

CUMBRIA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Carlisle Branch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018.

Monday November 26<sup>th</sup>, at 7.30 p.m. in the Houghton Village Hall

MINUTES

**1. Welcome:** Robin welcomed everyone to the Annual General meeting

**2. Attending:** Neil Baillie, John Beattie, Stuart Bowie, Ian Burrow, Ann Dodds, Emma Keir, Dieter Gringinger, Tim Hatt, Robin MacLeod, Walter McPhee, Peter Matthews, Christine Matthews, Nicholas Mills, Carol Neilson, Michael Neilson, Lorraine Priestley, Robert Robson, Sharon Seth, Ken Smith and Ann Thompson.

**Apologies for absence:** Apologies from Maureen Cooper, Edward Dodds, Pete Nanson, Syd Parker, Monica Parker and Fiona Roebuck

**3. Minutes of AGM, Nov. 2017** were circulated by email and copies were distributed at the meeting. The minutes were approved by the membership in attendance.

**4. Matters arising from minutes-**

Robin advised that initially there had been a lack of interest in the beginners' course, but one did run, and it was planned to do this again next season.

Pg 3- Associate membership was now available.

**5. Reports**

**a) Chairman**

Robin advised he would give a short report, recording a further fairly successful year.

At the apiary, Ken had worked hard to ensure that we had a good number of working hives, all at varying stages of development and had been happy to let beginners have a good amount of hands on inspection. With the weather having been particularly good during the year, we had been able to go into the hives on all of the Apiary days and as ever, beginners in particular were encouraged to come to our Apiary days, as only by "hands on" did you really get to understand what beekeeping was all about. He expressed grateful thanks to Ken and also to Ian Burrow for cutting the grass and to John Beattie for keeping the hedge under control.

Speakers at winter meetings had been excellent, thanks in the main to Fiona coming up with suggestions and this had been reflected in regularly good attendances. We were still working on speakers for the next year and would be issuing details the next month. We were trying to get a balance that suited both experienced and new beekeepers alike.

Honey production overall seemed to have been good although just as someone said “My best year for honey” some said, “didn’t get any”! As ever with bee-keepers, we blamed the weather. It was either “too wet” for the bees to forage or “too dry” for there to be much nectar.

There had been fewer entries to the Honey Show, although the quality of exhibits had been high. It had been fascinating to see the variation in colours, from almost non-existent to competing with marmite. Christine’s advice on exhibiting techniques was obviously proving successful, as most exhibits passed the various tests she set. As ever, many thanks to Christine and Peter.

Robin was particularly pleased at the growing number of beginners showing an interest and coming along to the Apiary. It was definitely the best way to learn and even the “old-timers” enjoyed the session afterwards where various issues got discussed and sometimes even resolved!

Michael would give his financial report later, together with a recommendation for the next year’s subs. We were in balance but he had very little money to play with and when repairs etc. were needed, there might well be problems unless we increased the sub by a reasonable amount Michael would also pick up on what the Committee wanted to recommend as a good money saving proposal that we could all benefit from.

Finally, the Chairman thanked everyone for their support over the past year, particularly to Emma, Michael, Christine, Ken and of course, Lorraine, “Minute-taker extraordinaire” and very conscientious teas/coffees and raffle organiser, to the committee and all the regular faces who came to our meetings and the apiary, which helped keep the association successful and moving forward.

#### **b) Secretary’s report-**

At the last AGM Emma had agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to take over from Fiona. This she did over the summer, initially with a great deal of support from Fiona and other officers, especially Robin whose patience has been unfailing. As she was a little unsure about her sphere of operations Emma had taken advice from several sources... the one which seems most concise had been from Wikipedia which defines the role as “A secretary is a person whose work consists of supporting management, including executives, using a variety of project management, communication, or organisational skills. And, in other situations a secretary is an officer of a society or organization who deals with correspondence admits new members, and organizes official meetings and events.” However, Emma advised that she was not looking for extra work and was quite happy with the current arrangements regarding sharing duties and thanked all her fellow committee members for all their hard work in the last year, particularly Fiona, Robin and Lorraine, Stuart for his diligence in maintaining the website and Ken not only for all his hard work in the apiary but for his support in dealing with some of the more difficult enquiries which had come her way. Having said that, Emma’s personal situation had not improved in the last year so if anyone felt like taking over the position she would be happy to support them in picking up the reins!

The year had started well with a superb annual dinner. The year then got decidedly worse weather-wise and then when we thought it was all over, the “beast from the east” had swept in

and devastated hives all over the UK. Several members had reported losing colonies and in one case their entire stock. However, the summer had been hot and dry and the bees bounced back. Emma had been quite pessimistic after her queen absconded but with help and support, the situation was salvaged and she ended the summer with three strong colonies and had been able to leave 10 full super frames on each hive and still harvest 8kg of honey. It was particularly gratifying to be awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the beginners' category at our honey show.

The show was quite well attended, and Emma believed the attendance at the winter talks had increased over average attendance in 2017, She suggested this was at least in part due to the selection of speakers. It had been suggested that talks should cover topics other than beekeeping and this started with Peter Roebuck's talk on cattle droving which certainly drew in a good number of members. As always comments and suggestions were welcome. Emma advised that there was a number of potential new members over the summer and several had said they would join, so she hoped membership would be increased in January.

Likewise, our beginners' beekeeping course was attracting interest and she currently had five definite attendees, one of whom had paid, five were interested but not confirmed and several "possible". Emma would be contacting likely candidates soon (and chasing payment in January) but it seemed quite likely that we would have enough attendees to make the course viable. Emma thought this was far better than the situation last year when it was uncertain whether there would be a course at all. Emma suspected this was partly down to public perception of bees being endangered but also to the course being advertised on our website.

Last year it had been suggested that we consider offering Associate Membership. After much discussion over the summer we had started offering Associate (non-beekeeping or social) Membership and Family Membership, to potential new members but this was not yet on the website.

There had been much discussion about moving our apiary from Walby to a more favourable location. While nothing had come about yet, when the time came this would inevitably incur costs; financial and for those involved in the transport of bees and equipment, work. Being retired, Emma's time cost little but we needed to think about the possible expenditure. To date we had deliberately kept membership fees as low as possible and ours were low compared to other beekeeping societies and other leisure societies she knew of. Our fees to date were £30 while for example Penrith beekeepers was £42 p.a. and she knew of a model railway group in Carlisle for which full membership was £120 p.a.! Rather than increase membership fees dramatically Emma felt we should seriously consider promoting a beekeeping taster day once, or twice during the summer. There were several beekeepers offering this around the UK but the nearest one she knew of was Macclesfield. This could be either buy-in or a gift certificate. For one or two CBKA members time and the hire of a room; this day consisting of a half day talk and an apiary visit for a group of about ten people had the potential to raise somewhere around £250 each time.

**c) Treasurer** Copies of the annual accounts were circulated.

Michael advised that we were in profit this year because some equipment had been sold and because of the Beginners course fees.

Michael circulated new membership forms and advised all members would need to sign these to comply with GDPR. Christine pointed out that the form stated this included BDI which it did not as this had not been agreed at previous AGM discussions.

The form would need to be amended and Peter Matthews would send Michael a copy of Petersfield BKA to see if our form should be similar.

There then followed discussion about the wording on the form regarding different classes of membership and Walter advised BBKA had similar wording which would make for confusion.

Stuart suggested there should be a committee meeting to look at the wording for membership classes and this was agreed.

Stuart also asked if there was potential for sale of the honey crop from the apiary. Ken advised that there had been minimal honey crop and populations of bees were low. He advised that sale of nucs would be more appropriate if possible.

Michael was concerned that if a new apiary was made this would incur considerable cost and proposed the subscription be increased from £30 to £35. This was seconded by Robin and approved by the membership.

Michael also advised he had investigated the purchase of containers of syrup at a good price for onward sale to members which would benefit the members. He would need payment when ordering.

Jars and Fondant may also be available at a good price if there was interest.

**d) Raffle report-** Lorraine circulated copies of the return and advised that the expenditure had been less this year with a slight increase in income. £200 was handed to Michael for funds. Cash in hand stood at £89.45

Robin thanked Lorraine for organising the raffle.

## **6. Election of officers and Committee:**

Robin reiterated that it would be helpful if any new members who wished to assist the club either as an office bearer or committee member put themselves forward. He felt it would be particularly helpful to have new blood on the committee.

While encouraging members to put themselves forward for official posts, with no alternative nominations, office bearers for 2019 were proposed, seconded and agreed as follows:

**Chairman** Robin MacLeod

**Vice Chairman** Christine Matthews

**Treasurer** Michael Neilson.

**Secretary** Emma Keir

**Minute Secretary-** Lorraine Priestley

**Apiary Manager** Ken Smith.

**Inspection of Accounts-** Stella Bell was willing to continue in 2019 and this was approved.

### **Branch Representative at Cumbria Beekeepers Association-**

Walter advised there are 2 places available for Carlisle Beekeepers Association to attend the meetings and encouraged people to put themselves forward.

**Committee-** Nominations were then sought and the committee appointed as follows:

Neil Baillie, Harold Bowron, Ian Burrow, George Heimensen, Nick Mills, Lorraine Priestley, Fiona Roebuck, Sharon Seth, Ken Smith, Ann Thompson plus the office bearers. (Robin, Emma, Michael, Christine)

**7. Membership issues and setting of Branch Subscriptions-** Following Michael's recommendation in his earlier report, Robin proposed an increase to the annual subscription of £5 to £35 to cover ongoing costs.

This was approved.

### **8. Website**

Robin thanked Stuart for keeping the website up to date and encouraged people to send him information. Stuart was happy to maintain the website for Carlisle Beekeepers Association <http://www.carlisle-beekeepers.co.uk>

### **9. Education and Training**

**Beginners Course-** Robin advised that following a poor initial response and possible cancellation of the course, it had been possible to run the course for 8 people. Good feedback had been received.

Emma advised that a course would be run on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 for 1 day in the hall.

**Improvers Course-** Robin asked if Christine would be available to run an improvers course with assistance, however she indicated that her weekends were very tied and she would not be able to do this. Nick advised that he would have been able to assist Christine along with Walter if this could be arranged.

Robin advised he would send an email round to gauge interest.

Christine advised she believed beginners should over winter bees before undertaking an improvers' course.

Stuart felt the BBKA Basic Examination / assessment should be promoted to members and they should be encouraged to take this assessment to improve standards. This would then allow members to take further courses.

Taster Day- Emma proposed this could be a fund raiser for the club. This would take place around June with up to 10 people in the class for the morning and apiary visit in the afternoon.

She could make gift cards for this be bought as a present for people.

This could be advertised on the website.

## **10. Annual Dinner**

The Annual Dinner would be held on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at Mr Browns at Brampton. Price was likely to be £20 including gratuities

## **11. Programme for 2019**

The following dates for meetings were agreed:

18<sup>th</sup> **January:** (Annual Dinner at Mr Browns Brampton)

25<sup>th</sup> **February:** Julia Hoggard “Bee Needs”

25<sup>th</sup> **March:**

29<sup>th</sup> **April:**

**Apiary meetings every fortnight at 2pm, alternating Sundays and Saturdays**

30<sup>th</sup> **September:**

28<sup>th</sup> **October:** Honey Show

25<sup>th</sup> **November:** AGM

Any suggestions were welcomed.

## **11. Any other business**

**a.** Dieter advised he had a surplus of bees 2 years ago and would have been happy to let others have them but had not known how to go about this. He asked how members get to know if there were nucs for sale if they had a surplus.

Robin advised this could be discussed at committee meeting, but it may be appropriate to advertise on the website.

**b.** Peter was concerned re confidentiality when replies to enquiries from the public were sent out to committee as one message had the full list of membership. Emma advised she normally sent these out BCC but would take note.

**c.** Walter advised that people can join BBKA after the capitation cut off in September and should be able to become a member of Carlisle BKA.

**d.** Carol advised that Houghton Village Fair would be held in June and she and Michael had attended 2 meetings. Groups using the Hall were invited to promote their groups by having a table in the hall. It was felt that this would be worthwhile doing a stand to promote beekeeping and Carlisle BKA.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.