passed onto members and committee as appropriate. Email from Saffron Walden offering places on their training day. SR to pass on to members. **Action SR.**

5. Regular Reports

5.1 Trustee/DVM: Exam results for the November modules will be available by the 3rd week in January. 9th February is the closing date for March modules. 28th March is the closing date for applications for General Husbandry and Advanced Husbandry. The 23rd of March is the exam day for modules and the closing date for Honeybee breeding is 30th April. Basic assessment 2024 deadline is 30th June.

EBKA total membership numbers are 1180.

Harlow division has been suspended and their accounts which have been managed by the EBKA have been separated out from EBKA's own accounts by the General Treasurer so as not to distort the EBKA account. The governance sub-committee of the EBKA has been working through the issues around the suspension of Harlow and Keith Lomax has produced a working document with all the points that need covering or investigating. This will be a document that can be used in future to identify if issues arise with other divisions. Dave Garrett gave an update on the AH. The divisional bee disease reps should have received DG's power point presentation on key dates and what to do during the year. He will recirculate this to divisional secretaries. As the bee inspectors are likely to be very busy during this coming year, the plan might be to train up the divisional reps to take the lead on AH and also being more involved with existing diseases. We don't want to overlook existing diseases while concentrating on AH.

Thornes apparently have produced labels for honey jars giving details of AH, other divisions have discussed possibly using these.

Dave Garret is looking at a bee health day to concentrate on bee diseases possibly in May at Temple Mills. The EBKA AGM is now planned to be 20th March by Zoom starting at 7.00 pm Romford's presiding officer needs to be confirmed, usually the current chairperson. A short report will need to be presented on the 2024 conference and the last item on the agenda is the reading from the book of commemoration.

Other Divisions points of interest: Chelmsford have Stewart Spinks aka The Norfolk Beekeeper doing a talk in February.

Braintree have Ted Grad talking in January and Peter Aldridge booked for March talking on queen rearing.

EBKA AGM is by zoom this year, to be held in March. We will host the following year.

Budget for Conference to increase as thought not fair for Divisions to be out of pocket. Discussion as to whether to hold the Ted Hooper Lecture in with the conference, but decided against this.

5.2 Chair:

We need to organise an AHAT team for Romford Division. See point 8 below. JM will forward on the email from Leigh Sidaway about the zoom meeting by Andrew Durham on 16th January to TW. There is also an Asian hornet conference on Saturday 17th February details to follow. **Action JM.**

5.3 Secretary:

SR suggested that a list of who does what is put in the February newsletter; even though members will get a copy of the AGM minutes with this information and it will be updated on the website, feel that not all members read these! SR has received a lot of replies to various emails sent out bulk buys/Asian hornet traps – when emails have stated to reply to JM/RMcC. Unfortunately people do not read emails properly and just click “reply”. Adam Ozbek should have been added to the lay committee, he joined in the summer; he has agreed to continue. Also Simon Perchard had volunteered to be disease liaison officer at last AGM, he should be added, need to check first. SR apologised for missing these on the AGM agenda that went out. SR also suggested that more committee member’s contact details were added to the current list in the newsletter - PA - membership secretary and JM and AS - bulk buy secretaries. This would hopefully allow members to contact the appropriate person directly. Maybe to be included as a banner at the top somewhere. SR had contacted St Michael’s prior to the AGM to see if we could hire the hall on the second Thursday in January, this is not possible as hired out to another group. No longer relevant as it was decided to hold the 2025 AGM by Zoom. We need to update our equipment inventory. **Action SR, PA, equipment holders.**

5.4 Treasurer:

Balance of accounts £20,518.59. Lots of payments for memberships have been received. Attempts to add JM and RH to the Barclays account have been frustrating and very time consuming, hours spent on the phone. JM’s paperwork is almost complete, she will need to go into a branch with ID. RH has a Barclays account and will hopefully not need to go in to branch with ID, his paperwork needs signing. PA has finally been added back onto account, but needs to order a new card. RMCC requested that if Asian hornet traps need ordering this year that it is done much earlier to ease accounting too late in the year. Of the 100 traps ordered, 45 have been sold, most collected at the AGM, rest of those paid for are now with FN for collection. So far only one person has collected from FN. Another email can be sent out soon offering the remaining 55 traps.

5.5 Show Secretary: nothing to report.

5.6 Apiary Wardens

5.6.1 Havering: TW visited today, 11th January – not a lot going on!

5.6.2 Hornchurch: NMCD visited Monday 8th January – all quiet, wire netting on hives.

5.6.3 The Chase and Bee Garden: all OK.

5.6.4 Teaching Apiary: FN went over and checked, but at this time no grass to cut. All OK. PA has not been over recently, but was planning to go over on Sunday to apply oxalic acid with DD, but she is unwell; FN and JM offered to help if DD still unwell.

6. Programme 2024:

February 1st - Chris Bawtree talking about the Rewilding Project in Essex. March 7th - The Bat lady cannot do this date after all. Perhaps Julie would like to do her Wax evening. DD will see if Ella from Essex Bat Group can do May instead. April 4th - Mark Patterson from Apicultural talking about Planting for Pollinators. None others booked yet. Are we having an apiary meeting in June or July this year? Has anyone ideas for other meetings? It was decided to hold a meeting at the teaching apiary in June, possibly on the Saturday after the first Thursday in the month, Saturday 8th June. TBC.

7. Courses 2024:

Education Officer: Garry Furnell and Zakir Bickhan have both put their names forward to be Education Officer. PA is planning to meet with Zakir on Sunday. Garry has spoken to JM and he said that he is still in full time work, so has limited time available, but has offered to help in the future. He would not be able to do school visits. Maybe they could both work together? There is quite a lot of admin involved in being education officer.

Beginners’ Course: PA asked if the tutors from last year were willing to be tutors again, all said yes. JM also volunteered to help. Provisional dates to begin beginners’ course on 23rd April, through to 25th June, missing late Bank Holiday week. Decided to keep the cost the same as last year - £63.50.

Taster Sessions – 2 dates in July to be confirmed. RMcC said that those who were booked on the second session last year were keen to rebook for this year.

Storage at Thames Chase: We need to think about some storage again, flat pack container? Maybe we could hold a working party there to erect this? **Action PA.**

8. **Asian Hornet Team:** Concern was expressed that Romford Division has not set up an AH team, and members do not know how to report possible sightings. FN said that a member had asked how to report sightings when they had collected their AH traps, and he was unsure as to what to advise them. TW said that he had been doing some research and that Somerset BKA, who have 12 divisions, each have 6 teams of two AH officers. Within EBKA some divisions are more prepared than others – Epping, Southend and Saffron Walden, Chelmsford – good. We need to have a plan of reporting that members are advised of and follow, with instructions for use of the two different traps – bait and wick. The AH app for mobile phones should probably be the first reporting method, we should advise all members to download this to their phones. Should members be reporting possible sightings to Ian Nichols too? Or just via the AH Watch App? A member at the AGM suggested that we had an AH WhatsApp group for the division. This was discussed, and it was generally thought that this would only delay any reporting to the correct channels and could become very confusing with so many members posting up requests for ID. Dave Garret has set up a team and we could ask him for advice in setting up our team. Dave Garret is going to send out his presentation, and will be arranging further training. Roger H offered to contact him. Decided to put a piece in the February newsletter with photos of “similar” species that might be confused with AH and give details of the AH Watch App and ask members to download. RobH suggested that we could obtain and give out at meetings the AH posters, but these are freely available on request online and members could get their own if they wished. This topic needs more discussion and we need to appoint AH officers as soon as we can. There is a map on the BBKA website which lists AH officers and their contact details, we need to add ours to this. **Action RogerH and other committee members.**
9. **EBKA Conference 2024:** JM said that 13 people had volunteered help, and these were not all committee members. JM has looked at the theme of rewilding. NMCD suggested that we may not need a theme as long as we had 3 good speakers. PA will speak to Robert Pickard who is chair of the CABK. PA feels it is a good idea to link the topics of the speakers. JM now has PA’s conference folder, containing all the information from the previous conferences that Romford have hosted. Sarah Rumble from Southend, has kindly offered to send us all her information from last year’s conference. RH will contact Sarah and put her in touch with JM. RMcC said that conference committee meetings would be held by Zoom. JM will email volunteers to start things off. **Action PA, RH, JM.**
10. **2024 Donations:** could the committee think of possible donations, PA requested that we need to ensure that the recipients of proposed donations fell within our CEC rules and regulations. Should we set aside money for the Asian Hornet team? To be discussed at next meeting.
11. **Bulk Buys 2024:** JM has spoken to National Bee Supplies and they will hold last year’s prices for us till 23rd January. JM has also asked for this year’s prices, as this will be too tight to put in an order. Will do a bulk buy of frames and foundation in a few weeks. SM asked whether it would be possible for JM/AS to send out bulk buy order emails to members in future as despite stating replies need to be sent to bulk buy secretary, many people reply to SR. JM will ask National Bee Supplies and Wynn Jones if they could supply any raffle prizes for the conference, and will also ask Sarah Rumble for ideas. **Action JM, AS.**
12. **AOB:** none.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 29th February – via Zoom
Meeting finished at 9.32 pm.

Julie Mugglestone

Chair Minutes - Sue Richardson