



### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020/2021**

Mike Benson	
Tim Bullock	Chairman
Stephen Greenaway	Vice Chairman, Spray and Swarm Liaison.
Clive Harris	Treasurer
Kathy Hobson	Secretary, Membership Secretary.
Andy Jones	
Nicola Perrett	
Christopher Wilkinson	Website Manager

### **APIARY NOTES Tim Bullock**

With the wet May we've had this year we may find that the 'June gap' doesn't happen this year, but still keep checking that there are enough stores in colonies to keep them going. If you do need to feed then go for the little and often method as we don't want them drawing syrup down into the brood box or supers, feeding now is for consumption.

The oilseed rape should now finish flowering so if you have colonies close by now is the time to clear supers and extract the honey if you haven't done it yet as it will granulate quickly. Better that this happens in a honey bucket rather than in capped supers.

Swarming is still likely to happen during June so stick to a maximum of 7 days between inspections. It may be worth doing an artificial swarm on strong colonies even if they aren't showing signs of swarming – at least we're in control and you get the benefit of another colony!!

Don't forget that water demands will be high, not much of an issue at the moment but as natural water sources dry up (I'm assuming that June will be drier than May here!!) make sure that there are water sources for colonies – I have a large plant saucer with a sponge in full of water close to the outside tap available (it also gets used by the local hedgehogs as a bonus!)

### **PARK FARM APIARY Ian Cowdy**

The three colonies are healthy and thriving despite the earliest split appearing to have failed. Remember the old maxim let the bees sort themselves out and a new laying queen will appear. (Doesn't always work like that but here it did!). A three frame nuc was made up from one of the strongest colonies and this now sits at another out apiary waiting to produce a laying queen.

Full inspection on the 1st June revealed an exceptionally strong super colony - I have never encountered a brood box with only eggs on 9 frames! This colony was carefully split to produce two more three frame nucs with Sheila Rummings help and which were taken away to raise new queens. The parent colony will be kept at Park Farm to hopefully produce more potential splits next year.

Despite the weather all three colonies are packing stores and honey away.

Two of the colonies will be moved back to Twigs in the next few weeks plus surplus equipment. My intention now is to just keep bees at the farm for increase and possibly queen production.

I apologise to those of you who were hoping to attend sessions here but after last year I found that having too many people caused (me) to get confused over what was and wasn't happening. Possibly in a few weeks I will open the site to preferably new beekeepers only and then no more than 4 at a time so if you are interested let me know.

## **TRAINING**

Hopefully three Taster Days will be run in July as long as the current restrictions are lifted. All the dates are nearly full!!!

## **WBKA – CHARITY STATUS AND GIFT AID**

As members are probably aware, WBKA has been considering the merits to converting to a charity for some time and your committee wish to bring you the latest information it has in this respect.

By way of background, SDBKA is a branch of WBKA which is an unincorporated association with the usual officers, i.e. Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary etc. WBKA and its branches work within the framework of the WBKA Constitution. SDBKA has its own funds, although technically these “belong” to WBKA as the latter (as District Association) has the legal capacity to operate a bank account. Notwithstanding this SDBKA, as have all other Wiltshire branches, have historically made their own decisions about their fund-raising activities and how they wished to spend their money.

The principal factor that seems to be driving WBKA’s desire to convert to a charity appears to be its ability to claim Gift Aid on members subscriptions, if members choose to offer that when paying their annual subscriptions (only those who pay UK income tax can authorise a claim for gift aid to be made on their subscription).

Conversion to a charity would be as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The structure of this would be similar to WBKA’s existing structure.

Earlier this year WBKA held an extraordinary meeting at which a vote was taken to decide whether or not to pursue conversion to a charity. The motion was passed, but voting members of your committee either abstained or voted against the motion as they considered that important questions upon the consequences of conversion had not been answered.

What is known is that additional administration will be involved, as WBKA and its branches will have to comply with Charity Commission rules and regulations. Further, conversion to a charity would require a new constitution to be adopted, based upon a lengthy model Charity Commission constitution. What is currently unclear is whether the financial benefits of gift aid funding outweigh the burden of the additional level of administration involved.

WBKA continues to work towards converting to a charity and in due course the full membership will be asked to vote on the proposal. In the meantime, representatives from your committee are attending sub-committee meetings of the WBKA to have input into the discussions. This is turning out to be a very complex issue and it is intended that before members are asked to vote upon the matter, a full briefing document will be produced by WBKA setting out the advantages and disadvantages of conversion, so that members can make an informed decision.

***Please note that nothing will change until there has been a county wide meeting and all paid up members have been given the opportunity to vote.***

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

Our Club Zoom meeting held on 27.5.21 on the subject of bee stings was really interesting and informative and I think those from Swindon and all the other Wiltshire Clubs learned something!!!.

We will not be setting up a meeting for June. Our next meeting on 29.7.21 will be face to face (fingers crossed). This will be an Open Forum and take place at Park Farm, Lydiard Tregoze, SN5 3NY – bring your own chairs and drinks.

## **TWIGS Open Day for the National Garden Scheme**

The next open day is Sunday 18.7.21 12.00-4.00 pm admission £3.50 children free. A request for volunteers to help will be emailed nearer the time.

Even if you are not helping why not bring your family and come along to look round the garden.

**Anything odd or unusual (or just anything!!!) to add to the Newsletter will be gratefully received.**