

TTBKA COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 719

Wednesday 26th JUNE 2024 at 7.45pm

Virtually on Google Meet

Minutes

Present: Ray Nichol (RN); Warwick Francis (WF); Patrick Brennan (PB); Mandy Moss (MM); Philip Webb (PW); Greg Elliot (GE); Jane Sachdev (JS); Alex Lawrence (AL)

Apologies: Christine Betley (CB); Julie Hill (JH); Sally Ewen (SE); Jonathan Palmer (JP); Candida Williamson (CW); Harvey Kirk (HK) Irek Gajowniczek (IG).

1. Minutes & Outstanding Issues from last meeting (15.5.24)

- i. AGM Minutes – dated 2023 and should read 2024. **ACTION: Julie to amend.** These minutes will be presented at the next AGM for approval.
- ii. Minutes of the last meeting: Proposed as an accurate account: GE Seconded JS – approved unanimously.
- iii. Speaker for President's evening on Friday 15th November – Maggie King has suggested a speaker Lars Chittka, who wrote The Mind of the Bee. MM will take this forward with Maggie. **ACTION: JP as President to invite the speaker for President's Evening.**

2. Apiary and Mole works

- i. Skip has been filled with discarded trailer and its contents. AL has done a great job of clearing a lot of his belongings from the club house. The disused bee hive boxes and frames should be discarded as they are a bio hazard and might attract unwanted pests eg Asian hornet. **ACTION: JS to organise a gardening group to plant new beds and boxes with left over plants from the Open Day and complete filling of skip and arrange removal – done Monday 1st July.**
- ii. Mole has scope for 20 stands although doubts as to whether the forage would support this number of colonies. **ACTION: JS to pull together a group of interested parties to devise a strategic plan for 5 years.**
- iii. Attending the Molesey Carnival on 8th June with an observation hive and honey sales was a good success – welcomed by the public. WF suggested that activities such as this should be noted and reported on. **ACTION: JS will write a report about Mole prior to the AGM.**

- iv. **Maintenance of Twickenham:** GE and CB did a considerable amount of work at Twickenham to tidy up the apiary and prepare it for the Open Day on 15th June. Since then, MM and JS have cleaned the kitchen shelves and put excess crockery into plastic storage boxes. Honey Prep room – contains a lot of buckets of cappings, fermented honey and detritus that needs to be sorted out. Reclamation of wax to be done on a Tuesday - suggested the wax is melted down; frames can be steamed; PW suggested it is buried. Honey to be dealt with during the week too. Drain is blocked between Miller Hall and Honey Prep room – very smelly. **ACTION: AL to clear the drain with PW who has a set of rods. ACTION ON HONEY PREP ROOM????**
- v. **CIO Sub Committee** – (MM; PB; RN; WF; AL; Irek; Neil Hilbery) It was commented that it is difficult to maintain momentum with this, but important to keep it up. MM has prepared a spreadsheet with timings and actions to be achieved in order to work towards CIO. MM said that the “actions” need expanding on, reckons that an 18-month timeline should be sufficient. Discussion about whether trustees should be involved at the outset. (Chris Neaves and Neil Hilbery are Custodian trustees) AL has spoken to a lawyer who is willing to take it on, MM said this is needed at the end of the process. **ACTION: Date of next meeting Thursday 11th July to be convened by MM - done.**
- vi. PB raised the question of appointing Custodial Trustees for Mole, as both those on the deeds have died. This will need to be part of the 5 year plan. **ACTION: JS to ensure this is discussed and a plan put forward to committee.**

3. Education Group.

- i. JS reported that the school visit programme is going according to plan. There was a minor hitch when the laptop was locked away for Open Day and wasn't available for one school group. We should bear this in mind next year.
- ii. JS reported that there have been clashes of Basic Group Assessment tests with school visits on Wednesdays and she thinks this should be avoided. It is a distraction for both parties and there are possibly safeguarding issues. RN recommended that assessment dates be cleared by tutors with the committee/calendar. MM suggested that the Basic Test is being taken very early in the year – not enough time being given to theory. WF said that early August is a good time, once the honey supers are removed, as it is not fair to expect people taking tests to remove honey supers. People doing the test

need to be properly prepared and given time to get the experience. **ACTION: for next season, tutors (RN etc) to liaise over dates of assessments and delay until late July/August after school visits have finished and honey removed.**

4. Correspondence received

- i. Richmond Housing Partnership – JH and JS to meet RHP and find out more about their requirements/objectives and feed back to the committee. WF suggested that we might donate a bug hotel etc. **ACTION: JH to arrange a get together or zoom meeting.**
- ii. LCH have contacted us. They are an organisation that provides housing for people with mental health and other problems. They have requested a beekeeper to manage their bees, their representative will visit Twickenham apiary on Friday 28th June. **ACTION: RN/WF to discuss possibilities with them if they show up.**
- iii. Apiary sets for film & TV – MM said this approach is likely to be seeking potential settings for news crews on the back of the Asian Hornet coverage. MM suggested that the apiary needs a coherent story regarding Asian Hornets. WF recommended MM's article on website re Asian Hornet.

- 5. Social Media.** MM reported that there was some good interaction from the public on our social media leading up to Open Day. Tickets were available on Eventbrite (free of charge) – however, as we don't check tickets at the entrance, we don't know if those who registered on Eventbrite attended. However, MM commented that Eventbrite makes our presence known to those who otherwise would have no awareness of "bees in Twickenham." WF expressed a less positive attitude towards the use of Eventbrite and social media in general. **ACTION: MM to take on the role of Social Media secretary from WF who will forward issues arising from our social, that appear in correspondence.**

6. Membership Secretary (WF)

- i. Two new registered memberships bring total to 116. – Rue Turner and Neil Sagar. Otherwise, numbers unchanged. (8 Partner; 1 Junior; 3 Country; 3 Family; 2 Associate; 6 Honorary)
- ii. GE asked whether the aim of the organisation is to encourage more members. And if so, how do we achieve this. WF explained that we are currently not seeking to attract more "beekeepers" as the forage availability doesn't permit large increases in bee colonies being managed and is possibly detrimental to the forage available to bumblebees and other bees.

The question remains: Should we have a more publicly facing way in to the BKA for people who are interested in bees, but haven't any intention of keeping bees? AL said pollinator interest is high; PW said an hour or two of beekeeping might be welcomed by the public as a "red letter experience"; RN suggested that the latter would take a lot of resource, someone to run the scheme etc. MM suggested that once we are a CIO we will be able to charge people to do such a course/experience – at the moment we can only take donations. This will come under the business plan we put together in order to become a CIO. It will require a paid employee probably. **ACTION: Postpone further decision on expanding membership until after CIO achieved.**

7. Treasurer's update:

- i. WF reported on financial results of Open Day which were down on last year – largely due to lower honey sales and adverse weather. Tombola was down perhaps because they had to move their stall position. Books were popular. Plant stall was down on last year – perhaps it wasn't as attractive as it could have been. WF suggested that an earlier date in June might be more attractive to gardeners wanting to buy plants. There were left over plants, these can be planted in planters at the front of Twickenham, a variety of plants were taken to Mole for planting in the garden there. Positive engagement with the general public is the most important thing and this was achieved. The laboratory display was very popular and the children's activities were welcomed.
- ii. GE commented that the credit balances (approx. £83,000) on the CAF bank account should be put to better use by investing more profitably. Interest on this account is minimal and paid quarterly. GE suggested that it is a legal requirement of the committee under the charities commission/trusteeship responsibilities that we make the monies available to us work to best advantage both financially and to achieve the charity's objectives. WF commented that this is a work in progress, and needs to be researched but requires a fair amount of time to assess best options and get new accounts set up, but he agreed that it needs to be addressed. **ACTION: WF to research preferable investment options for credit balances.**

8. Asian Hornet Action Group – nothing to report at this meeting.

9. A.O.B.

- i. GE said that he has given his time to the Tuesday gardening group and reported that they would like to plant more flowers at Twickenham. **ACTION:**

GE will submit a proposal for this expenditure and an inventory of garden tools. Strimmer needed.

10. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 7th August 7.45pm on Googlemeets