



**Sussex Beekeepers Association  
Annual General Meeting  
Saturday 2nd March 2024**

# Minutes of the Sussex Beekeepers' Association

## Annual General Meeting

Held at Five Ashes Village Hall, TN20 6JA ,14.00pm

### Present:

**High Weald:** Peter Coxon, Jonathan Coote, Malcolm Wilkie, Maurice McGowan, Geoff Greory, Lesley Francis, Phil Edwards, Roxanne Gould, Keith Obbard, Peter Halford, Douglas Andrews.

**Brighton & Lewes:** Graham Bubloz, Hilary Osman, Manek Dubash, Shirley Light, Ian White, Jude New.

**Eastbourne:** Simon Tuck, Jean Piper, Ben Pratt, Ian Smith, Stuart Corner, John Farmer, Kit Bentham, Dan Morgan.

**East Grinstead:** Simon Redgrove, Margie Dodman.

**Hastings & Rother:** Harold Cloutt, Sheila Fellows-Turnbull, Liz Twyford, John Twyford, Gillian Sales, Roger Renner, Mike Cullen, Kyomg-sook Cheek, Morris Metcalf.

### 1. Opening of the AGM by the President. Jonathan Coote.

Jonathan welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Being President, he thankfully does very little, as all the hard work is undertaken by Peter Coxon, Harold Cloutt and Jean Piper, whom he duly thanked on the members behalf. He is member of both High Weald, and Eastbourne divisions, where he was previously Chair for many years. The Asian Hornet is the biggest thing we now all face, having first come across them in France several years ago. They took all the insects, including bees, and in turn food for the birds. We need to ensure we don't take the same route as the French have done, and take the presence of Asian Hornets seriously.

### 2. Apologies for absence: Kerry and Jason Weller, Graham and Fern Burgess, Clive Foster. All members of H&R.

### 3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on March 4th 20223

The minutes were available for anyone wanting to view them. The members declined.

### 4. Matters arising from the minutes:

Nothing noted.

Jonathan Coote voted we adopt the minutes, proposed by Ian White, seconded by Sheila Fellows Turnbull

## 5. Chairman's Report. Peter Coxon.

### **SBKA Chair's Report 2024 – by Peter Coxon**

The SBKA is in good shape.

Our finances are healthy with our balance for the year ending Sept 23 at £4,937.34 versus £4,109.31 for the same period in the previous year; an increase of £828.03.

This was a greatly assisted by 2 factors:

- Raising the capitation by a massive 100% ... but to keep that in perspective - from 50p per head to £1.00 per head and as it had not been increased for the preceding 17 years this was not entirely unreasonable.
- And the changing of the venue for our main event of the year ... the Bee Market, from Heathfield Community College to Uckfield Community College which saved us approximately £500.

Talking of which, the impetus to change to a new venue for the Bee Market was not entirely driven by financial considerations but also by the never-ending complaints we received about the poor Wi-Fi and the poor mobile signal at Heathfield which in these days of cash free transactions and card machines made life particularly problematic for our traders. You may also recall that at the last Bee Market at Heathfield our invited lecture via Zoom from the Buckfast Beekeepers was rather ruined by the dodgy Wi-Fi.

The Bee Market at the new venue was deemed to be a success and the consensus was to stick with this venue for the 2024 Bee Market. We even made a profit of £758.49

We have a full complement of willing and active committee members who contribute well to the smooth running of the committee, for which I am very appreciative. Unfortunately, Graham Bubloz will be standing down from both the SBKA and Brighton & Lewes committees, and I would like to express my gratitude to him for his very valuable contributions to all our activities. After a period of absence, we also now have 3 members of East Grinstead BKA now on the SBKA committee which is really excellent news.

My hope and ambition is to encourage the different divisions to work more collaboratively together as there is a great deal of experience, knowledge and resource within our 5 divisions which we can all benefit from if shared more effectively. With the very imminent and real threat the Asian Hornet invasion represents this will become increasingly necessary.

To this end I recently rebuilt the SBKA website on a new platform which is

- Much less expensive.
- Can host 100 sites if any other divisions wanted to use our hosting package.
- We now have access to very many essential plugins which hitherto would have cost a lot of money.
- In particular I wanted to add an Events Calendar ([Sussex Beekeepers Association | The Home for Beekeeping in Sussex \(sbka.info\)](#)) and post all the divisions activities so there is more possibility of sharing. This is a facility we have had in the HWBKA website for a long time and is viewed by many as the single most useful aspect.

The most pressing and demanding problem we are likely to face in the coming years will be the Asian Hornet invasion, hence the theme of the 2024 AGM where we will have an AH trap making competition and invited talks from Dan Morgan our Seasonal Bee Inspector who was well and truly blooded in 2023 dealing with nests in the Southeast. In addition, we have another talk by Tony Warren an AHAT Coordinator from Kent BKA where they faced the brunt of the onslaught in 23 and who has been largely instrumental in setting up AH Catch and AH Watch on-line websites to help with monitoring the situation. Better communication with Kent who are literally in the front line could be very valuable. Asian Hornets have no respect for boundaries, so we are all in this together, regardless of where we pay our subs. The better our communication, the better we can plan our defences.

In East Sussex we currently have 6 AHAT coordinators of which I am one and have set up our own Sussex AHAT WhatsApp group which now has 24 members to assist with local communications, as last year we were hearing rumours of local siting long before any official announcements were made. Please take the Asian Hornet exercise ([Asian Hornet Exercise \(google.com\)](#)) and join us we need as many people as possible to keep on top of this problem.

Peter Coxon

## 6. Treasurer's Report and Acceptance of the Accounts: Harold Cloutt

### SUSSEX BEE KEEPERS ASSOCIATION

#### Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 30th September 2023

2022	2023
<b><u>Income</u></b>	
15419.00 BBKA	14058.00
377.50 SBKA – 691 members [755 in 2022]	691.00
5223.23 Bee Market	5341.54
73.50 NHS - West Sussex	77.50
535.00 Convention	0.00
35.15 Bank and Building Society Interest	46.67
65.00 Donations	
21728.38	20214.71
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	
15419.00 BBKA	14058.00
53.50 SEAS	86.50
5037.29 Bee Market	4583.05
472.00 Convention	0.00
227.00 National Honey Show	485.00
148.90 AGM and Halls	91.00
95.38 Administration and Web Site	53.34
Equipment	29.79
21453.07	19386.68

#### **Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2023**

359.95 Current Account	1641.31
0.00 Deposit Account	0.00
3746.36 Building Society	3293.03
1.00 Bee craft Share	1.00
1.00 Antique Equipment	1.00
1.00 Challenge Cups	1.00
4109.31	4937.34

#### **Represented by**

Opening Balance 1st October 2022	4109.31
Surplus	828.03
Closing Balance 30th September 2023	4937.34

H R Cloutt  
Treasurer

The accounts for 2023 were shown on the overhead projector and explained.

Most of SBKA income comes from the capitation fees. This was last raised in 2003. An increase of 50p was agreed at the last AGM taking the figure to £1.00 per member which had been implemented. This helped to make our finances much healthier. In the future the capitation fee would be reviewed more regularly. We currently have 691 members registered under local divisions. This is a drop of 43 members from last year.

The Bee Market made a healthy profit and we look forward to its success in 2024.

We sponsor lectures and classes at the National Honey Show, sharing the cost equally with West Sussex. Unfortunately, one of the cups was damaged and the cost of repair will (hopefully) be shared.

We also sponsor honey classes at the South of England show, which is shown on the spreadsheet under expenditure.

Thankfully interest rates were rising and we look forward to earning more from our income.

The share of Bee craft magazine we hold is minimal in terms of monetary value.

Gratuities to past post holders are shown under expenditure.

The accounts were accepted with no abstentions

Proposed by: Keith Obbard    Seconded: Sheila Fellows-Turnbull

## **7. Election of Officers:**

Malcolm Wilkie proposed that as there no other persons standing, and the current officers were willing to remain in post, they could be voted on-mass.

Proposed: Malcolm Wilkie                      Seconded: Manek Dubash

The Officers voted in were:

President:            Jonathan Coote

Chairman:            Peter Coxon

Hon. Treasurer: Harold Clouett

Hon Secretary: Jean Piper

## **8. Divisional reports:**

# Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



## **Brighton and Lewes Chairman's Report for 2023 Sussex BKA AGM**

Our membership grew from 167 to approx. 190, which I think is an all-time high number.

During the summer, some of the Apiary Managers (Jude, Ian and Tony) organised a co-ordinated Queen Bee Rearing Programme which took place over several months– using different techniques at each Apiary site. Several ordinary members were also involved, and it was judged as a big success. We hope that it has enthused many members to continue to raise good quality Queens themselves.

In March, we received our first swarm call but overall, calls to collect swarms were once again again down on previous years. We had 67 calls, of which we collected 45 swarms. This is down by approx. 44%.

Following our application in January, we received £500 funding from Lewes Town Council to assist with our proposed new Apiary in the area. (This Apiary is to replace our existing one at Isfield which is being closed down because of difficulties with access and to site apiaries closer to our membership.)

In May, we held a very successful Microscopy course at Brighton University. Our sincere thanks to Heidi and Martin Burgess and to Gerald Legg for hosting and informing us how to analyse bees and to Jude once again for coordinating the event.

In July, we introduced a map at the foot of the [B&L website](#) homepage, that allows members of the public to see where they can buy local honey.

The Asian Hornet threat moved a giant leap forward in August, when a member of the public in Newhaven contacted me to inform me that she had observed one on some rotting fruit in her garden. We alerted the authorities, and the nest was subsequently found and destroyed.

In September, we welcomed new Secretary Mat Budgen onto the committee.

Three wax workshops were held in the latter days of October. These were initiated and co-ordinated by Jude New, and several members of the division kindly donated their time and effort to demonstrating to a wide audience how to make wax candles, soap, lip balms etc.

We had 4 members who passed their Basic Beekeeping certificate: Heidi Burgess, Rachel Ramaker, Jane Stimpson & Felicity Alder. In addition, 3 members passed Module 1 exams. These were: Heidi Burgess, Rachel Ramaker & Graham Bubloz

## Graham Bubloz

Graham Bubloz,  
Chairman  
Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers

31<sup>st</sup> January 2024



<http://www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk/>



## Eastbourne Beekeepers' Association Annual Report 2023

Simon Tuck- Chair EBKA

Our membership numbers remain stable at approximately 100-120 full members and friends and attendance at our winter meetings is very positive.

We ran a successful beginners' course in February/March which had a smaller number of attendees compared to the previous year, which we put down to a peak following Covid (10 compared to 20). There is a consistent influx of valuable members from each year's beginners' course which makes the effort hugely worthwhile, even if we do not hear from many of the attendees again.

Two members successfully took their basic assessment, with thanks to Brighton and Lewes BKA since we didn't have sufficient take-up to warrant our own assessors visiting our apiary. Our intention this year is to have many more take the assessment and we will therefore be able to arrange this ourselves.

Our association apiary continues to be in high demand by members and there are sufficient opportunities for additional places to keep bees – mainly from those with large gardens interested in hosting hives. Finding ideal locations which work for the beekeeper is more challenging but bee talks to local villages and groups is proving to be very worthwhile in this regard.

The association continues to strive for beekeeper improvement despite limited opportunities being provided by the BBKA for improvement beyond the Basic assessment. With additional demand being put on BKAs as a result of the endemic invasion of the Asian hornet I think it is imperative that we don't ignore the need to continually uphold the standard of our craft.

I'd personally like to thank everyone on our committee; particularly John Farmer who was our excellent President for many years and who sadly stood down at the AGM in November. Fortunately, Jean Piper was willing to step forward and this works well as she is our direct connection with SBKA. As chair, I'm supported by an excellent team on the committee and feel the Association remains in a really strong position.



*East Grinstead Beekeepers Association*



East Grinstead BKA – Simon Redgrove EGBKA Treasurer

The EGBKA apiary ran monthly sessions for members from April to September 2023, weekly inspections were also carried out by the apiary manager and a couple of others during the busy period. The year finished with three thriving colonies having started with none, winter 2022/23 having seen all colonies fail.

The apiary also hosts bees for two members, one beginner, one experienced.

An extraction day was run for members which showed different uncapping techniques and to try out different types of extractors.

A well-attended AH talk held which had fantastic feedback

There was also a taster day hosted by Oliver St John held in early May.

We had a talk in March, concerning bee diseases and a further talk in September on winter preparation. Current membership is at 92 members

## **Hastings and Rother Chairs report 2022.**



**HASTINGS AND ROTHER DIVISION**  
*of the Sussex Beekeepers' Association*

Read By – Sheila Fellows-Turnbull Chair H&R.

We held monthly apiary meetings throughout the summer.

Apiary still has two colonies which have survived the winter, plus two more on order to hopefully improve stock.

Extra meetings during the summer included First Aid and Beginners' Microscopy

Honey Show held in September, which was the second one since lockdown ended

Winter Programme meetings included two on the yellow-legged hornet, one on improving the health of one's bees, and one from the NBU seasonal Bee Inspector, with one more speaker to come in March. The hornet will be our priority over the coming year due to our proximity to both Kent and the coast.

We currently have 145 members





Malcolm Wilkie (Chair of High Weald).

Although the High Weald is a large division within Sussex numbers have dropped slightly. Last year we had 218 members but so far this year we only have 177 who have rejoined.

Instead of a beginner's course last year we ran improver sessions. On average we had about 15 participants for each session. I consider this to be an acceptable level of participation. I was delighted those timings for every session worked well – a Swarming session before Swarming, a treatment session before treatments needed to be given and a session preparing hives for winter before the wet weather arrived. We have only 4 beginners this year probably as I have done too good a job in highlighting the commitment needed to keep bees.

We ran a session on disease led by Dave Rudland of East Surrey Bees and got about 50 members along to either a morning or afternoon session.

Having obtained a grant two Microscopes were purchased. One compound microscope for examining pollen and Nosema and a second dissecting microscope that can be used for teaching dissection. We also purchased a camera so that images could be projected onto a screen. We intend to run some microscopy sessions for our members. We have one organised for the middle of March examining pollen. Other associations with the relevant expertise could borrow these together with the Sussex Microscopes to run sessions themselves. They are expensive pieces of kit so we do need to know they will be well looked after. Please have a go later this afternoon making up a pollen slide– I will be there to help!

Four people sat their basic and were helped to prepare in a session run by Lorraine Patel.

Our biggest challenge is going to be monitoring the Asian hornet and dealing with hives under attack. We had an Asian hornet trap workshop building traps earlier this month and intend to have another session in July. I am personally concerned that none of us are doing enough to combat this threat and that within three or four years we may see membership of our associations halve. I am keen to share any ideas with other associations – how to map monitoring traps within Sussex, sharing ideas about lures, ideas about makeup by cheap traps, sharing ideas about excluding hornets from hives, sharing ideas about positioning hives. I feel there is a lot more to be done.

## **9. ADM Report Annual Delegates meeting 13.1.24, Liz Twyford.**

The meeting was chaired by Anne Rowberry, BBKA President and checked as quorate. The whole meeting was streamed live and available later too on YouTube. A report will be published in BBKA news.

Among individuals who have died in the past year Ian Homer, Ron Hoskins and Sarah Snelson were mentioned.

Delegates were reminded that speaking to the meeting was limited to 5 minutes.

**The Annual reports** were taken as read and questions followed.

Within these Asian Hornet presentations and research featured. Talks on AH are on YouTube.

There is also research on Honey adulteration and its analysis.

Reports are on the BBKA website: Executive, AH, Communications, Education, Research and Technology, Governance, Spring Convention, eR2, international meeting of Young Beekeepers.

### **Exam Board report included awards:**

Robert Hammond award: Gwen Walton, Lancashire

Wax Chandler award: Steven Green, Gloucestershire

George Knights award: Shropshire

Surrey Shield: Yorkshire

David Charles award: Shropshire

Bee Health award: Jersey Highest % of members passing Bee Health assets.

Surrey queried the criterion for the Surrey Shield: confirmed as the highest number of Basic passes while the David Charles award is for the highest % of members passing Basic.

### **Finance Report:** Mark Hunter, Bristol

Accounts show a deficit of 18K compared with a projected deficit of 72K was better than expected. Invested funds have been moved to increase return. As a charity the organisation needs to have sufficient reserves but not over hoard.

Budget: A deficit of 67K has been set. Hopefully investment returns will be better.

No increase in Capitation subscriptions this year but a proposition will be presented next year.

A budget is in place for AH activities.

Report and Budget votes were carried.

### **Awards:**

Professor Steven Martin was nominated a Fellow of the BBKA for work on AH worldwide. Vote carried.

Certificates were awarded to: Avis Marshall for Spring Convention organisation.

Mike Badger for Long Service (70 years).

Up to this time all votes had been carried fairly unanimously except for Surrey's request to reschedule their proposition 2024/13 which failed.

**Elections:** (All nominations matched the available posts for numbers and ranked following voting for years of tenure. Number of years in brackets.

**President:** Stephen Barnes vote (59/2/4) (for/against/abstain)

**BBKA Trustees:** Alan Rowse, Devon (43)(1) , Luke Whyatt, London (46) (2), Phillip Rogers, Somerset (61) (3), Richard Oliver, Wiltshire (60) (3), Warwick Newsome, Devon (59) (3), Toby Chapman-Dawe, Surrey (58) (3)

**Education Board:** Gareth Morgan, Surrey (61) (3), Marin Anastasov, Glos. (58) (2) eligible for 1 only, Stephen Derry, Lancs+NW (57) (3), Andrew Gibb, Surrey (57) (2), Jennifer Morgan, Reading (56)(2), Shirley Bond, Harrogate and Rippon (58)(3) A coin toss decided between Derry and Gibb for tenure terms.

**Propositions:**

2024/1 Vote percentage needed if fewer candidates than posts. Failed, 75% needed

Referred back to executive. (37/25/3)

2024/2 Pursuing the matter of adulterated honey, amended to add 'fake'. Carried (58/6/1)

2024/11 (brought forward by the chair) re: external accreditation for examinations. Carried (53/8/4)

2024/3 Individuals to not serve as Trustees and Exam. Board to remove possible conflict of interest with consideration to accreditation. Ex-officio not counted. Carried (50/12/3)

2024/4 Examination Board to be adopted as a sub-committee.

There were conflicting views on whether this was appropriate for accreditation requirements and moderator independence. Confusion followed the conflicting advice. Failed on both delegate and membership counts. (75% needed), 43/17/5 - (% 72/28) membership - (% 69/31)

2024/5 Budget for Exam. Board has previously been held by a trustee but will be the Chair of the Exam Board. Carried (54/5/5)

2024/6 Clarification to ensure that there are enough moderators. On recommendation of the Exam. Board only and reiteration that moderators need to be independent. Carried (52/8/4)

2024/7 Removal of the requirement for Master Beekeeper for Exam Board candidates.

During the discussion the chair and others adjourned to further discuss acceptable position. An amendment to completely relax guidance was defeated but to add 'suitable qualification, to show suitability to the delegates' was accepted. Carried (51/11/1) finally

2024/8 To encourage more members to come forward as assessors: to leave to the discretion of the Exam Board but that candidates from the Bee Health and General Husbandry may be offered the opportunity to apply as Basic assessors. Following amendment Carried (57/8/0)

2024/9 To consider post-Basic qualifications for the 'average' beekeeper with 2/3 hives. Many members get Basic but proceed no further. It is to be considered. Carried (46/18/1)

2024/10 The use of generic oxalic acid is not legal and the BBKA is to clarify further. Carried (36/26/3)

2024/12 Insurance through BBKA for members with up to 39 hives.

There was discussion about the insurance company's definition of 'hobby' beekeeper and whether income at a certain level from the pursuit could invalidate cover.

A figure of £2000 is apparently a HMRC definition. BBKA cover should cover up to 39 hives regardless of income.

There is also the factor of 'primary' products only being covered and not products with added ingredients which would require extra cover. Carried (62/2/1)

2024/13 ADM is currently a 'hybrid' meeting so delegates can remotely both speak and vote exactly as in-person delegates. The proposal wanted to encourage more in-person attendance with a requirement to ask for special permission to attend remotely. This was considered to not be in line with the Disability Act regarding inclusion and also delegates are aware of reducing unnecessary journeys both due to fuel and time and financial cost although do accept the benefits of delegate interaction. Time may be built in to the hybrid timetable for chat. The proposal failed and the hybrid format continues. (25/36/3)

Sussex vote appeared in the majority except proposition 2024/10 when abstained.

I was disappointed with one delegate who voiced the opinion that his vote was already decided before the meeting and he took no notice of the discussion at this meeting or body language of speakers.

Having started half an hour earlier this year at 9.30am it was still very nearly 5pm before the meeting closed.

## **10.AOB:**

Peter added there had been no Autumn convention for the past two years and asked for a show of hands to indicate interest. Of the thirty-six people present just eleven people raised their hand.

H& R division invited anyone to join them as they hold a similar event in Autumn.

Peter Coxon was looking into SBKA buying "Trappit" as a lure for AH traps to save money for members. It was noted the government hadn't stepped in to make further resources available to fight the incurrence. It may be a Go Fund page or similar will be required to appeal for further resources.

Ben Pratt noted the cost of hiring a cherry picker to destroy nests was around £700 +.

Peter Coxon, at a recent committee meeting it had been agreed that from now on all divisions will be required to return only 10% of sales at the Bee Market to SBKA and that all divisions are now on an equal footing.

## **11. Host Division for 2023 AGM:**

The turn to host the AGM falls to East Grinstead in 2025. As East Grinstead is the smallest division they may wish to miss it next year. Simon Redgrove will speak to the committee and report back to Peter at the next SBKA committee meeting.

**The next AGM date and venue TBC**

## 12. Presentation of cups and Examination Certificates:

Candidates who had successfully completed modules had already received their certificates, with one exception.

Peter presented a certificate to Simon Tuck, Module 7 selection and breeding of honey bees  
Congratulations were extended to all who had had success.

Sussex Cup winners, including East and West Sussex:

**Lady Denman Cup** (for the highest number of points in Sussex classes at NHS) Lesley Francis

**Crawley Cup** (for the second highest number of points in Sussex classes at NHS) Rob Gore

**Mrs. Matthews Cup** (for third highest number of points in Sussex classes at NHS) Malcolm Wilkie

**PJ Cup** (for Mead) Phil Edwards

**Berry Cup** (for Novice) Joanna Gore

The AGM finished at 15.15pm

Following the AGM refreshments were provided and served by High Weald V division, including the NHS award winning Parmesan, thyme and honey biscuits.

Mead tasting was provided by Phil Edwards. He has won the PJ cup two years running at the National honey show.

A competition for the best designed Asian Hornet trap, for spring trapping was won by Manek Dubash.

The AGM was followed by two talks on Yellow legged Asian Hornets

1. Dan Morgan APHA seasonal bee inspector
2. Tony Warren from Gravesend BKA Kent, "How Kent is responding to Asian Hornets".  
Tony also made us aware that they are manufacturing injection moulded plastic tops for jars to make inexpensive AH traps and that these would be available soon.