Chair's Report for Wimbledon Division, SBKA AGM 2026

Firstly, I would like to thank all association members, the committee team and everyone who has contributed to the Wimbledon Beekeepers Associations (WBKA) over the last 12 months and a big "Thank You" to everyone who have contributed something to this report.

As I look back over the last year, it has defiantly been a "Learning curve" for me having chaired the WBKA.

1. Apiaries Report

All Association apiaries during 2026, have been going well during the year with some spaces opening-up for new members as the year progressed. The rules applicable in the WBKA's apiaries were up-dated during the course of 2026, and are now available on the WBKA's website and are signed-up-to as part of the regular WBKA membership renewal process.

The WBKA's apiaries, their wardens during 2026, and their What-Three-Word locators (useful in an emergency or to give directions) are as listed below.

- Cannizaro Park - John Deacon - *pint.fine.royal*
- The Orchard (Name change from Dorset Triangle) - Amanda Berry - *retail.record.successes*
- Holne Chase - Gareth Morgan - *larger.drank.cities*
- Martin Way - Alison Pelikan - *string.vibrates.onion*
- Morden Hall Park - Claire Rawlings (outgoing) Dave Charnley (incoming) - *loving.dared.party*
- Putney Vale/Stag Lodge - Steve Derry - *crowd.second.cabin*
- Watermeads - Dave Charnley - *note.poems.hello*

A more detailed assessment, on an apiary-by-apiary basis, follows below. This is based on what each warden has provided, for which I thank them.

1.1 Morden Hall Park – Dave Charnley (taken over as interim Apiary Warden)

We have a license for 30 colonies from the National Trust. Most of the hives are now on National equipment with a few members on 14 x 12's, we have one member (Anna) with a Flow Hive. There are now 7 members with their own colonies and 12 WBKA colonies. Two members have rented spaces but do not currently have bees. Three spaces are currently available and one member who attends regularly and helps with WBKA hives has already been allocated one of the spaces for next season. Spaces are only released to those who have demonstrated both proficiency in beekeeping and strong commitment to help at the apiary. Spaces are not released to members who only want to have bees without making a wider contribution to the WBKA. Next season we intend to allocate newer beekeepers to the smaller Buckfast colonies. More experienced beekeepers will be allocated to the larger colonies for honey production.

We bought 3 Buckfast queens (from John Clark), with the intention of replacing current queens that have failed. Queen rearing was disappointing in 2026, but we have a plan for 2027. We are looking to buy additional apideas and nuc boxes, with the hope of being "Self-Sustaining". Dave Charnley alongside John Clark will be running the queen rearing activity utilising association hives, grafting and a Cloake Board for the coming season.

Despite a very poor year the members' hives did manage to produce a honey crop, that has been subsequently sold at the association apiary over 3 weekends. This was probably due to their over-use for instructing inexperienced members, assessments and for taster days. In 2027 we aim to have dedicated hives for honey production which will hopefully produce honey for sale.

We have a regular flow of members of the public wanting to buy local honey and have now set up a "Selling Table" at the entrance to the apiary, that will sell to the public on the 1st Sunday of each month (additional dates on the run up to Christmas). This interaction with the public provides opportunities to inform them about the threat of the Yellow Legged Hornet (YLH), and generally raise awareness of beekeeping related questions and the WBKA's role.

The apiary at Morden Hall is classed as the WBKA training apiary and provides the WBKA with a range of facilities and opportunities. We have a very strong team of members that carry out all the various roles that are needed to make it work. This includes the mundane roles of cleaning hive parts and frame making, as well as the those requiring more skilled knowledge including of hive manipulations. While we have a group of volunteers who attend regularly, we are always looking for others to assist and spread knowledge. Hopefully, as in previous years the numbers are boosted with members who attend the 10 week course.

A big shout out to John Kelly for his care and assistance in looking after the apiary grass and infrastructure and welcome to Dave Charnley who has stepped in, after Clare Rawlings stood down due to personal reasons. A big thank you to Clare for her work as apiary warden at MHP over the last 6 months, which was greatly appreciated.

1.2 Cannizaro Apiary – John Deacon

It has been a challenging year for our bees. A wet spring followed by a very hot summer with record temperatures and no rain. Consequently, our bees have been stressed. Beekeepers too, due to the extreme and consistent heat limiting time to inspect. It is only now that we are experiencing normal temperatures and some rain after the record-breaking weather.

There are currently 5No colonies. All of which have now been treated with Apiguard. At the time of writing, bees are collecting pollen and topping up their stores.

The fox is still active and has undermined a large tree trunk that consequently is falling over towards the middle portion of the apiary. Merton Council's Arboriculturist and Park Trees Department has been contacted on numerous occasions since 15 September 2026 to make it safe. A date has not been given yet. In the meantime, apiary beekeepers have been notified of the situation via WhatsApp.

The holly hedge between the apiary and allotments has been cut back.
One allotment holder mentioned that a bee had stung her. Otherwise, there have been no problems with the allotment holders or general public. Our relationship with Wimbledon & Putney Commons Maintenance Department continues to be fine.

1.3 The Orchard (Previously called Dorset Triangle) – Amanda Berry

This year, the apiary has undergone a change of ownership. Dave Channon sold the land to The John Innes Foundation (JIF), based in Norwich. This is a perfect fit for JIF as it adjoins the John Innes Conservation Area in Merton Park and it has been planted with a good number of heritage fruit trees.

JIF are keen to retain the link with beekeepers. We have drawn up an agreement and rent will continue to paid in honey. I have designed a label specifically for them as they are planning to give the honey to trustees at their AGM.

Since purchasing the land they have involved COPSE (COPSE -*Community Orchard Project South East -a not-for-profit social enterprise and Community Interest Company launched in October 2019 that creates, restores, and enhances community and traditional orchards across Surrey and Southern England)*. They have visited the orchard a few times and are creating a plan for the site. They have consulted with me about this and how it might work.

Once all necessary work is completed, JIF are planning, to invite school groups for educational visits. Although COPSE feel this won't be in place for a fair bit of time, we have been asked to move all colonies to a slightly different area and we have already started to do this – however there is an area that is to be cleared of scrub before this can be completed. I have met with COPSE and we are going to keep in contact so that clearance and subsequent placement of colonies works smoothly for all of us.

The shed is to be replaced, and they have agreed for us to have a shed on site for lawn mowers etc. We are removing all the rather old bits of seating so that everything that is on site is sound. Some work has already started – such as the fruit trees have been identified and labelled using ground stakes. It looks really good.

There are currently three beekeepers in this apiary. All colonies were treated with Apivar at the end of the summer. We have eight colonies and two nucs going into winter.

1.4 Holne Chase Apiary – Gareth Morgan

The beginning of the year saw a facelift in the apiary due to the hard work of the members. Bark has been scattered in the apiary and a new garden laid down in the middle of it. Over the winter months there will be some clearing and cleaning to do. We will have room for another beekeeper in the New Year. Any communication between HC's members is done through their WhatsApp group.

1.5 Martin Way Apiary – Alison Pelikan

We had a bad winter as did many others over 2025/2026, losing several hives to (we think) varroa related diseases plus queen issues. This was in spite of treating in late summer with Apiguard and with ApiBioxal during early January.
New hives or Nucs were either bought in or splits were made to try to regain our hive numbers. Some of these were successful but some others declined into laying workers very quickly, with queen cells full of drone not worker larva.
So this summer we changed our treatment from Apiguard to FormicPro and will also as usual treat with ApiBioxal in winter.
We may have space for a new beekeeper to join us.

I have continued my usual variety of bee talks to groups including several schools, Wimbledon Common Nature Club, a local Townswomen Guild and Wimbledon Guild. I always ensure I finish my talks by informing people about the YLH.

1.6 Watermeads – Dave Charnley

Six full members and, and one junior member with hives located at Watermeads. There are 35 hives on site with the aim of moving 18 hives to a new location.

The apiary gets a clean-up every 3 months with all members taking part in the "Tidy Up". We have Harris fencing around the Apiary and have brambles going through it to make extra defence. There were no major issues to report on site, old brickwork alongside the riverbank has been reported to the National Trust and is very close to collapse into the river. No flooding this year from the river Wandle, with no oil spills up-stream reported this year. Queen rearing at Watermeads was a little late this year but is planned for 2027. All colonies were tested at the Bee Health Day, resulting in one colony having replacement comb and a new queen All hives looked good going into Winter and all have had a treatment of Formic Pro.

Membership – Membership Secretary Omar Soares

2026/27 Membership Renewal is not yet completed yet, but we currently have the following
82 Full Members,
4 Life Honorary Members,
8 Partner Members,
1 Country,
3 Junior Members
Total of 98 members.

Unfortunately, we have had 12 members who did not renew their membership. The renewal process could have been better, and members' response was slow which I believe is most due solely counting on the system automated email list which not everyone sees or ends up in spam etc. I will figure out a better and more proactive strategy for next year's renewal. The membership system ER2 is fully up to date. Ther membership costs have increased due to Bee Disease Insurance (BDI) and Surrey BKA charges.
Beecraft has improved its response and has received the latest list of members to update the magazine distribution online and by post accordingly.

Accounts – John Clark

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer is pleased to report that the Wimbledon Beekeeping Association maintained a sound financial position for the year ended 30 September 2026.

The accounts, prepared on an accruals basis, show a net increase in funds of £943 (2025: £3,860). The Association's liquid funds increased to £37,286, compared with £28,909 at the end of the previous financial year.

These results reflect the Association's continued financial stability and provide a sound basis for its ongoing activities. As a personal note from the Chair, I would like to thank John for all his hard work in getting the accounts sorted and up to date in a timely manor.

SBKA - Steve Derry & Gareth Morgan

Each division within SBKA has an elected Trustee and an elected Representative.
The role of the Trustee is to be a legally responsible charity officer who oversees the *entire* organisation: its governance, finances, risk management, compliance, and strategic direction.
The role of the Divisional Representative is to attend all SBKA Council meetings and to report to Council on the activities of the Division and to inform the Divisional Committee of any relevant business conducted at Council meetings. The Divisional Committee may appoint a substitute Representative for any meeting that the appointed Representative cannot attend, provided that the SBKA Secretary is informed beforehand.
The trustees and the divisional representatives form the Council and meet at least three times a year to manage the charity on behalf of its 1,000+ members.
Many issues are discussed and where appropriate voted on and this year these have included:

SBKA and central funds, SBKA and BBKA membership fee, Beecraft issue concerns, Guildford roof repair Epsom hut refurbishment, Reigate septic tanks, code of conduct, safeguarding, code of behaviour, Surrey show, YLH updates, education across the association, Annual Delegates' Meeting's (ADM) propositions, Gift Aid, constitutional updates, SBKA 150th anniversary, Divisions' rule books and other matters of governance as they arise.

Bee Health Day - Dave Charnley & Zoe Hunt

This year's Bee Health Day was attended by a lot of new members that were on the Introduction to Beekeeping Course, with over 58 members' bees being checked for disease, it was good to give a talk about how to check for *Nosema* (two types, *Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae*) and Acarine. Many thanks for the members who set it all up, participated and gave assistance on the day.

Swarms – Clare Rawlings

We had about 48 calls for collection of swarms of bees. Of these, 28 were successfully collected 3 calls were for bumblebees and 6 calls were for wasps. Again this year, we had a few calls to the swarm line in September and October, but these turned out to be for wasps or bees busy harvesting from ivy.

Library, Education, Outreach and Social – Elham Khani, Steve Derry, Gareth Morgan and Others

Executive Summary
While we aim to increase community engagement and uptake of BBKA practical assessments and theory exams, our primary focus remains on promoting responsible beekeeping practices and supporting members from their first hive inspection through to advanced apiary management.

Training courses
•**Beekeeping for Beginners:** Our ten-week course which comprises of six theory and four practical sessions (from March to May 2026) attracted **20 Participants** in 2026. A number of students have successfully transitioned from this course to supporting with the management of WBKA colonies at the teaching apiary at Morden Hall Park.

•**Taster Days:** Our two taster days (June and July 2026) were both fully booked up, with a total of 30 participants attending over the two sessions. The taster days introduce participants to the hive, tools and equipment as well as some of the theory behind colony management.

Basic assessment and Honeybee Health assessment

At the start of 2026 (February and March) a room close to the teaching apiary at Morden Hall Park was offered by the National Trust from which to run study sessions. These were run over four consecutive Sunday mornings for both members considering the Basic assessment and those considering the Honey Bee Health assessment. All candidates were also offered mock assessments, run by some of the most experienced members of the association. In total, three members took the Basic assessment, and six members took the Honeybee Health assessment (all assessments took place in our teaching apiary, towards the end of July and in early August). We are pleased to report a 100% pass rate for those who took the practical assessments this year.

Community Outreach and Public Education

Public education is vital to fostering a bee-friendly environment. Our initiatives this year included: a YLH stand at Morden Hall Park (to increase public awareness during YLH Week, 7 – 13 September) a community honey show (3 October) as well as school and community visits / talks. Members who give talks are invited to log details of these on the WBKA website. From the data collected, we know we have reached over 464 people with our educational talks and demonstrations.

Future Strategic Goals

Looking ahead to the next season, the Education Officer aims to prioritise the following objectives:

•Invest in **beekeeping equipment and resources** specifically for the practical assessments, to ensure the right equipment / resources are close to hand to support both study sessions and assessments. New equipment is to be clearly labelled and stored in the teaching apiary shed.

•Establish a more formal **mentorship framework** to pair experienced beekeepers with our Beekeeping for Beginners course 'graduates', taking advice from other associations as to how to approach and implement this.

Acknowledgments

This successful year would not have been possible without the dedicated team of volunteers, apiary wardens and tutors who gave their time to educate / mentor others. I extend my sincere thanks to the Chairman for their support and (future!) budgetary approval of educational initiatives.

Lectures and Events – Rosemary Clark

Rosemary Clark had a full list of speakers and ran an excellent program of lectures during the year, with a resumed emphasis on in-person meetings in the Snuff Mill, this was to encourage our members to attend the events. The speakers attending and topics covered included:- Peter Dalby on Pollinators, Elham Khani on Solitary Bees, Mark Patterson on Keeping Bees on a rooftop, Jackie Aucott on YLH, Nyke Blomer, Richard Ricketts on Beekeeping stories, Dylan Gossman on Tropilaelaps, no speaker in November as it's the AGM, and December is the Christmas Party.

YLH – Elham Khani

We carried out a **three-week YLH monitoring programme**.

- **33 volunteers** took part.
- **47 monitoring stations** were set up.
- **25 km² of our area was covered**, out of approximately 51 km².
- **7 stations were outside** our current monitoring area.
- **No Yellow-Legged Hornets were sighted.**

This is encouraging news, although it is important to remember that **no sightings do not necessarily mean there are no YLH in the area**.

We will use everything we have learned from this programme to plan and improve our spring monitoring.

We now have a **Buzzcopper Version 1**, which will be stationed at Morden Hall Park (MHP). This will allow us to gain experience with the equipment and understand how it works, ready for **Version 2**, which is easier to handle, next year. We continue to educate the public by handing out identification cards and talking to visitors at all our events, including monthly honey sales, outreach talks and stalls, and our planned Honey Show.

I also attended an afternoon of **YLH Tracking Training in Epsom**, which was very useful in improving my understanding of the YLH behaviour and tracking. Wimbledon volunteers supported the **South of England Show** during the summer and will do the same for the autumn show and the **National Honey Show**.

Newsletter

The newsletter now has an established format following many tweaks and feedback from members.

Members regularly send in photos and articles for inclusion, and I am absolutely grateful for their contributions. I have received some very positive feedback, particularly about **accessibility and the diversity of content**. WBKA had also entered the newsletter for the **National Honey Show** and got a 2nd place.

Website – Gareth Morgan

Our website is our main way of advertising and providing information to the public. It contains information and the ability to book courses/taster days, honey sales, outside talks, archived newsletters etc. It is always being checked and updated by the webmaster, but more information submitted from members will be gratefully received.
At the time of writing – we have had 8778 enquiries from 52 countries, the bulk of which is from the UK with 8190 'clicks' to the homepage for the past year. The most popular page are the 'courses' page, which also provides us with the bulk of our income.

Honey Extraction

The WBKA has 4 extractors, two electric and two manuals. Extractor hire is managed by Steve Barton currently, with another person required. Further information about hire and contact details is published in the monthly newsletters and on the website. Most all extractors were returned, after use, in a clean and tidy state, with one currently stored in the association shed.

Extraction of honey from the WBKA's hives at MHP was organised by Dave Charnley as a group activity this year, using the kitchen facilities of the Epsom Beekeepers kitchen. Jarring of the WBKA's honey was also organised and completed by Dave Charnley, who volunteered the use of his own kitchen. Many thanks for that organisation. All honey produced has been sold

Prizes and Honey Shows

WBKA Honey Show and WBKA Cups and Shields
The WBKA's honey shows this year was held in conjunction with the National Trust it was held in the Stable Yard at Morden Hall Park. We had 17 members who submitted various products for judging. Dave Charnley was the Judge in attendance with the help of Sally Bishop as his assistant, the event went very well. After the Judging had taken place, it was opened to the public. We had an "Ask a Beekeeper a Question" with a table of over 20 items from "The Hive" as a good talking point with the public, the interaction was well received as we had association honey and other products for sale (a sellout of everything), a table for candle rolling which was attended well by the younger community attending, completing over 100 rolled candles (at a charge of £1.00 which went to the association) they did have a chance to win a jar of honey every hour when the stable yard bell rang, this was also a sell out within 3 hours.

The Winners (in my option they were all winners)
The **Jubiliee Shield** (most points in show **Amanda Berry** with 35 points
The **Gadge Cup** (Best in Show) **Ann Page**.

For 2026: - the **Cook Cup** (contribution to the WBKA) along with the **Lynn Witham Shield** (most promising new beekeeper) will be revealed at the 2026 Christmas Party.

Surrey Honey Show
At the Surrey Honey Show 2026, Elham Khani and Beata entered some of the classes and were awarded certificates. Sally Bishop & Jenny Pandey were in attendance as stewards for the event.

National Honey Show
At the National Honey Show 2026, there were various winners from the WBKA. This was one more than in 2025, but alas, the WBKA failed in winning-back the Douglas Cup from Croydon. We'll go (again) into next year determined to have another go.

The WBKA winners in 2026 were: -
- Elham Khani
- Steve Derry
- Matt Forster
- Paul Kearney
- Luke Whyatt

The top tip for all honey shows remains - to enter. Many members also attended at the show and assisted as stewards and attended various events, learning many useful things.

Finally

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed something to the WBKA over the last year, without you turning up on a Sunday mornings, or doing things in the background to make it all come together. To all I did not mention I thank you on behalf of the WBKA.

Dave Charnley
Chair, WBKA