

VALE AND DOWNLANDS BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION  
REGISTERED CHARITY No: 1015801



Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020 via a Zoom Meeting online.

There were 42 members in attendance.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Stella Cowan, Malcolm Hutt and David Cox.

**2. Minutes of previous AGM**

The minutes of the last AGM were agreed and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**4. Trustee Reports**

a. **Chairman.** The Chairman noted that 42 members had logged into the AGM, and 77 members had returned their voting forms; a higher attendance/response than was normally seen with physical meetings. He explained the challenges we have faced during the year and what measures had been put in place to ameliorate them. The association bees at the Red Barn apiary had come through the season well, serviced by a small team of trustees due to the Covid restrictions and producing over 600lbs of honey. Committee meetings had been successfully conducted using Zoom.

The Trustees proposition that existing members would not be charged for the VDBKA element of membership for the coming year, was overwhelmingly supported by the membership. BDI, BBKA membership and BeeCraft subscriptions would still be levied as normal. Other updates included that the association membership remained stable at 142 active members. Notable achievements included the erection of a substantial Deer fence around the training apiary, with a lockable gate. A member has also donated a shed which will be reassembled in the Red Barn as a clean room for extraction and practical extraction demonstrations.

The Chairman gave thanks to John & Lilian Valentine, and Lyn & Pete Barker, who were not standing for re-election this year. Once again, we asked the membership if anyone would be willing to stand as a trustee and we had four applications who were voted in. In addition, several members have offered their help and support to the committee and Association so we will certainly be taking up these offers.

Our vision for 2021 is to improve the practice and science of apiculture for the public benefit. We will look at having increased involvement with schools and young people

in our area. It is also intended, when they restart, to attend more local events to help educate the public on the importance of bees and the craft of beekeeping.

b. **Secretary**. The secretary discussed the challenges we have had with not being able to meet at the Red Barn and how important it was that we continued to support each other as beekeepers. Meeting by Zoom had initially provided challenges, but the Trustees were now used to working together through this medium. It would be interesting to see guest presenters next year online rather than in the usual East Challow Hall. As a charity the association is required to provide education to its members and the public, but this had been difficult this year due to the Covid restrictions. We look forward to things getting back to a more normal state but, in the meantime, all members were encouraged to keep in touch as much as possible by electronic means.

c. **Treasurer**. The Treasurer reported the following:

- Income for 2019/2020 was £7184.35
- Expenditure for 2019/2020 was £6530.99
- The Association had a surplus this year of £653.36
- Assets for 2019/2020 were £20,714.10
- COIFF Account £7801.19
- Social Fund £424.67
- Income (Honey and Waitrose community matters) £860.00
- We invested in a defibrillator at a cost of £984.00
- The erection of the Deer Fencing and gate were a requirement of the apiary lease.
- Prepared by L A Barker and Examined by Dr Maurice Bichard (because of Covid restrictions, the annual audit was replaced by remote examination)

d. **Apiary Management**. An eventful year taking place largely out of sight of the members. The apiary began the season with 14 hives and finished with 17. In addition, there are 3 nucs to take through the Winter that could be made available to beginners if we are allowed to resume training. Inspections had been conducted by small groups of Trustees with the aim being to take measures to prevent swarms under a minimum maintenance regime. A thank you was given to Peter Barker and Malcolm Hutt who had done most of the extracting this year, and to Lilian and John for all the years of work they have done at the apiary and getting the Red Barn set up. The creation of a clean space in the Red Barn would allow us to do our own extraction in the future.

e. **Programme Secretary**. After a normal start to the year with talks from Marin Anastassov and Derek Mitchell, Covid 19 brought the meeting schedule to an abrupt halt. A full programme for 2021 has been booked in the hope that normal life will resume and many of the speakers booked for this year have kindly rescheduled to next year. However, as a contingency, arrangements are being made for the initial

talks scheduled for Jan, Feb and Mar 2021 to be delivered by Zoom. An outline of the programme is available on the association website, but members are asked to bear with us due to many changes we have already made and will continue to make due to Covid. In addition, Pam Hunter the BBKA link trustee for V&DBKA has agreed to speak to us after next year's AGM and we are finalising details of Summer apiary meetings.

## **5. Election of Trustees (Executive Committee & non-committee members)**

Due to Covid 19, election of members as Trustees and non-committee members was carried out by post with members indicating their preference on voting forms returned to the Chair who acted as proxy and tallied the votes. 77 ballot papers were received by the Chair by the cut-off date of the AGM. The Chair confirmed that all trustees standing for re-election passed with a majority vote to be re-elected. In addition, there were 4 new trustee nominations: **Lewis O'Neill, Matt Richards, James Thornber and Wendy Tynan**. The vote to appoint all 4 nominees, conducted by voting through Zoom, was unanimous and they were therefore appointed to be Trustees.

## **6. AOB**

Those members who completed the Winter/Spring beginner's course but did not have a chance to have their bees on our apiary this year, will hopefully be offered refresher training and the opportunity to have their bees on the Red Barn apiary. This will be dependent on Covid regulations.

Help, if allowable within Covid guidelines, is needed for various tasks at the Red Barn throughout the winter. It was noted that further training might be required on using the Defibrillator and also, we should consider whether counselling may be required after someone has used it (likewise for an EpiPen, for which we now have a training EpiPen). Sandra Ballard will look into training courses for this.

The Chair noted that creating a bursary for a junior beekeeper was being considered as part of the association's charitable remit as well as providing more help to schools. Finally, it was reported that following the increased need to communicate via internet rather than face to face, we should look to increase our presence on social media.

## **7. Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 20.36