



EPSOM DIVISION SURREY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 18th November 2025

Chairman's Report

I'm starting this, my final AGM report with some major "Thank You's". First, a thank you to the many Committee members who have worked alongside me in the last three years. Your hard work, time and enthusiasm are the very foundation of this Club; keeping it fresh and vital.

I'd particularly like to thank those Committee members who are stepping down at this meeting with particular mention to Gill Futchter who is stepping down after more than 10 years - recently as Trustee and before that as Chair and Membership Secretary. Gill has always been willing to throw herself into all our activities and it has always been greatly appreciated. There's also Howard Gray and John Futchter who have revitalised our Training and Education programmes. It seems there's not a day when I have visited the Clubhouse that Howard and John haven't been there. And a final big thank you goes to Nigel Edwards for his sterling work in managing our Club Shop over a very challenging year. Thanks to him and the shop team our total takings were £18,586 - which is £1,750 more than the previous year.

At last year's AGM, members discussed and agreed a draft Action Plan for the Club. The Plan (Appendix 1) was the product of comments and suggestions from our EGM and online membership survey. It was formally endorsed by the Committee in January.

We hit the ground running - responding to membership requests with a revitalised schedule of twice-monthly Club events including hosting external speakers including such as local expert Fiona Gerdes-Hansen, who talked about Health & Safety for beekeepers; Steve Riley Chair and Education Officer for Westerham BKA who talked about selecting for Varroa-resistant traits in honey bees and our Regional Bee Inspector, Tom Bickerdike who talked about his experience and the threat of the Yellow Legged Asian Hornet. We created a Beekeepers' Question Time event and we called out for member mentors to help our newer members.

A key part of the plan was to form working groups to take on practical work around the Apiary and



for the Club. My thanks go to Sam Nicol, Chi Choi, Chris Lavington, James Henderson, Katherine Walsh, Julie Bastopcu, Kevin Double, Alexandra Mochilina, Paul Temlett, Kelly Bright, Peter Ward and Ian Watts for stepping

forward to help (alongside our long-term gardener, Linda Hughes), with our garden working party activities.

I'd also like to give a nod of appreciation to Aviva's "Fantastic Five" - Bonita Driscoll, Lily Hodson, Samatha Stanley, Marsuli Thompson and Raquel Kay – who volunteered to paint our Clubhouse



and Storage Shed - making them both presentable and preserving them for ongoing use. An apiary is not the easiest of environments in which to paint. The team had to dress appropriately and - on a hot day – wear boiler suits and gloves. They did this with a joyous professionalism

We've adopted new measures to improve communication by rolling out an *all.members* email and by joining other clubs in taking up renewals via the nationwide eR2 system

We took every opportunity to increase our outreach to the wider community.

Whistlestop Arts visited us twice in Spring to interview and film our activities as part of a video-based "virtual day trip of Ewell" commissioned and distributed by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council - a good vehicle to take bring our messages to local school classrooms, day centres, and care homes.



As part of our outreach, we hosted a visit from our MP, Helen Maguire. We held talks with local library associations with an emerging opportunity to showcase our materials and host talks. And, having placed member hives at a local charity's wildlife grounds, we held exploratory talks for related possibilities with a regional property developer.

The reports that follow provide more details on our activities. It is good to see our Club ends the year in reasonable health - with a cash balance of £26,432 and stable membership numbers at 110. The Apiary and QRP have enjoyed very buoyant growth despite the challenges of the weather. The Teaching Apiary Team have come through with a solid honey harvest for the Club and many colonies set for over-wintering (supported by innovative intelligent monitoring thanks to our web-guru, Nick Fry).

The Education Team has continued its brilliant work and can be rightly credited for the Club's candidate successes in this year's Basic and Module exams.

A small but active corps of members have actively helped run our club meetings, apiary and shop. They help at important public events, schools and other organisations – selling honey and talking to the public about our charity aims and work. We are extra-ordinarily grateful to all of them.

Sadly, it is still a fact that Epsom members continue to pursue their hobby at a distance from the Club. A glance at the Action Plan shows there remains much to do to achieve greater engagement. It is frustrating that, still, too few members come forward. For those volunteers that help out in activities - and for those who take up the responsibilities of manging the club - the stress and strains are very obvious. While we rightly celebrate the successes of this year it is important to reverse this trend.

I close with a final thanks for the privilege of being voted Chair. I have enjoyed the challenge - and I wish the new Chair, and the remaining and incoming Committee members every success in the coming years.

Stuart Gendall

Education Report

We have continued to expand the education offering in response to the Chairman's callout at last year's AGM and have seen a rise in numbers attending and qualifications obtained.

As well as the various course tutors and speakers on a Tuesday evening the whole apiary team has contributed to the full range of activities this year. The breakdown is as follows:

- **Beginners' Course:**

Twelve people completed the course. The apiary offered an increased number of hives (peaking at 20) and range of hive types (including 14 x 12, Langstroth and WBC) to improve the learning experience.

Six of the attendees have been invited to assist/join the apiary team for next year with the intention of taking the Basic Assessment in July. Income Generated: £3000. There are 10 bookings for next year.

- **Experience Days:**

A total of 28 people attended over the 2 days. Income Generated: £2400. There are 2 bookings for each day next year.

- **Basic Assessment:**

Refresher course evenings were held throughout June. Eight people took and passed the exam this year - with 50% receiving the highest grade.

- **Module Exams:**

Seven people attended the Module 1 Study Group with 2 taking the exam on the 15th of this month. Hopefully more people will be able to take the exam in the Spring.

Separately we have had a successful pass of the Module 1 exam, and 3 people will be taking a total of 6 module exams on the 15th. We also had a successful pass of the General Husbandry qualification - well done John!

- **Microscopy Course:**

We have trialed a Microscopy Course with volunteers and will hopefully look to offer this more widely in the future.

- **Tuesday Evenings:**

We continue to have regular meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month and cover a variety of topics including outside speakers. Attendances have been improving on average and allow members to socialise and ask questions of more experienced beekeepers.

- **Apiary Invites:**

Members were invited to brush up on their varroa treatment skills and question the apiary team about winter preparations during September. Five members attended over the course of the month. An additional invite to members will be extended when we conduct oxalic acid sublimation on the apiary hives on the 21st December.

- **Outside Courses:**

Reigate Division has offered a couple of courses/events that we have been able to offer to members:

- Honey Bee Health course. Ran from March - June with zoom meetings and practical days with a view to taking the Honey Bee Health Certificate exam.
- Surrey Bee Health Day with the NBU. 7 people attended.

- **Club Honey Extraction:**

This year we have conducted 2 extractions from the club apiary and members of the apiary team were present to demonstrate various methods used during the process and the gadgets available. Approx. amount of honey harvested - 350 lbs. Retail value £3500. Total apiary costs: £1860.

Howard Gray

Queen Rearing Project

The team now consists of John Futcher, Howard Gray, Jane Bush, Nigel Edwards and Chi Choi. This year we raised 21 nucs. However, with Spring having been such an active period, several of the people on the queue for nucs already sourced bees from swarms or donations by the time we had our nucs ready. As such, we only sold 7 of the nucs.

With 3 of the nucs failing, we have 11 nucs being taken into winter and all gathering stores in November; those that survive the winter will therefore be available to members early next year.

Another change we have incorporated this year was a move to using correx nuc boxes to hand nucs over to members. This had been already discussed in the team to address the admin of chasing customers to return the poly nucs, but the advent of EFB in the area was the final argument. Until further notice, nucs will be supplied in the non-returnable correx boxes.

From a learning perspective we successfully raised a number of queens through using mini-mating nucs - and also tried (unsuccessfully) to raise queens using the cloake board technique.

In September we worked with the Apiary Team to distribute surplus queens from well-mannered colonies to members and were able to re-home 6 queens

Next year we aim to implement a plan to check up on progress of this year's distributed Nucs and Queens to check how well they have fared

John Futcher

Shop Report

Firstly, my thanks go to the staff who have operated the shop this year — Jenny Breese, Gill Futcher, Kate Kellett, Anita Rhodes, Giselle Dyson, and our new member Katherine Walsh. Thank you all for your time, effort, and commitment throughout the year. Thanks also to Nick Fry for his continued support on the IT front.

This year we have made a number of changes in the shop which we hope have benefited our customers. The shed has been reorganised, and we have carried out training sessions for staff and volunteers. The shop continues to operate successfully as a click and collect service.

By the end of the year, total takings were £18,586, which is £1,750 more than the previous year. These figures include sales made at outside events, which continue to be a profitable activity. Currently, the shop has 87 individual items for sale. Of those, only 37 achieved sales in double figures. This raises the question of whether we should streamline our inventory.

Our top-selling item was apiary honey, with sales of £2,085, which is slightly less than last year. We currently have over 200 jars in stock and approximately 230 lb of honey awaiting jarring. Given the shop's limited opening hours, selling this quantity will take some time. Other top-selling items included wax, frames (both super and brood), and jars. In addition, five other members' honeys featured in the top twenty items sold. Selling honey remains the shop's strongest and most profitable activity, highlighting that we rely more on honey sales than any other product line. It also suggests that the shop may be carrying too wide a range of products overall.

When compared with competitors, we find it challenging to match prices on items such as wax, frames, and jars. As many of you will recall, jar supplies became a problem at a critical point in the season. Due to the high volume of honey extraction in the apiary, jar stock was diverted there first, which meant members were unable to purchase jars in the quantities they needed. Supplies have now returned to normal, and a price audit has been completed. There may be price increases in 2026 as a result.

During the year, we carried out a survey to assess members' requirements for the shop. Although the number of responses was small, the requested items were already stocked — and only one of those items was actually purchased.

We also made a small operational change to Tuesday evening opening hours, ensuring the shop closes promptly so that speaker sessions can begin on time. This adjustment has worked well.

We continue to need additional volunteers to help on the shop rota, so this is another appeal to members to come forward and get involved.

Finally, on behalf of the shop team, I would like to thank all members for their continued support of the shop throughout the year.

Nigel Edwards

Membership Report

There was a slight increase in overall membership fees this year. This was due to an increase in Beecraft magazine subscriptions, both paper and digital and BBKA Capitation. Epsom did not increase its own membership fees for 2025/26.

Membership renewals this year have been similar to previous years. As of 10th November 2025, our membership profile is as follows:

Membership Numbers	
Registered	88
Partner	7
Country	7
Local	6
Honorary	2
Junior	0
Total	110

There are 20 members who are awaiting renewal, some of these may have decided not to renew. Two reminder emails have been sent to these members. We have gained 44 more Instagram followers over the last year making a total of 369.

This year our membership renewals were sent out via the nationwide eR2 system. Most members have reported to find this a much easier system, but some members have struggled to select the correct membership type using the dropdown menu. We will continue to use this system going forward.

On 3rd November the Treasurer and I attended a meeting with our Surrey counterparts to discuss Beecraft magazine, both digital and paper. There is an on-going issue with this publication which will be discussed at the next Surrey meeting. In short, NO amendments can be made to their distribution list, for example, adding new members, changing addresses, cancelling subscriptions. This appears to be affecting alterations since March 2024. Previous subscribers should not have noticed any changes. Further information will be sent out when we have details.

Angela Jay

Website and IT Report

The graphic on the right shows traffic to our website. As can be seen we have a busy website with over 7 thousand unique visits in September!

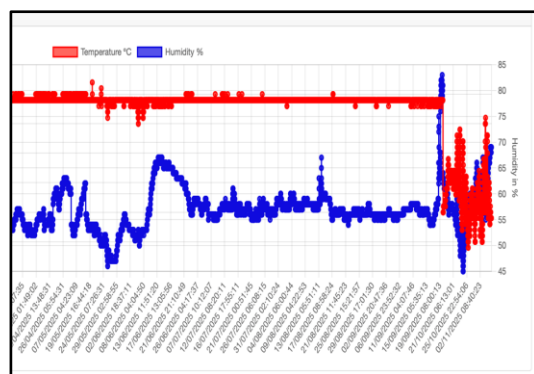
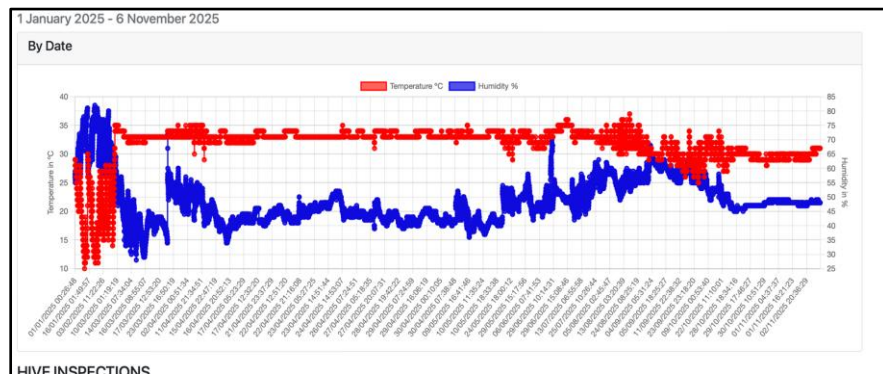
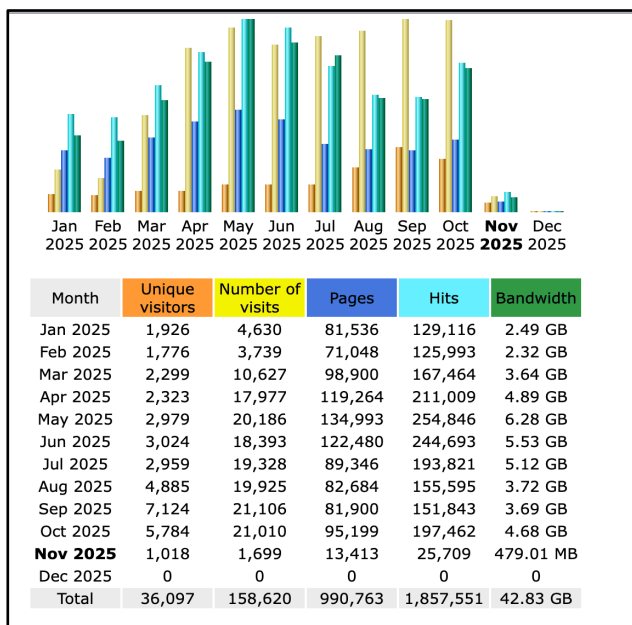
So far this year there have been over a million hits on pages to the site!

We continue to add items the website - if you have any suggestions please email webmaster@epsombeekeepers.co.uk.

HiveBeat

We have had HiveBeat in some of the hives for just over a year now. We will be looking at the data soon. However, we are aware the system requires more monitoring and maintenance! It is hoped the entire apiary team will know how to monitor and maintain the system next year.

The chart below shows the temp and humidity for one hive in the apiary this year. The chart next



to it shows when a colony absconded! Well noticed by Caroline on the Apiary team! The graph shows the temperature (in red) dropping on the 20th September indicating when the colony left.



Club Jarring Machine

The club kitchen now has a jarring machine (kindly donated to the club by a member). We tested the machine with some club honey and all worked well! We had to stop due to cold weather!

We will use the winter to create instructions for members to use the equipment and add it to the Shop for hire soon, though it cannot leave the club kitchen.

Club Communications

An *All.Members* email group was set up this year with take up very high from the membership and is working well. My thanks to Stuart G and Angela J for all their help in setting up. The Committee will look into member requests for a club WhatsApp group to be set up in the near future.

Yellow Legged Asian Hornet Report (YLAH)

The club has continued to monitor for YLAH with cases across the country going up, particular in the South East. The committee is committed to helping and providing funds as and when necessary to help with monitoring.

We will also investigate and understand kit and measures that can be taken to mitigate the YLAH in our apiaries when and if the time comes in order to support members.

The club will assess the NBU results over the Winter.

BuzzCopper www.buzzcopper.org

I have been involved with the development and testing of an affordable (not for profit) AI YLAH monitor station.

The device monitors a bait tray and if the AI system detects an YLAH, an email is sent to the owner. The device is powered by solar panels. It is hoped the price point will be around the £20 mark.

Testing is ongoing and will continue over the winter, though limited. It is hoped the device can be used next year.



Nick Fry

Financial Overview

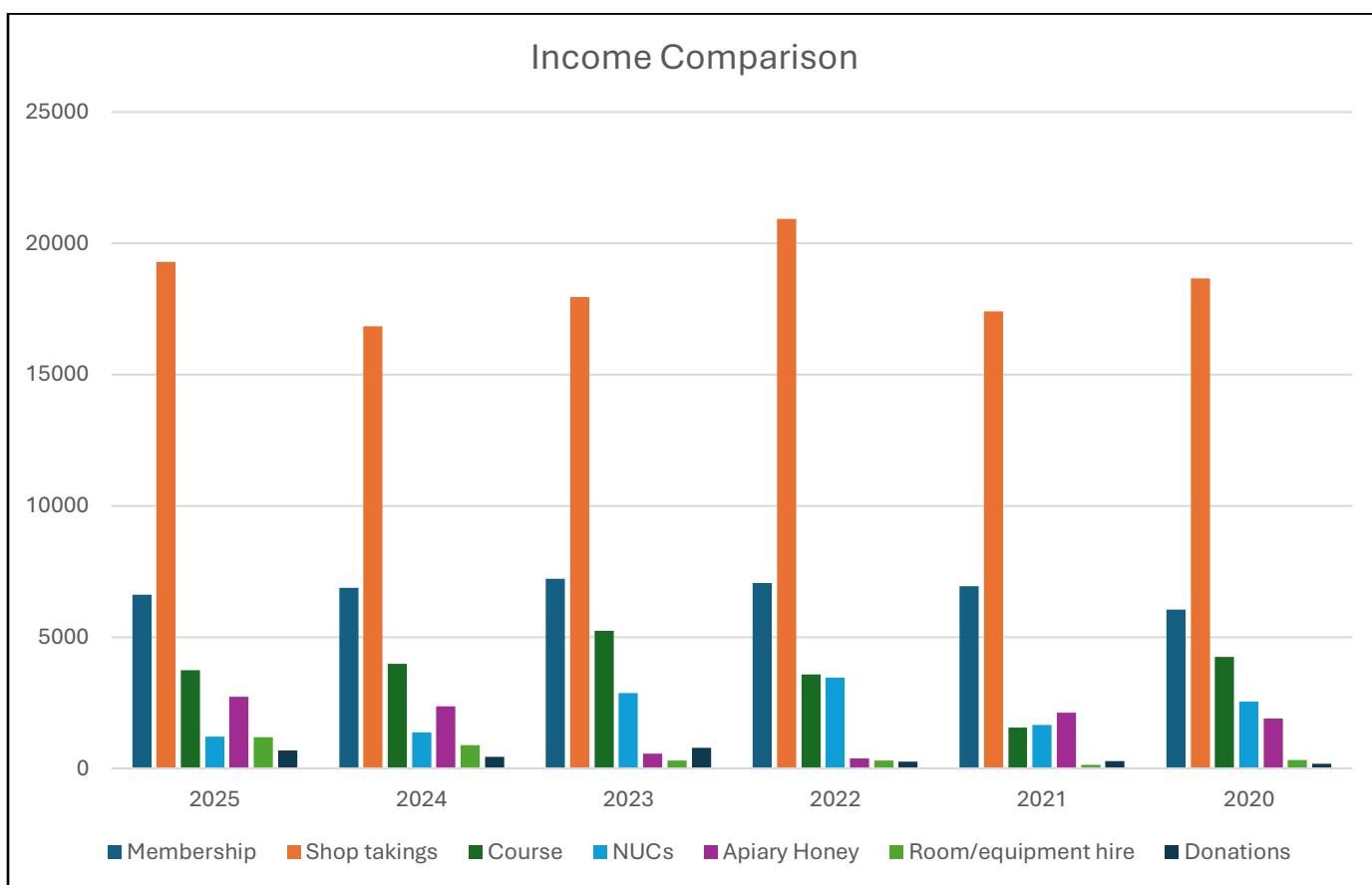
Cash Position

This report provides a summary of the financial status of Epsom Beekeepers Association for the financial year ending 30th September 2025. The audited accounts are attached (Appendix 2); these will be signed by the Chair at the AGM.

The financial year finished with a total cash balance of £26,432 (£5,000 of which is ring-fenced).

Profit and Loss Account

Income received during the year has been generated through membership fees; the shop; 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.

	2025	2024	2023	2022
Surplus from running courses	£	£	£	£
Receipts for courses in current year	3,740	3,900	5,240	3,583
Tutor fee	(1,100)	(1,300)	(1,402)	(884)
Books and postage	(186)	(160)	(220)	(175)
Refreshments	(234)	(97)	(220)	(116)
	2,220	2,343	3,398	2,408
	2025	2024	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Sales of NUCs	1,205	1,360	2,860	3,465
	2025	2024	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Room/equipment hire	1,191	880	298	295
	2025	2024	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations	685	446	777	251

Annual costs incurred in running the Club (including tutor fees) the Apiary and the Queen Rearing Programme, amounted to £14,663. Alongside general expenses, the Club made one-off purchases of a defibrillator and first aid courses; a honey warmer, uncapper and scales and improved fire safety equipment.

<u>Costs associated with running the Club, Apiary and QRP</u>				
	2025	2024	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Utilities				
Cleaning	236	168	528	538
Gardening	236	36	180	300
Internet/mobile	1,532	1,490	442	360
Council	151	130	146	201
Insurance	1,361	1,266	1,159	1,226
Water	156	126	126	82
Zoom	159	0	0	144
Electricity	1,200	616	1,150	1,260
	5,030	3,832	3,730	4,111
Apiary	1,860	1,675	816	1,477
QRP	1,127	808	434	1,031
Club	4,467	1,036	1,158	2,615
	7,454	3,519	2,408	5,123
Cost of running courses/taster day				
Tutor fee	1,100	1,300	1,402	884
Books and postage	186	160	220	175
Refreshments	234	97	220	116
	1,520	1,557	1,842	1,175
Bank charges	59	70	75	60
Other fees	600	469	369	331
	659	539	444	391
Total	14,663	9,447	8,424	10,800

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