



AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members are invited to log in to 'Zoom' for the Association's 51st Annual General Meeting.

If there are any items members would like to add to the Agenda these should be notified to the secretary **no later than 7th March.**

Likewise, we are seeking nominations for all the executive roles and the accounts scrutineer for 2024. These too should be submitted to the secretary in the same timescale.

The 2024 Agenda, Treasurer's Annual Accounts, Chairman's Report and Minutes of the 2023 AGM, were in the members' copy of the February Newsletter.

Graham Elliott

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

51st Annual General Meeting

Online with the following 'Zoom' logon details:

Wednesday 13th March 2024
commencing at 6:30pm

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BBKA Link Trustee

Timely reminders from Toby Chapman-Dawe, BBKA Link Trustee for West Sussex



As I am sure you are aware, 2024 will be a busy year for the BBKA: celebrating its 150th birthday, the Spring Convention in April, and challenges from the Asian hornet, among other things:

- **BBKA Spring Convention** – 12-14 April. More details here: www.bbka.org.uk/pages/category/about-spring-convention
- **BBKA 150th Birthday** – 16 May. More details here: www.bbka.org.uk/news/celebrating-150-years
- **Asian hornet news** – Check out activities and events here: www.bbka.org.uk/listing/category/asian-hornet-vespa-velutina

And by the way, the BBKA Spring Convention includes some very nice 150th Birthday porcelain mugs and honey pots – plus attendees will receive a free hive tool (first-come, first-served while stocks last).

Part of my role as a Trustee is to act as the link between West Sussex BKA and the BBKA. If you have complaints, comments, and criticisms, I encourage you to let me know. Similarly, feel free to suggest ideas and innovations, of course.

If you have questions or concerns, or if I might help in any way, please email or call me and I will be delighted to hear from you.

With kind regards and best wishes

Toby Chapman-Dawe

BBKA Trustee

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BBKA's 150th Anniversary Tree Planting

As Toby has mentioned above, as part of its year-long 150th birthday celebrations, the BBKA has gifted each of its 75 local associations with trees to be planted in their apiaries.

Our Divisions are currently investigating the best sustainable sites to plant the trees for the enjoyment of future generations of beekeepers in West Sussex.

Although they will take a few generations to get to the size of the tree on the right!



BBKA Training

The Education & Husbandry Committee has arranged the following courses to be held at the BBKA's office and apiary at Stoneleigh during 2024:



Queen Rearing - Saturday 15th June

This course is for BBKA members who are improver or experienced beekeepers. The course is suitable for those who have learnt the basics of colony management and want to learn more about queen rearing. The course will seek to equip the beekeeper with the knowledge and skills to raise sufficient queens for their own colonies and potentially improve their own stock, possibly having surplus queens to share with others in a small breeding group and will include queen marking, queen cell selection, selecting breeding material, setting up cell raising colonies and the set up and management of nuclei and mini nucs for mating queens, queen introduction and simple methods of producing your own good queens. **Cost: £75**

Honey Bee Health: Train-the-Trainer - Saturday 10th August

The Honey Bee Health Certificate is a practical qualification and is for BBKA members who are experienced beekeepers wishing to run a Honey Bee Health course locally. Participants should have passed the Honey Bee Health certificate themselves. Participants who deliver HBH training in their own association during 2025 will have their course fee refunded. **Cost: £35**

For more information and to book places, visit the shop on the BBKA website:

www.bbka.org.uk/pages/shop/departments/training-courses

BBKA Outreach Officer



It's an honour to be joining you as the new Outreach Officer for the BBKA and thank you to everyone who has so far reached out to welcome me and to talk through their association's current plans and past experiences in tackling the Asian hornet threat. It's been awe-inspiring to hear about some of your efforts so far, and it's clear a huge amount of work has taken place on a personal level to address the challenge at hand.

My initial priorities in the role will be to lobby organisations, groups and prominent individuals who can help raise awareness and point me towards possible funding sources on a national level, while doing my best to support you all on a local level – particularly for those associations in areas currently on the 'front line' of the fight.

Please feel free to drop me a line any time and share your thoughts about what your own association's priorities and challenges are, how we might all share best practice and pool resources, or any ideas you have that you think might spark public awareness.

Thank you once again and I look forward to working with you all!

Kirsteen Thorne

outreach.officer@bbka.org.uk

WSBKA Convention 2024 - Review



Photo courtesy of Andrew Bellamy (Worthing)

Our Convention in February was enjoyed by 73 attendees from as far afield as Canterbury and Winchester. Nearer to home, 55 West Sussex members joined fellow beekeepers at Lodge Hill in Pulborough for an unforgettable day.

Christine Stevens and her organising team had arranged an exceptional line-up of speakers: Margaret Murdin, Professor Lars Chittka, Lynne Ingram, Sue Remenyi and Andrew Gibb.

The speakers covered a diverse range of subjects

which included the queen, queen rearing, keeping colonies healthy, drones, the mind of the bee, environment, wasp control and collecting pollen.

Lodge Hill is a good venue and provided all delegates with a light lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

Next year's Convention will be on **Saturday 22nd February 2025**. A date for your diary and we look forward to seeing you there.

Changes to BBKA Insurance

We have arranged with Aviva, the current insurer for the BBKA's £10million public & product liability policy for members, to extend the description of activities for which members are covered by insurance to include more detail on Asian hornet. The description now reads:

The Business

Registered charity (CIO) and member association (including members' activities), representing beekeeping in the UK. Provision of publications, education and assessment programmes, telephone support and research on beekeeping and related issues. Promotion of beekeeping and education of the public about beekeeping and the importance of bees in the environment (at events, online and by members) and ordinary beekeeping activities, manufacture & supply of primary hive products, including bee health advice. They are also involved as the authority on honey bees, and accordingly are called upon to work in a wide variety of places, from schools to prisons, advise the public, move swarms and any other activities as required, including advising DEFRA and trapping, freezing and identification of Asian hornets. BBKA will be present when the NBU are involved in destroying nests.



Please note that there is no cover for releasing Asian hornets as it is illegal at present to do this, unless you have a licence.

Members can read and download a copy of the policy and schedule on the website:

<https://bbkanews.com/>

We will be modifying the Insurance FAQs to incorporate these changes which we will circulate, once they have been submitted to and approved by insurers.

Leigh Sidaway,

BBKA General Manager

Chairman's Chat



Roger Patterson writes for the County News for the final time as Chairman.

This is the last 'Chairman's Chat' from me, as I have now completed the maximum 3-year term allowed under the constitution for the chairman. The inaugural meeting of West Sussex Beekeepers' Association was held on 22nd May 1973, where I was elected the first chairman, a position I have held on 5 occasions. It would be impossible to check, but I doubt if anyone in Britain has ever been elected a BKA chairman on 5 separate occasions and done a full term in each.

The purpose of WSBKA is still the same as it was, being the halfway house between the local BKAs and the BBKA, but inevitably there have been many changes in those 50 years. Communication is an example, making it much easier to transmit information, so easier for administrators and for beekeepers to learn. Although there is good work done by WSBKA, it is the four Divisions where a lot of activity takes place by many dedicated people, often doing work with time constraints such as editing newsletters, arranging meetings or apiary sessions.

I bow out by thanking all administrators, both at county and divisional level for their continued dedication.

Cheers.

Roger

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

WSBKA 48th Bee Market & Auction

Following the very successful Convention on 24th February we are now turning our attention and planning to our 48th Bee Market & Auction. This will be held on **Saturday 27th April** and the venue is again Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough.

Full details, Guidance Notes and an Entry Form for registering Lots for sale are on the website: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html



It's time to take stock of all that surplus beekeeping equipment you may wish to sell at the Auction. Remember, the equipment must be clean and in a saleable condition. Any bees offered for sale must have been inspected by the Regional or Seasonal Bee Inspector within 14 days prior to the Auction.

Lots registered to be auctioned are already in treble figures, with the promise of a number of bee colonies or nucs registered for sale. The first volunteers have pledged their time and support!

As usual, a large team of volunteers will be required to manage this event and ensure a successful experience for the Association, buyers and vendors. So if you can offer some time please contact Ben Hewson by email: ben@benhewson.com or me. We promise you an enjoyable and interesting day benefiting members, non-members and your Association.

Graham

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Asian Hornet Update

Following the Asian hornet conference in February the BBKA Asian hornet team published the new Asian yellow-legged hornet nest identification poster from the NNSS.

Asian Hornet nest identification

Asian hornets produce two types of nest, primary and secondary:


Primary nests:

- Spherical with a small entrance hole at the base, usually 5 to 10 cm in diameter.
- Built in spring by a lone Asian hornet queen, usually in a protected place such as brambles, a hedgerow, or in / on a building.
- All primary wasp and hornet nests look similar, only report primary nests if seen with Asian hornets. To identify a nest, watch for insects from a safe distance.**


Secondary nests:

- Pear-shaped, entrance hole halfway up the nest, up to 60 cm wide x 80 cm tall.
- Usually found in trees, may also be in buildings and hedges.
- Use binoculars to identify secondary nests from a safe distance. Do not disturb suspected nests and retreat from any wasp / hornet nests if flying insects are observed.**


Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*




Primary nest. All primary wasp and hornet nests look similar. **Only report if seen with Asian hornet.**




Secondary nests in a tree canopy in summer (left)



Secondary nest in a hedge



Secondary nest in a building




Secondary Asian hornet nests may be confused with other wasp and hornet nests, or objects in trees. If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet nest, please use binoculars to check from a safe distance before reporting. See overleaf for details of where to report nests and how to get help with identifying a potential nest.

Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*

Secondary nest:


- Usually found in trees, may also be in buildings and hedges.
- Pear-shaped.
- Entrance hole halfway up the nest.
- Up to 60 cm wide x 80 cm tall.



Other objects in trees

- Crow and magpie nests.
- Mistletoe.
- Squirrel dreys.


Bird nest in a tree:



Median wasp, *Dolichovespula media*

Secondary nest:


- Usually in bushes that are less than 2 m tall.
- Conical.
- Small opening at lower end, off centre.
- Usually 20 x 25 cm.



European hornet, *Vespa crabro*

Secondary nest:


- Usually in hollow trees, chimneys, rarely in the open air.
- Cylindrical.
- Wide opening at the bottom.
- Usually 30 x 60 cm.



Common wasp, *Vespula vulgaris*


Secondary nest:


- Usually on the ground, or in confined spaces in buildings.
- Round to conical.
- Small hidden opening at the lower end.
- Usually 30 x 35 cm.



Primary nest:

Characteristic tube-shaped entrance (unlike primary Asian hornet nest).





Download from the BBKA website:
www.bbka.org.uk/bbka-leaflets

Around the Divisions

All Members are welcome to attend any Divisional meeting, but please advise the organiser if you plan to attend.

Central Sussex Division



Details of the Division's activities from: secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk or the Division's website: <https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/>

Chichester Division



Wednesday 20th March - 'AGM' followed by 'The Truth About Honey' with Lynne Ingram at 7:30pm. at Boxgrove Village Hall, The Street, Boxgrove, PO18 0EE. Further details of the Division's activities from: Cheryl Barton, secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or the Division's website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk.

Wisborough Green Division

Full details of the Division's activities from: Martina Hendry, secretary@wgbka.org.uk or the Division's website: www.wgbka.org.uk.

Newsletters may be viewed here: www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html

Worthing Division



Thursday 14th March - 'Cut Comb' with Christine Stevens at The Glebelands Centre, Greystoke Road, Ferring, BN12 5JL at 7:45pm.

Further details of the Division's activities from: Debra Edwards, dmcd.edwards@gmail.com or the Division's website: www.worthing-beekeepers.org

'Share your Division's activities with readers of the County News'

...and Dates for your Diary



Wednesday 13th March - 'Annual General Meeting'. On 'Zoom' from 6:30pm. Details in this and February's newsletters.



Friday 12th - Sunday 14th April - '150 years of the British Beekeepers' Association. Spring Convention', Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB. www.bbka.org.uk/pages/category/about-spring-convention



Saturday 27th April - 'West Sussex Beekeepers' 48th Bee Market & Auction'. From 8:30am at Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus, Pulborough, RH20 1DL. www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html

We are on facebook so if you would like your events featured please send details to the Editor.



Gilbert White's House - Hampshire

Gilbert White's House & Gardens, is an institutional member of the BBKA and has generously offered a two-for-one entry to BBKA Members during the BBKA's 150th anniversary year.

Gilbert White's House & Gardens was the home of the 18th century writer and naturalist who's work *'The Natural History of Selborne'*, has inspired generations of naturalists. White is remembered for being the father of ecology, identifying several iconic British species such as the harvest mouse and for his observations on drone congregation areas.

His house and gardens in Selborne, Hampshire, opened as a museum in 1956 when money to buy the property was provided by Robert Washington Oates, the nephew of Captain Lawrence Oates, on condition that the museum also displayed the Oates family collections. Today, it celebrates the achievements of three explorers of the natural world – Gilbert White, who studied the environmentally diverse Selborne area in great detail, Frank Oates who explored in Central America and Southern Africa in the late 1800s, and Captain Lawrence Oates who was with Scott in Antarctica and walked to his death on his 30th birthday in an attempt to save the lives of his comrades with the famous last words *'I am just going outside and I may be some time'*.



The House at Selborne

The museum established beekeeping on site in May 2022 to help to pollinate some 25 acres of land which are managed as wildflower-rich meadows, provide additional interest for visitors as well as generating additional income for the charity. The museum is also keen to raise awareness of bees and other pollinators and the important role they play in the *'interconnectedness of things'*.

If you would like to take advantage of this two-for-one offer, please use the ticket on page 11 of the February issue of BBKA News magazine.

More details on Gilbert White's House can be found on the following websites:

www.bbka.org.uk/news/gilbert-whites-house

<https://gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk/>

...and finally

Beekeeping in Developed & Managed Environments

In response to requests from members, two new BBKA information leaflets have been created:

- *'Beekeeping in Developed and Managed Environments including Solar Farms'* (by kind permission of Simon Maslin, Beverley BKA)
- *'Solar Farm Sites'* (by kind permission of Sally Leslie, Dorchester & Weymouth BKA).

The leaflets are available to download from the BBKA website: www.bbka.org.uk/bbka-leaflets



MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you don't have access to the internet and want further details of anything in this newsletter, please contact the Editor & County Secretary. Likewise, if you would like to contribute to future newsletters please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Editor & County Secretary, no later than the 20th of the preceding month.
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

We're on the web:
www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



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