

ESSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION - ROMFORD DIVISION

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 16th May 2024, 7.30 pm

Via Zoom

Present: Pat Allen (PA), Doyland (DD Dawn), Garry Furnell (GF), Angela Mander (AM), 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:** Roger Honey (RogerH), Rob Hyde (RobH), Lorna Pattle (LP).
2. **Minutes of previous meeting 29.2.24:** Minutes agreed and to be signed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda:**
Minutes 11.1.24 Point 5.3: RMCC now has list of equipment holders and will collate. **Action RMCC.**
Minutes 11.1.24 Point 7: Storage at Thames Chase see below Teaching apiary report.
4. **Correspondence not otherwise on agenda:** SR received a request from Padraig via email for a talk at an Ilford Scout Group. Details to be passed to committee to see if anyone can do this. **Action SR.**

5. Regular Reports

5.1 Trustee/DVM: Points of interest from the CEC meeting that took place on 14th May 2024:

Items from other Divisions:

Chelmsford - lots going on in this division, 84 members attended their last meeting and they have 161 members in total, with bank balance of £15.2k. Training they have undertaken included H& S training, first aid training, following the collapse of a person on a taster training day. They have also done swarm collection training and have updated their 5 week theory section for beginners so that it is in line with BBKA syllabus. Braintree - Peter Aldridge (Chelmsford member) spoke on queen rearing. 153 members and £13.7k in the bank.

Southend - a number of topics have been covered including a talk by Clive de Bruyn on what to do about swarming, also disease inspection and preparation for the honey show were other topics covered. They had an issue with a member being stung in their teaching apiary, which has led to a review of their procedures on lone inspecting. 151 members and £13.4k in the bank.

Epping Forest - 153 members and £16.8 in the bank.

Maldon & Dengie - 40 members and £8k in the bank.

Saffron Walden - they had an interesting talk on removing bees from difficult places; 124 members and £12k in bank.

Colchester - 144 members and £22.k in the bank.

Essex Honey Show - still no show secretary, looking at using the EBKA web site to managing the show entries. On the day hoping existing helpers will allow the show to run smoothly.

Privacy policy has been reviewed with only one minor change but not something to really note.

Membership Secretary reported total membership across Essex as 1113. Three mail shots had been sent in the period, honey jar orders, EBKA AGM minutes and County Basic Assessment training.

Exam report included the follow info: Bee Health taken by 4 from Braintree and 2 from Chelmsford. General Bee Husbandry 3 from Epping Forest. Basic Assessments 1 Braintree, 4 Chelmsford, 2 Epping, 7 Saffron Walden and 1 Southend.

CEC General funds held are £50.8k and increase from last time of £8k.

Alison Morris is the new treasurer, taking over from Pat.

Items that have been returned from Harlow following their shut down, are all still available to divisions to take what they want.

I updated the CEC on progress on the 2024 conference.

Romford might want to review their H&S training and procedures for issues arising in the teaching apiary if someone collapses and needs to be removed from the area if paramedics have been called. Possible purchase of a stretcher!

5.2 Chair: see below report on 2024 conference.

5.3 Secretary:

SR has received the rates bill from Havering Council for Havering apiary which is £48.99, this has been passed to RMcC who has paid. We have received an offer for a stall at the Rotary Club Fete on the Green at the Queens Theatre, Bob Manning is involved with this group. FN, PA, and JM offered to man the stall and NMCD offered to help set up. SR to confirm our attendance. Our website is still out of date with regards to the committee meeting minutes and the newsletters. PA, SR and AM have all emailed several times but to no avail. Updating has been minimal and sporadic. TW has also spoken with him. The 2024 beginners' course details and the taster sessions were very late in being put on. Only 2/3 people signed up for taster sessions. Do we need to ask if he wants to step down and we can find someone else to manage the website? GR suggested that we outsourced and paid for a completely new website. Chelmsford has a very good one. GF offered to chat with Chelmsford and JM offered to speak to Pdraig. **Action SR, JM & GF.**

5.4 Treasurer:

Latest accounts sheet has been emailed to the committee. RMcC asked about 2024 donations – no suggestions as yet. Is there a cap on what EBKA will make up for any loss made for running the 2024 conference? RogerH to ask. **Action RogerH, RMcC.**

5.5 Show Secretary: Date for this year's show to be set as Saturday 12th October. Hall is available. Decided to ask Claire O'Brien again. It was very disappointing to have to cancel last year's show due to lack of entries, we really need more novices to enter. Discussion on what could be done to encourage more members to take part. What are the reasons for not taking part? Time management, venue, lack of confidence in beginners with honey preparation, having to drop off entries and then return later? PA also mentioned that last year was not a good year for honey. It was decided to have a honey show preparation talk/ demonstration at the August meeting. We have already had Claire give a talk on this, and several other talks prior to this, but RMcC pointed out that there are always new remembers coming through who need support and help. Decided to send an email out promoting our honey show and asking why members may not feel like entering. Show should also be mentioned in every newsletter from now. Committee felt that the forment and the after judging supper worked well. Change of venue was discussed but having the side room for the show exhibits and the main hall for the supper does work well. Decided to add some new classes to encourage entries –Aroma of honey and Chelmsford have a fun class where each member enters a jar of any type of honey, everyone tastes it and votes for their favourite and highest number of votes wins. **Action SR/ AM and committee for email.**

5.6 Apiary Wardens

5.6.1 Havering: There are lots of blackberries and nettles. Otherwise all OK.

5.6.2 Hornchurch: Ian Nichols visited on Monday 13th May as there is EFB 1.5 km away in Rainham. All hives are clear.

5.6.3 The Chase and Bee Garden: All seems OK with the Bee Garden. Apiary - All the pathways have been strimmed and tidied. We currently have 5 beekeepers with 16/17 hives. Dada has an empty hive in situ, but no bees. Lots of rubbish has been thrown over into the apiary and a large bag of sand was left outside the gate, This has now largely been cleared. The large orange no parking cone which was inside the gate has gone missing. The wooden table and extra pallet I placed in the apiary is proving invaluable and saves a lot of bending. I have recovered the gate key from Chris Merrit and Dean. Weaker colonies on site have been fed during the cold/wet spells. I have put a large stone over a large anthill on the edge of the pathway to warn people it is there as it could easily be tripped over. Other than that, all O.K.

5.6.4 Teaching Apiary: FN cut the grass on Tuesday 7th. There are 3 colonies and 2 nucs. 1 colony and 1 nuc are queenright, the others are re-queening. Bees well behaved at first beginners' course apiary session.

Storage: PA would like another committee member to accompany her to discuss storage with Thames Chase. JM offered. We need to ask if there are any specifications from Thames Chase – metal, timber, base. A metal container like the one at Havering would be good, but just one section. There are different sizes available. This would need a base and ground screws. We would need a survey to see what was underground in the area. NMCD was concerned in case Thames Chase may want us to move at some time in the future. PA confirmed that the Thames Chase Trust own/ manage the area where the hives are, whilst the rest of the site is Forestry Commission. PA said that whilst the trust was there we would not be thrown off. JM will get a price for container; PA, JM and AS to meet with Thames Chase staff. **Action PA, JM.**

6. Programme 2024:

June – apiary meeting at Thames Chase on Saturday 8th June at 2.30pm. Hives can be opened, general chat and Q & A. July– microscopy. Will need microscopes, PA has camera for microscope, screen and projector. August – Honey show preparation.

7. Courses 2024:

Beginners' Course: there are 9 students, 2 have dropped out due to health issues. Their course fee has been refunded, but we cannot refund the BBKA subs. There has been one apiary session, the bees were all good. Tutors were Dawn, Terry and Paul. PA would like to buy uncapping forks, marker pens and brushes for the beginners' course.

Taster Sessions: Dates of Saturday 6th and Sunday 14th July confirmed. Garry Furnell is running these, only 2 firm bookings, one on either date, so these may have to be combined if no other people book. **Action GF, PA.**

Refresher Sessions: PA has arranged a session on 29th May at 11.00 am for 2 people and is charging £5.

8. Asian Hornet Team: Swarm collection list needs to be updated, PW needs moving to Maldon and TW as AH coordinator on BBKA website. Needs to be done via eR2, PA to look into this. GF held a zoom meeting for the AH team. TW asked Dave Garratt to clarify some queries with the AH App at our last monthly meeting. 2 AH verifies are needed to confirm possible sightings of the AH. There is an AH quiz on the BBKA website which is easy and informative to complete. GF has printed his own honey jar labels with AH information on them. GF noted that there are 70 country wide AH WhatsApp groups but oddly not one for Essex. The national WhatsApp group does not allow members to post up, but you receive all the notifications. The BKKA AH team is a closed WhatsApp group. **Action PA.**

9. EBKA Conference 2024: JM held a conference meeting on 15th May – The food menu has now been arranged. Speakers are: David Robinson – Rewilding, Dr Beth Nicholls – Bee behaviour, and Nick Mole from PAN – Pesticides Action Network. Programme and flier will be available from mid June. Visits will be made to the other EBKA divisions in the coming months. JM has got 5 raffle prizes from beekeeping supply companies – Thornes, Abelo, National Bee Supplies, and Wynne Jones, plus Jean Smye has kindly offered to donate a prize. Early bird price will be £25, late booking tickets will be £28. A donation will be made to the British Legion if any profit. **Action JM.**

10. 2024 Donations: No suggestions made.

11. BBKA 150th Anniversary Trees for Planting – after discussion it was decided that we did not really have anywhere suitable to plant a tree, so it was decided not to take up the offer.

12. Bulk Buys 2024: All orders were collected. The new order form was created by AS's son and worked very well.

13. AOB: none.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 11th July – via Zoom
Meeting finished at 9.30 pm.

Chaired by Julie Mugglestone

Minutes - Sue Richardson