

Minutes of the Committee Meeting Exeter Branch of Devon Beekeepers Assoc.

Date: 20th February 2024

Venue: Zoom

Present:

Chris Carr, Jill Blackett, Cathy Mudge, Paul Hammond, Jonathan Custance Baker, Steve Tucker, Gerald Stuart, Alex Merchant, Janie Smallridge, Paul Smith, Alan Binge

Apologies:

Caroline Taverner, Ed Maltby, Imogen Hallam, Basil Strickland

1. The Minutes of both meetings, having been previously circulated, were offered for approval. The minutes were to be signed by Jonathan Custance Baker as a true record of the meeting.

2. Matters arising

- Mins to have the addition "for many years the show has been jointly organised", by Janie Smallridge.

3. Honiton Show

- Janie Smallridge; Each branch in Devon has its own show, as the Honiton show is so big it is run by 6 members from both branches. The Devon County show has often used innovations from the Honiton show in their own Bee tent. East Devon needs 2 replacement members from Exeter. Exeter Branch seems less and less supportive of the show. As a result Janie stood down as communication between branches does not seem to be working. If show continues it needs support from the Exeter Committee.
- Chris Carr; it would be good to see more novices involved in the show.
- Paul Hammond; Largest 1 day show in the whole county, people are on holiday in the southwest during this time. There is a need to have more encouragement of new members next year. People actively encouraged to attend the show. In future years will need replacements on the Committee, East Devon encourages its members to take part. They will write to all the members. Exeter was a close 3rd on overall prizes for most points scored for competition entries. We need to build on this. Competition, Stewarding and Committee.
- Chris Carr will need to communicate directly with members.
- Jonathan said that the Committee is happy to be involved. We have arranged for new forms to be sent straight to Exeter members and Karen Pearce has volunteered to be the Exeter liaison

4. Asian Hornet

- Gerry Stuart outlined response efforts for the Asian Hornet, emphasizing collaboration with DEFRA and NBU. Discussion included plans for equipment distribution, public engagement, and education initiatives. The committee unanimously agreed to allocate £500 to Steve's Hornet equipment.
- Gerry provided the following details:
 - There are two elements in response to support DEFRA and NBU. Maggie and Steve have an additional 30 Exeter members in place to assist with the arrangement.
 - Response for the Asian Hornet is SL Trappit Bait. Steve needs to make traps and will require Bottles/wire/wick etc., costing about £100 in funding. This equipment can be distributed around verifiers, and stations will be ready by April.
 - For Asian Hornets, a local Exeter response presents an opportunity to distribute the bait to verifiers. It would be beneficial to hold a meeting one evening or at the Apiary for members. Steve and the Hornet group could conduct a presentation, supply identification posters, and provide information on other non-native species.
 - Honiton show has offered to explore saving the Bee as a new topic. There is already a stand with information at the show.
 - Steve suggests engaging with the public through resources such as local councils, bookclubs, and Facebook. Chris suggested organizing a roadshow, considering several gardening groups around. David McLarin is a member of Topsham.
 - Pull-up posters could be effective, especially at shows and in Exeter on weekends.
 - Gerry Stuart, Vice Chair of Torbay, has taken over running the Asian Hornet Response group from Simon Sullivan. There is now a Pro-Active Team of AHAT members.
 - So far, there have been 72 nest incursions that were then destroyed. 3 nests were in Plymouth. There was an original one in Woolacombe. Since then, the Hornet has made inroads. Education is crucial to getting the public involved.
 - Schoolchildren might be more receptive. It's also important for beekeepers to recognize what the Asian Hornet looks like and its behavior.
 - An Asian Hornet App is available, allowing users to take a photo and send it for verification or upload a photo. NBU will not respond unless they have evidence. Reports have been flooding in, and the Hornet team is there to support BBKA and NBU.

- Gerry commended Steve's work and also acknowledged Judith Norman and Colin Lodge. Volunteers have been to Jersey to see the work in action. Presentations have been conducted over Zoom, and gardening clubs in Devon have been contacted.
 - Mapping of the areas and base stations need funding, currently organized through Alan Binge via the DBKA. Other sources of funding should be approached, including other charities and funds.
 - Lynne Ingram is Somerset's cross-border assistance and cross-branch representative, ensuring reports, verifiers deployment, and bait stations. Activated by sensors, viewed over iPhones.
 - Moving forward, one nest in one season can consume 11.3 Kgs of pollinators. Other creatures then lose their food source. Belgium had 400 reports; last year, they had 4,000.
 - BBKA now has a fighting fund to help and a PowerPoint presentation.
- Jonathan's suggestion to allocate £500 to Steve's Hornet equipment was unanimously passed by the committee. Jonathan thanked Steve and Gerry for their presentation.

5. Secretary's Report

- We have our next evening meeting with Lynne Ingram on Bees on the 5th March. Cathy will give members the choice of topic.
- John Easton has requested the prices for Honey and sugar for 2024. At the moment it is £6.50/Lb. We will keep this price, Paul said it would be better to review as the spring starts and price of honey can be checked. Sugar we will keep at 60p/Kg
- A Nuc will now cost £130 from Apiary. They will be sold in Corex nuc box that will be kept by the buyer.

6. Treasurer's Report

- Draft accounts are available. Bulk of subscriptions are in any beyond 14th February will be treated separately.
- There is a small BDI payment legacy from last year.
- There has been a large spend at Apiary, Cathy said this was due to the sales being in January, there will be a big buy of nuc boxes from Maisemore and 2 new Brood boxes to come but there is not yet enough Cedar from our usual supplier.
- We have 155 members.

- The fees from Eventbrite haven't arrived yet, Cathy will check with Caroline when the payment normally arrives.

7. Executive Meeting of DBKA

- Devon County Council has the same level of vacancies. There is no General Secretary and other branches don't have a chairman and enough members to hold a core meeting. Luckily the DBKA manage by just one. However there are more things to be done.
- More discussion about the magazine, the digital or paper option seems to have resolved. Younger Beekeepers are more interested in digital version.
- Branches may be able to organise an Education co Ordinator, however can there be minimal help for the secretarial role at the DBKA. There will be a meeting of all available branch secretaries on Friday to discuss options.
- More examiners are needed for the BBKA Basic exam, we need to encourage more assessors as many are getting near retirement.

8. Web Manager's Report

- Not available.

9. Education Officer Report

Not available.

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10. Apiary Report

- Alex has done an amazing amount of work at the Apiary. There is a video available which Jonathan has asked me to show to members.
- Paul and Alex will be looking at sheds behind the old Tea shed to store supers and equipment for loan. Paul will come and have a look. Jill suggested a similar shed to the toilet, but that was about £400. Also it needs to be shallow so all equipment can be easily reached.

11. Any Other Business

- Jill is making a pond for the Apiary.
- A meeting is arranged for a group of Beekeepers who have an interest in Varroa free bees and feel they may have a line developing. John Easton. Janie Smallridge, David Friend, Mick Street, David McLarin will be meeting about their 5 yr history of varroa free bees.
- **Dates for Future Meetings: 2024**
23rd April, 21st May, 18th June, 16th July

