



# SBKA AGM 2026 – Minutes

President: Jonathan Coote  
Chairman: Peter Coxon  
Treasurer (Pro-tem): Stuart Walter  
Secretary: Jean Piper

## **Eastbourne:**

Ian Smith, Simon Tuck, Stuart Corner, Ben Pratt, Dan Morgan

## **Brighton & Lewes:**

Manek Dubash, Jude Law, Hilary Osman, Shirley Light

## **East Grinstead:**

Alastair Lee, Simon Redgrave, Thelma Mason

## **High Weald:**

Malcolm Wilkie, Roxanne Gould, Keith Obbard, Helen Hadley, Ben Curtis

## **Hastings & Rother:**

Sheila Fellows-Turnball, Clive Foster, Francis Cummings, Penny Foster, Josh Dean, Kerry Wellar, Liz Twyford, Gill Sales, Graham Burgess, John Twyford, Simon Reed

---

## 1. Opening of the AGM

Jonathan Coote opened the meeting. *“Having suffered after Covid years, the SBKA was back to normal and had progressed successfully under Peter Coxon’s careful guidance, confidence and experience.”*

He recommended that Peter continues in the role of President, which he is relinquishing at this AGM.

---

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Helen P., Peter Fisher, Graham Bubloz, Donna Powell, Shane Lambert, Peter Halford, Filippo Bortolato, Harold Cloutt, Tany Fry, Simon Busby, Roger Renner, Doug Hind, Henry Foster, Gordon Lee, Chris Davidson, Jo Crawford and others.

Peter Coxon wished Harold Cloutt a speedy recovery following illness and noted his stepping down as Treasurer. Thanks were expressed to Stuart Walter for taking over pro-tem.

---

### 3. Minutes of the Previous AGM (1 March 2025)

The minutes had been circulated in advance and were not read out. They were accepted without alteration.

---

### 4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

---

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

Key points:

#### Membership

- Continued decline: 691 → 673 → 648

#### Finances

- Still sound but trending down: £4,937 → £4,650 → £4,404

#### 2025 Bee Market

- Good attendance
- Low profit
- Auction described as “*abysmal*”

#### 2026 Bee Market Plan

- Same venue
- Improved Wi-Fi/support
- ~25 stalls
- No external organiser
- Food & PLI issues to resolve
- New auction catalogue to increase attendance and prices

#### New Initiatives

- Shared educational resources (lead: **Simon Tuck**)
- Internal SBKA workshops (leads: **Alastair Lee & Manek Dubash**)
- Full committee complement for 2026

---

## 6. Treasurer's Report – Stuart Walter

- Accounts to **30 Sept 2025** reviewed and accepted.
- Some items moved under different headings but content unchanged.
- West Sussex BKA contributed to cup repairs and talks.
- Sussex Agricultural Show costs increased.
- Accounts examined by **Ian Smith (Eastbourne)**.
- Passed unanimously.

**Proposal:** Hosting division from 2026 onwards to examine the accounts.

**Proposed:** Sheila Fellows-Turnball

**Seconded:** Manek Dubash

**Carried.**

---

## 7. Education & Training – Simon Tuck

A major theme for SBKA.

**New programme:** *Building Basic Confidence in Beekeeping*

Focus areas:

- Hive confidence
- Core skills
- Seasonal decision-making
- Disease & varroa recognition
- Exam readiness

Target group: second-year and returning beekeepers.

Delivered by experienced county trainers.

---

## 8. Knowledge-Sharing Workshops – Alastair Lee & Manek Dubash

Cross-division workshops introduced in 2025 to:

- Share best practice
- Reduce duplication
- Improve consistency

Completed topics: **Education, Communications**

Future topics may include:

- eR2 database

- Swarm collection
- Events organisation
- Apiary management
- Varroa management

Members invited to submit ideas.

---

## 9. Divisional Reports

### Brighton & Lewes – Manek Dubash

- ~165 members
- Increase in swarm reporting
- Asian hornet alerts
- Strong talks & workshops
- First standalone Honey Show
- Multiple exam successes

### Eastbourne – Simon Tuck

- Membership
- 146+ members; strong attendance year round
- Active WhatsApp community
- Education
- Beginners' Course: 10–12 learners, revamped, high success
- Basic Assessment: 7 sat, 4 passed (county leading)
- Honey Bee Health Certificate: 2 achieved; now division wide
- County wide module study groups
- Innovation
- Successful Queen Rearing Weekend + dedicated apiary
- SCHIP: local, Varroa tolerant bee improvement
- Microscopy & General Husbandry evenings
- Apiaries
- Crossways: 4 members, space for more, working party planned
- Queen Rearing Apiary (Magham Down)
- Arlington Training Apiary: open days & assessments
- Maintained list of potential sites + member support
- 2025 Season
- Excellent forage; early, predictable swarming
- Strong queen rearing; extensive swarm control support
- Dan Morgan visit (May)
- 2026 & Beyond
- Speaker lineup Jan–Apr (Rickitt, Basterfield, Colyer, Swarm Control)
- SCHIP Bee Market stand (May)
- Annual pollinator protection contribution planned

### East Grinstead – Alastair Lee

- Membership: 91 → 85
- Strong training programme (Taster Day, Basic Assessment, extraction day)
- Active winter events and socials
- 4 confirmed YLH nests destroyed
- Benefiting from countywide sharing initiatives

### Hastings & Rother – Sheila Fellows-Turnball

- Membership: 135 → 149
- New apiary thriving; old site now teaching-focused
- Busy honey show
- Active YLH sightings and trapping
- New website and WhatsApp groups

### High Weald – Roxanne Gould

- 191 members
- Strong training and exam results
- Numerous educational events
- 2026 goals:
  - Improved engagement
  - Cooperative apiary management
  - Breeding for varroa resistance
  - More improver sessions
  - Spring hornet trapping

## 10. ADM 2026 Report – Liz Twyford

### Highlights:

- Chair appointment confirmed after constitutional challenge
- Annual Reports and Minutes approved
- Requests for improved digital search tools
- Examination Board Report approved
- Elections completed
- Propositions passed, including:
  - Capitation fee changes
  - Best-practice sharing
  - Standardised YLAH coordinator guidance

Next ADM: 9 January 2027

### Questions raised:

- “*What is a specialist member?*” – Liz to follow up directly.
- Gift-aid on membership: deemed too complex for limited benefit; to be raised with BBKA at next ADM.

Liz expressed her wish to step down as ADM representative at the next AGM.

---

## 11. Elections (2026–27)

### Officers Elected

- **President:** Peter Coxon
- **Chair:** Simon Tuck
- **Hon. Treasurer:** Stuart Walter
- **Hon. Secretary:** Stuart Corner

All elected en-bloc.

**Proposed:** Malcolm Wilkie

**Seconded:** Manek Dubash

---

## 12. Host Division for 2027 AGM

Eastbourne Division will host the 2027 AGM.

---

## 13. Awards & Certificates

Certificates presented for:

- Basic Certificate
- Bee Health
- Modules 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
- Intermediate Theory
- Bee Breeding

Grades included Pass, Credit, Distinction.

Simon Tuck recognised for his Master Beekeeper achievement and invitation to the Wax Chandlers annual dinner.

---

## 14. Any Other Business

- Thanks to East Grinstead for refreshments
  - Hastings & Rother attending Heathfield Show; members invited to visit
  - No further business
-

## 15. Close of Meeting

The AGM was closed.

Followed by a talk from **Tom Bickerdike**, Regional Bee Inspector:  
**YLH / AH Report & Spring Trapping**