



BEEKEEPERS

NEWSLETTER – January 2025

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS 2024/2025

Tim Bullock

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Kevin Holt

Nicola Perrett

Mick Carter

Clive Harris

Marcel Marsh

Barry Roberts

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Matt O'Dell

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock (Chair)

February and March are the mostly likely times that colonies could run out of food. If in any doubt feed them (fondant not syrup). As we start to get some warmer spells and the days are lengthening workers will start getting brood cells ready for the queen to lay in if she hasn't already started. This requires more energy and when she does start laying the brood temperature will rise needing even more energy so stores will be used up at a faster rate than the last couple of months. Don't forget that colonies will need water to dilute stores and/or to make set ivy honey usable. With nighttime temperatures below freezing bees are likely to struggle to find water that's usable. On sunny days it's worth checking they have water to access close by, if they need it.

As a general rule a colony will use about 1 kg stores in Jan, 2 kg in Feb and 4 kg in March. This is why feeding and checking the amount of food a colony has got is really important.

If you want to check if you have brood, then put the mite board in for a few days and see what colour the cappings are. The more 'biscuit' coloured cappings are from emerging brood.

Honey/stores cappings are whiter/light beige. If you see bees bringing in pollen then that's a good sign that there's brood that needs feeding.

Make sure entrances are clear of dead bees so that the flyers can get out. It's also worth cutting back dead vegetation that's close to the hive to give a clear flight path in and out.

If any hives need moving this is about the latest that the 3 feet or three miles rule apply. It's unlikely that bees would return to the old site if only moved a short distance.

If in any doubt feed your colonies.

The new season is getting closer now, have you got enough equipment and is it all ready? If supers, extra brood boxes and frames are still flat packed, they're not going to be much use when the rush starts

TRAINING

The dates for Taster Days and the Starting Beekeeping Course are now shown on our website. The first Taster Day on 10.5.25 is nearly full!!

The closing date to register for a BBKA module exam is the 31st January
Currently we have 5 members doing Module 3, Pests and Diseases.

SDBKA APIARIES

PARK FARM

Park Farm has lost one hive which we think was due to a failed queen as there was very few dead bees in the actual hive when it was removed. One Hive is being fed fondant. The Nuc is doing well and taking fondant down.

TWIGS

The colonies are being fed fondant and the normal winter checks are being carried out. We have two colonies at the moment both of which seem to be doing well. We will be holding our annual work party in March - volunteers will be needed!!!!

WASSAIL AT TWIGS

Once again Mick Carter flew solo and attended this first open day of the year at TWIGS.

The 2025 open day dates are 27th April, 18th May, 22nd June, 20th July and 4th October. As you are aware these days are very well attended by the general public who we invite to look at our bees through the shed window. We get asked lots of questions as people are very interested in bees and beekeeping. An email will be sent out asking for help – an hour or so would be great. If you come and help you are welcome to bring your honey to sell

SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't forget to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages. If you have any bee related photos to share please email them to Kathy.

CLUB MEETINGS

No meeting in January

Next meeting

27.2.25 This will be on Open Forum. The main discussion will be to help new beekeepers know what to expect from the new season

We are moving to a new venue!!! From February the Club meetings (the last Thursday if the month) will take place at The Tawny Owl Pub (Parliament Room), Taw Hill, Swindon SN25 1WR. Meetings will start at 7.30pm

MEMBERS INPUT

If you have any articles or a meeting topic idea that you think may be of interest to members please let Kathy Hobson know.

