



Annual Auction Update

We were perhaps a little optimistic in beginning our planning before Christmas for an Auction this year. It now seems unlikely that even with the speed of the vaccination programme no rapid return to normality is expected and a mass meeting during April is probably too soon.

We have therefore reluctantly decided to cancel the Auction again this year. Unfortunately with the relatively long lead-times set for advertising our event in beekeeping publications you will still see publicity for a Bee Market & Auction on 24th April.

We are mindful that members may have equipment they are keen to sell this year. If there is such a demand I am happy to work on an opportunity to advertise items for sale on the county website and in the monthly newsletter throughout the spring and early summer - or as soon as travel restrictions are relaxed. An 'e-Market' to buy and sell beekeeping and related equipment. **See Page 3.**

Our newsletter alone reaches nearly 700 members as well as the surrounding associations. ***So please let me know if you would be interested in such an opportunity.*** An entry form will then be made available on the website with a few guiding principles to make the process as easy as possible for both sellers and potential buyers.

Finally, a sincere thanks to all who have already offered their time to help with the running and management of the Auction in April. Your support as always is greatly appreciated. Let's hope for better in 2022.

Graham Elliott

Hon. Secretary West Sussex Beekeepers' Association
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

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Annual General Meetings

Our postponed 47th AGM and the 48th AGM for 2021 were held concurrently on **Thursday 28th January**. Due to the current Covid-19 Government restrictions the event was a 'virtual' affair - our first!

The 'Zoom' meeting was chaired by our retiring President, Christine Stevens with a small number of members online.

The Chairman's Reports for the last two years were adopted unanimously as were the accounts from 2019 and 2020.

Last year all officers had agreed to their tenure being extended due to the postponement of the AGM. However, the President and Chairman must now step down. Steve Boyce was also retiring as Treasurer after nearly 8 years in the role.

The new President, Melvyn Essen from Central Sussex was elected. Melvyn was retiring as Chairman after 4 years in the role.

Roger Patterson (Wisborough Green) was elected as Chairman, Harry Boxall (Chichester) as Vice Chairman, Brian Hose (Chichester) as Treasurer and Graham Elliott (Chichester) was re-elected as Secretary.

No other business had been raised with the Secretary and Christine therefore closed the meeting.

Graham Elliott

Hon. Secretary West Sussex Beekeepers' Association
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Varroa Treatment Research

Prof. Stephen Martin of Salford University will be a name familiar to many BBKA members either through the talks he gives or from articles in the BBKA News. BBKA has previously funded research carried out by Prof. Martin and his team and we are grateful to them for writing The BBKA News Special Issue on Natural Varroa-Resistant Honey Bees (available from the BBKA web shop). We are therefore hoping that as many beekeepers as possible will assist with the study below.



As part of my final year project for my zoology degree at the University of Salford, supervised by Prof. Stephen Martin I am investigating the distribution of treatment-free beekeepers and beekeepers who are actively treating for *Varroa* resistance in the UK. In the case of this project we are defining treatment as any form of external/ additional control administered to bees by their keepers with the aim of reducing *Varroa destructor* mite numbers. This survey is completely anonymous apart from asking which association you are linked to, to ensure no data protection laws are broken. Any responses would be extremely helpful!

The deadline for responses is the middle of February and the link to the survey is below, all responses are greatly appreciated.

Alexandra Valentine

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdfM7K7xMOyqcyreYOFT9MrTd65PjOMn3GO8SusOd4ja9Q2Q/viewform?usp=sf_link



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting



Roger Patterson was again our representative at the meeting this year and provides us with a flavour of the day online.

The BBKA ADM is where delegates from the Area Association Members (AAMs) discuss and vote on various topics such as finance, Exam Board members, Trustees and propositions that are tabled by the Executive Committee and AAMs.

There are 74 AAMs, of which West Sussex BKA is one. I am the current delegate. The meeting is usually held face-to-face, but this year was held via 'Zoom' on Saturday 16th January. Apart from breaks, I was online from 9:20am – 4:40pm, so rather a long day.

In theory, all 26,000 members of the BBKA can have input via their delegate after reading the ADM papers, which this year was 87 x A4 pages! In practice, that doesn't happen. Your WSBKA committee discusses the various propositions and we have always given guidance to our delegate, who can change the way they vote depending on the debate and any possible amendments. Some delegates are mandated, which seems pointless, as there may as well be a postal or online vote.

There will be a report in due course in *BBKA News* of the proceedings, so I won't repeat here. WSBKA put forward a proposition that only delegates could hold proxy for AAMs not attending, as the previous year two Trustees held proxy, which is considered unwise. Unfortunately, although the proposition was won with 68% of the votes, it didn't reach the 75% required to change the constitution.

Roger Patterson

Vice - Chairman West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

BBKA's Chair, Anne Rowberry has made the following comment; 'I would like to thank your delegates for persevering with the Virtual ADM. It was a very long day (as the ADM usually is) but was a success and many appreciative emails have been received.' There was an emergency proposition at the ADM referring to the derogation being granted for the use of a neonicotinoid treatment of sugar beet seeds to be sown in spring 2021. The ADM overwhelmingly decided to oppose this use of a pesticide which was banned in all EU countries in 2018. A letter has already been sent by Margaret Wilson, BBKA President, to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. See the article on Page 4.

WSBKA e-Market

If the Association was to set up an e-Market (a means of vendors and sellers being put into contact with one another) would it be of interest and would you support it? Your thoughts, please.



e-MARKET
West Sussex Beekeepers Association

See the lead article in this newsletter.

Comments please to:

Graham Elliott

Secretary West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Authorisation of Seed Treatment

BBKA expresses concern at the Government's authorising of a neonicotinoid seed treatment. The full article can be read on our website: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/newsletters.html

Beekeepers will no doubt have seen the news that the Government has announced the Emergency Authorisation (derogation) for the limited use of the neonicotinoid seed treatment – thiamethoxam (Cruiser SB) for sugar beet for 2021. The full document can be accessed here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/neonicotinoid-product-as-seed-treatment-for-sugar-beet-emergency-authorisation-application/statement-on-the-decision-to-issue-with-strict-conditions-emergency-authorisation-to-use-a-product-containing-a-neonicotinoid-to-treat-sugar-beet

The Secretary of State considers the application meets the requirements for an emergency authorisation and has therefore decided that authorisation should be granted, subject to a number of conditions. An emergency authorisation for the short-term use of a product (and placing on the market for no more than 120 days) may be granted if certain requirements are met.

If these requirements are met then the benefit of granting an emergency authorisation must be balanced against the potential harm from the proposed use of the product. Therefore, the potential risks to people, animals and the environment remain a key part of the evidence that needs to be considered. The neonicotinoid seed treatment provides important protection to the emerging crop against insect pests and the viruses they can transmit. This protection cannot be provided by any other reasonable means. Sugar beet yields were significantly reduced in the 2020 season due to the incidence of virus, and similar conditions in 2021 would be likely to present similar dangers.

Sugar beet is a non-flowering crop and the risks to bees from the sugar beet crop itself were assessed to be acceptable. The applicant recognised that risks could be posed to bees from flowering weeds in and around the crop and proposed to address this with the use of industry-recommended herbicide programmes to minimise the number of flowering weeds in treated sugar beet crops. This was considered to be acceptable.

The BBKA is extremely disappointed and concerned at this derogation and is encouraging members to read and comment on the draft National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides which is open for public consultation:

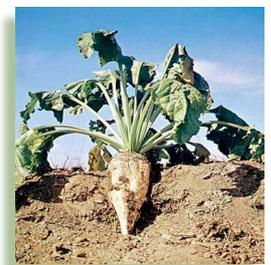
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/pesticides-future-strategy/sustainable-use-of-pesticides-national-action-plan/>.

The Trustees on behalf of the Associations are requesting that each member acts in support of the ADM proposition and helps to pressure the Government to withdraw this derogation by:

1. Writing to their MP. You can find the contact details for your MP by using the link and entering your post code. <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>—include your address to show you're a constituent.
2. Supporting the 4 current active petitions which have been started to oppose the use of this chemical. The BBKA has decided not to start its own petition as there are others which already have substantive support against the use of neonicotinoids in the UK now and point forward. The petitions are:-

Greenpeace <https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/save-our-bees>

Wildlife Trusts. <https://action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/74049/data/1>



Two Individual petitions calling for a ban and seeking a Parliamentary debate:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions?q=+neonicotinoids&state=open>

When writing to your MP it is better if you do not use a form letter. Form letters tend to be less well received. The BBKA believes that the following points need raising with MPs:

1. There is no publicly available data on the application for the derogation.
2. What information there is does not seem to consider weather effects on the yield of the crop, which is the main reason for the derogation request.
3. The 'precautions' to prevent bees from being effected by the neonicotinoids is to treat the fields and surrounds with **herbicide** to prevent flowering of wildflowers which would take up residual neonicotinoid from the ground. This would appear to be directly in opposition to the stated aims of the new agricultural policy in development. This precaution is reducing the biodiversity of the environment and denies forage not only for bee species but other insects which is bound to effect other species such as birds which feed on insects. The precaution for using the chemical is to use more chemicals?
4. There appears to be no sampling of the soil prior to the sowing of the treated seed nor any in the 'precautionary' period following the harvest of the sugar beet. Therefore, residual neonicotinoids may still be in the soil after the precautionary period after crop harvest.
5. The use of neonicotinoids will not be used in future and investment will be made in resistant crops rather than the use of destructive chemicals.

Please help the BBKA to support you in protecting your bees from the reintroduction of these provably harmful chemicals.

Anne Rowberry – BBKA Chair

Diane Drinkwater – BBKA Vice-Chair

Richard Bond – BBKA Trustee

BBKA '*Positive Thinking*' Newsletter



In her February newsletter Margaret Wilson comments on the recent 'virtual' ADM and the approved increase in capitation of £2. The letter can be read in full on the WSBKA website:

www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/newsletters.html



BIBBA Update

An update from BIBBA on their forthcoming activities

Spring 2021 webinars

These webinars are free to attend. They are in the same format as the very popular ones we held towards the end of 2020. Their purpose is to offer beekeeping education and training to all beekeepers in these days of restricted movements and meetings. For information on our 40+ Spring 2021 webinars [click here](#)



Prospective Beekeepers

Whilst we all support our members as best we can, we can also cater for prospective new members. A couple of the webinars in the Spring programme are very much for those people thinking of keeping bees. The 30th January event is around about an hour in duration and is free to attend. The second event on 13th March is an all-day offering based on a successful event that has run for 15 years. A small charge of £15 is requested for this individual event. Tickets are on sale via Eventbrite. [Click here](#) for more details.

To help BKAs

The Spring webinars offer a range of events for beekeepers at all levels. We are also offering a couple of webinars which we hope are relevant to our local officers and volunteers.

Karl Colyer & committee

BIBBA Chair

karlcolyer@gmail.com

Around the Divisions

Divisions are continuing to support members during these difficult times. Please speak to your Division if you need help.

Central Sussex Division

Details from: Debbie Rowland, chairman@centralsussexbka.org.uk or the Division's website: www.centralsussexbka.org.uk

Chichester Division

Details from: Ray Green, secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or the Division's website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk

Wisborough Green Division

Details from : Martina Hendry, secretary@wgbka.org.uk or website: www.wgbka.org.uk.
The Division's Newsletter may be viewed or downloaded here: www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html

Worthing Division

Details from: Debra Edwards, dmcd.edwards@gmail.com or website: www.worthing-beekeepers.org

South East Region Annual Report 2020 (abridged)



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Kay Wreford, Regional Bee Inspector, reports from the [National Bee Unit](#). Kay's full annual report can be viewed here: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/newsletters.html

We are delighted to welcome Danyal Conn to the team. He joined us in August and has been in training since. He will be covering parts of South East London and Kent from April 2021.

Bee Inspectors are classed as keyworkers which enabled us to continue inspecting throughout the lockdown whilst observing strict Covid-19 precautions, including inspecting colonies either with the Beekeeper absent or if present keeping at the requisite 2m distance. Despite this, there have been inspections which we have not been able to undertake due to problems with either access or health risks.

There are currently 6459 Beekeepers and 8113 apiaries registered on Beebase in the South East Region. This year we did 891 apiary visits and inspected 3477 colonies. We were also assisted by inspectors from Eastern Region who helped in the area sweeps in North London looking for cases of European and American Foulbroods.

We undertook 10 honey samples for the Veterinary Medicine Directorate all of which were clear.

During the season we also attended several suspect poisonings of colonies. In many of the cases we attended, colony death was found to be due to either Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus or Parasitic Mite Syndrome (caused by *Varroa*). However, 3 samples were submitted for analysis and these were followed up by Natural England.

Yet again this year we had significant finds of European Foulbrood (EFB) especially in the London area. This does have to be viewed against the fact that this year more inspections occurred in this area compared to 2016 and 2017. I would, however stress that it is important to do regular bee disease inspections of your colonies in the active season and contact your local Inspector if you have any concerns.

We have continued to see colonies lost to *Varroa* this year. Do monitor your *Varroa* levels and treat when necessary using approved varroacides. You may also wish to consider using bio-technical methods of control throughout the season. See www.nationalbeeunit.com for more information. If you are using medicines then do follow the manufacturer's instructions, again we have seen colonies lost due to incorrect usage of these products. It is a legal requirement to keep a record for 5 years of any Veterinary Medicines that are used on your colonies.

This year has seen a reduction in confirmed Asian hornet sightings in the UK with just one Asian hornet nest found and destroyed by NBU inspectors in an apple tree in Gosport, Hampshire on Friday 11th September. This followed reports from two householders in the area, one of which was a beekeeper who had identified Asian hornets feeding on his grapes.

There are 15 Beekeepers in our region who have agreed for their apiaries to be Voluntary Sentinel Apiaries. This involves twice a year taking floor debris samples from their hives and submitting this to the NBU laboratory where it is examined for the presence of Small Hive Beetle. This forms part of our surveillance for the arrival of this pest. We do need more volunteers to join this scheme. If you would like to take part or would like to know more details, then do contact me.



Gordon Brooks' photo of Asian hornet feeding on grapes

The Seasonal Bee Inspectors start back on 29th March 2021. If you need help before then please contact me.

Kay Wreford

Regional Bee Inspector – South East England
Tel. 07775 119483 Email: kay.wreford@apha.gov.uk

...and finally

BBKA News Survey

The BBKA needs your opinion about your *BBKA News* magazine. Do you enjoy picking up a printed copy as it drops through your door and relaxing in a chair to read it, or do you prefer to receive it on your computer/laptop? Let BBKA know. You can even opt to receive both versions if you wish. There are several other questions about the content, balance and style to comment on.



The link is here: www.bbka.org.uk/news/bbka-news-reader-survey or you can send in a printed copy by downloading the form or by filling in the paper copy in January's *BBKA News* and returning it to:
Freeport BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION *Note this address label is sufficient and nothing else should be written on the envelope.*

The survey will remain open throughout February.

We're on the web:
www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you don't have access to the internet and want further details of anything in this newsletter, please contact the Editor & County Secretary. Likewise, if you would like to contribute to future newsletters please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Editor & County Secretary, no later than the 20th of the preceding month.
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



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Previous newsletters from the last 12 months are available on the website.

