



## Minutes of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM)

**Saturday 12 March 2022**

Jubilee Hall, New Hall School, Chelmsford CM3 3HS

These minutes will be considered correct if no objection is raised in writing or by email before Tuesday 31st May 2022.

Any point challenged will be brought before the next meeting for amendment/correction of the record.

Presiding Officer: Jan Tutton (Chelmsford Division)

Also present: see EBKA Attendance Book

A period of silence was observed to remember our fellow beekeepers who had died during the past year.

Richard Ridler showed slides of beekeepers in Ukraine to mark the current tragic events in the country.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from: Jean Smye (President,), Clive de Bruyn (Braintree), Bridget Mudd (Braintree), Graham Spinks (Braintree), Graeme Crook (Chelmsford), John Renault (Epping), Ian Nichols (Epping), Louise Carr (Harlow), and Deryck Johnson (Saffron Walden).

### **2. Minutes of 141st AGM**

The Minutes of the last AGM were published in *The Essex Beekeeper* for review by members and were on the EBKA Website. No challenges to the accuracy had been received so the Minutes were signed by the Presiding Officer as a true record.

### **3. Report of the Chair of the Central Executive Committee (CEC)**

The CEC Chair (Jane Ridler) had published her report for members in the March issue of *The Essex Beekeeper* and it was sent to members via eR2. An appropriately modified version will be submitted to the Charity Commission.

It had been another difficult year because of Covid so it was a pleasure to be together again. This year, in contrast to last year when so many events were cancelled, there would be a Ted Hooper Lecture in June, the Honey Show in September and the EBKA Conference in November.

The Governance subcommittee, comprising Jane Ridler, Vanessa Wilkinson, Chris Allen and Keith Lomax, is ensuring that there is a consistent and regular review of EBKA policies, which

are available on the website. A Health & Safety Workshop was held on Zoom in March 2021, which was attended by representatives from all Divisions.

Harlow Division, in anticipation of losing their Secretary, Treasurer and Trustee in December 2021, as well as being without a Chair, called an Extraordinary General Meeting in September. There was a vote in favour of passing the responsibility for possibly dissolving the Division to the CEC. A small group from the CEC offered support and thanks are due to Simon Nicholson, Dave Garratt, Jane Ridler, and Richard Ridler as well as members of Harlow Division. The division now has a new Secretary and Chair, and meetings and training are underway for the upcoming season. The dissolution of the Division is currently no longer being considered.

The CEC welcomed three Divisional Trustees, Andrew Linley (Colchester), Simon Nicholson (Epping Forest) and Linda Yeats (Saffron Walden), and a new General Secretary, Vanessa Wilkinson. Also joining as non-voting members were Dave Garratt, (Chelmsford), County Bee Health Officer and Dee Inkersole (Chelmsford) Editor of *The Essex Beekeeper*. Two excellent Trustees came to the end of their term of office, and deserve special thanks: Jan Tutton (Chelmsford) for her work on eR2, and Nick Holmes (Harlow), our webmaster.

There are two CEC vacancies: Membership Secretary and Education Secretary. Jan Tutton has agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary but an Education Secretary is still needed. This is a vital role and would help encourage more middle and upper ranking beekeepers to take on higher qualifications and to contribute to beekeeping expertise in the future.

At the latest CEC meeting, it was agreed that EBKA would:

- support World Bee Day on 20 May 2022
- encourage Divisions to mark World Bee Day with local initiatives, e.g. school visit, garden party, and to sponsor a Bees Abroad Project,
- donate an equivalent of £500 per division to support a Bees Abroad project.

Richard Ridler would be providing a pack of information for each Divisional Secretary to share with their committee, describing the three Bees Abroad projects to sponsor.

#### **4. General Treasurer's Report & Approval of the 2020 Accounts**

The General Treasurer (Pat Allen) stated that her report and the examined accounts were sent to all members using the eR2 system; they were also displayed on-screen. It had been another extraordinary year in which key County events were cancelled, but some activities, such as courses, Divisional Honey Shows, and monthly Members' meetings had resumed, albeit with restrictions.

The following items in the 2021 Accounts were noted:

- EBKA accounts showed a large surplus
- Two Divisions suffered a deficit in the year but all accounts were in credit
- The CEC had agreed to pay *Versa Accountants* £550 + VAT for examining the end of year accounts. It was considered to be a reasonable fee for the work, although it was higher than the original estimate of £500 + VAT
- Subscriptions had been held at the 2021 level, despite the increase in BBKA capitation, by reducing the EBKA capitation

- The Trustees had approved an increased grant of £2000 to the EARS project for 2022.

The Divisional Treasurers and Membership Secretaries were thanked for their co-operation throughout the year.

There were several comments regarding the large sum of £145,000, which are the total assets of EBKA, and its status as a charity. This is potentially a problem for the Charity Commission. The funds should be channelled into education. There were a number of suggestions for how the money could be spent, e.g. take less in subscriptions; sponsor members to take BBKA exams; and organise professionally produced material as teaching aids to use in schools.

In response, it was noted that the pandemic had prevented us from spending money on EBKA events, such as the Honey Show and Conference, in the last two years; this year would be more expensive as we get back to our normal programme. Some of the funds have been spent on the EARS project and, as reported by the Chair, a donation will be made to Bees Abroad.

Members were asked to vote to approve the Accounts: Carried *nem con*.

## 5. Written Reports of other members of the CEC

The Examinations Secretary (Steph Green) had published her report for members in the March issue of *The Essex Beekeeper* and it was sent to members via eR2.

Although there were no BBKA examinations in 2020, six people took Module exams in March 2021 and all were successful. Their certificates were sent out by Royal Mail as there was no Conference at which to present them. There were two successful candidates in Module exams in November 2021 but, in their absence today, their certificates would be sent by post. Christine Poerschke will receive a Ted Hooper award for gaining a distinction in Module 6. Three candidates are due to sit Module exams next weekend.

In 2021, 20 beekeepers took their basic assessments and 19 of them passed. Their names were announced at the Ted Hooper Memorial lecture. Twelve people passed with credit. Six people passed with distinction and received a Miss Avey award. In addition, Tom Geddes passed the Bee Health Assessment and Peter Aldridge passed the General Husbandry assessment.

In autumn 2021, the CEC agreed new achievement awards for those taking higher assessments in which it is only possible to pass or fail: an award of £80 for a pass in the General Husbandry and £100 for a pass in the Advanced Husbandry.

## 6. Election of County Officers (Trustees): CEC Chair, General Secretary and General Treasurer

**CEC Chair:** Jane Ridler      Proposer: Paul Wiltshire      Secunder: Andrew Linley  
Jane was willing to continue and was re-elected *nem con*.

**General Treasurer:** Pat Allen      Proposer: David Learmonth      Secunder: Chris Allen  
Pat was willing to continue and was re-elected *nem con*:

**General Secretary:** Vanessa Wilkinson      Proposer: Linda Yeats      Secunder: Penny Learmonth  
Vanessa was willing to continue and was re-elected *nem con*:

## 7. Notification of 2022 Divisional Voting Members and 2023 Presiding Officer

Braintree	Bridget Mudd
Chelmsford	Mike Abel
Colchester	Andrew Linley
Maldon & Dengie 100	Glenn Mayes
Epping Forest	Simon Nicholson
Harlow	<i>vacant</i>
Romford	Jim McNeill
Saffron Walden	Linda Yeats
Southend	Chris Allen

[Note added: Southend Division will provide the name of the 2023 Presiding Officer]

## 8. Election of 2021 of County (non Trustee) Appointees

**President:** Jean Smye was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Sheila Rushbrook    Second: Paul Wiltshire

**BBKA Delegate:** Richard Ridler was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Steph Green    Second: Ted Gradosielski

**NHS Delegate:** Jim McNeill was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Jim Rushbrook    Second: Simon Nicholson

**Editor** (*The Essex Beekeeper*): Dee Inkersole was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Andrew Linley    Second: Salma Attan

**Show Secretary:** Michael Webb was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Linda Yeats    Second: Simon Nicholson

**Education Secretary:** no nominations

**Examinations Secretary:** Steph Green was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Ted Gradosielski    Second: Simon Nicholson

**Bee Health Secretary:** Dave Garratt was re-elected *nem con*.

Proposer: Salma Rattan    Second: Chris Allen

## 9. Notification of CEC Appointees and Co-opted Members

**CEC Minutes Secretary** Linda Yeats and Simon Nicholson

**Membership Secretary** Jan Tutton

**Book of Commemoration Secretary** Penny Learmonth

**Advertising Secretary** (currently covered by Editor)

**Webmaster**            Graeme Crook

## **10. Confirmation of Accounts Examiner (External Auditor)**

The General Treasurer reported that the CEC had used a new accountancy company to examine the accounts this year: *Versa Accountants* in Upminster. She would recommend we use the company again for the 2022 accounts.

## **11. Proposition**

Following a proposal by the CEC, the following proposition was raised at the AGM:

That the official name Dengie Hundred, Maldon and District be changed to Maldon & Dengie Hundred.

The proposition was carried *nem con*.

## **12. EBKA Conference 2022 - given by Simon Nicholson**

This will be hosted by Epping Division with the working title *The Dream Conference*. It will take place on Sunday 13 November at Copped Hall, Epping, which is a Georgian mansion in landscaped parkland, with important historical connections to Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

It is planned that there will be three speakers, one of whom will be Ben Woodcock from the National Honey Monitoring Scheme. Refreshments will be provided by Copped Hall and it is expected that there will be a tour of the building and an opportunity to visit the gardens.

The cost of a ticket is expected to be in the order of £25. There is limit of 75 attendees in view of space at the Hall.

Responding to a comment that the event would be on Remembrance Sunday, Simon said he hoped that there would be members who would still attend the Conference.

## **13. Installation of the 2022 Presiding Officer**

Simon Nicholson, Trustee for Chelmsford, was installed as Presiding Officer.

## **14. Reading from the Book of Commemoration**

Simon Nicholson read from the Book of Commemoration.

The AGM was formally closed.

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Break for refreshments kindly provided by Chelmsford and Epping Divisions.

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## AGM Keynote Address

Following the AGM there was an excellent presentation by Dr Paul Hurd, Reader in Epigenetics, Queen Mary College, London, on *Honey bees are what they eat: how do differing diets result in queens or workers?* The lecture was given online rather than in person, because the speaker was confined at home with Covid.

Dr Hurd introduced us to the concept of epigenesis: the idea that development takes place from an unformed into a formed organism. This was first postulated by Aristotle in 350 BC. Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is understood that development of organisms is governed by genes. The basis of epigenetics is that all cells in an organism have the same genes (DNA) which are turned 'on' or 'off' depending on the context or environment.

Since 2001 when the human genome was sequenced, technological advances in sequencing genomes have allowed huge advances in the understanding of the insect epigenetics. Eusocial insects, such as wasps, termites and bees, are of particular interest because each species has the same DNA but different morphology, physiology, behaviours, life spans and diets.

In honey bees, workers, drones and queens all have the same genetics, but different characteristics and life expectancy. Dr Hurd's experimental work has investigated the effect of gene silencing on honey bee larval development. It has been shown that different genes are switched 'on' in queens compared with workers and that, after 96 h post hatch, the outcome of whether an egg develops into a queen or a worker is fixed.

Research has revealed that queen and worker bees are epigenetically different. The genes switched 'on' in queens are different to those in workers. The body growth in the queen is in sharp contrast to worker development, where neurological connections and brain specialisation are evident.

So are honey bees what they eat? During development, queens, workers and drones receive different diets: queens are fed royal jelly in contrast to workers and drones, which are fed a pollen mix. Royal jelly is a potent substance capable of changing developmental instructions. It has been shown to contain about 5% of a fatty acid, 10-hydroxy-2-dece-noic acid (10-HDA), which is not in the pollen mix, and appears to be the active ingredient affecting larval development.

Such fundamental research in epigenetics can aid the understanding of how environmental changes and disease can affect honey bees, and provide a tool to monitor the effects of environmental stresses in the future.