

### Chairs Report for SBKA AGM 2023

The year began with a notable cold spell in early March, with more than double the average rainfall for March and it was chilly for a time in late April. Then from about the second week in May, high pressure meant warm settled weather and sunshine for the rest of the month and for most of June. This drawn-out wet spring and then a sudden dry warm period, triggered an **unusual number of swarms early in the year**, which caught out many beekeepers throughout the County.

Warm or hot temperatures with a strong wind from the south in the spring also seems to be the major trigger for an **unprecedented incursion** of the **Asian Hornet** into the south particularly in and around Kent.

This has been a **massive wakeup call to all of us** and we have come together with the other divisions of Surrey to pool our resources and collaborate to work on a strategy to defend the environment our bees and beekeeping. In the last month or so we have made connections with other counties and the **BBKA** to work together on this threat.

### Accounts

2022/3 has been successful year for the division. We are delighted to have been able to run so many courses, to have attended many shows and fairs, and especially with the success for the Members Store in its first year. We are all very much hoping to be able to expand our programme of activities further again in 2024.

I have been very fortunate to have had the support of **Geoff Lane** as Examiner of the Accounts, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for that support and for his professional advice.

**Subscription income** has remained steady, and we have continued to hold the GBKA subscriptions at the same price. However, most of the subscription is paid away to **BBKA, BeeCraft and BDI**.

We are very appreciative of the **Donations** received from members and from the public who have received assistance from our members.

**Gift Aid.** We were delighted that the long-running discussions between SBKA and HMRC regarding the GiftAid status of subscriptions were resolved in the 2021/22 financial year. In 2022/23 happily our claim was very straightforward.

### **Activities for generating funds.**

The post-pandemic recovery in income from **Course fees** continues to be strong, as we are continuing to concentrate our efforts to run many of the deferred courses and satisfy the backlog of demand.

We had stalls at several **successful fairs and events**, both to promote public awareness of the Asian Hornet, and for **Honey Sales** of the **bumper crop of honey** which the apiary yielded last year. Many thanks to the members who have given their time and expertise to achieve this.

Our new **Members Store** has been highly successful. We have been most fortunate in our Quartermaster, **Peter Jones**, who has been extremely active sourcing at good rates and fulfilling the needs of our members, and I would like to give my personal thanks for the regular and careful book-keeping which has informed the GBKA accounts.

### **Fund raising costs.**

Many events and shows were attended this year. We invested in presenting attractive brochures, posters and factsheets to help raise public awareness in several bee-related topics, including the Asian hornet threat.

**Charitable activities** include **Apiary expenses** which are variable. Also variable is the honey harvest from the apiary, which was zero in 2021, but yielded honey valued at £2730 in 2022 which was been netted off against the apiary costs in the presentation of the accounts. 2023 has also been a good year for honey, and the apiary stock for sale is currently valued at £1,987.

### **Surplus for the year**

The overall outcome of all these movements was that the surplus was £3,577, which is larger than in most previous years. Note that although the increase in 2021/22 was much higher, this was due to the **one-off GiftAid resolution** which was backdated for 4 years. Overall this is a very creditable result and a tribute to all the hard work of the committee and members.

**Helen Boughton** Treasurer



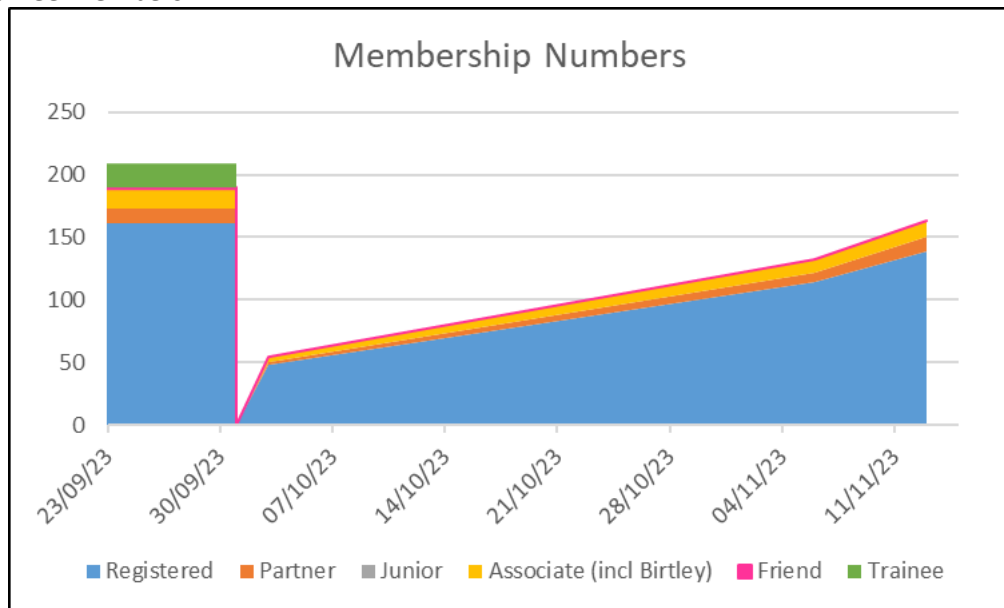
Guildford Division of Surrey Beekeepers Association.

**Membership**

13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

- Membership Renewal reminder was issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 to all of last year’s members and the 2023 trainees who had not joined so far in this year. The mailshot was issued to 101 people including last year’s trainees. This prompted 23 more renewals from past members.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> November, 132 renewals have been received, this compares with last year’s total membership (excluding trainees) of 190, i.e. 58 less.
- Any outstanding members who have not renewed by the AGM will be set to Lapsed in eR2 and removed from the WhatsApp group. No further renewal reminders are planned to be issued.
- To date none of the 2023 trainees, who didn’t join last year, have joined. It is expected that the majority will join once they have their own bees.
- An updated Membership Pack is being used, with enhanced instructions on completing the online renewal form, to avoid common completion errors that we get each year.

**Active and Trainee Members**



**Prospective Enquiries and New Members During the Period**

	3/10/23	6/11/23		
New Membership Enquiries	1 new + 2 deferred from last year	2		
Enquiries Converted to Membership	1	0		

**David Bennett** Membership Secretary

**Teaching Apiary**

The colonies came through the winter 22/23 strongly with minimal losses. This, together with the long winter and cold temperatures throughout March and early April, meant that all but one colony produced swarm cells in a very short period at the end of April/ beginning of May. Various splits were made using the nuc and Pagden methods, and at the same time nucs were set up for later sale. Some of the new colonies took a long time to establish, especially those with Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus present. This viral infection was more prevalent this year and meant several colonies were lost during May.



## Guildford Division of Surrey Beekeepers Association.

The **GBKA Beginners Theory Course**, with twenty trainees, was again a hybrid course, with sessions held on Zoom and at the Apiary during January and February. Despite the early problems with the colonies the Beginners Practical Course commenced as planned, with twenty trainees attending the eight weekly sessions at the Apiary. These ended in mid-June by which time most colonies were of a good size. This also meant that three days of BBKA Assessments could take place, six candidates taking the **BBKA Bee Health Certificate** and four the **BBKA Basic**. Feedback on the colonies and facilities, given by the external assessors, was gratefully received.

Thanks must go to Jacqueline Tolley and Geoff Lane, respectively, who steered these candidates through the revision sessions, some of which took place at the Apiary. A successful **Taster Session** was held in July with twenty members of the public attending the Apiary for an afternoon.

Honey was extracted from a small number of frames in June, but the majority of supers were taken off in the first week of August. Although slightly down on the previous year a good crop of honey resulted. Some of this honey was set aside for the **Surrey Honey Show** and the **National Honey Show**, and we were pleased with a first and second prize at these shows.

A group of **NHS staff, including immunologists**, from the Allergy Clinic at the Royal Surrey County Hospital visited the Apiary and were able to experience beekeeping at first hand. One of the immunologists will now be giving a talk on **Bee Stings and Desensitisation** in the New Year.

The Apiary year ended with the now annual **Autumn 'Spring' Clean and Barbecue**. This was well attended as have been most of the sessions throughout the year, the number of GBKA members attending increasing year on year. There is now a rolling programme of monthly 'themed' sessions during the winter months, the aim being to improve the knowledge of all members who attend, regardless of capabilities and beekeeping experience.

**Thanks must go to everyone** who has helped with the training, the maintenance of the colonies, nucs and equipment throughout the year, especially Alastair Heslop, Angela Massie, David Bennett, Ian Carmichael, Geoff Lane, Pauline Lane, Mel Robertson, Sara Cannell, Gillie Muir, Peter and Mary Jones. Finally, thanks to all those who helped with the **refurbishment of the kitchen** area in the barn, which has helped to make the Barn a more pleasurable place to use.

**Susan Kimber**

Apiary Team Lead.

### Events for 2023

GBKA **Talks and Events team** have been busy in this year. There have been **12 talks to adult groups** and **12 to schools**. Our aim is to spread awareness of the wonder and importance of bees and pollinators and give people some ideas of how they can help slow insect decline. The leaflet we commissioned at the beginning of the year has proved very useful and was given to everyone we met so they can pass our message on to others.

An added bonus was the increase in **Association honey sales**. The purchase of the **card reader** was key to this as it has made honey sales much easier at events, also at talks to adult groups who usually ask us to bring honey to sell.

A huge thank you must go to **Peter Smith, Peter Jones, Greg Reeve, Geoff Lane, Mel Robertson, and Jane Kumar** who have all contributed enormously to the success of these talks and who have been so generous with their time and willingness to do them.

We have talks lined up for next year and expect to do even more as the **Asian Hornet Awareness** programme gains momentum.

We have **attended 5 big events** this year including **Surrey Hills Wood Fair** which is a two-day event and we have another to come in December. It takes a big team and lots of effort to set up at events, so we made the decision to concentrate on those with a big footfall. We attended **Cranleigh Carnival** for the first time this year and it proved a great success as well as a lot of fun. In 2023 we have spoken to thousands of people, informing them about bees, pollinators and the Asian Hornet. We sold over £3,000 of honey for GBKA.

**Pauline Lane.** Secretary and Events Co-ordinator