



Date: **November 25, 2023**

Time: **14:00**

Venue: **Arreton Community Hall**

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Liz Van-Wyk, welcomed participants.

Apologies from: Mandy Benton, David Cassells, Bob Bromley, Guy Mattinson, Helen Newbury, Christine McLellan, Barry Duke, Kathy Cheek, Derek Sothcott, Michael Terry.

APPROVAL OF LAST YEAR'S MEETING MINUTES

No comments, but a correction to Kim Hughes surname name was raised.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Liz presented her report for the year. This document can be found in **Annex 1** of the minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

In his last report as Treasurer, Roger Hall reported that the 22/23 financial year has been another sound financial year as our programme continued to return to almost normal after the disruption caused by Covid 19. Total income was well up on last year primarily due to the receipt of a donation of £1000 from the estate of the late Mary Pain plus other larger than usual donations for swarm collections e.g. one of £100 and a couple of £50. Some of the donations due to swarm collections were from Southern Water and Brading Town Council. The group discussed and agreed that it would be useful to hand out some kind of IWBKA business cards for donations, with details such as the IWBKA bank account number; this is likely to make easier for people to donate.

The auction netted £89 pounds, a bit down from recent years. The seminar was back on the programme, contributing a net £225.

The AHAT training pushed the expenses up, at just over £4100, which was split 50/50 with Quarr.

There still a surplus this year, which came out at £926 and total funds now stand at £11,191 therefore the subscription will remain unchanged for the forthcoming year¹.

Liz thanked Roger for all the sterling work he has done for the association throughout the years.

ACTION

- Carol/Terri to propose a design for the IWBKA donations business card

¹ Which represents, in effect, a reduction in the subscription fees due to the rise in inflation.

QUARR TEACHING APIARY REPORT

The Teaching Apiary's (TA) finances are also looking healthy, it has been reasonable year with £104 surplus. The funds now are in excess of £13,133. In the practical sense, the TA did well this year and the RA is active. Kim Hughes is the TA manager and Frank helps out on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The meetings in the TA have not been too well attended this year, perhaps the weather and the King's coronation had something to do with it. They are not making so many nucs, as there were plenty of swarms this year. For the RA, something new will be trialed next year: the proposal for new beekeepers to run an association hive. Newbies will make all the decisions regarding the colonies they are managing.

As attendance to these TA meetings have not been high, the two Quarr meetings will be combined in to one (for members and complete new beekeepers), once a month.

The reduction in attendance may have been related to the fact that the association decided not to create and post to members the physical programme booklets. The Group decided that it would be appropriate to resume the creation of, and distribution to, physical programmes.

ACTION

- Resume the creation and distribution to members of the physical programme booklets

THE 2023 PROGRAMME

Chloe Underwood, the Programme Secretary, provided with an overview of the current status for the events next year, which includes the Annual Dinner in January (Hewitts), the Seminar in 24 February (with 3 speakers), the Auction in April. They are considering a skep making workshop, also for April. Most events are now confirmed, including the members' apiary visits: Chloe and Luke's (date TBD), Adriana's in August, and Richard's in May. The date and venue for the Annual BBQ are to be confirmed, but probably, like in 2023, in September (at Mandy's). The events' details will be added to the IWBKA website in due course.

The honey show is resuming in 2024; the winter clusters will continue, probably at the Woodman's Arms in Wootton, but some in the meeting also mentioned as possibilities the Bargeman's, and the Checker's.

For next year, upon renewing their membership, members will receive the physical booklet with the programme of events for 2024. It was generally agreed that a paper programme is better.

ACTION

- Confirm the events and finalise the 2024 programme.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

George presided over the election of the Chair. Liz Van-Wyk was unanimously voted in again. Liz then presided over the election of the remaining Committee positions. The following members were voted in unanimously:

- Guy Mattinson as **Treasurer** (proposed by Liz and seconded by Frank).

All positions are now fulfilled and are shown below:

Position	Officers
CHAIR	Liz Van-Wyk
VICE-CHAIR	Bob Bromley
PRESIDENT	George Bignell
TREASURER	Guy Mattinson
MEMBERSHIP SEC	Frank Steven / Christine McLellan
ASSOCIATION SEC	Adriana McCann
PROGRAMME SEC	Chloe Underwood
COMMITTEE MEMBER	Barry Duke
COMMITTEE MEMBER	Kim Hughes
COMMITTEE MEMBER	Mandy Benton
COMMITTEE MEMBER	<i>Still vacant</i>
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AOB

- The members present agreed to a 13:30 for 14:00 AGM start next year.
- No show of hands for filling up the ordinary members' vacancies (2).
- Christine will, in due course, taking over Frank's position as Membership Secretary, but group was offered to apply for this position too. No show of hands.
- The AHAT provided an update on their past, current and planned activities. A summary of the verbal presentation given by Carol Bradshaw is as follows:

In September, a group of 4 members from the IWBKA went to Jersey to be trained in velutina/AH trap and tracing (subsidized by the IWBKA); during the week this group was away, the sightings increased in the UK, including the south coastal area. In Jersey there are about 300 volunteers part of their AHAT; extrapolating taking into account the size of the Isle of Wight, we would need about 1000 volunteers. Most in Jersey are aware of the AH. Jersey's AHAT is not part of the local beekeeper association and is funded by the Jersey government. The IW AHAT has initiated the set up of a charitable organisation and, although it has already started receiving donations, its activities are in the meantime being funded by the individuals in the team. Hoodies, booklet for schools were designed and printed. Terri Burt is the coordinator for the island. Public awareness was the main focus of the team after returning from Jersey. The first awareness day was in October, and about 30+ volunteers signed up on this day. This event also resulted in opportunities for talks and presentation throughout the island; one of which was in a "breakfast" church and the AH was included as part of her sermon ("good neighbours help each other" link made) and this can be seen in YouTube. Among the planned events, the AHAT will be present at the antiques and collectors fair in Cowes community club in December; social prescribing group contacted Terri/Carol and will

do a talk in St Helen's. Kids are better at observing insects than their parents, and there will be a focus in this age group. There are more meetings scheduled for February, including one to discuss the possibility to put the subject into the schools' curriculum. The arrival of the velvetina is not only a beekeeper's problem, however, it needs beekeepers help too, for monitoring and trapping.

ACTIONS

- Adriana to produce and distribute the AGM minutes.

END OF MEETING

Tea, cakes and biscuits were served.

ANNEX 1: REPORT FROM THE CHAIR (Liz Van-Wyk)

Chair's Report to the 2023 AGM of the IWBKA

And so ends another IWBKA year with some unusual challenges and bonuses: reports of wonderful spring crops of honey but little flow from the rape, an early end to the main flow, a huge number of swarms.... Our thanks to Terri Burt and Carol Bradshaw, our swarm collection co-ordinators, who were almost overwhelmed with the number of calls in May and June. They report that one morning they had three phone lines on the go! Thanks too to the team of collectors for responding so well.

We have had a busy year with our dinner, the seminar which was well attended, the fascinating Bee Health Day with a team of bee inspectors delivering on a range of pests and diseases and, of course, our auction. Thanks are due to the members who hosted apiary meetings and for their hospitality. The first of the Quarr series had to be cancelled for the King's Coronation, then the June date was so hot that subsequent ones were moved to a morning slot. This, of course, was the signal for the heatwave to end and the heavens to open. However, the barbecue at the beginning of September was well attended at Mandy Benton's beautiful home in Newchurch. I'm not sure much was barbecued, but there was, as always when beekeepers get together, plenty of bee talk. We also experimented with a winter social in March at the Woodman's Arms in Wootton, which had more than twenty members attending. The recent one, at the beginning of this month, was less well attended but still of great benefit, especially for the three 'newbies' who came along. Both evenings were relaxed and welcoming.

Our special thanks are due to Chloe Underwood, new to the committee this year, who took on the mantle of events organiser and continues to perform it so well. I'm sure she would welcome offers to host apiary meetings and other events.

Alas, there was no honey show this year as our appeal for a team to take over the sterling work Christine McClellan has done for the past several years was not answered in time. I'm pleased to report that a new team has now been set up and is well underway with plans for the 2024 Honey Show.

Terri and Carol continue to run the theory course. After considering whether to run just a one day course, they realised that this gave little room for discussion and assimilation, so have gone back to four two-hour sessions for each of the three courses they run from autumn to spring, usually with 12 to 14 attendees. Thanks in no small way to their mentoring after the end of each course, when they give help in siting hives, visiting when there are problems and willingly answering phone queries, Carol reports that 78% of the attendees from the past three years are now keeping bees. Kim Hughes, the new TA apiary manager, has also attended some of the sessions on the latest course in order to establish a link between the theory and the practical sessions she offers at Quarr; we had found there was a disconnect between the two so a familiar face should make new members more comfortable in coming along to Quarr to gain experience. Knowing first hand just how much work is involved in organising and running the courses and the TA, my heart-felt thanks to all three ladies.

You may know that the Association sponsored a team of four to visit Jersey in September to have training in the trapping and tracking of the Asian hornet. The Jersey team made them so very welcome and gave of their time and experience with such generosity that our team returned full of determination to get things moving immediately. Within a month they had arranged an awareness day at Cowes Community Club which was well attended and generated many offers of help with trapping and publicity, including schools and community groups. They, with Adriana, Guy and myself attended the Hampshire Asian Hornet seminar two weeks ago and I was immensely proud of the compliments and praise

they received from groups attending from Kent, London through to Somerset for the sheer amount of public awareness they have generated in such a short time. We have asked them to make a short presentation after this meeting; as you know, this is not just a beekeeper problem as the hornets predate a higher proportion of other species than honeybees. However, you are vitally important in helping with bait stations and traps in spring and autumn, and in using your contacts within other organisations, whether farming, countryside, natural history societies, even utility companies, to create public awareness. Jersey has found the majority of sightings are made by the general public, and their ability to tell the difference between *Vespa velutina* and similar species, such as the European hornet, hornet mimic hoverfly and a variety of wasp species will save so much time for the team when the Asian hornet arrives, as it inevitably will.

Forgive my lecture; it is a subject we must all become familiar with. As an Association, we must also consider beekeeper training on how to maintain healthy colonies when *Velutina* arrives in order to minimise the losses such as those suffered by many on the continent and now in Kent and London.

Less than two weeks ago, we were approached by the New Forest BKA asking for support in their request to separate from the umbrella organisation of Hampshire BKA; two independent BKAs are required to support such an application to the ADM of the BBKA in January. We were sent eight documents supporting their request and had a video linked meeting with the Chair of NFBKA, Krysia Watson, who happens to be our current SBI. In summary, the reasons for their request are that they pay capitation to HBKA as well as BBKA but see very little benefit to NFBKA from the Hampshire capitation, that they are not sufficiently represented at HBKA Trustee meetings and that they are only given limited feedback from those meetings. As Krysia put it, "Capitation without representation." Interestingly, our own Association history shows that IWBKA had similar problems in the mid 1950s and successfully applied to separate themselves from HBKA in 1956. After thorough consideration, this committee decided to support NFBKAs request.

Talking of preaching, I am well aware that, simply by your attendance today, you are the converted, not the silent majority. However, we always welcome constructive feedback and suggestions.

Adriana is extremely busy with her work and family, and I sometimes wonder how she manages to be so efficient with Association business given all her other commitments. We decided back in September that if I wrote the words, she would do the production of the newsletter that we are now sending out monthly. I hope that this, along with the hard copy of the diary of events that will go out with membership renewals will help to stimulate greater engagement from our members.

I took on the role of Chair with some reluctance a year ago but have thoroughly enjoyed it, thanks in large part to the support of an excellent and very hands-on committee that has a wide range of skills and experience.

Thank you to you all.