



# EBKA – Colchester Division

February 2022 Members newsletter

## Frosts, flying, and no flipping idea what's going on!

Well, one minute I'm watching my bees out flying like it's a warm April day, the next my bees are clustered together as it's -4 degrees. I think they must be as confused about the weather as I am (but suspect they have more of an idea than me). I gave one colony a block of fondant 2 weeks earlier than I usually do and have needed to replace it with a second block. The other 3 colonies were given a block of fondant on Boxing Day (family tradition) and I haven't,



as yet, needed to top up any of those. So, I'm not concerned about lack of stores, but more concerned (due to some higher than usual temperatures) that the queens haven't really stopped laying at all. This, in turn, makes me slightly concerned of my varroa count, but also makes me wonder when I'll start to see queen cells appearing if the colony is increasing earlier than usual. For those beginners, don't be tempted to look inside the brood box just yet.

At least I haven't seen any pollen being collected – yet, but the snowdrops are just starting to appear so watch this space. However, there is still plenty of time for the weather to confuse us again even further and we plunge into deep snow! . . . or not and we are able to do our first spring inspection earlier than usual and can therefore be prepared for swarming the same time that the bees are. Basically, I have no flipping idea what's going on, but it's good to have some constants in my life!!



## January AGM club meeting at Langham Community Centre

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January in the large room of the Langham Community Centre. It was great to see so many members and receive such positive comments. These comments have been extended via emails and the committee very much appreciate the warm words of thanks for our efforts over the last year. We also appreciate the suggestions and practical advice given on the night and will be discussing those at committee level. *Thank you.*

The meeting went well, with each committee member giving a report of events in 2021. Both Ian and Penny were unable to attend the meeting. Ian sent his very best wishes and hoped for a better and more sociable year to come. Barbara discussed her many tasks as role of Chair and Apiary Manager, including teaching the practical classes to our beginners. Morag went through her roles as General Secretary and Education Secretary, including her vital role

as coordinating swarm collections and teaching the theory beginners classes. Morag was also, obviously, taking the minutes of the AGM. Andy explained the role of the CEC and his part in communicating information between the CEC and the club such as matters that relate to all 9 of the Essex divisions. He also talked about his plans for the club's website. Penny's report was read out, where it was explained that the club had 149 members in 2021, which was the highest figure since Penny became our Membership Secretary. Her report also stated that 91 members had already renewed their membership (with a few others joining and re-joining on the night). For those members who were unable to attend, you should have received a copy of the club's finances. The club has nearly £16,000 in reserves and made just over £2,700 in profit in 2021. This was largely down to not needing to pay to hire the hall for most of the year and selling a lot of the club's honey during the Brightlingsea Food and Drink Festival last August. Matt discussed his role as Technical Secretary by explaining the many calls he received throughout the year to attend people's homes where bee colonies had become established. He would often spend all day cutting out the comb and boxing it all up, along with ensuring all the bees were collected. The bees were then re-housed and either passed to the club's teaching sites or given to beginners who had yet to have a colony. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

All current committee members stated they were happy to stand again, and all were nominated and voted back in to continue their posts for 2022.

We then finished the evening with a delicious buffet supplied by our Chair, Barbara, with plenty of tea and coffee – and even mead supplied by Penny.

Therefore, your committee remains the same as 2021, as follows:

- President – Ian Milligan
- Chair – Barbara Sharp
- General 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 liaison Secretary – Barbara Sharp (and Tom Geddes for the Tendring Show)
- H & S and Data Protection Officer – Sarah Curtis

For those of you who were unable to attend you will be able to read through the minutes being sent out by Morag shortly.



## Theory classes for Beginners

Morag will be starting her theory classes on Thursday evenings at Langham Community Centre, with the first class on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. She has a good number of students this year, as many are catching up from last years abrupt end to our beginner classes. We plan to then offer practical classes at our teaching apiaries later in the year.



# BOOK NOW!



## Spring 2022 Convention

Friday 8 - Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 April 2022

Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Lectures, Workshops and Seminars covering a wide range of practical and scientific topics, directed at all levels of experience, presented by leading experts. Bumper Trade Show Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>

Speakers and Tutors include; Marin Anastasov, Mark Barnett, Shirley and Richard Bond, Norman Carreck, Lars Chittka, Celia Davis, Joyce Nisbet, Juliet Osborne, Julian Parker, Sara Robb, Nigel Semmence, Jo Widdicombe, Geraldine Wright, and more...

For further information, and to book from 31<sup>st</sup> January see the Spring Convention pages at [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk)



## Raw honey petition

There are many online bee related petitions to take a look at, but this one in particular caught our eye. Click on the link for more information.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/603996>



## February's club meeting

This month's meeting will be in Langham Community Centre at 7.30pm and will be a 'cooking with honey' evening. Once again, we have hired the large hall for the meeting to allow for more space. There will be demonstrations and time for tasting both savory and sweet dishes. Recipes will then be in the next few club newsletters. As usual an email will be sent out with more details nearer the time. If anyone has a really interesting and tried and tested honey recipe they would like to share with fellow members please get in touch.



## Membership renewals

Thank you to those members who have already renewed your membership to ColchesterBKA. Penny, our membership secretary, has been very busy processing and checking online and posted renewals. Please remember when you renew to consider adequate BDI cover ie, make sure that you insure for how many hives you predict you will have after the swarming season rather than how many you have now. If you are underinsured, in the unlikely event that you need to call the bee inspector to check your bees and you are told that you have one of the foul brood diseases and your colonies need to be destroyed, if you are not covered for all the colonies on your apiary site then you will not be covered at all. It is only a few extra pounds to insure more hives and so better to be safe than sorry. The BDI is included in your membership for up to 3

colonies and so it is only more than this number that you start to pay extra for. You can increase your BDI cover at any time (apart from just after the bee inspectors visit of course).

Your renewal invitation was emailed to you on the 1<sup>st</sup> January via er2 membership services. Or if you would prefer to do a paper form, you can find this on our website to print and then post to Penny (details at the bottom of the form). Do not hesitate to get in touch if you need to discuss further, are having trouble renewing, or would like your renewal invitation re-sent to you.

**Your membership to Colchester BeeKeepers' Association will lapse if you have not renewed by 15<sup>th</sup> February.**



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](mailto:hazelsfarm2015@gmail.com) or phone on 07867 640650 or post to Mrs Sarah Curtis, Hazels, Carringtons Road, Great Bromley, Colchester, CO7 7XA.

