



## **Surrey Beekeepers Association AGM 3rd December 2023** **Chairman's Report**

I think it's fair to say that in 2023 we have finally shaken off the restrictions of covid and returned to normal operations. Zoom meetings will continue to play a useful part in all our activities but at last we have been able to meet face to face on a regular basis.

Your Surrey Beekeepers Association (SBKA) Council met four times during the year by Zoom. We discussed capitation, Gift Aid, our voting instructions to our delegate at the BBKA AGM (subject of a separate report) and many other topics.

Thank you to all our Council Trustees and Divisional Representatives for your constructive contributions and my special thanks to our Hon Secretary Julie Hogarth, our Treasurer Penny McMahon and our Membership Secretary Kathy O'Toole for all the hard work they do for us. Kathy has completed her first year as our Membership Secretary. She and the divisional membership secretaries continue to have occasional issues with the BBKA's eR2 membership scheme but have managed to make the system work. Mike Hill, our previous membership secretary, has kindly continued to give his advice and assistance when needed.

We have had no changes to our trustees this year but Marion Cooper stood down as the long serving representative for Weybridge. Thank you Marion for your wise advice over the years. I am glad that you and Geoff will still be available to offer your considerable experience when needed. In Marion's place we welcome Michael Main who is well known to many of you around the county as a previous Chief Steward of our Honey Show. We have a good team who work together in a constructive and congenial way. It is a pleasure to chair our meetings.

Alex de Salis has done a great job in his first year as our webmaster. There is still work to be done on the website but progress is being made. Thank you Alex.

As I say every year, it's important to stress that the county website is a 'portal' with the main aim of driving enquiries to the appropriate division. It is in no way intended to compete with the excellent divisional websites.

Every year I include a bit of information in my report about the structure of Surrey BKA for the benefit of our newer members. Old hands can skip this bit!

Surrey Beekeepers Association is a registered charity. Each of the eight Surrey Divisions is asked to provide a Trustee. In addition, the Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman are also Trustees. Trustees are proposed by their divisions and elected at the AGM. Each Division also elects a Representative whose job is to put forward the views of his or her Division and report back on what happens in each Council meeting. Representatives are elected at Divisional AGM's.

The SBKA Council sends a representative to the British Beekeepers Association Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) to vote as decided in discussion at SBKA meetings. Through this 'pyramid' system, individual

members' opinions are passed to county and then national level and conclusions are passed back down the line. Every member has the opportunity to make their opinion known.

Surrey BKA members again did well in the BBKA exams and assessments in 2023. Well done to our Exam Secretary, Celia Perry for her meticulous management of the exam system.

I'm glad to report that the BBKA Exam Board has reversed its decision to make module exams on-line only. A victory for common sense.

If you are thinking of using the winter to work towards taking a module I can thoroughly recommend the BBKA correspondence courses. There's nothing to stop a group clubbing together to buy one course and submitting group answers. Easy to do with Zoom and an incentive to bounce ideas off each other. If nobody in your division is interested in the module you want to study do ask around the other divisions. With Zoom there are no geographic limits. Our Hon Secretary Julie Hogarth will help you make the right contacts. Do have a look at the syllabus on the BBKA website.

Michael Main is our representative at the BeeCraft Magazine AGM. Again for the benefit of our newer members, BeeCraft is owned by a group of county associations. Surrey BKA is a founder of the magazine along with Kent BKA and is the second largest shareholder so you own the magazine! The BeeCraft AGM is an opportunity for their directors to welcome representatives from the shareholding associations, explain BeeCraft's latest plans and answer questions about the company. It is usually held in the pleasant surroundings of Wax Chandlers Hall in the City of London.

For the third year running we held our own very successful Honey Show for members. That's the subject of another report but well done to all concerned – entrants and organisers.

To end on a positive note, most divisions had another bumper honey crop and that will provide much needed income as it is sold during 2024.

Let me sow a seed in your minds. In 2024, BBKA will celebrate their 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In 5 years time Surrey Beekeepers' Association will do the same. It would be nice to do something really special to mark our 150<sup>th</sup> – but what? Plenty of time to put your thinking caps on.

Have a very happy Christmas and I hope 2024 will be another great year for Surrey beekeepers.

Bob Maurer  
November 2023

07740 707500

bob@maurer.uk.com