



NEWSLETTER – March 2024

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS 2023/2024

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	
Mick Carter	-AHAT Leader
Website Manager	-Christopher Wilkinson

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE NOW MEET AT 7PM

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock

The weather has been 'changeable' recently and the forecast says it should be staying that way for now, so I wouldn't be in any hurry to start inspections yet. If you do, make sure it is warm day and you are fast – the last thing you want to do is chill any brood.

When we do get to the point of making regular inspections, 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.

Colonies won't be starting to make swarm preparations yet, but now is the time to make sure you're ready for when they do. Spare hives/nucs, bait hives etc etc. As April progresses brood boxes fill and get more congested, then colonies may start to swarm. Once the weather warms up properly and things get going 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 at some point in April – again something that is weather dependant. 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.

Basic Beekeeping Assessment

If you are interested in taking the basic bee keeping assessment this year then please contact Stephen Greenaway. stephen.greenaway@outlook.com

Starting Beekeeping

If you are a new beekeeper and want to gain more knowledge our Starting Beekeeping Course may be of interest. The course will take place over two Saturdays 8th and 15th June. Please let Kathy Hobson know if you are interested.

SDBKA Apiary – Park Farm

Due to the losses mentioned in previous newsletters the apiary at Park Farm will be restocked with Nucs later this season.

SDBKA Apiary – TWIGS

On Saturday 23/03/24 we held our annual spring-cleaning event at the Twigs apiary. The following members attended.

Justin & Nicky Downes

Andy Jones

Andy Phillipson

Doug Deas

Kevin Holt

Fiona Sampson

Mick Carter

Kathy Hobson

A big thank you goes to those who attended whos' work will ensure we have a tidy apiary and training facility for the remainder of the year.

In last month's newsletter it was mentioned that the bad weather had blown a tree over which was causing an obstruction. There are also further concerns regarding the remaining trees in the same area which may pose a further risk. The steering group have been discussing options on how this may be addressed, one of which would involve the use of club finances. The steering group have a meeting planned this week to specifically discuss this issue. Any decisions made will be communicated at later date.

Club Meetings

The next club meeting is on 28th March and the main topic will be swarm management. The schedule for the next two months is.

25th April 24 – Flo & Rose Hives

30th May 24 – Drones

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 7.00pm. Please come along, all are welcome.

National Event

Don't forget the he BBKA Spring Convention is next month – 12th-14th April 2024 – at The Harper Adams University, Shropshire

Site link:

[Spring Convention | British Beekeepers Association \(bbka.org.uk\)](https://www.bbka.org.uk)

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.

Justin

justin.downes@yahoo.co.uk

