

TWICKENHAM & THAMES VALLEY BEEKEEPING COMMITTEE MEETING NO: 726

WEDNESDAY 16th APRIL 2025 at 7.30pm

Miller Hall, Whitton Road, Twickenham

MINUTES

Present:

Greg Elliott (GE); Ray Nicol (RN); Warwick Francis (WF); Patrick Brennan (PB); Jane Sachdev (JS); Mandy Moss (MM); Christine Betley (CB); Alex Lawrence (AL); Julie Hill (JH).

Apologies:

Harvey Kirk; Sally Ewen; Candy Williamson; Phil Webb (PW); Irek Gajowniczek (IG).

1. Minutes and any Outstanding Issues from last Meeting (5.3.25)

- IG to advise details of the Tree surgeon. **ACTION: IG**
- Thanks were recorded to JS for the Mole update. There is a list of those who have hives at Mole.
- RN to sign off last year Accounts.
- Children's bee suits to be kept in the Discovery Room.

2. Minutes of the last AGM Meeting and any Outstanding Issues from AGM

- Schools are only asked to make a voluntary contribution (£1 per child) should they wish to do so and it was agreed that no change would be made to this arrangement.

3. Twickenham Apiary – first night report – teacher and student list

- 13 new members had been expected to the first practical session but fewer turned up. It was agreed that next year, there should be an induction night, starting a week or so earlier to run through health and safety, lighting a smoker etc.
- WF is running a Spring Course for four weeks in the Discovery Centre from 9th May for those late in signing up. They will then join others on Friday nights in the Apiary. **ACTION: WF**

4. Update from each Sub-Committee Team Leader

Mole User Group - JS

- Fire and Rescue inspection – we need to do a Risk Assessment. Template is provided by Surrey Fire and Rescue. Certificates not provided. The inspector didn't appear too concerned about Mole clubhouse as it is not open to the public, and no overnight stays. Classed as "domestic" outhouse I think he said?
- Association Hives – approach to Kingston beekeeper who lives in Molesey about the possibility of him switching to Mole and learning for his Basic with Ray on the Assoc hives
- Email going out to Mole Beekeepers explaining that the AGM passed a motion to allow an increase in subs for 2026 to £14 per stand and use of a Terms of Engagement form to encourage Mole Beekeepers to participate in the upkeep, maintenance and outreach work of the apiary – Mowing, Garden weeding, pruning and maintenance and watering, Rubbish removal, Mail box, meter reading, gas bottle supplies, Abbey Walk litter picking and hedge trimming, leaf sweeping, Fence repairs, Tree work, Club house repairs

- Mole outreach work - 2 Beaver Groups, 1 junior school – Y5 – 2 afternoon sessions, 1 infant school – YR – 2 afternoon sessions, Molesey Carnival – Saturday 14th June afternoon

Education Group, Discovery Centre - JS

- DBS checks underway – most will be obtained by the week after Easter
- First session of the season on Thursday 24th April.
- 12 school groups booked plus 1 Beavers and 1 cubs evening sessions
- Good strong volunteer base.

Apiary Shop - (HK away)

- New IT software is in progress. Shop sales are slowly reducing despite being competitively priced. Subcommittee team needs to meet to discuss further.
- Members need to know that the Shop is significantly cheaper than other suppliers such as Thornes.
- Pricing policy and discounts and the Shop to be promoted in the next Newsletter. “Use it or lose it”.
- Stock clearance sale to be looked at.

Policies and Procedures - GE

- Thanks given to MM who has generated a list of Policies - spreadsheet is on shared drive
- some documents already completed by Mandy and Jane
- generate more policy documents prior next meeting
- Sort filing cabinets in Discovery room and set up a document store

ACTION: GE & Team

ACTION: GE

Apiary Maintenance - GE

- most changes have been completed and the apiary now in better shape with a plan for storage of frames, woodwork, smokers etc.
- new drainage of rainwater has been done (PW, GE) but may need to be reviewed
- if you see anything that needs fixing or improving then please let me know.
- review what/if any long term maintenance plans are in place (e.g. painting)
- gutter clearance still to do
- electrical update work agreed to be done by Brooks Electrical

Gardening - CB

- CB is organising planting of the bed behind the shed to be in flower in time for the Open Day.
- Blackberries were still a problem on the right hand side of the Apiary.
- Petrol mower is currently in a workshop being serviced.
- Suitable shrub to be looked into to replace the bamboo screen.
- A firepit was requested to burn all the old wax.

Library, Honey Prep Room, Member Talks and Workshops - PB

- The audit of the Library stock is completed and it is hoped it will be online by the end of the month

- MM has updated the beginners reading list on the website. Out of 9 recommended books, the Apiary only has 3.
- MM to send the recommended list to PB.

ACTION: MM

Honey Prep Room – PB

- It was agreed that another Deep Clean would be booked as a matter of urgency.
- PB has started a clear out of empty buckets etc and hoping to organise a Meeting of the Sub Committee.
- A Membership talk and workshop is happening next Wednesday?

ACTION: advise details

Laboratory - SE

- Sally, Phil, Ray and Christine began working in the Lab from the end of last year, with the view to learning skills to take the Microscopy Certificate in November this year. Along the way, Avis from Kingston Beekeepers has joined the group. We have been meeting every Wednesday, though this will need to change after Easter to give space to the Schools Education group.
- A full audit of the contents of the laboratory has been carried out.
- Acquired all the relevant PPE, and a full safety audit of the chemical store is in progress. (note that we have already assessed the MSDS safety documents of the few chemicals that we are using at present).
- Plan to add to/ improve the educational posters that are up in the microscopy room
- Present a Friday night talk, so that other members can see what we're up to and might be tempted to become involved themselves next year.
- In terms of microscopy skills, we are making good progress towards the requirements of the November exam and look forward to eventually establishing a working microscopy department here at TTVBKA.
- We are very fortunate to have such a good lab, and kit, and the history of having once been a leading association microscopy department, to build upon.

Membership and Correspondence, Finance Report, Public Events - WF

- The Finance Report was circulated prior to the Meeting.
- Once The Association becomes a CIO, there will be opportunities to expand the type of membership, such as Friends of or Social Member.

Registered: 99

Partner: 7

Junior: 1

Country: 2

Family: 3

Associate: 2

Honorary: 6

Total: 120

The figures show paid up members. Subs are still to come in so figures will rise as payments for the forthcoming year are received.

Marketing Communications and Social Media, CIO Update - MM

- Awaiting updated graphic for Honey Show dates to add to website.
- Draft received from Solicitors on the Constitution. Quite a process getting it to the point that it ready to go to the Committee.
- Valuations received are based on charity valuations which is different to a commercial valuation. Mole charitable valuation estimated £630,000 / £760,000 Twickenham.
- Social Media – getting more interaction.
- MM is working on the Newsletter.

Apiary Management, IT, Adult Education - RN

- Thanks recorded to GE for leading on tidying up and overhauling the Apiary.
- Each beginners group to have their own crate for Friday night inspections.
- To update the Website and booking system for other assets, such as observation hive, settling tank, extractors. The website is currently backed up on an ad hoc basis.
- Trying to move forward with providing support for Honey Bee Health and General Husbandry 2025/26.

Asian Hornet – RN

- New sightings in Oswestry, Hampshire, Southampton.

5. Correspondence Report - JH

- Emails from BBKA and other parties were circulated to relevant Committee Members. Enquires about honey for sale or bees in houses formed the rest of the correspondence received and dealt with by JH. MM also answered enquiries via other social media platforms.
- Two pitches confirmed to use Apiary forecourt – embroidery company £350 and coffee company £1000 donations.
- Owner of Lemon & Lime in Turnham Green Terrace W4 would like to stock our honey. JH to advise him to look at website for list of members who may be able to supply honey. **ACTION: JH**

6. Items to discuss / vote

- Electrical survey and LED Lights quote received to check all electrics, PAT testing £2,364. WF suggested also looking at combining with emergency lighting which can be dimmed. This will increase the cost slightly but worth it

It was agreed to go ahead.

PROPOSED PB

SECONDED: MM

All in favour

- Glass for protecting library shelves – quote £260 from Glazier in Twickenham

PROPOSED PB

SECONDED RN

All in favour

To discuss at another time - Garden costs and paths, Fire check, Door locks and furniture, others?

7. Any Other Business

Lockers - Members on left, students on right

Committee dates – confirmed Wednesday nights through to the end of the year and maybe in winter we go to Zoom but until the end of the beekeeping season we meet at the apiary. Meetings will start at 7.30pm and aim for 90 minutes maximum.

Comms – a new Internet router is in place.

Skip – Another skip to come in May.

Smoker hut removal – Stephen Roberts will take the redundant hut away and it is hoped that a new tree would be planted in its place.

Honey Show Schedule – JH asked if the rules for winning cups could be made clearer and that the cake recipes could be looked at – perhaps submit a recipe as per honey fudge category rather than have to follow the one in the schedule? There was currently no judge booked for the October show.

Tea rota – GE has created a tea rota and asked that everyone (who wasn't teaching) could volunteer for a Friday night session. Other Members would also be encouraged to do so.

Brewery Market – RN is supplying some of his honey for their limited edition mead. It was agreed that they could not use the Association logo though.

Production Hives - It was agreed that 2-3 hives would be utilised specifically for honey production. This should increase the amount of honey we can sell to generate income and interest in the Association as people come in to buy honey and there is enough nectar around in Twickenham.

8. Date of Next Meetings

Wednesday 28th May at 7.30pm in Miller Hall

Wednesday 9th July at 7.30pm in Miller Hall

Wednesday 20th August at 7.30pm in Miller Hall

9 Other Important Dates

Acarine and Nosema Training Day - Saturday 26th April (amended date) 1000h to 1400h. The plan is not only to analyse members' bees for disease but also, if they wish, to allow non-experienced members an opportunity to do the dissection and use the microscopes themselves (with supervision).

Spring Course – 9 May WF to organise

Open Day – Saturday 7th June

Summer Social Evening – Saturday 28th June. Exact format to be decided

Provisional Honey Bee Health Exam – July

Basic Exam - August. No more Friday examination dates

Last night for members – Friday 26th September

Honey Show – Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th October

President's Evening – Friday 14th November. GE away

Committee Meetings (done) – Apiary schedule

Module Exams – done up to March

Spring Tidy – GE to set a date

Use of Car Park on Rugby days – 3 May, 27 September

GE thanked everyone for attending and closed the Meeting at 21:40