

north staffordshire beekeepers association

www.northstaffsbees.org.uk

next meeting

Wednesday 5th January

7.00 for 7.30

Annual General Meeting

then a short DVD 'Dancing with Bees'

The Friends Meeting House

Miller Street, Newcastle-u-Lyme ST5 1JD

JANUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

A Message from our Chairman

I do hope as many of you as possible will attend the AGM and join in with the discussions. It is very important that every-one's views are heard so that future events and meetings are tailored to cater for your requirements. With a diverse membership with many new members, some having reached the intermediate stage and not forgetting experienced beekeepers who need the latest information, it is important that we consider everyone.

Dave Cheek

NewsLetter Editor's Report

I hope that the monthly NewsLetter meets with your approval and that you find it both useful and interesting.

I passionately share the view of your Committee that we need to keep you informed and updated about beekeeping issues, therefore the size of the NewsLetters varies according to what is happening and I hope that is useful to you because if it is not serving your needs then we need to know.

I am constantly looking for articles or information that can be published in the NewsLetter and am grateful to those members who have supplied articles for publication or interesting/useful articles from other publications that can be used.

Whilst I come from an IT background and the use of computers does help to quickly disseminate information, I am a strong defender of the need to provide information in the written form but I would appreciate some feed-back on the actual content and presentation of the NewsLetter to ensure that it meets your needs therefore any constructive comments of any kind are appreciated.

Contra to what has been circulated; I am willing to continue to edit and produce your NewsLetter but would appreciate a little more input from everyone.

Thank you. **David Teasdale** NewsLetter Editor

Officers Reports to the AGM

This year, we are providing written reports in place of the usual verbal reports. This will ensure all members have access to the reports, and will give more time for members to give their views and ask questions at the AGM. **The agenda is appended, please bring your copy.**

The minutes of the last AGM have been checked by the committee, and are available to view online on our [website](#) ; copies will be available for inspection half an hour prior to the start of the AGM.

we hope to show a DVD on beekeeping after the AGM

could you use an

Out-apiary in Longnor?

"Until last year, a neighbour was keeping his bees on our farm. As he no longer needs the facility, we are keen to have some hives sited here. There are 50 acres of upland grassland (meadows and pasture), including woodland, ponds and orchard. We consider bees to be an integral part of the wildlife management of the farm."

Paul Walker Under Whitle Nr Longnor.

elspeth.walker@virgin.net

Are you interested in becoming a

Trainer for New Beekeepers?

The British Beekeepers Association is running a series of regional training days to help encourage those with some beekeeping experience to become proficient at teaching newcomers to the craft. There are also training sessions for very experienced beekeepers interested in the NDB. Please contact the secretary if you are interested.

possible online management of the membership list

Data Storage

Over the last two years, your committee have debated the best way to store membership data. **This item is on the AGM agenda as we would like to seek the views of the membership.**

The membership information is currently needed for the following reasons:

- Recording subscriptions paid and sending reminders (treasurer)
- Processing PayPal payments (treasurer and webmaster)
- Communication with new members (membership secretary)
- Answering queries (secretary)
- Swarm management (swarm officer and other committee members)
- Managing email distribution list (webmaster)
- Processing postal mailings (editor and webmaster)
- Organising social events (social secretary)
- Processing giftaid (treasurer/webmaster)
- Chasing return of library books (librarian)
- Managing property (property officer)
- Organising educational events and exams (education secretary)
- Arranging meetings (programme secretary)
- Other association business (Chairman, president, delegate)

The data is currently kept on various committee members' home computers. I would like to explore the benefits of storing the information in one place, in an online database.

The problems presented by the current system are as follows:

Data Security

The current system requires the database to be sent to officers by email, which runs the risk of misrouting and interception

The database is stored on multiple computers, with no guarantee that it will be adequately deleted when an individual ceases to be an officer

Data Accuracy

The database needs editing by the treasurer, webmaster, membership secretary and possibly a giftaid organiser in future. There is a major problem in ensuring that there is only one up-to-date membership list in use. We have experienced issues when information has not matched, such as email address changes.

Ease of Use

Officers vary in their IT skills and the programs they can use. We recently had issues with xlsx and docx causing compatibility problems. We do not want to discourage people from standing for office over concerns that they will have problems with IT.

The information we need for all members would be:

- name and address
- past and current membership status and amounts paid
- options for newsletter delivery

Optional information that members may choose to provide:

- partners name
- telephone numbers (useful for passing urgent information, eg swarms or cancelled meetings)
- email address (required for email newsletters)
- giftaid declaration (required for reclaiming tax)

An online system, such as GoogleDocs, should improve data security and accuracy. The information would only be accessible to those who had been authorised, and access can be cancelled at any time. Editing can be restricted to a few members, and the system automatically shows changes and keeps backups of earlier versions. The system is more basic than desktop word processors, so should be easier to use. When a new person takes over as an officer, it would allow an existing officer to review changes and offer support.

If we do decide to proceed with an online database, your committee will be required to ensure that it meets the requirements of the data protection act.

Nick Mawby

Membership Secretary's Report.

Hello Friends,
Last years membership (2009-10) totaled 106 members.
So far the current membership stands at 92.
We do expect many members to renew since some had promised to bring their fees on the night of the Christmas Social, which was cancelled due to bad weather.
I expect this financial years membership figure to increase considerably throughout 2010-11.
Of the 92 members, 59 have paid by PayPal and 33 by cheque or cash. So we can see the positive effect that PayPal has on membership payment.

<i>Membership 2009-10</i>	<i>106</i>
Current membership	2010-11
Total	92
Full	78
Affiliated	14
Paid by Paypal	59
Paid by cheque/cash	33

Linda Day

BBKA Delegates Report 2010

It is the role of the BBKA Delegate to represent the views of their Association to ensure that the BBKA Executive do what the majority of beekeeping Associations want and to liaise with the BBKA Executive on behalf of our Association as required.

I have tried to keep all NSBKA members updated on all activities of the BBKA throughout the year and represent the NSBKA viewpoint and I believe that it is being achieved insofar as the BBKA Executive do listen to the member Association and the views expressed within our Association for the best interests of NSBKA and beekeeping nationally.

The only area of contention relates to pesticides and some information was published in our recent Newsletter. Nevertheless, the members of the BBKA Executive were elected by all member Associations to undertake activities on our behalf and to that extent, they must be supported but any areas of contention, are fully debated at the Annual Delegates Meeting to ensure that our needs and requirements are achieved.

Thank you for your support and interest. **David Teasdale** NSBKA Delegate

Honey Show Report

We were lucky to have Steve Guest come to do an 'open judging' at our Honey Show this year. We started this type of event some 10 years ago to try and encourage new and inexperienced members in their efforts to gain a good standard of processing hive products.

Despite having increasing numbers joining the our association the number of members submitting entries has not yet started to increase although there was a small increase in the number of entries in class 1 (this class is aimed at beginner beekeepers) which is hopefully a good sign. The black jar class has proved popular as has the reintroduction of the cake class.

Unfortunately this year illness meant I was unable to attend on the night and David Teasdale had a crash course in the scoring and organisation required on the show day and I am very grateful to him for his help.

The winners this year were:

MYATT CHALLENGE CUP

Awarded to P & D Apiaries for the best exhibit in Classes 1 - 14.

C. JOYNSON RICHARDS " MELLIFICA CHALLENGE CUP

Awarded to M & D Teasdale for gaining most points in Classes 1 - 14

TOMKINSON CUP

Awarded to Cherry Tomkins for gaining most points in Class 1.

CUMBERLIDGE-JOHNSON CHALLENGE CUP

Awarded to P & D Apiaries for gaining most points in Classes 2,3 & 4.

THE MYATT MEMORIAL SHIELD

Awarded to M & D Teasdale for gaining most points in Classes 11 & 12

The cups will be presented at the AGM this year.

Margaret Teasdale - Honey Show Manager

Programme Secretary's Report

In the past two years the BBKA and other organisations have been alerting government and other bodies to the plight of the honeybee. Problems facing beekeepers are not confined to our own island; media coverage of Colony Collapse Disorder has recently headlined the major problems facing the beekeeping fraternity across the world. This has sparked an unprecedented interest in beekeeping, reflected in a significant increase in association membership.

In previous years the NSBKA has consisted largely of established beekeepers seeking advanced level talks. However, mindful of the needs of our newcomers I have been turning to our homegrown expertise to help cover beekeeping topics from basics. Although this has resulted in fewer advanced level topics it has provided an opportunity for established members to share their experiences with those just starting out. Associations such as ours are of course founded on self-help. I extend thanks to all who have given their time to contribute to the 2010 programme; those wanting more advanced topics I also thank for your tolerance. The phrase 'you can please some of the people all the time but you can't please all of the people all the time' rings true.

The programme is based as far as possible on feedback and suggestions for ongoing meetings from all members. It is not always practical to implement every idea put forward, many speakers too distant to attend evening meetings, some topics being specialised in terms of speakers / demonstrators and cost prohibitive e.g. skep making only available at weekend, minimum numbers etc. I do however note all suggestions and incorporate as many as practical into events.

The 2010 programme aimed to provide newcomers with a logical series of meetings integrated as far as possible with the Longsdon apiary meetings and the Keele course run by Dr. William Kirk

I thank all who have come forward with feedback and ideas for next year. It is most valuable for the preparation of next year's programme, indeed it appears that a number want more 'from the basics' in the coming year. Although it is impossible to cater for all needs with the talks alone, as long as a good number of experienced members attend our meetings or better still offer to give talks and demonstrations, members can benefit even just from general chat at the end of the evenings.

At a time when the vested interest in protecting honeybees has never been as high on the agenda it is important to encourage newcomers to participate in the association's activities and to promote a healthy exchange information and practical help. I remain grateful for your help in producing a programme for 2011.

Tim Waye Programme Secretary

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 2nd February 2011

Unfortunately, the January meeting fell victim to adverse weather but the content was incorporated into February's illustrated presentation 'A beekeeping Miscellany' by Nick Mawby.

In March Pete Sutcliffe of Cheshire BKA explored the virtues of a variety of hive designs in his talk 'Which Hive for Me?' along with examples.

The South Cheshire BKA hosted David Cushman from the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeding Association (BIBBA) with his talk 'Problems with Queen' in their April meeting.

In May David Teasdale and David Cheek took the meeting through Swarm control and introduced honey extraction and show preparation.

David Buckley who co-ran the Keele course gave a well received demonstration at Longsdon Apiary in June.

A summer social was organised by Pat Twigg and kindly hosted by Cherry and Brian Tomkins along with a viewing of honey extraction equipment led by David Teasdale and David Cheek.

In September's meeting (joint with SCBKA) Gerry Collins of Doncaster BKA gave an illustrated talk 'Reading the Combs', a valuable incite into signs and symptoms of bee behaviour.

October's Annual Honey Show was open judged by Steve Guest of SCBKA. Despite low numbers of exhibits (none in some classes) Steve covered the criteria for preparation for showing, many points equally valid for public sale.

Steve Guest returned to our November meeting with a demonstration 'My way of making beeswax polish' in which his freshly finished products were handed around.

December's Christmas Social in was unfortunately subject to cancellation at very short notice due to the threat of worsening weather during the day (the outside speaker Sylvia Everitt MBE was relieved at the committee decision in view of the weather conditions).

Secretary's Report

Gill Woodroffe

I would like to thank Gill Woodroffe for her time as secretary. Personal issues forced her to resign, but I am pleased to report that she is hoping to resume beekeeping.

Apiary

We have a fantastic team at the Longsdon Apiary, who have put in a vast amount of work to improve the site. The association has purchase a shed to give better storage facilities. Your committee has been trying to locate a suitable site nearer the centre of Stoke-on-Trent, for a main teaching apiary, but so far without success. If you have any ideas, let us know. A major stumbling block to running a second apiary is the lack of experienced beekeepers with time available. As our newer members gain experience, I hope that we may eventually have enough manpower to move forward with a more central apiary.

Giftaid

We have now had giftaid declarations from 54 members, and Ray has made progress with the bureaucracy. In the new year we plan to complete the reclaim process.

Website

I transferred the website hosting to the BBKA site a couple of years ago, as it offered a free content management system. This allows different people to easily edit their own sections of the website. There are promises of an improved website, but we will have to wait to see if it materialises. If anyone is interested to having a go at managing a section, please get in touch; you do not need any special knowledge.

Beginners

Once again we have had great interest at the Longsdon Apiary, with 36 newcomers registering on the meetup site since last January. The BBKA have produced educational materials to support a beginners course, which we will be using as the basis of the course we are running in the coming months.

Newsletter

The last year has seen a continued improvement in the newsletter. As the vast majority of members have opted for the email version, it has kept costs down. Despite requests for feedback, we have received very little. David has put in a huge amount of work, and we would really like to know what members find useful.

Nick Mawby

AGENDA

1. President's Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Amendments to, and approval of, Minutes of 2009 AGM (previously published)
4. Members questions on the accounts and Treasurer's Report (previously published)
 - a. Questions for the account inspectors
 - b. Authorisation to increase subscription rates
5. Questions from members on the Officer's Reports (previously published)
6. Discussion of possible online management of the membership list
7. Any other matters arising from the minutes
8. Election of Officers
 - President
 - Vice-Presidents
 - Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Assistant/Minutes Secretary
 - Membership Secretary
 - Programme Secretary
 - Honey Show Manager
 - Editor of Newsletter/Combings
 - Social Committee Representative
 - BBKA Delegate
9. Election of Members of the Committee
10. Election of Two accounts inspectors
11. Any other Business
12. Date of Next Committee Meeting
13. Presentation of Cups from the Honey Show