



NEWSLETTER – March 2022

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2021/2023

Tim Bullock	- Chairman
Stephen Greenaway	- Vice Chairman, Spray and Swarm Liaison.
Clive Harris	- Treasurer
Kathy Hobson	- Secretary, Membership Secretary
Justin Downes	- Newsletter Editor
Nicola Perrett	
Mike Benson	
Mick Carter	
Juliette Cavilla	
Website Manager	-Christopher Wilkinson

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock

The weather has been warm recently and the forecast says it should be staying that way for now, so it's probably ok to start inspections, BUT, I would still make them short and sweet for now as brood can get chilled easily.....It's always best to have a plan before you start each inspection – what do you want to know, what are you looking for etc., as this will help to speed you up.

The main key things to check: - is there enough food (colonies can still starve at this time of year especially if the weather turns cold), is the queen laying well (and does the brood pattern look good), any sign of disease.

Hopefully colonies won't be starting to make swarm preparations but now is the time to make sure you're ready for when they do. Spare hives/nucs, bait hives etc etc. As brood boxes fill and get more congested then colonies may start to split. Don't forget to check for swarm cells and play cups hidden away in corners and hard to get to places.

Asian hornet queens are likely to be out starting to build their first nests. Consider putting out hornet traps baited either with hornet bait or something sweet (beer, fruit etc). Check regularly and release any catch that isn't an Asian hornet.

TWIGS

Open Days - There are a number open days coming up, these are:

Spring Open Day - Sunday 24th April 11-4

NGS Open Day Sunday - 22nd May 12-4

Summer Open Day Sunday - 19th June 11-4

NGS Open Day Sunday - 17th July 12-4

We will need some help with these and will be asking for volunteers.

WORK PARTY AT OUR APIARY AT TWIGS

The new fence is up thanks to committee members and new Club Member Kevin Holt. There are lots of other jobs to be done so a work "party" will take place on Saturday 2.4.22 at 10am. If you can help, even for an hour, can you let Kathy Hobson know asap. A reminder to anyone who has borrowed the Clubs extractor over the last couple of years that some help at the work party is the "fee"!!!!

SDBKA SGM

As you are aware there was a meeting on 8.3.22 to vote on whether WBKA became a charity. The majority vote was in favour of this. Part of the transfer is the requirement for two trustees to represent each branch. At the SGM held via Zoom on Thursday 17.3.22 it was a unanimous vote that Tim Bullock and Kathy Hobson be the Trustees for SDBKA.

TRAINING COURSES - 2022

The dates for the courses are:

- **Taster Days** - 14.5.22, 11.6.22, 9.7.22 and 6.8.22. Kathy needs one beekeeper to help her.
- **Starting Beekeeping** 28.5.22 and 4.6.22 – three beekeepers are needed to help with this course – you need to have passed the basic exam to be "eligible" Can you let Kathy know if you can help with any of the above

CLUB MEETINGS

Further dates of interest:

Richard Oliver – 31.3.22

Avril Earl- 28.4.22

Skittle's evening -26.5.22

Honey Extraction Demonstration – Park Farm 28.7.22

AGM – 27.10.22

Meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month in the Skittle Alley at the Haydon Wick Club, Blunsdon Road, Swindon SN25 1JD, start time 7.30pm. Please come along, all are welcome.

COUNTY

Bee Health Day – 3.9.22

WBKA Bee and Honey Day – 8.10.22

Neonicotinoids – Update on Last Month's Article by Clive Harris

On March 1st this year, the Secretary of State (George Eustace) authorised a UK emergency exemption, allowing the use of thiamethoxam (Cruiser SB) within the UK for application to sugar beet this year.

This is in response to intense lobbying from the sugar industry (BSC) which has suffered crop losses in 2020 amounting to some 20% – 25% of the national crop, caused by the pathogen "virus yellow". This incurred financial losses to the industry of some £64 million based on the government's 2020 figures.

The areas of the UK affected are largely East and West Norfolk, Suffolk and Nottinghamshire, the major sugar beet growing areas within the UK.

It must be understood from the outset that sugar beet in itself presents no direct danger to pollinating insects since it is harvested before it is allowed to flower, otherwise the extractable sugar content is dissipated in flower and seed.

The danger, to pollinating insects, is presented by the persistence of these insecticides. Only about 10% is utilised by the crop on which it is sown. The remainder remains active within the soil until either absorbed by subsequent crops, which may be of a flowering variety, or until washed out by rainfall and into the water courses presenting known hazards to aquatic life.

Rainfall also causes sideways migration into any "set-aside" land, and such hedgerows that still exist, and also into roadside verges, all of which support wildflowers.

Several caveats have been set by the government to arguably mitigate such hazards in that: -

- Only non-flowering crops are to be planted within 32 months of the sugar beet crop.
- No further use of Cruiser SB seed treatments are permitted on the same field within 46 months
- Industry-recommended herbicide programmes are to be enforced to minimise flowering weeds to reduce the risk of indirect exposure of pollinators.

- Application rate of Cruiser SB is to be reduced from 100 ml per 100,000 seeds to 75 ml per 100,000 seeds (this reduces the application rate of Cruiser SB from 60g per 100,000 seeds to 45g per 100,000 seeds). This is said to be less than 6% of the original dosage applied generally, before the moratorium.
- Currently this policy only applies to sugar beet none of which is grown within this area to the best of my belief. Consideration is however, being given to the use of this insecticide on oil seed rape if "flea beetle" rises above a, so far, undisclosed threshold. This potentially, would impact upon us.

ASIAN HORNET TEAM

The Role of BBKA Associations and Beekeepers concerning Asian Hornets

The BBKA are asking every Association to select teams of 15 members to work with a co-ordinator to help identify the hornets. This team will assist with local requests for help in identifying Asian Hornets.

It is vital that all Beekeepers can identify Asian Hornets.

Each branch or group can establish their own team so that individuals will not be asked to travel vast distances.

They should establish a good communication network between each other, so that the nearest team member can answer a call about a potential siting and call for back up if necessary.

What Does the Team do?

Form a communication network of people confident in identifying what could be an Asian Hornet.

- Know how to report a suspected hornet
- Distribute identifying literature and inform individuals, businesses, markets gardeners etc in their area about Asian Hornets and how to report them
- Know how to set up open bait stations and advise the public about monitoring them (from a distance) if they are in suitable places such as a garden.
- Provide contact numbers so that hornets can be reported
- Establish monitoring traps in their area or when directed by bee inspectors

To qualify for insurance, you must undertake this exercise

<https://forms.gle/nfsUFL3fWmrDwg7XA>

BBKA SPRING CONVENTION

With just over two weeks to the BBKA Spring Convention at Harper Adams University, TF10 8NB, a reminder that Advance ticket sales (£10 - £30) close in ONE week, on 29th March. Thereafter, Full Convention tickets (£15 - £35, card payments only) will be available 'On-the-Day'. Free entry for under-18s.

The Convention is again on-track to be the sociable event many of us have enjoyed before. Three days immersion in 'all things' honeybees, with the opportunity to meet and mingle with old friends and make friends we don't yet know. All in Harper Adams' spacious campus, with plenty of parking, in the Shropshire countryside. Plus, there is Harper Adams' legendary (and reasonably priced) catering to look forward to!

Though workshop bookings have been brisk, there is no need to pre-book the 25-plus lectures over the three days of the event. With a three-day or single-day Wristband Ticket (not Trade Show only) there is no further charge for lectures. These cannot be booked - just be at the lecture theatre in good time. The lecture programme starts at 10.00 each day. Although several workshops are now fully pre-booked, some extra ones have been opened. Any places remaining after 29th March can be booked at the Convention from Friday 8th.

Saturday 9th April 08.30 – 16.30 – Convention Trade Show - One Day Only.

THE major Trade Show of the year. Meet the traders; inspect the kit; handle the hive tool; try on that new bee-suit; trade-in beeswax; collect pre-orders and so much more. Tickets available only on-the-day, just £6. Card payments only please.

For full details, see: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/spring-convention-2022-updates>

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT KATHY REGARDING THIS EVENT

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

If you feel you would like share anything of note or which may be of benefit to other members, then please let me know.

