



# EPSOM DIVISION SURREY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## Chairman's Report

It has been another challenging year for across the country. The unreliable weather has sometimes made it almost impossible to plan and to work with our bees. There were many local reports of dead colonies and a good deal of swarms catching people on the hop this year.

Our very able Queen Rearing Project Team, were hit by the adverse weather in the first half of the year with only 8 queen right nucs from 20. Nevertheless, many local member beekeepers had good experiences and sound harvests. The Teaching Apiary Team come through with a good honey harvest for the Club and many colonies now set for over-wintering.

The threat of the Yellow Legged Asian Hornet was ever present. But luckily, the winds and rain have acted in the country's favour, keeping the invader at bay. The AHAT teams formed last year have been very active - spreading the message to the public and reacting to alerts. Our Club has played a key part in Surrey County's noteworthy monitoring project which looks certain to be rolled out in other parts of the country.

Our Club ends the year in reasonable health. We have a total cash balance of £24,875. And at 111 we have increased our membership by 9 persons year-on-year. The Education Team has continued its brilliant work and 2024 saw 5 members pass their Basic and 2 members pass Module 6 exams.

We have made a number of changes at our Clubhouse – installing new signage and equipment - to ensure we meet health and safety standards and the fire safety requirements of our new insurers. (Thank you, Kate and Nick.)

A compact corps of members have actively helped run our club meetings, apiary and shop. Others have helped maintain our grounds, clubhouse, web and digital presence and attended public events – selling honey and talking to the public and special interest groups. We are extra-ordinarily grateful to all of them. Sadly many members pursue their hobby at a distance from the Club and attendance at our twice monthly Club meetings remains much lower than in pre-Covid times. It is to try to reverse this trend that we organised the EGM and member survey, The encouraging responses, ideas and suggestions been incorporated into a Club Action Plan for 2024 to be presented and voted on at the AGM.

I would like to pay tribute to fellow Committee members for all the time and hard work they put into supporting the Club. It's almost impossible to express the debt of thanks we all owe them.

I particularly want to thank colleagues who left during the year or are now stepping back - Kim Broughton, Fiona Dowle, Kathy Gunn, Diane Middlecoat, Sam Nichol and Helen Worwood - you have been absolute stars. It has been a pleasure to work with you. It's also been a delight to bring two new members – Nigel Edwards and Howard Gray - onto the Committee. Both have stepped into big roles with practical enthusiasm and humour. It's pleasing that they are standing for election.

Finally, I thank you - the Members - for your support. Your Club has weathered another year. The challenges of the coming year will no doubt be just as tough - if not more so. However, the active and growing involvement of members and the steps we have taken this year put us in good stead to meet them.

**Stuart Gendall**

## Membership Report

The profile of our current membership on 31st October 2024 was:

Registered	84
Partner	4
Country	12
Friend	9
Honorary	2
Junior	
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>

We have increased our membership numbers slightly from this time last year (October 2023: 102) with new members joining after our courses this year. There has been a change in the demographic of our membership with some of the existing Registered members retiring from keeping bees but still remaining with us as Country members.

The BBKA, SKBA, BDI and Beecraft did not increase their fees this year. However, we increased our proportion of the membership price. These monies will be split between maintenance of the Club House and Grounds and a new fund to assist SBKA's Yellow Legged Asian Hornet monitoring and awareness raising activities.

### Instagram

Our Instagram page has grown significantly – we now have 325 followers. From what we can see of their profiles most are beekeepers and not necessarily in the Epsom area, some are from worldwide including Germany, America & Australia.

It is a dynamic way of showing interested people that we are an active association. We are able to share posts from the BBKA and other related organisation about various topics including information about the Asian Hornet. It is a public page, so anyone can check it out <https://www.instagram.com/epsombeekkeepers/>

**Kim Broughton**

## Education Report

This season we managed to guide 18 people through the Taster Days and 15 through the Beginners Course. We have 8 people booked for the Beginners Course next year and would like more! Please recommend us to friends and family.

Five members have passed their Basic Assessments and 2 more will be receiving their Module Six certificates. We will repeat the Basic Assessment revision course next year and will be assisting study groups for the Advanced Modules.

We will also be looking to provide workshops during the year on a variety of topics, to be announced via the newsletter.

As the year draws to a close, we have moved to 2 Tuesday meetings per month and are increasing the amount of outside speakers booked (thanks Nick!)

**Howard Gray**

## Queen Rearing Project

The Queen Rearing Project team (of Fiona & Derek Dowle, John Futcher and Phil Shepherd) continued to meet regularly this year creating new nucleus colonies for EBKA members.

However, the adverse weather throughout the first half of the year meant that although 20 nucs were created, only 8 became queen right and were sold to members. More recently two additional nucs have been created and are being overwintered to act as insurance for the stock hives.

Due to unpleasant bee sting reactions, Fiona and Derek stopped participating in the QRP in August, we thank them for all the hard work they have put in for the past 5 years – including during the pandemic – in keeping the Queen Rearing Project going.

For next year, John has created a new team (of Howard, Jane B and Nigel Edwards) who are meeting regularly through Autumn checking on varroa and stores. In addition to raising nucs through swarm cells, they plan to try their hand at grafting queens and will report their progress during summer 2025.

**John Futcher**

## YLH Co-ordinator Report

The group of 15 Yellow Legged Hornet monitors continue to observe their bait stations. Monitoring will stop this week as per guidance from the National Bee Unit. Thankfully, to date there have been no YLH seen in our area. Thank you to the team for your support and hard work!

I took a call from a member of the public shortly after the BBC news ran a story about looking for YLH nests in trees. Helen attended the property the next day and confirmed the nest was a wasp nest being visited by European Hornets.

If you are interested in becoming a monitor, please let me know! My email address is [webmaster@epsombeekkeepers.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@epsombeekkeepers.co.uk).

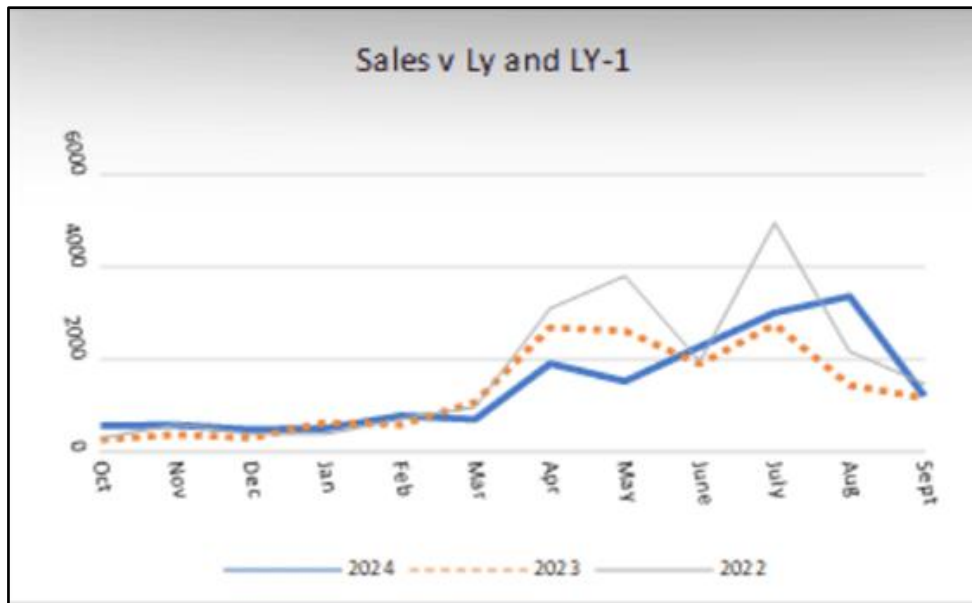
**Nick Fry**

## Apiary Shop Report

I'm starting this, my final AGM report with some huge "Thank You's". First, to our hard-working crew of volunteers: Jenny Breese, Gisele Dyson, Gill Futcher, Kate Kellett, Ellie Lodge, Diane Middlecoat, Anita Rhodes and Sophia Wellsby. Second to Nick Fry - our webmaster and general all round tech wizard - who has maintained our web shop and navigated us through many technical challenges. And, finally, my thanks to Nigel Edwards who was brave enough to step forward to volunteer to take on the challenge of running the EBKA shop and has shadowed me and worked alongside the team for much of the year.

Sadly, Diane and Sofia have decided to hang up their shop crew hats, I thank them for their help and hard work and I hope we will continue to see them as regular customers from now on.

The solid blue line of sales performance in the graph overleaf shows sales significantly flat lining in comparison to the last 2 years. We had no early lift for frame replacement, no mid-year lift for extra supers and super frames to support peak foraging, no peak for jar sales and only a steady year-end demand for varroa treatments.



By the end of the year, we had taken £16,836. This is only £1111 more than last year (+7%) but is £3,900 less (-18.8%) than that achieved in 2022 - our best ever year.

Sales of honey continue to provide a valuable source of income for the association and provide a service to the public.

We sold £4,258 Honey in total. Of this £2,366 is Apiary honey and this is significantly more than last year's £1,000. So my thanks to the 2023 and 2024 beginners groups for producing such high honey harvests in far from perfect seasons under the tutelage of the apiary team.

This was the first full year that we sold our members' honey taking a 10% commission for the Association. We sold £1,892 of members honey and therefore made £189 for the association.

**Helen Worwood**

## Financial Overview

### 1. Cash Position

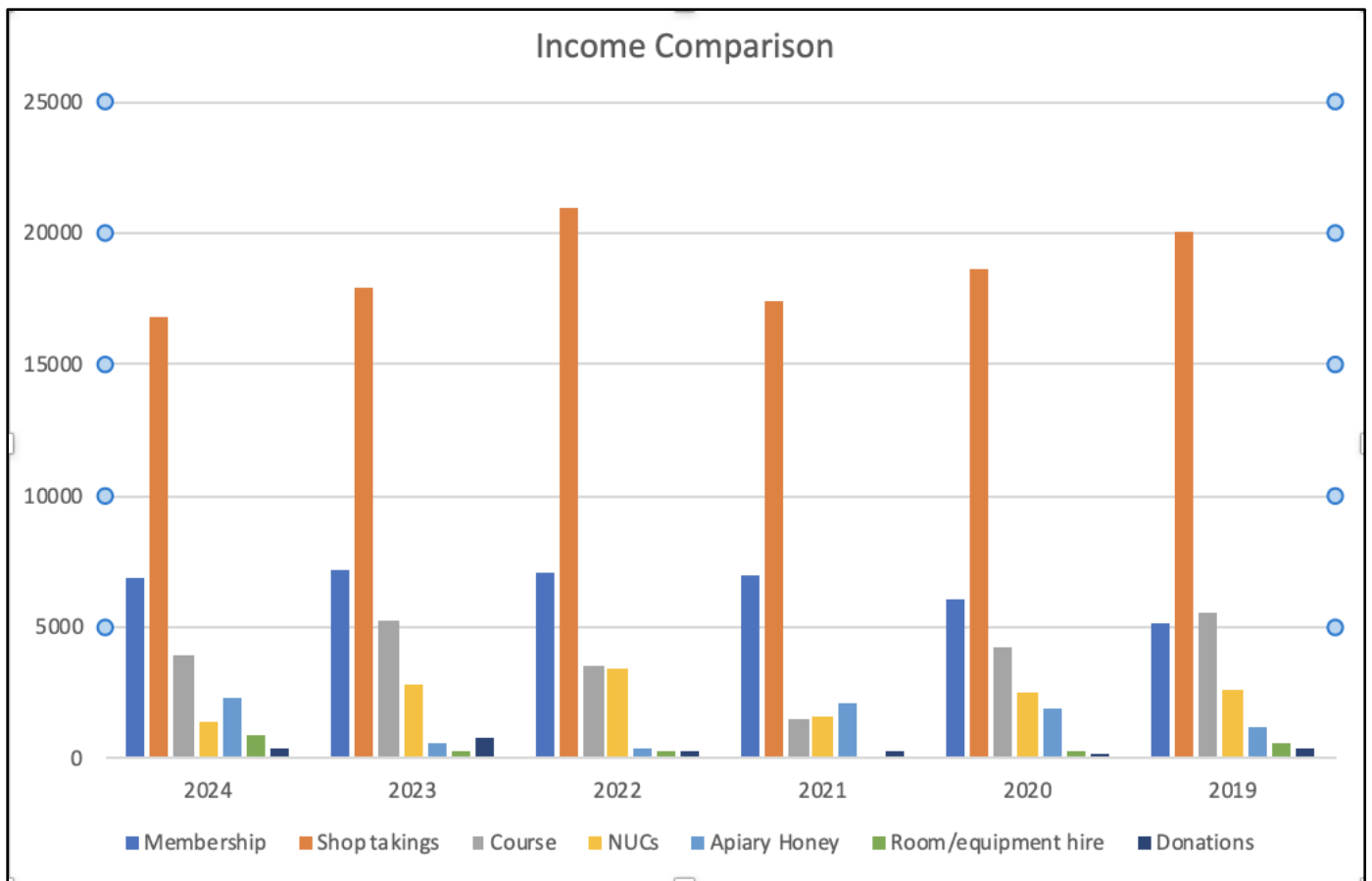
This report provides a summary of the financial status of Epsom Beekeepers Association for the financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Unfortunately, the accounts have not been audited in time for the meeting and they are submitted in draft form.

As soon as the audit has been completed, the accounts will be circulated to members. The financial year finished with a total cash balance of £24,875 (£5,000 of which is ring-fenced.)

### 2. Profit and Loss Account

Income received during the year has been generated through Membership Fees; the Shop; Bee Courses; the Queen Rearing Programme; sale of Honey; Room/Equipment Hire and Donations.



- Details of Membership are given in the report by the Membership Secretary.
- Details of Shop and Honey sales are given in the report by the Shop Manager.

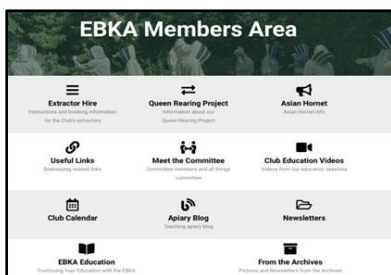
	2024	2023	2022
<b><i>Profit from running courses</i></b>			
Receipts for courses in current year	£3,900	£5,240	£3,583
Tutor fee	(£1,300)	(£1,402)	(£884)
Books and postage	(£160)	(£220)	(£175)
Refreshments	(£97)	(£220)	(£116)
	<b>£2,343</b>	<b>£3,398</b>	<b>£2,408</b>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b><i>Sales of NUCs</i></b>	<b>£1,360</b>	<b>£2,860</b>	<b>£3,465</b>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b><i>Room/equipment hire</i></b>	<b>£880</b>	<b>£298</b>	<b>£295</b>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b><i>Donations</i></b>	<b>£446</b>	<b>£777</b>	<b>£251</b>

Annual costs incurred in running the Club (including tutor fees) the Apiary and the Queen Rearing Programme, amounted to £9,447.

<u>Costs associated with running the Club, Apiary and QRP</u>			
	2024	2023	2022
<b>Utilities</b>			
Cleaning	£168	£528	£538
Gardening	£36	£180	£300
Internet/tech	£1,490	£442	£360
Council	£130	£146	£201
Insurance	£1,266	£1,159	£1,226
Water	£126	£126	£82
Zoom	£0	£0	£144
Electricity	£616	£1,150	£1,260
	£3,832	£3,730	£4,111
<b>Apiary</b>	£1,675	£816	£1,477
<b>QRP</b>	£808	£434	£1,031
<b>Club</b>	£1,036	£1,158	£2,615
	£3,519	£2,408	£5,123
<b>Cost of running courses/taster day</b>			
Tutor fee	£1,300	£1,402	£884
Books and postage	£160	£220	£175
Refreshments	£97	£220	£116
	£1,557	£1,842	£1,175
<b>Bank charges</b>	£70	£75	£60
<b>Other fees</b>	£469	£369	£331
	£539	£444	£391
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,447</b>	<b>£8,424</b>	<b>£10,800</b>

**Kate Kellett**

## Webmaster's Report



This year has seen continuing improvements to website including growing the members area

<https://www.epsombeekeepers.co.uk/members-page/>

Any suggestions for this area please email

[webmaster@epsombeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@epsombeekeepers.co.uk)

Barcodes have been introduced in the shop to help speed up walk in sales and make shop volunteers job easier.



## Zoho Account

A centralised Cloud-based documents storage has been rolled. In an effort to help future proof the club, most departments in the club now have their own Zoho cloud account helping with the continuity of handover to the next officer and future proofing the process. Zoho is used for all our email accounts.

Further leveraging our existing Zoho account, we are storing instructions papers (e.g. for apiary honey harvesting), buildings documents, health & safety etc on Zoho rather than on individuals' computers.

Two Factor Authentication (2FA) has been rolled out across the club's electronic communications in line with insurance requirements.

## Zoom usage at meetings

To enable members to attend club meetings on Zoom, a Zoom kit was purchased for £100 to enable a better online zoom experience at club meetings. It is hoped more club meetings will be available on Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

## Club welcome sign.

The old notice board was removed and replaced with an aluminium sign. The sign gives more precise information ie contact information and more importantly it welcomes visitors! Cost was £90. The post box was also moved next to the welcome sign.



## Apiary Cameras

The cameras in the apiary are now working reliably and broadcast 24hrs a day! With limited bandwidth at the apiary, the image is reduced but high-quality images are recorded in the classroom that go back 3 months. We are hoping to see a swarm leave one day!

<https://www.epsombeekers.co.uk/live-ebka-apiry-cameras/>



Pollen being taken into the hive!



A slug investigating bees at night.



Plenty of activity at night!

## Hide Beat Sensors.

We are looking to purchase 6 x Hive beat sensors for the apiary to use along with cameras to help give more understanding of bees behaviour. This will give us some insight in the use of open roofs for ventilation against roofs with no ventilation and insulation.

The sensors record temperature and humidity, the measurements and data will be available online to any member wanting to see them. The recent talk by Harry from Hive Beat is available here - <https://youtu.be/A6jDFO68mo>

## Health & Safety and Fire Regulations

To adhere to our insurance requirements, new signage has been added to the apiary entrance and in the building. Thank you, Kate for your help.



Entrance Safety Sign



Smoker Cabinet



Gas Storage Cage

We have 2 gas cylinders in the workshop used to scorch the equipment. A gas storage cage has been purchased, assembled and installed/fix on the hardstanding next to the shop cabin.

They need to be stored outside securely. Cost £172

A metal outdoor cabinet has also been purchased to enable the storage of hot smokers. These smokers were stored in the workshop and posed a fire risk. Cost £79

Please email [webmaster@epsombeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@epsombeekeepers.co.uk) with any ideas or suggestions for future projects.

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