



Buzzworks Association Hitchin

Minutes of AGM

Sat 20th Jan 2018, 10.30 am – 1 pm, St Mark's Church, Hitchin

Present: Robin Dartington (Chair of Trustees), Paul Calvert (Finance Officer), Mari Stevenson (Trustee), Chris Parker (Trustee), Giorgio Martinelli (Trustee)

Members: Anne Taylor, Anne-Marie Lusty, Ashley Walker, Colin Ware, Daryl Lusty, Howard Prutton, Janet Southwood, Liz Dartington, Mike D'Souza, Rosemary Manders, Sarah Irons, Stella Farr, Tim Farr, Mike Cook (new member)

Apologies: Nicki Tomlin, Nikki Greenham, Christine Gray, Christian Baugh

1. Welcome

2. Bedfordshire Beekeepers' Association (Beds BKA) Talk

Robin welcomed guest speaker Colin Hall, Chair of Beds BKA and Wally Thrale, Secretary (arrived later). Colin and Wally gave a very interesting talk covering brief history, committee structure and vision. Beds BKA are independent of the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA), citing differing views on beekeeping and values. They have a committee of 28 each with a defined role, all trustees and 420 members in total. They stressed that members all work together well and the association has very good relationships with other county associations and beekeepers. Robin expressed a wish for BAH to work with them on queen-rearing. They are keen to visit the site. Robin will arrange this. Beds supports members taking BBKA assessments and modules who have to pay the additional cost of BBKA private membership (£35) which it was remarked is a problem also for BAH which BAH are trying to resolve. The speakers were well-received and thanked for coming along.

ACTION: Robin to arrange site visit

3. Break

When the meeting resumed: The Chair of Trustees chairs a General Meeting if willing. Robin proposed the chair be taken by Mari. Mari's offer to do this was accepted by the meeting.

4. Approval of AGM 2017 Minutes (added to circulated Agenda)

Minutes of the previous AGM were approved with the following additions:

- 1) On the volunteer responsibility chart it should be made clear that Daryl Lusty was appointed Site Manager (HoneyWorks).
- 2) Under (B) Organisation, add 'It was agreed that Anne-Marie should also check the basis of occupancy of the current sites and report back to the trustees'.

Mari apologised for not having thanked Anne-Marie for the report. Robin confirmed that it had been discussed by the trustees at their next meeting. Following a query about what



action had been taken as a result, Mari reported that the trustees were discussing the leases with NHDC and would keep the members informed.

ACTION: Robin to arrange meeting with NHDC re leases and trustees to keep members informed of outcome

Communications was raised as an area needing improvement. This was deferred to later in the meeting (see under Marketing).

5. Trustees Report 2017 (including BAH Mission Statement and changes made to the organisation).

The Trustees Report had been circulated prior to the AGM and is attached again with these minutes. It was agreed that questions would be taken later in the meeting.

6. Finance Report: Summary and Questions

The Finance Report had been circulated prior to the AGM and is attached again with these minutes. Paul presented a summary. Some questions had been submitted before the meeting and Paul dealt with these as follows (details at the end of these minutes):

- Breakdown of training expenses - given
- More details on expenditure on tea-towels – given
- The expenditure approval process: there had been no process in place when Paul took on the Finance Officer role in 2017. There had not been enough information about expenditure, to make it possible to set budgets. There is now enough information to agree budgets for each area. Replacement of consumables does not need prior approval. Expenditure of over £100 does need approval eg larger items of equipment or external services. All purchases should be accompanied by a receipt passed to Paul.
- More details of honey production and stocks: given, which indicates we have enough for the stall (though not an exact science). Robin will have finished the melting-out of stocks of ivy honey by end February.

Answers to further questions:

- Two extractors and one settling tank are on loan from Robin
- The generator donated by funds from Hitchin Rotary Club is locked in a secure shed at Honeyworks and is in frequent use
- Paul was passed a £10 membership fee which needs to be refunded to the Polish student together with his course fee: **ACTION Paul**
- Paul will reimburse Janet's expenses: **ACTION Paul**
- Robin, Paul and Chris are signatories to the BAH account. Two signatories are required on each cheque
- The increase on spending under Education was due to fees for home educators

Paul was thanked for a well laid out report.



7. Area updates

Membership: Anne will be helping to recruit new members and volunteers in her role as Member Group Support Coordinator at North Herts Centre for Voluntary Service, of which BAH have been members for some years. This may include a Manager/Coordinator and a Membership Secretary, when trustees have agreed the role descriptions. She will speak to area leads in person about their volunteer requirements. She is also a new member and volunteer herself.

ACTION Anne: liaise with trustees and area leads on role descriptions and begin volunteer recruitment process asap

Site Management including Gardening

Janet reported that it had been a good year for gardening. Bulbs, strawberries and colourful bee-friendly flowers in the raised beds had flourished. The pond was also doing very well and grogs and a toad had been seen. Stella was thanked for all her help. Janet felt much greater appreciation of volunteer help should be given. This would encourage volunteers to stay.

Chris reported that Daryl, Mike and Tim had helped with roof repairs, meeting room and kitchen repairs at HoneyWorks. They were trying to complete all hedge-cutting before March 31st to allow for nesting. Hedges would then be cut again in September. The roofs of the Cream Shed and Bee Shed had been re-felted by Howard, Chris and Robin with outside help. The pond and herb garden are being managed but more volunteers are needed. Later in the meeting Robin added re site management, that the grounds, buildings, equipment and BuzzWorks hives need refurbishing/improving eg hives need re-legging. He is unable to maintain all of the hives himself and this will lead to poor honey. The Wednesday group has shrunk to 4 regular helpers putting in 4-5 hours each time but more help is needed to deal with HoneyWorks, BuzzWorks and Gt Offley.

Education

Mari reported that Nicki T and Nikki G are devising 4 new lesson-plans linked with the national curriculum, paid for privately by Robin, in readiness for enlarging the educational programme when an additional classroom has been provided. School visits and visits by youth groups and other groups had continued at a reduced level through 2017. There was a very successful and enjoyable school visit to 200 Reception & Nursery children, charged at £2 per head. The plan is to increase contact with schools, but there a lack of volunteers means education services are limited for now.

Training (beginners, learners and improvers)

Ashley reported that the beginners had got off to a slow start after 9 people signed up to the taster. Unfortunately dates were not circulated far enough ahead to allow all who wanted to, to attend. 3-7 attended each time. Two dropped out – one didn't have enough time, another for personal reasons not fully explained. There had been one late-comer. Unfortunately the bees did not behave themselves, but two additional sessions enabled the



course to be fully covered and everyone enjoyed themselves. All now have their own hives. At least two may carry on to the Basic training. Thanks to Sarah and Paul for their support. Ashley was concerned that he would not be able to manage the 20 new interested people on his own. However, Sarah and Paul will support again, and it is unlikely all 20 will actually come. Trustees are discussing further help needed. It is important that the training is finalised very soon – **ACTION Ashley** with support.

Colin reported that all post-course feedback from learners/improvers was very positive. 6 people passed the Basic Assessment, 2 with credits. The Assessors were highly complimentary about the upkeep and standard of the HoneyWorks site and its natural (uncut grass) presentation.

There is a new BBKA practical qualification (Honeybee Health Certificate) which bridges the Basic and Husbandry training and could retain members who might not otherwise continue. Colin and Daryl feel this would be ideal for BuzzWorks. Paul said he had raised this with the Herts Association and was awaiting a response. North Herts BKA had been irritated by their perception that members were being poached. At present BAH members are unable to take BBKA assessments without first becoming members of an area member of BBKA (or private member).

It was suggested that BAH needed to clarify their bee-keeping mission and decide whether to offer a wider variety of training eg BBKA courses for the new advanced certificates.

Marketing including stall

Colin & Daryl's report is attached to these minutes.

An apology was given and accepted, for emails which had been written in anger and caused offence. Assurance was given, that this would not happen again. Mari stated that the trustees were planning to establish a proper agreed process for handling complaints and more generally to improve communications between members and trustees. The latter might be a function of the Membership Secretary role.

ACTION trustees: establish complaints/contacts process

Stall: in the January – December 2017 period, Colin had potted 890 jars of honey for the stall. 54% of honey sold was local, 46% 'external' – labelled 'English' but in fact from Beds (Robin later corrected this to Bucks). Robin also clarified that the local honey included honey from BuzzWorks which had been counted in with the HoneyWorks honey. He also has more at home from Gt Offley. It was agreed that in future, honey should be labelled with its exact source eg Buckinghamshire honey was sold as such and buyers showed a great interest in this – it was good marketing.

Volunteers who helped on the stall were really valued and Colin thanked them.

8. Forward Plan Update

The Forward Plan is still a work-in-progress, led by Paul. The five areas have been established as Education, Training, Site Management (including Gardening), Marketing



(including Stall) and Membership. Leaders and key people for each area need to be confirmed. For each area Paul is describing current state (facts and figures), vision, short and medium term priorities and (crucially) how plans will be delivered. He will circulate a 'high-level draft' to members by mid March, for comments.

ACTION Paul: circulate draft Plan by mid March

Paul has revamped the website and will put in links eg to a facebook page. There will be a members' area. Ashley's notes for Beginners are already there. The website will be launched in the next few weeks and comments will be welcomed. Paul was thanked for his work on this.

9. Election of Trustees

Giorgio voted back in for another term by a show of hands, proposed by Robin, seconded by Chris. He told the meeting he had helped on the stall and with maintenance whenever possible, subject to family commitments. Robin welcomed his continuing contribution to trustee discussions and decisions. No-one expressed an interest in the remaining trustee vacancy.

10. Offers to fill volunteer positions

There was no discussion on this item.

11. AOB

- There were no questions on the Trustee Report
- Health & Safety: two members had developed an allergy to bee stings. It was agreed that the hives at BuzzWorks should be blocked off when visitors were on site, until the bees were better-behaved
- The trustees are going to arrange meetings with the lead people for each area.
ACTION trustees – arrange meetings
- There was general agreement that the trustees moved things forward at this AGM in a positive way and that thanks should be more often given for contributions to the work of BAH by its members who are almost entirely volunteers. The meeting closed at 1 pm.

Summary of Actions

- Robin to arrange site visit for Beds BKA
- Robin to arrange meeting with NHDC re leases and trustees to keep members informed of outcome
- Paul to refund £10 membership and course fee to Polish student
- Paul to reimburse Janet's expenses
- Anne to liaise with trustees and area leads on role descriptions and begin volunteer recruitment process asap
- Ashley to finalise training, with support
- Trustees to establish a complaints/contacts process
- Paul to circulate draft Forward Plan by mid March
- Trustees to arrange to meet with area leads

Finance Questions raised by Members

1. What is the breakdown of the training expenditure

Item	Date	Cost	Notes
Bee Suites & replacement veils	04/03/2017	£ 128.00	Purchase of additional/replacement bee suits (x5) & Vails (x10) from Simon the Beekeeper
Hive Tools	04/03/2017	£ 41.25	Purchase of stainless steel hive tools from Part Time Bee Keeping for beginners (in stock)
		£ 169.25	

2. Please provide details on the Honey that was purchased.

Supplier	Date	Cost	Notes
British Honey Producers Ltd	16/08/2017	£ 1,344.00	Summer Honey x12 buckets, 384lbs @£3.50 /lb
Sarah	18/08/2017	£ 177.00	Summer Honey 59lb @£3.00 /lb
		£ 1,521.00	

3. Who authorised the expenditure on Tea Towels for the Stall?

The expenditure was based on 2 separate purchases of x15 towels each. The first purchase was around May 2017 (£112). These have sold out on the stall and Giorgio, following discussion with Daryl, purchased an additional x15 in December to restock the stall (£113). Whilst the profit margin on the towels is modest, £2.50 per towel they sell

4. What is the expenditure approval process for BAH?

In 2017 Area leads were not issued with an area budget due to new appointment of a Finance Officer and availability of historically data. However, area leads were empowered to purchase items on behalf of BAH for their area of responsibility and BAH worked under the following guidelines;

- Replacement of consumables that are accepted as being required to support their activity can be made without prior Trustee approval, such as jars, labels, petrol, sugar etc.
- Any purchase of additional equipment for an area, where the investment is over £100 should be approved by the Trustee's prior to purchase.
- Any payment of external resources for services should be approved by the trustees prior to expenditure.
- All purchases should be accompanied by a receipt, which should be submitted to the Finance Officer before reimbursement is made, ideally within 4 weeks of the purchase.

The intension is to set a 2018 budget for each area based on historical spend and the 'finance guidelines will be included in the Role Profile where appropriate.



5. BAH Honey Production and stocks (raised in Stall Email)

The following provides a status of the current Honey stock available to BAH for 2018 season.

BAH Owned Stock
Bought in Honey - 5 buckets @30lb/bucket
8 honeyboxes and 4 national supers of ivy honey (containing some left over summer honey as well)
4x part buckets & 2 full buckets extracted late at HW
1.5x buckets Ivy honey donated to BAH by Giorgio (for his hives at Radburn)
9kg of Ivy Honey from HW & Benslow (donated by Ashley)
2x Small buckets older honey from BW
BAH additional Honey - Options
Giorgio is also melting out Robins ivy honey from Radburn site, there will certainly be a surplus
Chris has 7 National supers of summer/autumn honey for extracting from his own hives and will also have surplus

There is an intent in 2018 to keep more detailed records of honey produced by Site and by individual Hive, allowing us to understand our current 'bee quality' and potentially drive better queen rearing decisions. To support this, we are looking to allocate supers etc to individual hives at the sites and number/identify accordingly so when extracting more detailed records can be kept.