

TWICKENHAM & THAMES VALLEY BEEKEEPING COMMITTEE MEETING NO: 727

WEDNESDAY 28th MAY 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); Christine Betley (CB); Harvey Kirk (HK); Sally Ewen (SE); Phil Webb (PW); Irek Gajowniczek (IG). Julie Hill (JH).

Apologies:

Candy Wiliamson; Alex Lawrence; Mandy Moss.

1. Minutes and any Outstanding Issues from last Meeting (16.4.25)

The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

- IG advised he had not had any response from the Tree surgeon. It was agreed this would be left until the Autumn. **ACTION: DEFERRED UNTIL WINTER**

- HPR user guide to be finalised and issued.

- Sum up system was discussed. Communication is the key.

- There are 14 hives in the Apiary. It is hoped to create some honey producing hives.

WF has one more lesson with his group and first week after the Open Day they will be able to go out into the Apiary.

- Suggestion made to run courses for members of the public with a general interest in bees but who do not necessarily wish to be a beekeeper. Feasibility to be discussed before the next Meeting and MM to be asked to gauge interest through publicity.

ACTION: RN, WF, MM

- GE suggested altering the exterior sign to include information about courses etc, but was reminded there are planning restrictions regarding signage size.

2. Sub Committee Reports

Jane

Mole User Group

- Two visits with new observation hive to Reception Classes at The Orchard School, East Molesey. Well received but children too young (in my opinion) - next time will offer to Year 2.
- Two visits planned for next week to Year 5 classes at St Lawrence School, East Molesey and two visits to Molesey Beaver groups upcoming.
- We won't be participating in Molesey Carnival this year.
- Apiary site - a bit overgrown but looks wild and pretty

Education Group and Discovery Centre

- School visit programme progressing as scheduled - Wednesday and Thursday mornings booked out until 3rd July (last session)
- Surprising demand from scouts/cub/beaver style groups for evening sessions, which we are managing to resource with extra volunteers drawn from the committee (Greg, Mandy, Ray thanks) together with Ed Group regulars. Need a system whereby such bookings can be put on to the apiary calendar. Also Patrick in process of finding a way to block all bookings for HPR on school visit times. (We had a clash last week)
- All regular Ed Group volunteers now have clear DBS certification (just Greg and Mandy outstanding - but I suggest not necessary for this season)
- School visit Information Sheet updated to reflect change to DBS status - updated version to go on the website please.

Harvey

Shop Trading Centre

- New Sumup sales 'front end' in place.
- Heavy promotion in forthcoming newsletter so let's see if any improvement.

Greg

Policies and Procedures

- Nothing done and nothing to report but now aim for June/July – will need to enlist members to write policies.
- Will set up hard copy storage location and liaise with Mandy over web based storage location for all apiary documents.

Maintenance/Building/General Management

- Approaching end point for all outstanding items – electrical survey complete, skip loaded and apiary cleared and all parts of the apiary looking less cluttered and fit for purpose. Additional items to be discussed at committee.

Christine

Gardening Group

- In preparation for open day the front hedges were trimmed and the lawns mown and various parts of the apiary were pressure washed and cleaned.
- The small bed by the new shed is being stocked with new plants.
- A key audit was carried out and all seems to be correct – discuss keys later in meeting.

Patrick

Library

- Library is up and running, newly donated books added and hoping to get approval for new books on Wednesday. I am planning on doing a membership talk on how to use the library. I have done a draft on instructions but awaiting revision from Mandy.
- New glass cabinet doors for additional storage have arrived and been fitted.

Honey Prep Room

- Up and running – cleaned and instructions issued.
- Waiting purchase of some new items.
- Responsibility for apiary honey (storage and packaging) passed over to Ray and Greg.

Member Talks and Workshops

- List of possible speakers and dates has been compiled – see spreadsheet

Sally

Laboratory

- complete inventory of stock and equipment sent to Greg (and to Ray for putting on the apiary drive).
- progress ongoing quite intensively to develop the knowledge base for the microscopy group to be ready for the Microscopy Certificate (meeting up a couple of times a week at present, plus working independently in between). We have also had a very useful Google Meet chat with Sean Stephenson, to fill in gaps in our knowledge.
- Sally is in the process of sorting out improved display items to be stuck on the cupboards, in preparation for Open Day.
- the acarine/ noseema clinic was a great success, with maybe a dozen members dropping by with their own bees, plus we tested all of the apiary colonies. Result = all apiary colonies had no detectable infestation; four members' colonies were positive for noseema and those members have been advised accordingly regarding next steps. Also, I have asked for a note to be put into the next newsletter reminding that the TTVBKA microscopy department are always available if members are after advice and/or testing for noseema or acarine (ie no need to wait for the next annual clinic) - maybe my (Sally's) contact details could be put on the website too, when we have a little subsection relating to microscopy on it (Ray).

Warwick

Membership and Correspondence

- Comments awaited

Finance

- Comments awaited

Public Events

- Comments awaited

Mandy

Marketing Communications and Social Media

- Open Day promoted on social media (Facebook, Instagram & Nextdoor) & local media (Richmond & Twickenham Times, Hounslow Guardian, Twickenham News Hub), Eventbrite and JP has been in touch with Radio Jackie and Love Whitton. Website updated
- May Newsletter to go out this week – Need financials to add to website and link in newsletter
- Social media getting more traction, especially Instagram followers – [TTVBKA Social and website stats.xlsx - Google Sheets](#)
- Correspondence tracker has been set up on shared drive - [Correspondence and enquiry tracker.xlsx - Google Sheets](#)
- Website – need to have more educational content on bees and pollinators – to discuss

CIO Update

- 2nd draft of Constitution received from Solicitors – I need to review.
- Had a problem with Transfer docs. CD has signed incorrectly. Currently on way back from NH to send back on to CD.

Ray

Apiary Management

- Buckets for wax and washing soda set up for groups.
- Old and broken equipment removed and new equipment replacements underway.
- Wax stored for rendering (carry out after school visits finish).
- Burcow boiler (for frames) checked and OK but cable needs to be fully inserted into boiler body – old frames to be cleaned and recycled. New frames (2025) increasingly being used.
- Ongoing familiarising and enforcing apiary procedures with students and users – Gregs weekly updates stressing tidiness!!
- Number of colonies now up to 14 – move hives to reduce crowding and allocate hives to groups and set up 'apiary hives' to be done.
- Sort out existing honey stocks - jar and label honey for Open day
- Order Varroa treatments so they can be applied mid August.

IT Infrastructure

- Website backups moved to Google Drive – need to document and add to document archive.
- Laptop backups moved to Google Drive – backup instructions are also on folder in Google Drive (Document Archive).
- Usage of Twickerbees email addresses being investigated and rationalised.
- IT requirements for Equipment Centre (Sumup) being investigated along with integration to the web site.

Adult Education

- Beginners groups set up and running.
- Basic group exam dates being organised.
- Honey Bee Health assessment being organised.
- Warwicks shortened winter course is ongoing – investigate other times if demand?
- Microscopy group ongoing – aim for November exam.

Asian Hornet Coordination

- Ongoing – no current actions.
- Keep eye on Government website for latest information.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asian-hornet-uk-sightings>

3. Items to discuss / vote

- **Key Boxes**

It was agreed that the gate and HPR and toilet key in the forecourt would remain as is.
An emergency key to the Miller Hall and shop will be put in a second keysafe in the courtyard.

- **Locks**

GE felt the locks to the Miller Hall doors were not very secure but the majority felt they were quite adequate.

- **First aid Boxes**

GE bought two new First Aid boxes. A third box to be made up utilising the two existing boxes with new plasters, Piriton. The Piriton in the existing boxes in in date.

- **Fire Check**

GE to look into who can carry out a fire check.

ACTION: GE

GE and PW to look into the pipework and if necessary organise a plumber to renew the pipework to the external sink.

ACTION: GE & PW

- **Discovery Room filing cabinets**

JH to look through initially.

ACTION: JH

- **Honey Prep Room**

Stopping the block booking can only be done when the software is updated.

When organising workmen it was requested that the HPR calender is checked to see if there are any clashes.

Discussion took place about installing a de-humidifier. The new extraction rules ask people to use the fan. RN suggested we monitor the mould levels throughout the season.

Irek suggested an extractor fan when the moisture level increased.

Any price increase needs to be communicated to the Membership. It was agreed that from next year, the rate would be £10 for a half day and £20 full day. Deposit lost if not left clean.

Discretionary spend limit was discussed. WF proposed preparing a form to allocate expenditure.

- **Correspondence Tracking – MM**

Carried forward to next Meeting. JH had printed off three sheets of 40 emails received and answered but as MM was absent, this item carried forward to next meeting.

- **H&S Rep (First Aid & review Guide) – MM**

Carried forward to next Meeting.

4. Membership and Finance Report- 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.

PB to be given access to the Membership for the Library database.

£13000 expenditure and £7900 in. There had been considerable expense this year to bring the Apiary up to standard.

ACTION: WF

5. Correspondence Report – JH

40 emails had been received since 28th April and answered. JH answers emails, mainly about bee nest in gardens, possibly Apiary visits and forwards to the relevant Committee Member, along with emails from BBKA for general circulation to members. MM can be copied into emails for tracking purposes but we need to be careful about what data is shared to other databases.

6. Preparations for Open Day

HK asked for flier to advertise the Apiary which can be given to members of the public to direct them to the website.

AGREED

7. Any Other Business

- For consistency, TTVBKA should be used when referring to the Apiary and in any correspondence – we should stop using T&TVBKA>
- Committee pictures to go up on the noticeboard prior to the Open Day.
- Ted Chatley Memorial Cup for Best in Show – cup still to be found
- HK to draw up a list of plaque recipients.

ACTION: HK

Summer social Evening

Friday 27th June. Bring a bottle for those who are around. Suggestion is to get Pizza or fish and chips for students and members who are present to make it more social after finishing hive visits.

8. Date of Next Meetings

Wednesday 9th July at 7.30pm in Miller Hall

Wednesday 20th August at 7.30pm in Miller Hall

Meetings to be limited to 90 minutes maximum in future.

9 Other Important Dates

Open Day – Saturday 7th June

Summer Social Evening – Move to 27 June and have with students after Friday night hive opening.

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 2138