



EBKA – Colchester Division

January 2022 Members newsletter

A very Happy New Year to you all and your bees!

You should soon, if not already, be emailed your renewal invitation via er2 membership services. This is a simple renewal process, but please remember that it does not take you to a payment page and you need to ensure payment is made separately. We are pleased to announce that your membership fee has not increased and remains at £36.50 including the basic bee disease insurance policy.

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR



January AGM club meeting at Langham Community Centre

Your current committee have all stated that they are willing to continue in their current roles. This consists of:

Chair – Barbara Sharp
Secretary – Morag Chase
CEC Trustee – Andy Linley
Membership Secretary – Penny Sheldrake
Education Secretary – Morag Chase
Treasurer – Sarah Curtis
Technical Secretary – Matt Payne
Apiary Manager – Barbara Sharp
Website Manager – Andy Linley
Show Secretary – Barbara Sharp
H & S and Data Protection Officer – Sarah Curtis

Any club member is very welcome to put their name forward for any role/s. However, we are currently looking for a volunteer to be Swarm Co-Ordinator. This role has been carried out by Morag for many years and basically involves the public phoning you to discuss a swarm or colony they have spotted. Your role would then be to go through the club's swarm list and allocate each phone call to the relevant beekeeper (ie the beekeeper who lives closest to the swarm).

The committee meet up once a month via zoom, during a weeknight evening with each member giving a brief report. Everyone obviously has certain jobs to complete throughout the year and anyone wishing to join will be given support and help in their new role.

If you feel you would like to be nominated for any role, **please look out for an AGM agenda and nomination form being sent out soon.** As usual do not hesitate to get in touch with any committee member if you have any questions.

The show committee is a separate group of volunteers to organise and run the Tendring Show. They are always very happy to welcome new helpers, who can join at any time. Please look out for future notices as we approach spring about help needed for the show, which the organisers are extremely hopeful will go ahead next July, after 2 years of cancellations due to Covid.

The AGM will take place on **Thursday January 27th at 7.30pm in the large hall at Langham Community Centre.** There will be a buffet style catering, made by Barbara, once the meeting has finished and all committee

members have been voted in. Obviously, we will be keeping a close eye on Covid related issues and updates and will switch to an online meeting if it is deemed necessary. If you would like to be nominated for a role but do not wish to attend a face-to-face meeting you are still more than welcome to. Please note that Penny, our membership secretary, will not be attending the AGM and so if you have any questions for her, please put forward to Sarah to pass on in time for responses to made available.



A summer cutting out bees!

I took over from Pat as the technical secretary at the CBKA at the AGM in Jan 2021 having been told that it had been a really quiet year and no need for cut outs of bees. So, I thought another quiet year was in store and I'd be able to possibly do a couple of cut outs of colonies that managed to get into buildings before someone off the swarm list was able to catch them. I looked on the internet and found some ideas for a vacuum chamber to collect bees into so I merged a few into one that I made with a commercial brood box and offcuts from various carpentry jobs.

The first swarm call I had was on the 16th May; an easy capture into a 6 frame poly nuc (my preferred swarm collector as I can shake the bees in and turn the front disk to keep the queen in) as it was on a gate post which the owner had walked past without noticing. Two weeks later was the first call to bees that had located into a building in Boxted. After talking to the owner about the process I would take to remove them, a small area of weatherboard above the back door was easily removed and a small caste was contently clustered on the floor joist and let me scoop up handfuls and carefully place them into the nuc box, once the majority were in I left the box on the steps and after seeing the workers fanning the entrance and the other bees going toward the box I re-fixed the boards and returned later in the evening and collected the nuc. Naively thinking how easy this cutting out of bees is!

The following evening another call, of a swarm on a conservatory roof which was only 100m from where I had been working in the day, they were a bit tetchy and as it

was such a small caste I put them into a mating nuc. The first week of June and I couldn't keep up and I had enough cut outs to do for the next 6 weekends, the swarm coordinator apologised saying that there have never been this many swarms going straight into buildings. Hardy's green was the next location, two established colonies in a barn and another in the roof of an old cottage. Kim gave us a hand at the barn and the bees were a comfortable 5 foot from the ground and easily accessed but it was still nearly 8 hours of work after cutting out the comb into new frames and securing with elastic bands, before replacing the boards. The cottage I cut out a couple of weeks later on the Saturday morning, accessed through the lower sloping ceiling in the corner of a bedroom cupboard, was probably the most awkward place this year that I've been to cut out bees. I

had to lay on my side at full stretch to access the comb. In the afternoon I went to Thorpe-Soken, to a colony in a porch roof which was really active but



not aggressive thankfully. I was able to unscrew the soffit and the bees clustered over their comb and I was able to vacuum them up and cut the comb into frames before re fitting the soffit and sealing up the bees' entrance to



prevent another swarm locating there. Calls continued throughout the summer, with three calls from owners that had put up with them for a few years and now wanted them out. Of the 19 calls, one in Tiptree was a single bee in an air vent that the owner thought was a swarm, another was a wasp nest, two were in

chimneys which were very long days off scaffolding

working through single brick openings. It was whilst doing one of these chimneys that there was torrential rain about 4 hours after we started, and we ended up saturated with water in our boots. Four were in a roof and the others behind fascia or weatherboards. Three calls I never managed to get to as I had run out of equipment to put the bees into. Only two were laying queens and the others were castes which I merged and re-queened and with the associations apiaries fully stocked, 5 are housed at home to replace any losses the apiaries may have over the winter.

Hopefully next year the swarms will be able to be captured off a small branch 5 foot off the ground before they enter any buildings. But just in case, I'm going to make improvements to the vacuum chamber!

Matt Payne.



Beginner Beekeeper Theory Classes

Morag has been busy planning and organising the next lot of beginner beekeeping courses. She will be taking the theory classes at both the Langham Community Centre and online where appropriate and following government advice on Covid updates. There has been a steady flow of keen new beekeepers and so we have been doing our best to accommodate them. Again, depending on advice moving forward, the plan is to offer our usual practical courses next summer at our teaching apiaries.



What's on in the year ahead

Apart from our AGM towards the end of this month, the committee has also booked the large room at Langham Community Centre for February and March. We are discussing a 'cooking with honey' at the February meeting. If any members have any tried and tested honey recipes they are happy to share, please send to Sarah (contact details at the end of the newsletter). We then have

a speaker from Beth Chatto booked for our March meeting to talk about planting for our bees and other pollinating insects, as well as the chance to buy some Beth Chatto plants. Please look out for more details in next two newsletters.



Thank you!

Your committee would like to say a huge thank you to all members of Colchester Division. Many members have gone out of their way to mentor new beekeepers, assist with the club's teaching apiary sites, help with swarm collecting, and general assistance. Your help and support never go unnoticed, and all members are an essential part of keeping our club active. Thank you also for your patience and ongoing membership in such unusual circumstances. *Thank you!*



If you would like to comment or respond to anything mentioned in any of the newsletters, please get in touch. You can either send an email to Sarah at hazelsfarm2015@gmail.com or phone on 07867 640650 or post to Mrs Sarah Curtis, Hazels, Carringtons Road, Great Bromley, Colchester, CO7 7XA.

