



Newsletter

Hi Everyone,

I was pleased to see so many members at our last meeting (we even ran out of chairs!) and the input everyone gave. We've had a committee meeting and begun to look at the opinions which were put forward and how we might implement your suggestions.

As you would expect we will not be able to satisfy everyone but for those who came, we have listened to what you said and we will do our best.

Members made it clear that they were happy for the cost of attending monthly meetings to be raised. The new rate going forward will be £2 and will cover the cost of the hall and guest speakers more effectively.

Now back to bee keeping!

This month and next month is the time when most starvation occurs so please check the hives to make sure that the bees have enough food. The food (fondant) will cost you less than a jar of honey and the hive will give you many more in return.

There is not a lot to do with bees at the moment, other than clean frames and spare hives but I have found a number of useful articles in the recent magazines so I would recommend a little light reading with a nice cup of tea while it is cold and raining.

Keep well and see you at the next meeting,

John

Foodie Fundraising.....

Following on from our monthly meeting in January we were told about a fund raising scheme that the London Beach Hotel in Tenterden offer:-

As a club we go along for Sunday lunch, afternoon tea or even an evening dinner and pay the full price say £25 a head for Sunday Lunch (don't know the exact figures).

The London Beach then give back the full price of the food to the club as a donation. We do not have to say it is for a specific fund or project.

Would the membership be interested in supporting this and if so what would the preference be lunch, tea or dinner?

Could you email your preferences to accounts@trudiethomas.co.uk

In this month's issue:

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- **Foodie Fundraising**
- **Workshop Reminder**
- **Members' Forum Feedback**
- **Bees for Sale**
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Build A Hornet Trap Workshop

Those of you planning to attend Gavin's 'Build Your Own Hornet Trap' workshop on the 18th February, please be reminded that you should bring the following items with you:

- 2 no. 2 Lt soft drinks bottle (wider at the bottom than in the middle e.g ASDA Spring water or ALDI diet lemonade)
- 60cm length of 1.5 or 2mm garden wire
- A5 peice of card
- Tools:knife, stapler, pliers, hole punch and scissors
- wire/varroa mesh will be available

Members' Forum Feedback Summaries

Newsletter:

- Members found the newsletter useful, esp. contact details and the upcoming events programme. They liked the new design and logo.
- Members appreciated the greater transparency in club matters.
- Several members suggested a meeting summary so they could catch up on what they have missed at meetings.
- Some members had had issues with downloading or out of date email addresses.

Website:

- Members like the existing website, found it easy to use on all platforms but were not frequent visitors.
- Members felt the website's primary function was attracting new members and promoting the club.
- Members requested a 'hand-out' archive so they could download useful notes from talks/workshops and meetings.

Membership:

- Members felt it was essential to give a positive welcome to new members.
- Members felt it was important for the club to facilitate mentoring, the sharing of best practice and new techniques.
- Members, especially new beekeepers, were seeking smaller group training opportunities in addition to main meetings.
- Members felt that we should be seeking new ways to promote the club and attract new members, possibly with increased, more focussed advertising in local publications and at local training centres.

Meetings:

- Beginners preferred meetings where there was an opportunity to work with bees and where the meeting contained theory followed by practical demonstration.
- Most members found visiting other club's apiaries valuable.
- Some members felt that an email reminder in the week running up to each meeting would be helpful.

Finances:

- Members felt that the club represented good value for money and almost all members felt that it was reasonable to increase the £1 meeting charge. Suggested monthly meeting costs varied from £2-£5.
- All members felt that careful financial management was key to the club's continuing success.
- Several fundraising ideas were suggested including group meals, visits, foreign trips and seeking sponsorship for events like the Honey Show.

Honey Show

- Members felt this should be Weald Beekeepers' showcase event, which should ideally be cost neutral

The aims of the show identified by members were:

- For beekeepers to compete re products from the hive
- To recruit new members
- To educate the public about the importance of bees

Ideas put forward by members included:

- It was felt that there should be some activities for children, however further education

could be offered by visiting schools.

- Consider working in partnership with horticultural societies and garden centres.
- Consider linking with another event to split advertising costs and increase footfall of visitors (Cranbrook Apple Fair was suggested)
- Facebook village groups could be used for advertising
- Celebrate members' success in the Newsletter
- The club could increase the percentage taken from honey sales to raise funds.
- Overall last year's show in the Vestry Hall, Cranbrook was felt to be a real success, however parking was though to be difficult.

Bee Shed and Equipment Hire

- Members really value the bee shed, particularly the mentoring and the social aspects.
- Bee-shed regulars were happy to contribute to running costs (refreshments etc.)
- Members liked the set-up and appreciated the opportunity to work with a range of hive types.
- New members, especially those without bees yet, sited the out apiary as one of the main attractions of joining.
- Members would like a list of club equipment available to hire and were happy to pay a deposit and small hire fee.

Thank you to all who participated in the Members Forum. Your ideas and enthusiasm are hugely appreciated by the Committee and we will be taking your comments on board as we move forward in the coming months.





Dates for your Diary 2017

Bees for Sale

Club member Dave Keen is retiring from beekeeping and has several hives for sale. If you are looking for locally reared, happy, healthy bees please contact Dave for details and prices :

Tel: 01892 832768

18th February 2017

“How to Make a Hornet Trap” practical workshop with Gavin Rees, Sissinghurst Parish Room, 3pm

18th March 2017

“Swarm Control” by Bob Smith, Sissinghurst Parish Room, 3pm

8th April 2017

“Spring Inspection” - First outdoor meeting of the year! - location tbc.

Contacts List

Chairman and Bee Shed Organiser:

John Priestley
tel: 01580 714498
jjpriestley@msn.com

Meetings Committee Chairman:

Gavin Rees
gavinrees@talktalk.net

Disease Control:

Michael Cooper
tel: 01622 891226
Mob: 07808 612609

Vice Chair and Honey Show Secretary:

Heather Faloon
tel: 01580 291986
heather@littlehareplain.co.uk

Branch Secretary:

Tracey Jewsbury
tel: 07903 411504
traceyjewsbury@btinternet.com

Website and Newsletter:

Katherine Akers Coyle
tel: 01580 755699
kath@growthindustry.co.uk

Treasurer and Membership:

Trudie Thomas
tel: 01233 771934
accounts@trudiethomas.co.uk

Members Representative:

Christine Clark
chris.a.clark@btinternet.com

Postal submissions to:

WBKA, 2 Springfield Cottages
Sopers Lane, Hawkhurst,
Cranbrook, Kent TN18 5AA

Healthy Swarms, Healthy Bees Project

Trudie Thomas

tel: 01233 771934

accounts@trudiethomas.co.uk

Heather Faloon

tel: 01580 291986

heather@littlehareplain.co.uk

Robert Lewis

tel: 01580 291531

robertlewisfarms@btconnect.com

John Priestley

tel: 01580 714498

jjpriestley@msn.com