



EssexBeekeepers'Association

Minutes of the 145th Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Thursday 27 March 2025

on Zoom

These minutes will be considered correct if no objection is raised in writing or by email before Tuesday 27th May 2025.

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

Presiding Officer: Julie Mugglestone (Romford Division)

Also: 34 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: Clive de Bruyn (Braintree), Jan Tutton (Chelmsford), Salma Attan (Epping), Khalil Attan (Epping), Robin Harman (Epping), James Walding (Romford), Carl Mitchell (Saffron Walden), Deryck Johnson (Saffron Walden), Jane Ridler (Saffron Walden), Diane Brooker (Saffron Walden), Steph Green (Saffron Walden), Paul Abbott (Southend).

2. Minutes of 144th AGM

The Minutes of the last AGM were sent to all members via eR2. 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.

Key points of the Chair's report were highlighted:

The charitable aims of EBKA are to promote and further the craft of beekeeping and this year's Honey Show, which was organised by Jean and David Smye, is our flagship county event. Other local events held throughout the year by all the divisions increased our impact, including our presence at local shows, school visits, and talks given to various groups.

In addition to educating the public, we provide education for beekeepers, through constant provision of training and information for our members. As well as regular divisional meetings, an Annual Conference is held. This was organised by Romford division in 2024 and provided a

very thought provoking focus, which put beekeeping in the wider context of environmental issues. The conference is a grand example of team work and how we are stronger working together.

The county endeavours to promote educational skills and training through BBKA exams, especially the higher levels, e.g. General Husbandry and Master Beekeeper, and members need to be encouraged to keep learning.

County resources are used to support our charitable aims, e.g. supporting a programme of bee research based at Queen Mary College, London; and 'seed' papers at Writtle College and Essex County Food and Farm Day for primary school children.

Communications within the county still remain an issue. Jan Swanwick, our webmaster, is designing a new website, which will help, but we are keen to bring back the *Essex Beekeeper*, if an Editor can be found.

EBKA has recognised the many contributions of David Smye with the award of Honorary Life Membership. A man of many talents, who has worked with good humour and efficiency. He has been a significant contributor to the running of the Annual Honey Show since the 1990s, was Editor of the *Essex Beekeeper*, as well as taking on roles within in his division.

Jean Smye, as outgoing EBKA President, was warmly thanked: she stepped in to run the Honey Show last year and her understanding and knowledge of our organisation has been very valuable to the CEC. In addition, thanks go to Alison Morris, who during her first year as treasurer, has been very supportive; to members of the Governance Committee for advice; and to Vanessa Wilkinson, who has completed her term of office as General Secretary.

4. General Treasurer's Report & Approval of the 2024 Accounts

The General Treasurer, Alison Morris, had circulated her report and the examined accounts to all members using the eR2 system.

Pat Allen was warmly thanked for her help and support during the year as she handed over the role of General Treasurer. Members of the CEC and other treasurers were also thanked for all their support.

The 2024 EBKA accounts were healthy, with funds still available in the Honey Show account. The surplus had reduced this year due to a number of key aspects: a reduction in the number of donations; a reduction in membership numbers; and money spent on research funding. There were also healthy bank balances within divisions.

The way that EBKA accounts are presented does not highlight the positive uses of money spent. We provide:

- training and support to our members by e.g. training days, apiary events;
- education and training to the wider community, e.g. Annual Honey Show, local community events;
- support for research and education, including funding for honey bee research at Queen Mary College, London University, and funding for 'seed' papers at Writtle College and Essex County Food and Farm Day organised by Chelmsford division; and
- support for DEFRA and the NBU, to help prevent the spread of invasive species through AHAT teams and sentinel apiaries.

The examined accounts were displayed on screen.

Members were asked to vote to approve the Accounts:

Proposer: Alison Morris

Second: Linda Yeats

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

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 (Jean and David Smye), Education Secretary (Jane Ridler), General Secretary (Vanessa Wilkinson), Bee Health Secretary (Dave Garratt) and the President (Jean Smye). They were sent to members via eR2 and are available on the EBKA website.

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

CEC Chair: Linda Yeats

Proposer: Alison Morris Second: Pat Allen

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Linda was re-elected

General Treasurer: Alison Morris

Proposer: Keith Lomax Second: Linda Yeats

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Alison was re-elected

General Secretary: Vanessa Wilkinson has come to the end of her term of office.

The position is currently vacant, although Linda Yeats commented that a member had expressed interest.

7. Notification of 2025 Divisional Voting Members and 2026 Presiding Officer

Braintree

Kate Dannatt

Chelmsford

Ian Grant

Colchester

Rod Richardson

Maldon & Dengie 100

David Mills

Epping Forest

Eric Beaumont

Romford

Roger Honey

Saffron Walden

John Rhodes

Southend

Keith Lomax

The name of the 2026 Presiding Officer is not yet available.

8. Election of County (non Trustee) Appointees

President: Jean Smye has come to the end of her term of office

New President: Richard Ridler

Proposer: Vanessa Wilkinson

Second: Jean Smye

In favour: 31; Against: 0; Abstain: 3

Richard was elected

BBKA Delegate: Richard Ridler has come to the end of his term of office

New BBKA Delegate: Tony Yeats **Proposer:** Diane Brooker **Seconders:** Andy Linley

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Tony was elected

Editor (*The Essex Beekeeper*): no nominations

Education Secretary: Jane Ridler **Proposer:** Julie Mugglestone **Seconder:** Pat Holden

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Jane was re-elected

Examinations Secretary: Diane Brooker **Proposer:** Deryck Johnson **Seconder:** Richard Ridler

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Diane was re-elected

EBKA Show Secretary: Jean and David Smye stood in as temporary Secretaries for 2024.

New Show Secretaries: Sarah and Colin Rumble

In favour: 33; Against: 0; Abstain: 1

Sarah and Colin were elected

National Honey Show Delegate: Jim McNeill has come to the end of his term of office

New NHS Delegate: Paul Abbott Proposer: Jim McNeill Seconder: Linda Yeats

In favour: 31; Against: 0; Abstain: 3

Paul was elected

Bee Health Secretary: Dave Garratt

Proposer: Tony Yeats

Seconder: Ian Grant

In favour: 32; Against: 0; Abstain: 2

Dave was re-elected

9. Notification of CEC Appointees and Co-opted Members

CEC Minutes Secretary

to be appointed

Membership Secretary

Jan Tutton

Book of Commemoration Secretary

Jean Smye

Webmaster

Jan Swanwick

10. Confirmation of Accounts Examiner (External Auditor)

The General Treasurer reported that she is looking for an independent examiner for the 2025 accounts, rather than a firm of accountants, in order to save on expensive fees. If no one suitable

is found then *Versa Accountants* in Upminster, who examined the 2024 accounts, will be appointed.

11. 2024 Conference Report - given by Julie Mugglestone

Julie Mugglestone said that the Conference, hosted by Romford, had been a great success, with very good speaker, and had received many compliments. More than 100 people had attended the event. The organising committee had been excellent and had put together the event with only 12 month's notice.

13. 2025 Conference Report - given by Andy Linley

The Conference in 2025 will be hosted by Colchester Division, on Saturday 11 October, and the theme will be '*Wellbeeing*': *the health and welfare of our bees and our beekeepers*. It will take place at the Holiday Inn Colchester, Abbotts Lane, Eight Ash Green, CO6 3Q, which is easy to find, straight off the A12.

The speakers will be: Kevin Thorne, a bee farmer who is working to reintroduce the native black bee to the Abberton Reservoir area of Essex; Dr Gerry Brierley, an apitherapist; and Brigit Strawbridge, a wildlife gardener, amateur naturalist, and advocate of bees.

Early bird ticket price will be £26, with a later price of £29. Tickets will go on sale end of June/beginning of July for early bird price.

14. Installation of the 2025 Presiding Officer

Andy Linley from Colchester Division was installed as Presiding Officer.

15. Reading from the Book of Commemoration

Andy Linley, as Presiding Officer, read from the Book of Commemoration.

The AGM was formally closed.

The President, Richard Ridler, paid tribute to Jim McNeill, for his invaluable contributions to EBKA's Honey Show and as National Honey Show delegate over many years.

He also thanked Michael Webb, for all his work for EBKA, and Vanessa Wilkinson, whose term of General Secretary had come to an end.

Any awards and certificates for this year will be presented at the Conference.
