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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISIONNEWSLETTER: January 2018 [**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***A Happy New Year to you all!***

***Editorial***

The ‘neonics’ debate continues. I suppose for most of us it’s the possible damage to our beloved bees that concerns us more than other aspects of their effects. We are all pretty knowledgeable about the problems faced by honey bees; apart from the well established varroa and all the other traditional problems, there is now a host of new viruses waiting in the wings, to say nothing of the small hive beetle and the Asian Hornet plus, in all probability, other unsuspected enemies yet to be revealed. I wonder about the state of the myriad creatures of which beekeepers are not so knowledgeable. The media brings to our attention threats to other animals and organisms of which humankind has a little knowledge, but what about the probably tens or even hundreds of thousands of organisms - insects and other creatures of whose existance we do not even know?

The discovery of such creatures is relatively common. I would like to ask: What unknown damage is being done to these unknown creatures (hence to the environment), not only possibly by neonicotinoids, but by the multitude of other chemicals (and practices) that are being introduced (unrecoverably) to the ecosystem? I have had the pleasure of listening to lectures from scientists at the cutting edge of research and never fail to be greatly impressed by the amount of time and effort that is required to solve an apparently simple question in the natural world. Then I think of the number of questions (known and unknown) there are to answer; how might dealing with the solution to one question adverely affect issues raised by other questions (some unasked and unthought of)… and so on, down the aparently endless chain of action and interaction. Fortunately, there are many people who, with ethical and unselfish motives, are using all their skills and knowledge to help to address the situation in which we find ourselves, but I have wondered for some years whether the human race has the capacity, wisdom, knowledge and perhaps above all moral integrity to manage the world in a way that appears to be desirable.

If you have not yet had time to watch it, I would again encourage you very strongly to view the video of Professor Goulson’s lecture on You Tube, detailed in the December Newsletter. In a world awash with doomsday films, etc, this one is very special.

**Potential Beekeeping Centre in Pleasant Place, Hersham: Update 11 – IMPORTANT UPDATE**

As I write this on the 30th December 2017, 2018 looks like it could be a momentous year for Weybridge Beekeepers.  On the 15th December Elmbridge Council effectively approved the Heads of Terms of a lease to Weybridge Beekeepers of 77a Pleasant Place – this encompasses the bungalow and the garden.  A fairly last minute, but very nice change was the increasing of the lease from 15 to 20 years at the suggestion of the councillors themselves.  This clearly demonstrates how much they are behind us and the project.

Published extract from Elmbridge Council:

<image001.png>

Full documentation can be found here:

<http://mygov.elmbridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=321&MId=2758>

So where does that leave us?  In effect this is when the real work on the project starts.  Immediate priorities can be broken down into three main areas:  Planning Permission, Detailed Costs and Fund Raising. The project team met in December and I am pleased to say that a number of the team have significant relevant experience.   We are also meeting with Elmbridge Council again on January 11th so they can further support and guide us on the planning process.

Financials;  The project team want to make it clear to members that no ongoing financial commitment has been made, and will not be made until an EGM is held and Weybridge Beekeepers have a chance to fully explore the project, provide input and vote.  All costs going forward until this time will be met from a legacy that had funds specifically left for this project and that can only be used for this.  This thus covers the whole planning process.

So when will the EGM be held? Given the further support of the project team and other experts we now believe that we should be in a position to hold the EGM in early to mid March.  However, a more pressing date where we need the support of Weybridge Beekeepers members will be during the pre-planning application process and the Neighbourhood Consultation meeting planned for end of January, early February.  The exact date has yet to be confirmed, support is also sought from anyone who is willing to knock on a few doors in Pleasant Place and speak to our potential future neighbours and leave with them an explanatory leaflet in advance of the meeting.  If you can support please email me.

The planning application for a change of use (from Residential) to a category appropriate to us is a major obstacle, and whilst not impossible, will take work to manage. Without this approval the project cannot move forward to completion, however we have had very positive feedback already through a review process.

Outline timings are thus:

Dec 2016                                 Business Plan Submitted

Dec 2017                                 Elmbridge Council HOT agreed

Jan/Feb 2018                                    Detailed plans drawn up for costing and planning application

Jan/Feb/Mar                             WBK Committee and Surrey Beekeepers Trustees approve HOT

Jan/Feb/March/April                Planning application process

Start Fund Raising

March                                       EGM WBK Meeting for approval

Jan – Sept                                Complete Fundraising and select contractor

Nov – Feb                                 Carry out work

Jan 2019                                   Move Bees in

Feb                                          Move in

April 2019                                 First practical course run

As ever, if you can support in anyway please shout. By the end of January we should be in a position to start to move forward aggressively on fund raising.  Do you know any local companies that might be willing to support us, with anything from £100 to £1,000 to £10,000?  Many companies have CSR budgets and/or local community support budgets – we fit both of these criteria.  Please get in touch if you believe a company you work for or know might be worth approaching.

Thank you, David Parker, Project Lead, [davidparker@polymathconsulting.com](mailto:davidparker@polymathconsulting.com)

**IMPORTANT REMINDER** - **Membership Subscriptions** **-­ Form attached**

The Treasurer is concerned that so many have not renewed their membership this year, so this Newsletter is being sent, for the last time, to ALL past members. If you have forgotten to renew, please do so as a matter of urgency, as you will be losing many benefits, such as your insurance – and these monthly newsletters!

Michael Main

**REPORTS**

**WBK Christmas stall in Baker Street, Weybridge**

Led by our Secretary, Jane Hunter, some members of our Division set up and ran a successful stall at the Christmas Market in Weybridge on December 2nd, which was unfortunately the same day as the Surrey BKA AGM, so several possible helpers were missing – our thanks to those who were there.

Richard Hignett took a photo – see attachment.

**Surrey Beekeepers Association Annual General Meeting 2017**

The Minutes of this meeting will be sent out with the next Newsletter.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Winter Meetings**

No meeting has been arranged for January, partly because I was holding this month open for a possible meeting in connection with the proposed new beekeeping centre. The first meeting on this is now likely to be early in February, when residents of Pleasant Place will be invited, ahead of Planning, to discuss any concerns they may have; a good attendance by the beekeepers would be highly desirable on that evening.

February Meeting, Tuesday, February 13th:

This will be our now customary evening when some of our own members will give short presentations. Andrew Halstead (our Chairman), Chris Edgely (past student of our Beginners’ Course) and hopefully Tim Hutchinson (one of our members and a Bee Farmer) will speak to us.

March Meeting: Monday, March 5th Combined with the Bee Diseases session of the Beginners’ Course, with David Rudland as the speaker.

April Meeting: Nosema Clinic

Full details of all of these meetings will be provided nearer the time.

Marion Cooper

**WSBKA Annual Convention – Saturday 24th February 2018**

**Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 1LZ**

We have a renowned group of speakers and an impressive mix of lectures and seminars with something for everyone.

A simple lunch will be included and there will be many opportunities to catch up with fellow beekeepers from around the county and beyond.  As always, Paynes Southdown Bee Farms will bring a range of equipment and books to the Convention for you to purchase.

We are hoping for record numbers to attend and encourage you to book early to ensure that you secure a place on your preferred seminars.

Full details are now on the website with a Booking Form to download: [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html)

 Graham Secretary WSBKA

*Some of our members have enjoyed attending these conventions for some years. I have heard nothing but praise for them.*

**REMINDERS**

**Weybridge Beginners’ Course (Theory) - First Session**

Monday, January 22nd, 7.30 pm. Hersham Community Trust Hall, Burhill Road, Hersham KT12 4BJ.

**Beekeeping Refresher / Continuation Course – January / February 2018**

As in several previous years, Tim and Sally Hutchinson will run this course if enough people sign up for it. Many of our new members tell us they would like more help, and other more established beekeepers tell us they would find some revision helpful. From past experience, we know that the course has been both informative and enjoyable. Please contact Tim and Sally if you would like to join the group or if you have any questions. There are more details and contact information in the attachment with earlier newsletters.

**"Making good use of your beeswax" Fri 9th, Sat 10th and Sun 11th** **February 2018**

See details on Page 4 of the November Newsletter or contact the chairman of West Sussex Beekeepers:Graham - Chairman WGBKA (grahammt@sky.com)

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**National recognition for Tim Lovett, President of Surrey BKA**

*Paul Bunclark has kindly sent in the following article from the ‘Get Surrey’ website:*

Tim James Lovett, from [Claygate](http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/all-about/claygate), has been appointed MBE for his "significant contribution" to the beekeeping sector through his unpaid work for the British Beekeeping Association (BBKA).

As a strong advocate of bee health education, Mr Lovett is a BBKA trustee and, in the past, has been president and chair of the association.

The 69-year-old has also worked as the director of public affairs - an unpaid role.

Mr Lovett plays a key role on the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) bee medicines group and has encouraged VMD to facilitate the availability of more medicines to tackle bee pests and diseases in the UK. In addition, he has lobbied for additional funding for research into bee health issues which has contributed to the evidence to support sound bee husbandry practices.

*For those of us who know Tim, or have worked with him for many years, this is truly exciting news. We have followed his tireless work at all levels up to government ministerial level on behalf of honey bees and beekeepers, as well as his service to the British Beekeepers Association.*

*Congratulations to Tim on this very well deserved recognition.*

**Teaching Apiary Hedge**

Andrew Halstead was successful in his application to the Woodland Trust for a free hedgerow planting pack. He will use the saplings for filling the gaps made in the hedge by the vandals when they broke in last year.

*Well done, Andrew!*

**Council-supported beekeeping in France**

We recently spent a few days in N. France and spotted that they have council-supported beekeeping.

In Montreuil sur Mer (long time since it was a port), an old hill top town in northern France, around 45 minutes from Calais, the local authority is supporting apiarists along with bumble and solitary bees. The old town is surrounded by impressive ramparts constructed in the 1500s. Walking around these, admiring the views and looking over the old town contained within, one can see a large number of beehives, at this time stored for the winter in a compound provided by the authority, including a solid and substantial building. There are also homes for a range of other bees to be seen when walking around the ramparts and outer town. The honey is for sale in the town and at the excellent tourist office on the ramparts, along with honey beer and other related produce. Montreuil has lots of hotels and many good quality restaurants, including a couple of Michelin starred ones, and makes a features of being the setting for part of Les Miserables.

Maybe when WBK has its council-supported clubhouse, it would be worth exploring twinning with the Montreuil beekeepers?

Peter Webb

*A photograph of the apiary is attached – thank you, Peter.*

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Update and major BBC error on using bees to spread ‘fungicide’ (December issue, bottom of page 4 )**

Here is the link and video, both of which state that bees are being used to distribute a ‘fungicide’ to crops.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/business-41921047/ceo-secrets-using-bees-to-protect-crops>

However, Richard Hignett sent a more detailed report, with a video of another BBC interview with the CEO (the same man as in the first, above) - see link below. He doesn’t use the word ‘fungicide’ at all, but makes it clear it’s a biological control method for introducing one fungus to control another. He demonstrates its use with bumble bee colonies in specially adapted boxes. I managed to stop the video at the right point so that it was possible to read what was on the pack the man was demonstrating in the bumble bee box. It is BOTC-16, which is a fungus (*Clonostachys rosea*) that inhibits the growth of *Botrytis,* the damaging fungus that grows on many plants. So it’s biological control, with the bees carrying a controlling fungus to the plants, not a fungicide. I checked out BOTC-16 and also looked up several papers on this biological control method - it’s not new, it seems.

What we may think about bees being used as tools to spread anything at all could be debated, but this second link gives an entirely different perspective from the first:

http://www.beevt.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Cota-2008-Biocontrol-of-Grey-Mold-.pdf

*Thanks to Richard and Marion for sorting this out.*

*Knowing his interest in the effects of fungicides, I sent the original link to our member, Jonah Chitolie; here is part of his reply, which readers may find of interest:*

‘I thought I might drop you a line about Fungicides which I maintain as being more important than insecticides when it comes to bee decline.

A paper was published recently from a large study of environmental factors linked to bumblebees and in particular Nosema. It found that fungicides correlate far more strongly than any other factor.

My last couple of blog posts concerning fungicide are receiving more attention. I have added the link to the study and part 2 of my blog post.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/11/171114195041.htm>

<http://pollenandbees.com/pollen-breakdown-by-chytrid-fungi-and-fungicide-use/>

And… highly relevant, is a message and link just received from Anne Miller:

Researchers at Cornell university have found a worrying link between fungicides and nosema in bumble bees. They believe common fungicides are the strongest factor linked to steep declines in bumblebees across the US, according to the first landscape-scale analysis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/dec/29/alarming-link-between-fungicides-and-bee-declines-revealed>

**Neonicotinoids at 'chronic levels' in UK rivers, study finds**

I feel that all of us seeking a balanced view on the ‘truth’ (a truly difficult task) about the effects of neonicotinoids, should at least take the trouble to look at the following website. The measurements published are not a matter of opinion, but indicate the actual amounts of these materials in our rivers. The only place where opinion comes in is the answer to the question: “Do these figures matter?” It seems to me with only an engineering background plus a bit of biology picked up from my beekeeping, that the report is, to say the least, disquieting. What do other members think?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-42354947>

Geoff Cooper

*Thanks to Anne Miller and David Parker for bringing this to our attention.*

**A report from the NBU on Asian hornets found in this country**

Please click on this link (if it works for you) or see attachment, to view an image of an [Asian hornet sighting in Woolacombe hawking in front of beehives](https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/downloadNews.cfm?id=158)

Following suspect sightings, on Sunday 24th September the NBU received two photographs from a beekeeper in Woolacombe, North Devon, of an Asian hornet. The following day, the 25th September, preliminary surveillance began in the apiary and the NBU's Contingency Plan was activated.

The local Bee Inspector monitored the apiary and initially found surveillance difficult due to the position of the colonies in the apiary. However, that morning, the Inspector managed to capture a hornet and sent the sample to the NBU in Sand Hutton for formal identification. Later that afternoon, the Inspector returned to the apiary site and a further 7 hornets were seen hawking in front of hives, but no line of sight could be ascertained, to establish a flight path back to the nest.

On the 26th September, South West Region inspectors were deployed to intensify searches for Asian hornets hawking in the area. Wet, misty and murky morning weather conditions were not ideal, but the Inspectors continued to survey the original outbreak apiary and two lines of sight were established. Inspectors were able to identify a second apiary site about 1km from the original outbreak, where one hornet was seen hawking for returning foraging bees. A hornet sample was taken, in order to establish if the hornets visiting the second apiary site were from the same nest and thus determine if there were multiple nests in the area.

Hornets were also observed in an apiary at a further site and were seen flying in a similar line of sight. The lines of sight from both the outbreak apiary and the second apiary combined were enough for an initial triangulation to be taken and investigated. The Inspectors began investigating public footpaths and the area around where the lines of sight met at the triangulation. A great deal of Asian hornet activity was observed at a nearby building site and on 27th September an Asian hornet nest was discovered.

The nest was destroyed the following evening, removed and taken to the Fera lab (Sand Hutton, York) on Friday 29th Sept. Further surveillance was carried out within a 10 km zone of the nest site and no further Asian hornet activity was detected. Following analysis of the nest has shown that none of the adult hornets were male and this indicates that the nest was detected and removed before the production of queens which will have gone into winter and then produced nests in 2018.

Additionally, if you are interested in finding out more details of the Tetbury outbreak in 2016, including genetic analysis of the hornets origin, this can be found in the PLoS One publication: Budge GE, Hodgetts J, Jones EP, Ostoja Starzewski JC, Hall J, Tomkies V, et al. (2017) The invasion, provenance and diversity of Vespa velutina Lepeletier (Hymenoptera: Vespidae) in Great Britain. PLoS ONE 12(9): e0185172. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185172>.

National Bee Unit.

**Watch the moment when Sir David Attenborough and BBC film makers recorded chimpanzees stealing honey.**

<http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170518-the-bees-that-have-to-deal-with-a-cunning-honey-thief>

A number of other videos will also be found here, including a detailed, balanced history of ‘Concordski’ that I found interesting...

*Thanks to David Parker for this.*

**FOR SALE**

**Second hand (but nearly new) beekeeping equipment for sale**

For the sale of my remaining bee kit, please see the attached list.

Thank you, Gil Bray

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | | |
| Monday | January 22nd | 7.30 pm | | First session of Weybridge Beginners’ Course (Theory) | p. 4 |
| tba | January / February | 7.30 pm | | Refresher / Continuation Course | p. 4 |
| Friday, Saturday, Sunday | February 9th, 10th, 11th | 10.00 am – 4.30-5.00 pm | | Uses of Wax Day, Tim Ryan, Petworth, W. Sussex | p. 4 |
| Tuesday | February 13th | 7.30 pm | | Winter Meeting – Members’ Presentations | p. 3 |
| Saturday | February 24th | am & pm | | West Sussex BKA Convention, Pulborough | p. 3 |
| Monday | March 5th | 7.30 pm | | Winter Meeting, Bee Diseases, David Rudland | p. 3 |
|  | April | 7.30 pm | | Nosema Clinic | Details later |
| CONTACT DETAILS | | | | | |
| Chairman  Andrew Halstead - 01483 489581  email: ahalstead44@btinternet.com | | | Secretary  Jane Hunter - 01932 857427  email: weybridgebees.sec@gmail.com | | |
| Treasurer  Michael Main - 01932 849080  email: michaelfmain@hotmail.com | | | Newsletter Editor  Geoff Cooper - 01932 242179  email: coopergm56@btinternet.com | | |
| Rowtown Apiary Manager  Rob Chisholm - 01483 715779  email: robinchisholm102@btinternet.com | | | Teaching Apiary Managers  Tim and Sally Hutchinson - 01932 962094  email: olddrone58@gmail.com | | |
| Beginners’ Beekeeping Course Tutor  Andrew Halstead - 01483 489581  email: ahalstead44@btinternet.com | | | Swarms  Michael Main – 01932 849080  email: michaelfmain@hotmail.com | | |
| Beekeeping Refresher Course / BBKA Basic  Tim & Sally Hutchinson  email: info@beehappyproducts.co.uk | | | Membership Secretary  Peter Webb  email: peterwebb@btinternet.com | | |
| Education Coordinator  Edwina Wardle – 01932 702887  email: Wardle\_1@ntlworld.com | | | Beekeepers Beginners’ Course - Admin  Sue Lawes  slawes@hotmail.co.uk | | |
| **Regional Bee Inspector**  Sandra Gray – 07775 119430  [sandra.gray@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.gray@apha.gsi.gov.uk) | | | Seasonal Bee Inspector  Hilary Hayward - 07900 167409  Email: Hilary.Hayward@apha.gsi.gov.uk | | |
| LOCAL BEE ADVISORS | | | | | |
| Rob Chisholm - 01483 715779 | | | Geoff Cooper - 01932 242179 | | |
| Paul Hildersley – 07827 916186 | | |  | | |