

# ESSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 7 March 2020

## GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

A year ago I was asked to report to the members as General Secretary. At the time I had little to say other than that, after only a few months in post, my knowledge of your Association was even more limited than my experience of beekeeping.

I am pleased to say that over the past year I have had plenty of opportunity to rectify both deficiencies – but with how much success I leave to others to judge.

After a period of membership of the Governance Sub-Committee which I had to relinquish because of other pressures, I took on the task of converting your Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This has been my primary focus over the past six months. The Constitution for the new CIO is now in final draft form and will be circulated to the membership once approved by the Trustees, and before submission to the Charity Commission.

The Constitution follows best practice as recommended by the Commission, adapted as necessary to take into proper consideration the structure and organisation of your Association. Further work will be required to ensure that the Rules and other governing documents are consistent with the Constitution itself and with the changing needs of EBKA. Our thanks are due to John Rhodes, a member from Saffron Walden Division, and a semi-retired solicitor with long experience of Charity Law, for his advice to help keep us on the straight and narrow.

I have circulated a briefing note explaining the benefits of this important change to your Association's status and setting out the further steps required to ensure proper consultation with the membership and a smooth path to registration by the Commission.

As General Secretary of your Association a key part of my role is to ensure compliance with the established Rules and Regulations which have been approved by the membership. EBKA does not have a policing function as such, but I have taken upon myself the responsibility to draw to the attention of the Trustees, where necessary, any deviation from the Rules and Policies approved by the CEC or the membership, or indeed from Charity Law. A necessary if perhaps not always popular role, given the ever-expanding volumes of regulation to which we are obliged to comply.

My first priority is to ensure the proper conduct of CEC affairs and your Association's administration. Neither of these are possible without the dedicated support of the Trustees and County Officers, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude. Our membership now exceeds one thousand, and the Association owns assets exceeding £100,000 in value. Essex is by no means a small and insignificant charity and we are one of the larger associate members of the BBKA.

It is particularly pleasing to see new members joining the CEC. They bring a new perspective and professional knowledge to your Association – invaluable in keeping our working practices consistent with the changing times. New members should be encouraged wherever possible to play a role in committees and sub-committees, whether at Divisional or CEC level. They will find participation an enjoyable and rewarding experience in a stimulating environment, as indeed have I.

Our membership now exceeds one thousand, on whose behalf the Trustees and other Officers are responsible for safeguarding assets valued at well over £100,000. EBKA is by no means a small and insignificant charity and we one of the larger associate members of the BBKA. Essex beekeeping is in safe hands, and we can all look forward to the continued success of our Association.