

Quarterly Newsletter, December 2016

Here we are at the end of another year although at the start of the beekeeping year which as you know starts on the 1st October each year. I guess this is because the financial year end is September 30th for the BBKA so everything starts again from there.

Much of the talk about the propositions for the ADM is already in the BBKA news so I will try not to repeat any of that, although the new applicants to be Trustees look good, there are certainly skills there that we could use, Finance and HR to name just a couple. We will have to wait to see if they are elected. Some Trustees have come to the end of their term and will not renew, those are Ruth Homer who I believe has served three years and Doug Brown, who I believe has served his full term a couple of others are renewing and as you know we had a couple of resignations during the year so there are six vacancies in all but only five candidates which is a shame because I am sure that there are people out there who could make a strong contribution to the BBKA, however eleven good people will be ample for us to continue to make the necessary improvements to the association.

This is the first time that we have actually made a surplus at the BBKA for several years, not a massive one, but if you measure that against the loss of last year there is an improvement of over £50K not taking into account the profit on investments. We are not complacent about the state of the accounts, we want to do better and I am sure that going forward we will be able to do that. There have been huge changes this last year, we have fought very hard to get to this position, please help us to continue to improve the running of the BBKA and give again that stability to the organisation.

Just before the National Honey Show, we had a small booklet printed about Anatomy, it costs £3.00 and it sold like hot cakes, it is a very good booklet with lots of information from experienced beekeepers. I have just been told that we have managed to pull out all the stops on the second book we planned called 'In the Apiary' this will be ready for distribution at the ADM. This booklet is aimed at newish beekeepers and again is on sale at £3.00 those are available to book from Head office at the above mentioned rate, if you buy these from the pollen basket they will be £4 each, as they are usually sold in singles so if you need any, please order now for collection by your delegate. There is also the 'BBKA Guide to Beekeeping' written by Ivor Davis. I have seen this book and it is excellent the price is £15.00 each but if you buy through the Pollen Basket (BBKA Shop) and order a minimum of 10 then they are cheaper via that route.

The reason I am telling you about these, is that if you wish to purchase some for your new and not very experienced beekeepers, if you order through the BBKA then they could be packed and ready at the AGM for your delegate to collect, thus saving all the postage costs.

Now to not nice news. You will all have had the opportunity to read about 'The Court Case' where the BBKA was taken to task for not paying a bill for work completed.

This all happened before my time as a Trustee, it is something that Margaret Murdin (Chair of the Trustees) and I tried to settle this year without all the legal costs of court etc, but the EC is a democracy and we lost on the vote, so the case went on. Thankfully the Insurers paid the costs of the case which was very expensive, both in money terms and in time and reputation. In my opinion it should never have been allowed to escalate as it did but the SDM's of previous years did not stop it so I guess there was little of hope of two Trustees stopping it this year. The letter by Frank Lenert has been published and Pete Sutcliffe was allowed to answer, there were notes from the President, the Chairman and the PR representative, so hopefully that will be an end to it and we can get on with the real task of running the BBKA in the way the members want, with openness and efficiency. If anyone has any specific questions regarding the case, I will do my best to answer

although some of the Trustees were kept at arms length during the process, but both the Chair and the President attended the court and are able to give me any information regarding any queries you may have.

George Brown as our new Fund Raiser, is working very well and getting to grips with new and existing ventures and moving them forward in an open and accountable way, this is great and he is supported by our new General Manager who is proving to be more than up to the task, she has not been long in post but there is a definite change in the atmosphere at H Q, it is much more vibrant, I am looking forward to the new year when we have the new Trustees in place who will hopefully add some valuable management experience to our team to help us to continue with the improvements.

Most associations are having their AGM's just now, if anyone wants me to visit, please let me know so that I can get it in the diary, I have next years diary in use already and the dates are filling, I thought that when you got to retirement age, that you slowed down a little, I have not exactly retired, I go to the office less but my time seems to have been taken over by Bee's and associated things and my diary is certainly fuller now than it used to be when I just went to work for a living.

The ADM this year will be at Stoneleigh rather than at a hotel, this was to cut down on costs so the Trustees and Office staff will be working very hard to make sure that everything is in place for the event. It is suggested that everyone brings their own lunch (trustees included) and we will eat together at lunch time, there will be tea, coffee and soft drinks available. It is hoped that this way you are able to communicate informally with the staff, Trustees and volunteers during the lunch period. All the Trustees will have their name badges on for those who would not recognise their link trustee or any other person they may want to ask questions of, I will look forward to renewing acquaintance with those I have met and meet those I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing.

Most of the current work for the Trustees is preparing for the ADM and for the Education committee preparing for the Modules, General Husbandry and Advance Husbandry, these are spread across the country so if you are interested I hope you have managed to get a place. I know Margaret Murdin and others have also been travelling helping beekeepers who are trying for the NDB but that is what the BBKA is about, helping Beekeepers to improve their skills and pass on that knowledge to others.

Margaret Wilson

Link Trustee