North Shropshire Beekeepers’ Association AGM

18 October 2022

Annual Reports 2021/22

**Chairs Report October 2021 – September 2022**

This past year started with a mixture of optimism and trepidation. We were coming out of the covid restrictions, but we were unsure if they would be reimposed. Thankfully, the optimism won out and we were able to continue the expansion of our face-to-face meetings (including cake), open the apiary for regular sessions, whilst still having some ZOOM meetings with some interesting speakers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those that have helped us develop this programme of activities throughout the year.

* Hannah for her fantastic work on developing the programme of meetings, organising the venues etc.
* Carol, our secretary, for ensuring we all have our minutes and agenda for meetings, ensuring the venue is booked and making sure we all get our copy of Beelines.
* Joyce and Marcus for coordination and writing the many great articles for Beelines and supporting the delivery of various training sessions that have been offered to our members over the past year. I would also like to thank those others that have made contributions to our monthly newsletter.
* Alison H for coordinating and developing the various training opportunities that have happened this year. Also, for supporting those that have decided to take the plunge into the world of Bee Education and doing some of the Modules that are offered through the BBKA. Our Association has had remarkable success in these modules that has been recognises by the BBKA
* Alison M for ensuring all our membership details are up to date and we, ensuring all our insurances and subscriptions to the BBKA are paid and we know what is happening with the Asian Hornet.
* Guy for the upkeep of our (NSBKA) web page, which is full of fantastic information, particularly within the members area.
* Ann for keeping us on a financially sound footing and at least tempering some of my exuberance to spend.
* I would also like to thank two of our experienced members who have been regular attendees at the apiary and supported many new beekeepers in developing their skills as they go through their first year of beekeeping. Mike Cranshaw and Dave Sale.

Highlights from the last year have included:

1. Fantastic exam results from both new and established beekeepers
2. Delivery of a varied programme of activities
3. Starting the process of the refocus of the association apiary (more later)
4. Our monthly Newsletter was delivered to every member every month.
5. The organisation of a Bee Health Day with our regional bee inspector at Harper Adams University.

Over the last two years it has been difficult to maintain the apiary as we would have wished and indeed as we have done so in the past.

We entered this year with more than thirty hives of various sorts and an area that was quite overgrown. Thanks to the support of many members of the association, in the middle of January, we were able to strim and cut back the area to enable good access to the hives. A sincere thank you.

Over the year we have reduced the number of hives down to nineteen. This was done via uniting some hives and preparing and selling others to members of the association.

We still have too many hives.

The plan for next year is to reduce these numbers further and to refocus the apiary to that of a ‘Teaching Apiary’. The aim is to have a selection of colonies that can be used for demonstration purposes throughout the beekeeping year without the management of these colonies becoming too onerous. We would also like to plan and deliver activities that will be of interest to more established beekeepers. Queen Rearing is one area that comes to mind.

One of the major projects for the coming few months is to ‘open up’ the apiary and make it much lighter. I will appreciate this when I am trying to identify eggs on a frame and I am sure the bees will find it a much nicer environment. If you have any ideas of activities that you would like included in the programme, both at the apiary or at our monthly meetings over the winter, I have placed a box by the signing in table with some small cards and pens please let us know your thoughts.

Although North Shropshire Beekeeping Association is a small association with approximately 130 members the range of activities and support to beekeepers is impressive. However, as I am sure you are aware, it takes a great deal of time and effort to make this happen. This has become increasingly difficult over the last couple of years as the number of people that are actively involved in the organisation is dwindling. Although we have job descriptions for the various committee roles that have evolved through necessity over the years it would be great if we could split some of these roles and involve more people. As has been said in the last newsletter, not all roles require a great deal of beekeeping knowledge. An example of this is the upkeep of the Facebook page and managing the association membership. Both require reasonable IT skills, but beekeeping knowledge is not top of the list. There are many other informal roles, such as Apiary Assistants that we would welcome new members into.

In conclusion, we have a fantastic association with great plans for the future, we just need a little more help if we are to continue to thrive.

Thank you

Pete Rawlinson

**Secretarial report**

The main secretarial work continued as normal with the distribution of correspondence and NSBKA newsletters.

**Treasurer's report: Accounts to 30th September 2022**

After a couple of years where our finances were adversely affected by the pandemic, in 2021-22 we were able to return to our normal level of activities, which has enabled us to return to more consistent levels of income and expenditure.

A new activity for us this year has been the sale of nucs and full-size colonies to members; this has been a useful additional source of income which has enabled us to continue to invest in improvements at the association apiary.

Income

Our primary sources of income were membership fees of £1,525 and sales of nucs/colonies of £1,545, together with sales of honey totalling £694 and taster course fees of £600 (down from £1,380 in the previous year). Total income from all sources was £4,462.

Expenditure

This year our expenditure was higher than the previous couple of years, as we return to more normal levels of activity. The largest element was Apiary costs (£1,981) where we added new flooring to the sheds and purchased 8 new polynucs and a number of replacement hives and hive parts, together with frames and foundation.

The other main areas of expenditure were speakers’ fees (£366), bulk feed for the apiary (£412), training costs (£325) and jars/labels (£294). Total expenditure for the year was £4,088.

Summary

The association’s financial year ended with a surplus of £374.

As at 30th September 2022 the association’s bank balances totalled £10,274, which will enable us to continue our ongoing improvements at the apiary, and ensure we can deliver a programme of educational and interesting events to beginners and more experienced beekeepers alike.

**Events report**

Thank you to Hannah for acting as events secretary for most of last year. We organised many events last year. All events, except one, were held face-to-face.

As well as the monthly talks over the winter, the big event was the very successful Bee Health day at Harper Adams university.

Summary of 2021/2 NSBKA Events.

19/10 21 Lesley Jacques The Marvellous Honeybee

16/11/21 Joyce Nisbet Observation Hive Fun

28/01/22 Annual Dinner

15/02/22 Paul and Pauline Aslin Products from Beeswax

15/03/22 Jim Griffiths Getting the best out of your Nucleus Hive

12/07/22 Bee Health Day

20/09/22 David Evans DIY for Beekeepers

(Zoom meeting)

**Education report**

The lifting of COVID restrictions meant that we have again been able to run ‘face to face’ sessions this year. In February, we ran a ‘Started with a Nuc last year’ session for those members who had started keeping bees during the pandemic. Then in March there was a session on different methods of swarm control and in July one on honey: from bucket to jar. We also ran a practical Queen rearing session for intermediate beekeepers.

The annual Taster and Basic courses were run at the end of March. We gained new beekeepers from the Taster course and four more experienced members went on to take and pass their BBKA Basic assessments in July.

Five members have furthered their beekeeping knowledge by gaining passes in the BBKA written modules this year. Congratulations to all who have been successful in the assessments and modules!

Finally, we were delighted to learn at the 2022 BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting that the Examinations Board had awarded the Surrey Trophy for 2021 to NSBKA for our assessment and examination successes. This is the first time we have won it but we hope it will not be the last!

**Membership report**

I am pleased to report that we’ve had an increase in the number of members again this year, currently 138, from both the Taster weekend and directly through the website.

It’s been fantastic to see both beginners and more experienced beekeepers at the apiary this year. There’s always plenty to do and we really appreciate the help of our members in looking after our bees.

This coming year, there will be no increase in the cost of either BBKA or NSBKA membership and we are offering the £5 prompt payment discount again. The cost of BDI has changed slightly with reductions in both 4-5 and up to 10 colonies. All other BDI costs will remain the same.

We will be looking for swarm collectors to register on the BBKA and/or NSBKA websites in the Spring.

I would also like to encourage members to have a go at the Asian Hornet Training on the BBKA website. It’s a good way to spend a few minutes on a cold wet day and really quite easy. Those that complete the training will be able, if needed, to assist in identifying Asian Hornets in our area. It is not an obligation, so no pressure and hopefully very unlikely.

**Webmaster report**

It has been my pleasure to maintain and develop the association website nsbka.org over the last twelve months and to administer the associations email setup.

If you have not already done so, I would urge you to register on the website for a username and password; this gives you a personal login so that you can access the NSBKA members’ areas which cannot be reached by the public, such as current and back copies of the Beelines newsletters, recent recorded Zoom presentations and many other items. The website content is also updated regularly.

Website Features

* Beelines, the NSBKA newsletter - current and previous issues (Members’ area)
* Zoom presentations (Members’ area)
* Online forms to facilitate association email contacts
* Latest Bee News – bee-related news articles in the press and media are outlined with a link to view them online.
* A focal point for information for anyone interested in beekeeping in Shropshire
* A source of information for the general public – e.g. swarm collection, Asian Hornet identification/contact
* Interactive swarm collectors’ map
* All the NSBKA library book details appear in an interactive section of the website so that books details can be viewed, and books requested and reserved online.
* NSBKA Events calendar
* Bee related Word puzzles
* Pollen colour identification chart
* Pollen and Nectar-rich plants for bees
* Interactive Honey Aroma and Flavour Wheel (Members’ area)

The website will be undergoing an upgrade to its content management system later this year.

**Beelines report**

Thanks to all contributors, over the past year 12 regular monthly editions of Beelines have been sent to all members.

The editors always welcome suggestions and articles from members.  Please don't be shy.  The newsletter is only as interesting as the material submitted!