



EssexBeekeepers'Association

Minutes of the 144th Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Wednesday 20 March 2024

on Zoom

These minutes will be considered correct if no objection is raised in writing or by email before Tuesday 31st May 2024.

Any point challenged will be brought before the next meeting for amendment/ correction of the record.

Presiding Officer: Keith Lomax (Southend Division)

Also: 57 attendees (record in EBKA Attendance Book)

A period of silence was observed to remember our fellow beekeepers who had died during the past year.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Antony Stark (Braintree), Fiona Cutting (Chelmsford), Brian Spencer (Chelmsford), Ian Nichols (Epping), Yasin Patel (Epping), Ken Shutt (Romford), Malcolm Legg (Saffron Walden), Deryck Johnson (Saffron Walden), Paul Abbott (Southend), John Edmunds (Southend).

2. Minutes of 143rd AGM

The Minutes of the last AGM were sent to all members via eR2 and available on the EBKA website. No challenges to the accuracy had been received so the Minutes were signed by the Presiding Officer as a true record.

3. Report of the Chair of the Central Executive Committee (CEC)

The CEC Chair, Linda Yeats, had circulated her full report to members via eR2 and it was also available on the EBKA website. An appropriately modified version will be submitted to the Charity Commission.

The key points of the Chair's report were highlighted: Successes, Challenges, Problems and Solutions.

Successes: There were some excellent educational experiences in 2023: the Honey Show, the Conference, and Officers Day. The Honey Show Committee worked hard to bring about a well supported and well attended day, and Southend Division had hosted a highly successful conference in November. Officers Day took place in October, attended by divisional officers and members of the CEC, and the suggestions raised at the meeting are still being worked through.

Challenges: We have to be careful to balance online and in person events as not everyone is comfortable with using Zoom. However there are obvious advantages to Zoom meetings, for example in the winter, compared with the cost and time of travelling to a central venue.

Problems: Sadly Harlow division, despite the best efforts of their members and members of the CEC, were unable to fill key committee posts and requested the division be suspended. The health of our divisions is vital to the smooth running of the organisation, and it is important to be aware of divisional good culture and of fostering it by encouraging new people to come forward, without losing long-standing expertise.

Communication is vital to sharing information within the county, but unfortunately there has been no *Essex Beekeeper* since September 2022. We need someone with the skills to take on the valuable role as Editor.

Other problems relate to the increasing threat of Asian Hornet. Dave Garratt, our Bee Health Officer, has worked hard to raise awareness, provide advice, and help us prepare for the coming season. The ongoing health of our colonies is important in enabling them to resist attack.

Solutions: Education, training and talking to other beekeepers are vital to keeping our skills up to date and keeping abreast of current practice. There are a wide range of talents within our divisions, and we should all be talent spotting to maintain the health of our organisation.

Bridget Mudd (Braintree) and Mike Abel (Chelmsford) are both retiring from the CEC and new trustees have stepped in. Pat Allen (Romford) has completed her four years as General Treasurer, and a new treasurer will be appointed. Graeme Crook (Chelmsford) has resigned as webmaster and is replaced by Jan Swanwick. Many thanks to all of them, and to those whose term on the CEC will continue this year.

4. General Treasurer's Report & Approval of the 2023 Accounts

The General Treasurer, Pat Allen, stated that her report and the examined accounts were sent to all members using the eR2 system; they were also displayed on-screen.

It had been a difficult year for her personally and she thanked all those who had helped keep the treasurer's tasks on track, and attempted to resolve Harlow Division's problems, in particular Keith Lomax, who had examined Harlow Division's accounts.

A few divisions showed a deficit, although all accounts were in credit. This was not a problem overall, as the EBKA accounts are healthy. Both the Honey Show and the Conference made a loss, but such events fit perfectly with our educational objects, educating the public and our members: what our funds should be spent on.

The Officers' Day, funded by the CEC, benefits the Association by helping our Officers to handover procedures. Hopefully it will become an annual event, as every year there are some posts changing hands, so this is an ongoing need.

Over 30 people took their Basic Assessment in 2023, and 4 of those achieved a Distinction and the Miss Avey Award. Given the number of members in the county, we need to improve on this number. We should encourage more members to sit BBKA exams and assessments, and be running courses and sessions to prepare them and to raise standards.

This year subscription rates and entitlements of membership will be discussed, and EBKA Trading limits and clarification provided for divisions.

After 4 years as General Treasurer, a new Treasurer will be taking over and will require an extended handover period to organise bank signatories, etc.

All fellow Trustees, Divisional Treasurers and Membership Secretaries were warmly thanked for their cooperation throughout the year, as well as fellow Trustees and CEC members for their help, advice, and support.

Members were asked to vote to approve the Accounts:

Proposer: Pat Allen

Seconder: Linda Yeats

In favour: 38; Against: 0; Abstain: 2

The Accounts were approved

5. Written Reports of other members of the CEC

Written reports were provided by the Examinations Secretary (Diane Brooker), the Honey Show Secretary (Michael Webb), Education Secretary (Jane Ridler), and the President (Jean Smye). They had been sent to members via eR2 and are available on the EBKA website.

6. Election of County Officers (Trustees): CEC Chair, General Secretary and General Treasurer

CEC Chair: Linda Yeats

Proposer: Jane Ridler

Seconder: Keith Lomax

In favour: 44; Against: 0; Abstain: 3

Linda was re-elected

General Treasurer:

Pat Allen is standing down after her term of office of 4 years.

Alison Morris (Southend) is willing to stand.

Proposer: Pat Allen

Seconder: Vanessa Wilkinson

In favour: 48; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Alison was elected

General Secretary: Vanessa Wilkinson

Proposer: Pat Allen

Seconder: Simon Nicholson

In favour: 45; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Vanessa was re-elected

7. Notification of 2024 Divisional Voting Members and 2025 Presiding Officer

Braintree
Chelmsford
Colchester
Maldon & Dengie 100
Epping Forest
Romford
Saffron Walden
Southend

Kate Dannatt
Margaret Cameron
Andrew Linley
David Mills
Simon Nicholson
Roger Honey
Jerry Hartland
Keith Lomax

The name of the 2025 Presiding Officer is not yet available

8. Election of County (non Trustee) Appointees

President: Jean Smye Proposer: Linda Yeats Second: Vanessa Wilkinson

In favour: 44; Against: 0; Abstain: 2

Jean was re-elected

BBKA Delegate: Richard Ridler Proposer: Paul Abbott Second: Roger Honey

In favour: 44; Against: 0; Abstain: 3

Richard was re-elected

Editor (*The Essex Beekeeper*): no nominations

Education Secretary: Jane Ridler Proposer: Deryck Johnson Second: Diane Brooker

In favour: 47; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Jane was re-elected

Examinations Secretary:

Diane Brooker is standing down: no nominations

EBKA Show Secretary:

Michael Webb is standing down: no nominations

NHS Delegate: Jim McNeill Proposer: Jean Smye Second: Michael Webb

In favour: 46; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Jim was re-elected

Bee Health Secretary: Dave Garratt Proposer: Jan Tutton Second: Steph Green

In favour: 46; Against: 0; Abstain: 2

Dave was re-elected

9. Notification of CEC Appointees and Co-opted Members

CEC Minutes Secretary Simon Nicholson

Membership Secretary Jan Tutton

Book of Commemoration Secretary

Penny Learmonth has been Book of Commemoration Secretary for many years and we thank her most warmly for all her work. The new Secretary will be:

Jean Smye

Webmaster Jan Swanwick

10. Confirmation of Accounts Examiner (External Auditor)

The General Treasurer reported that the CEC had used *Versa Accountants* in Upminster to examine the accounts, as last year. This company is willing to examine the accounts next year but it will be up to the new Treasurer to make the final decision on the Examiner.

Alison Morris said that in order to maintain consistency she was in favour of appointing *Versa Accountants* to examine the 2024 accounts.

11. Proposition: To accept the proposed changes to EBKA's Rules.

A document highlighting the proposed amendments was provided by email to all members via eR2 and was available on the website.

Proposed by: Vanessa Wilkinson

Seconded by: Linda Yeats

In favour: 40; Against: 1; Abstain: 6

The proposition was approved

12. 2023 Conference Report - given by Keith Lomax

Keith Lomax echoed the words of the Chair and President that the Conference hosted by Southend was great success. He highlighted all the work done by Sarah Rumble, Divisional Chair, ably supported by Southend Committee.

13. 2024 Conference Report - given by Julie Mugglestone

The Conference in 2024 will be hosted by Romford Division, on Saturday 2 November, and the theme will be '*Rewilding*'. It will take place in the Mount Avenue Banqueting Suite, Brentwood, the same venue as the 2023 conference, which has good public transport links and convenient access throughout the county.

David Robinson, Chief of National Bee Supplies, is one of the speakers and the division is waiting for confirmation of others. More information will be available shortly but, in the meantime, please keep the date.

14. Installation of the 2024 Presiding Officer

Julie Mugglestone, Chair of Romford, was installed as Presiding Officer.

15. Reading from the Book of Commemoration

Vanessa Wilkinson, General Secretary, read from the Book of Commemoration.

The AGM was formally closed.

The President, Jean Smye, paid tribute to Pat Allen, who has been the lynchpin of EBKA over very many years. Pat was awarded the category of Honorary County Life Member, an honour conferred by Trustees to those who have given exceptional and long service to EBKA. She was

was supported by the CEC to be President and was elected and served in that role from 2015 to 2020.

In the late 80s, Pat was already a prominent member of Romford Division and, when EBKA became a charity, she was one of the early members to become a Trustee. In the early 90s, Pat stepped forward to fill the vacancy of Editor of the *Essex Beekeeper* magazine, covering a period of 10 years.

Pat was also both EBKA Membership Secretary and Examinations Secretary for many years, and at the same she was busy taking her own exams, as well as teaching new members and helping them take their exams.

At one point, the Association was without both Secretary and Chair. Pat took on the role of Secretary, hoping that a Chair would be found: until then she filled both positions for 3 years, as well as continuing the roles of Examination Secretary and Membership Secretary, and in addition to Divisional training.

As Membership Secretary, eR2 automatically became part of Pat's role, and without very much information at the time, she put together a team, who between them worked hard to understand the system and help introduce it to the divisions.

Four years ago, we found ourselves without a Treasurer, and Pat once again filled this essential post. She has now come to the end of that term. She was warmly praised as a modest and hard working EBKA member, and thanked on behalf of the CEC and all EBKA members. There was a round of applause and many thanks expressed by individual members.

The President announced that any awards and certificates for this year would be presented at the Conference.

Dave Garratt, Bee Health Officer, gave a brief update on the threat of Asian Hornet in Essex. He displayed a map showing the areas of Essex, which are within a 10 km radius of the Thames, and therefore at more risk of sightings. He urged members living in this area to be vigilant and to keep using monitoring traps. He showed an illustration of a monitoring trap, which has been slightly adjusted to prevent bi-catch and bi-kill of other insects. The traps should be monitored daily so that any such insects can be released. The illustration has been sent to all divisional Asian Hornet coordinators to share with their members.
