



Surrey Beekeepers Association AGM 1st December 2018

Chairman's Report

As usual your Surrey BKA Council members met four times during the year. SBKA is a registered charity. Each of the eight Surrey Divisions is asked to provide a Trustee. In addition, the Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman are also Trustees. Trustees are proposed by their divisions and elected at the AGM. Each Division also provides a Representative whose job is to put forward the views of his or her Division and report back on what happens in each Council meeting. Representatives are elected at Divisional AGM's. Once again it is a testament to good management by all our Divisions that I can't think of any contentious issues relating to our management in the past year.

My thanks to all the Trustees and Divisional Representatives who give so freely of their time to make our organisation such a success.

We have a number of trustee changes at our 2018 AGM. Epsom trustee Kevin Woodward stood down and their new trustee is still to be nominated at the time of writing. Guildford trustee Peter Dawson has stepped down with Malcolm Clarke (no stranger to Surrey BKA meetings!) as the Guildford nominee. Reigate trustee Andrew Buchanan has stepped down to be replaced by Reigate nominee Richard Bradfield and Max Gladwyn is stepping down as Wimbledon trustee. His replacement nominee had not been decided at the time of writing. Thank you to all the retiring trustees for your great contribution to Surrey BKA. Welcome to all the new nominees. Can I call Malcolm Clarke new? He has probably spent more time as an SBKA Council member than all of us over the years – so welcome back Malcolm!

This year's British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) is the subject of a separate report.

We have some issues regarding the correct application of Gift Aid and we are still in discussion with HMRC about this but it appears that we can no longer claim gift aid on our subscriptions.

Croydon BKA's new environmentally friendly WC facility is now in operation at their apiary. CBKA is generously allowing allotment holders to use their loo. An excellent bit of public relations to keep the allotment holders on side. It seems that it has become a Surrey tradition for the opening of significant bits of infrastructure to be accompanied by a swarm and the Croydon bees duly obliged!

Epsom BKA undertook significant work on the floor in their building and carried out repairs to prevent water ingress. I should also say that Epsom BKA kindly host our Council meetings at their excellent facility. Thanks Epsom – it's a great venue.

Farnham's Rosalind Clague has set up an educational network with other divisions. If you are not already part of this and think it sounds interesting then do contact Rosalind via Farnham BKA.

Guildford BKA are currently in discussion with Birtley Estate to agree a new Licence for the use of the barn on site.

Kingston BKA continue to work closely with Hampton Court Way Allotment Association and have taken on additional allotment space now planted with lavender and manuka.

Reigate BKA have just started work on improving the parking area at their Henfold Copse apiary. Parking in spring and autumn/winter has been limited because of the boggy ground so a new environmentally friendly surface is being laid.

Weybridge Division's plan to develop a council owned building on an old nursery site as a training centre has sadly not come to fruition for reasons beyond Weybridge BKA's control but they have the support of their local council who are assisting them to find an alternative sight. I'm sure I speak for all of us in wishing Weybridge BKA every success with this project.

Wimbledon BKA' apiary at Morden Hall Park is now free of EFB – what a relief for all concerned. The Wimbledon team have gained valuable experience to share with others.

Always at the cutting edge, Surrey BKA has been involved with the development of the new BBKA Honey Bee Health Assessment. This is a practical assessment designed to sit between the BBKA Basic Assessment and the very demanding General Husbandry Assessment. Last year members of Farnham BKA kindly offered themselves as guinea pigs to test run the new assessment. This summer was the first when the assessment was made available to all suitably qualified BBKA members. A number of Farnham members put themselves forward and I'm delighted that most passed with flying colours (which you would expect from an association with the quality of training offered by Farnham) but it wasn't a 100% pass rate so it goes to show this assessment is no push over. Do have a look at the syllabus for 2019 on the BBKA website.

I'm always a little nervous of thanking individuals as I inevitably forget someone important so if that is you, my apologies!

Julie Hogarth is a wonderful county secretary. I would like to thank Julie for all she has done and for watching my back to make sure I don't get into too much trouble!

My thanks also to our Treasurer Penny McMahon who keeps us all on the straight and narrow in such a cheerful way. When all the divisional assets are totalled we are quite a wealthy association and it is important that our accounts are properly maintained to the satisfaction of both our members and the Charity Commission.

Michelle Ernoult has kept everything running smoothly in her role as Membership Secretary but this year as a result of the pressures of a new job she has decided that she cannot continue in the role. Thank you, Michelle, for all you have done. We wish you well in your new ventures. As I write we do not have a successor for Michelle so if you think it is a position you could fill please contact either Julie Hogarth or myself. Michelle has kindly said that she will give all the tuition needed so you will not be on your own.

County Examinations Secretary Celia Perry has had yet another busy year with a bumper crop of exam results. Thank you, Celia, for all your hard work. Congratulations to all who have been successful in exams and assessments this year.

Deborah Ware has been our archivist for many years but now wishes to stand down. She and Sandra Rickwood have been busy updating our archives at Woking so there isn't a backlog of work. Just a case of placing new records in the archive as and when needed. If you would like to tackle this interesting job please let Julie Hogarth know. Thanks to Deborah and Sandra for keeping us up to date.

Liz Knee has decided to step down as the Surrey BKA representative at the BeeCraft AGM, however I'm pleased to confirm Michael Main is our new BeeCraft representative. Thank you, Liz, for supporting SBKA and BeeCraft by attending the AGM's. Much appreciated. In case you didn't know, BeeCraft is owned by a group of Area Associations and Surrey BKA is the second largest shareholder. The BeeCraft AGM is an opportunity for the directors to welcome representatives from the shareholding associations, explain BeeCraft's latest plans and answer questions about the company. It is held in the pleasant surroundings of Wax Chandlers Hall in the City of London.

Michael Main did his usual wonderful job as Chief Steward at the Surrey County Show but has decided that this year will be his last. I am very pleased that Michael will continue to be involved with the show and delighted to announce that Mike Axford will be our new Chief Steward in 2019. Thanks also to the 40+ stewards who helped make the show a big success and to our Show Secretary Daphne Thomas assisted by Hazel Sharples for staging another superb honey show. More about this in the separate show report.

Martin Major has done a great job maintaining the county website. It's a difficult balance as it needs to be user friendly for SBKA members and for the public but not a replacement for all the excellent divisional websites.

Thanks to all the Surrey members who helped on the Surrey stand at the National Honey Show and in the body of the show itself. Special thanks to Julie Hogarth and Mike Axford for organising the stewards rota and the stand display. Also a mention in despatches for Reigate member Trevor Keast who volunteered to get up early on Sunday morning to take one of the shows American speakers and his wife to Heathrow. Thank you, Trevor. The show works because of acts of kindness like that.

Breaking news is the recent formation of a Surrey BKA Asian Hornet Action Team lead by Jonathan Brookhouse with small enthusiastic teams from all 8 divisions working together to create a countywide network. Surrey BKA will link up with other counties (Devon is currently leading the way here) and we will be ready to work with Defra/NBU when the time comes.

It would be very remiss of me if I didn't take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate the accolade our President Tim Lovett received when appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the Beekeeping Industry in the 2018 New Year's Honours List.

And finally, thanks to every one of you for making Surrey BKA great through all the wonderful work you do for your divisions. Well done!

Have a very happy Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all at our many events in 2019.

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November 2018