



Buzzworks AH AGM

Saturday 15th January 2022 11am – 12 noon Zoom

Present: Robin Dartington (President & Chair of meeting); Paul Calvert (Treasurer), Andy Cooper, Mike D'Souza, Giorgio Martinelli, Nathalie Titterton, Mari Stevenson and Anne Taylor (Trustees); Paul Johnson, Janet Southwood (members)

Apologies: Nikki Tomlin, Joanna Rafferty, Chris Baugh, Christine Gray.

1. Welcome by Chair
2. Minutes of AGM on 23rd January 2021 agreed. No matters arising.
3. Annual Report 2021 (Paul)

Activities were very restricted during the first quarter, due to Covid regulations. However, once restrictions eased all areas managed some activity. We hope 2022 will be more 'normal'. We will however still be cautious as we do have vulnerable volunteers, observing social distancing and moderating activities. We will need to be aware of changing guidelines and also our volunteers' personal judgement of risks.

4. Finance Summary 2021 (Paul)

Finances have stabilised to close to pre-pandemic levels. Expenses were slightly higher than income following the purchase of extra honey to supplement low availability of our own. This honey is shown as an asset carried forward to 2022. Also carried forward is an unspent grant of £250. There was also higher than usual expenditure on maintenance, with investment in materials such as a new strimmer and long ladder. 2022 budget requests have been approved on the assumption that full activities can resume in 2022.

Robin added that he has personally met all extra expenses incurred by his experimental work as there was no guarantee it would be of benefit to Buzzworks AH.

Paul Johnson raised the point that although no rent is currently paid to NHDC for use of the site, a contingency may be needed to cover any cost in the future. Paul Calvert

added that around £3k of our expenditure is core running costs and the rest other expenses such as maintenance materials and that care may indeed be needed to allow for extra rent in future. Robin summarised the history of the current arrangement with NHDC. Two neighbouring charities have been granted one free allotment and pay for any additional usage. Mari pointed out that East Herts DC only charge a peppercorn rent in similar situations. This issue will be addressed at the next Trustee Meeting.

5. Election and re-election of Trustees

In accordance with the constitution, two Trustees stood down, Paul Calvert and Andy Cooper. Paul is not standing for re-election but will continue as Finance Officer for the time being. Andy stood for re-election and was voted back in by all members present. Paul Johnson stood as a new Trustee and was voted in by all members present. The President and Trustees thank Paul Calvert for his contribution over many years and welcome Paul Johnson.

6. Area Updates and Questions

Area leads reiterated the summaries given in the Annual Report with some additional points as follows:

Education (Mari)

Mari will be collecting the observation hive for the Discovery Centre apiary next week. Robin and Howard have offered to make a roof for it. A TV screen will be installed rather than a projector and screen. Costs for purchase and installation are being investigated. The education team are also discussing ways to make more use of the Discovery Centre resources and garden to run educational sessions on developing a pollinator-friendly garden. Mari has contacted Rosybee about this.

Beekeeping and Training (Paul and Robin)

Adding to the Annual Report on the issues of beekeeping and honey production, Robin pointed out that better colonies produce a better yield. Beekeeping is not static as bees themselves have to adapt their behaviour to eg climate change. Mari pointed out that the size of the hive may not be related to amount of honey produced. Robin suggested that BAH follow new general aims amongst beekeepers - 'fewer hives but better beekeeping'

In addition to the points made in the Annual Report on Training, Paul pointed out that Covid restrictions meant that numbers per Taster Day or Bee Experience session had been lower. However, this had resulted in a much better experience for everyone, and would be continued in 2022 for this reason ie maximum 6 for Taster Days and 3 for Bee Experience sessions. Spending less time in the apiary on Taster Days and more on honey processing including a take-home jar had also worked very well. Attendees dropping out at very short notice had been a problem at times. Next year we could offer these places to others on the waiting list on the off-chance that they may be able to fill them despite the short notice.

It is hoped that in 2022 we can train up more people to deliver Bee Experiences as there is already a significant number of enquiries.

Gardening (Mike and Janet)

Mike added that it should be possible to continue to use Aletheia's greenhouse in 2022 and to add more 'foraging beds'. He had also been able to get a free tree from the North Herts tree-planting scheme. It was hoped that this would thrive and flower each year, as a fitting memorial to Chris Parker who spent so much time at Honeyworks. There is £200 carried forward from 2021 so the £250 allocated for 2022 may not all be needed.

The number of goldfish had increased. This is detrimental to other wildlife in the pond. Janet hopes to arrange for them to be caught and re-homed in February.

Janet has started pruning the hedge at the Discovery Centre to encourage dense growth. The materials produced can be used in the apiary dead hedge. A number of tools have gone missing from the shed. Anne will make enquiries on their whereabouts but we may need to replace them. The poplar trees still need chopping back despite the Council assuring us that this would happen last year.

Maintenance (Robin)

Adding to the Report, there was a discussion about security of the Discovery Centre site following an attempted break-in. Raising the height of gates and installing some kind of alarm or using anti-vandal paint were suggested. This will need to be re-visited.

Stall (Giorgio)

Building on the Report, Giorgio stressed the need to develop the educational side of the stall. Stall and education volunteers will meet to discuss how this could be done. Robin suggested a video that might replace use of the observation hive to attract interest. Giorgio again thanked the many volunteers who make it possible for the stall to run each month.

7. AOB

Robin is less available at the moment as his carer responsibilities have increased. He hopes the situation might improve in a week or so. We are very dependent on the contribution of beekeepers in our apiaries. In his role as President he is developing a relationship with NHBKA. He will re-join as a member and their Chair will join BAH. He hopes something of benefit to both might come from this. We are also developing good relationships with the Priory and Tilehouse Rotary Clubs in Hitchin.

Meeting closed at 12.10 pm.