

## BBKA ADM Report – January 2021

The January 2021 BBKA ADM was a virtual meeting. Our President Tim Lovett and I were uncomfortable about how this would work and expressed our reservations but we were ignored. To illustrate our concerns, not one delegate was able to speak until after the lunch break.

Key points:

Capitation up to £21

BBKA structure has changed to a CIO. (Charitable Incorporated Organization).

Independence of the Exam Board was weakened.

ADM voting is currently weighted according to the number of members in an Area Association. (Surrey BKA is an Area Association). We have about 1,100 members and BBKA total membership is around 27,000 so we have a significant vote. BBKA wanted to change this for a system that placates smaller belligerent associations who feel they are always outvoted by associations with large memberships. Surrey tabled a proposition asking that no changes should be made to the voting process until robust procedures are in place to regulate applications to join BBKA from small (often belligerent) associations. This was accepted.

In view of this decision BBKA should have withdrawn their voting changes and carried them forward to a subsequent ADM. Instead they tried to force them through and they failed.

The following pages show the abbreviated notes I circulated to Surrey BKA after the January meeting. They are included for transparency. Read them if you wish. Nobody will blame you if you fall asleep!

Bob Maurer  
Chairman SBKA

BBKA ADM. 'Lite' Notes. 10am to 4.30pm 16th January 2021

## Held by Zoom Webinar

You can find the ADM papers on the BBKA website – all 87 pages. They will help you make sense of these notes.

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Meeting was conducted by Zoom. Chaired by BBKA President Margaret Wilson.

Chaos at the start as the office tried to get all the delegates logged on. Up and running by 10.15. 68 delegates present.

Deaths of eminent British beekeepers were reported including our own Audrey Gill.

Campaign to remove VAT on equipment moved forward as BBKA didn't want to pester Government during Covid!

Will BBKA issue a digital BBKA News like BeeCraft? We were told to wait and see. 2021 IMYB cancelled.

Exam Board: Robert Hammond award Janet Preece - Lancashire

Exam Board secretary Val Francis has retired. (Side note – Val was presented (virtually) with a salver by the Lord Mayor of London at a recent Wax Chandlers lunch to recognize her contribution to the Exam Board.)

BBKA is using a legacy of £245,000 received in 2014 to develop a new training apiary at Stoneleigh. The site they are spending this money on is on a 10 year lease. They have tried to buy the site – so far without success. If the lease can't be renewed the building they propose to put on site could be moved.

Buffering and tec issues - Howard Pool (chair of finance) and Margaret Wilson seen to be talking but on mute! Some delegates wrongly on screen with the panelist's so individually requested to mute.

John Hendrie pointed out the chair had forgotten to vote on reports.

Complete dithering and minutes of silence as they tried to sort their tec issues.

Finance report: 5th year in a row budget managed within income. Last year £50,000 surplus but reduction in payments to research projects due to the projects not operating in lockdown. BBKA has secured £15,000 from the Government furlough scheme.

The BBKA's legal structure has changed to a CIO.

£78,000 received from donors in last 2 years.

No funds from capitation are being used for developing the new apiary.

BBKA policy requires we hold 6 months operating costs in reserves.

J Hopkins legacy £245,000. £226,000 spent. We have a 99 year lease on the National Beekeeping Centre building at Stoneleigh. In 2099 we need a new building and must return the current one in a good original state. £110,000 is set aside for that.

BBKA holds £886,000 in restricted funds.

The budget for the year ending September 2021 had to be set in May 2020 so assumptions had to be made.

BBKA engaged a grant writing specialist and paid about £21,000 to apply for grants on BBKA's behalf with a return in grants received of £3,000. Bad timing. Easy to be wise after the event.

How much will the new exam board database cost? Leigh Sidaway (General Manager) says about £20K. Not able to reclaim VAT.

Could members be asked to pay £5 for paper BBKA news and have digital copy as a free alternative. BBKA survey happening now (currently in BBKA News) and the results will guide BBKA. Half the cost of BBKA News is postage so an electronic version would help.

Virtual Spring Convention. Budget is £70,000. Supposed to be cost neutral as it is budgeted to have £70,000 income.

Is the Stoneleigh building fit for purpose? It is too small to hold an ADM. Finance chair says you don't have a building to hold a once-a-year meeting. BBKA is making the building fit for purpose in 21<sup>st</sup> century - disabled access etc.,

Forgot to accept trustee reports so this now done before approving the accounts!

Vote to accept trustee reports For 66 Against 0 Abstain 2 (Surrey for)

Approval of financial reports: more muddle! For 63 Against 0 Abstain 4 (Surrey for)

Approve Exam Board report. For 67 Against 0 Abstain 0 (Surrey for)

Election of trustees and exam board. On the agenda but passed over without comment (despite questions in the Q&A box) to a later proposition.

### **Proposition 1**

*That all references to 'Year Book' in the BBKA constitution be replaced with 'Directory of Officers.*

This can be continually updated unlike a printed book.

Vote on prop 1 For 63 Against 1 Abstain 1 (Surrey for) Proposition Passed.

Chair forgot to reappoint auditors - this now voted. Harrison Beale and Owen Ltd., Leamington Spa.  
For 66 against 0 Abstain 0

### **Proposition 2**

*Amend clause 10.4.3 of the BBKA Constitution to read two thirds majority of the votes cast.* (See page 71 of the ADM papers) For 65 Against 1 Abstain 0 (Surrey for)

### **Proposition 3**

*Clause 30.1 (a) (i) Voluntary winding up be amended to 'by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of the votes cast*

For 66 Against 1 Abstain 1 (Surrey for)

### **Proposition 4**

Election of trustees and exam board. Done before the meeting 'to save time'. Not a secret ballot.

### Trustee Elections

Term in years

2	Howard Pool
3	John Hendrie
3	Jenny Morgan
3	Suzanne Bennett

## Exam Board Elections

Term in years

3	Andrew Gibb
3	Julie Coleman
3	Shirley Bond

For 62 Against 2 Abstain 4

12.00 – 12.30 Lunch break. So far, no delegate had actually spoken. Just quick questions in the Q&A box.

Margaret Wilson proposed Past President Margaret Murdin for Hon Membership.

For 57 Against 3 Abstain 5

The Exec is considering the option that any potential trustee should get 51% delegate approval to be elected. This is to avoid a 'shoe in' where a potentially unsuitable candidate is elected because there is no competition. A non-binding zoom poll was launched. For 92% Against 3% Abstain 5% (Surrey for)

Vote to approve the budget. (Forgotten earlier!) For 58 Against 4 Abstain 5 (Surrey for)

### **Proposition 5**

*Increase in capitation from £19 to £21*

Amendment proposed by Devon to make the increase to £20, not £21. 3 hours into the meeting and the first time a delegate had spoken! Capitation hasn't changed for 6 years.

For 16. Against 51 Abstain 1 (Surrey against) amendment failed.

Much debate for and against an increase.

Vote to accept £2 increase. For 49 Against 16 Abstain 3. (Surrey for) Carried

Membership vote requested by Devon

For 19765. Against 5857 Abstain 358 Carried

### **Proposition 6**

*A proxy vote must be held by an attending delegate and no delegate to hold more than one proxy.*

For 43 Against 21 Abstain 3 (Surrey against)

As amendment to the constitution needs 75% in favour so it fails.

Membership vote requested.

For 17638. Against 8100 Abstain 242 68% for but not 75 % needed for constitutional change so still fails.

### **Proposition 7**

*BBKA to report within 12 months on the implementation of equality diversity and inclusiveness policy.*

For 55 Against 5 Abstain 8 (Surrey for)

### **Proposition 8**

*BBKA trustees have ultimate responsibility for the charity and this should include the work of the Exam Board*

Much debate – seems Exam Board was not consulted. Exec says Exam Board is already governed by the trustees. For 45 Against 16 Abstain 7 Surrey against

Membership vote. For 19773 against 5267 abstain 940 so proposition passes.

**Proposition 9 (Surrey proposition)**

*That no change is made to the voting system until a robust set of rules to control and regulate applications by new or breakaway groups to become an AAM.*

Because of Surrey BKA's proposed amendment to Proposition 10a (see later) the BBKA Exec changed their opinion and supported this proposition

Vote was For 43 Against 21 Abstain 4 so the proposition passed.

**Proposition 10 (10b was withdrawn by the Executive)**

*The development of a robust system for the admission of new Area Association Members.*

Surrey proposed an amendment to tidy up the BBKA's rambling original. (Supported by BBKA Exec).

Tried to have the vote on prop 10 deferred as it has been rushed and possible improvements to our amendment have been suggested. I requested that this be referred to the Executive.

Vote to defer For 26 Against 42 Abstain 0 Membership vote. For 11817 Against 14163 Abstain 0 so request to refer to the Exec failed.

Vote on Surrey amendment For 55 Against 8 Abstain 4 Amendment passed.

There was an immediate request for an amendment to reduce the minimum membership requirement from 75 to 50.

Vote on this amendment

For 31 Against 36 Abstain 1 (Surrey against) I and others called a membership vote.

Membership vote For 7722 Against 18258 Abstain 0. Amendment failed.

Cheshire now proposed the minimum membership should be increased from 75 to 100.

Vote on this amendment was: For 19 Against 47 Abstain 0 (Surrey for). Amendment failed. Not worth a membership vote.

Back to the substantive proposition. After much debate, request that 'the question now be put'.

(This stops debate and forces an immediate vote.) Vote to accept 'the question now be put' - For 56

Against 10 Abstain 1. (Surrey for) Passed so now the vote on the proposition itself.

For 58 Against 9 Abstain 0 Proposition passed. (Surrey for)

Exec is formally withdrawing proposition 10B.

**Proposition 11**

*Change to a weighted average method for voting at future ADM's*

In the light of propositions 9 and 10 this should not have been debated. Propositions 9 and 10 didn't come into effect until the end of the meeting. Having decided that a robust system of admitting new AAM's will be put into the constitution, the correct procedure for the Exec should (in my opinion) have been to withdraw proposition 11 and represent it at the next ADM or at an SDM if there is one before the next ADM. Railroading it through and ignoring points of order in the chat box smacks of unseemly haste and speaks volumes about the intentions of the Exec.

North Staffordshire proposed to refer proposition 11 to the Exec. Seconded by Essex.

Vote to refer. For 21 Against 46 Abstain 1 (Surrey for) Referral rejected.

Essex representative made an eloquent speech arguing against the proposed new system followed by much discussion from the 'for and against' camps.

vote – For 53 Against 12 Abstain 3 (Surrey Abstained on this vote)

A membership vote was called. I voted against as in my opinion the procedure was flawed. BBKA is 147 years old and hopefully will be around for centuries to come. There was no need for this unseemly haste beyond getting a few ‘firebrand’ delegates off the Exec’s back. Better to submit the proposition correctly at a future meeting. The result was:

For 18946. Against 6370 Abstain 664

A vote to change the constitution requires a 75% majority. In this case 18,987 votes were needed. The proposition was lost by 41 votes.

### **Proposition 12**

*Requests a hybrid system so some could come to a live meeting and some by Zoom.*

Hampshire proposed we refer to the Executive. Seconded by Kent.

For 61 Against 7 Abstain 0 (Surrey for) Proposition referred to the Executive.

### **Proposition 13**

A ‘leave of urgency proposition not in the original papers as the issue has only recently come to light.

*BBKA to condemn the derogation of neonicotinoids for use on sugar beet.*

Delegates need to grant permission to discuss this. Vote to agree to discuss the proposition - For 60 Against 7 Abstain 1 (Surrey for)

After much discussion a call that the motion ‘shall now be put’ to cease debate and vote to go straight to a vote on the proposition. For 63 Against 2 Abstain 1 (Surrey for)

Passed, so straight to the vote on the substantive issue: For 64 Against 2 Abstain 2 (Surrey for)

A membership vote was called by the Executive as it will help BBKA show Government the strength of feeling within the membership.

Result of Membership Vote For 25,019 Against 169 Abstain 271 (Surrey for)

The right result in my view but ironic that having just tried to get rid of the membership vote the Executive now finds it useful to them!

Meeting closed 4.35.

Bob Maurer – Surrey delegate

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