

# South Staffordshire and District Beekeepers Association



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Shareshill Village Hall, at 7.30 pm

**Attendance:** All 2022-2023 Committee Members were present and 37 Members signed the register by the entrance.

**Apologies** received from: Phil Healey, Ivor & June Sperring, Tony Ward, Margret Hotze, John Taylor & TJ (Tajudeen Eyiowuawi).

## 1. Chair's Introduction by Claire George



Welcome and thanks to all attendees for coming to the South Staffordshire & District Beekeepers Association's 110<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting. I hope you have all had your tea and cake and are feeling refreshed and alert as we have a very full agenda in front of us.

Firstly, a quick reminder, we became an independent association in 1913, although our present registration with the Charity Commission didn't happen for another 75 years.

In 1983 we were granted a piece of land at Shugborough Hall by Lord Patrick Anson, the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Lichfield, to open a teaching Apiary, which most of you will be familiar with and where many will have received or given training and support.

We are spending this year celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that event at Shugborough and would welcome any memories and photos of your time with the association and particularly at Shugborough. More information of this will be forthcoming later this evening.

We have had another very successful year and this will be evident in the reports that have been sent to members with your agendas. Questions on the reports will be received by those that have written them and where possible answered this evening.

We will be presenting certificates to all those successful candidates this year and Trevor Smith will be around to talk to you about how to take up certificates for yourselves for the next year.

Stuart Roberts has kindly agreed to lead a short talk for us in Remembering Geoff Hopkinson who was one of the first members I met and was very encouraging in my first year of beekeeping.

We will be showing a slideshow of the year at the association prior to Wendy Woodward and Penny Darlington-Twibill explaining more about the preparations for 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Shugborough.

I would now like to hand you over to Alan Greenman to address the members in his own indomitable way.

## 2. President's Address by Alan Greenman



It has been a real honour being club President. My grandson Hector mistakenly calls me emperor but then he is a Star Wars fan!

After a lot of thought, I have decided to step down. This is due to recent poor health and a need to get myself better.

I have been a member of the committee since 2016 when I was co-opted to produce the newsletter. I became chairman in 2019 and President in 2022.

I have really enjoyed my time on the committee. There is always something to do and I have met lots of helpful / interesting / wonderful people including lots of beekeepers.

Association wise, a lot has happened in the last 12 months:

Once covid restrictions were over it was decided to resume our Saturday morning inspections and Thursday evening talk and discussion format. This has proved very popular with members. Thanks to a grant from South Staffordshire Community Energy Group, we are now a two-marquee organisation. This has allowed us to provide a separate home for the beginner beekeepers classroom.



The new apiary at the Shugborough Kennels was officially opened on the 23rd April 2022. It is now fully established thanks to Chris and Alan Brewin who have refined the apiary systems to run like clockwork. It is now a real pleasure to inspect the bees on a Saturday morning.



We had a very good yield of honey with two harvests during the season. A big thank you from me to all the members who helped at our apiaries.

Our other apiary at Hilton Green has been going for 5 years now (Oct 2017) and I can remember when Chris Shaw first suggested the idea. I know that it was the wish of David Battersby (past President) that the association open another apiary and at Hilton Green there is a wooden bench named in his honour to celebrate the occasion. Look out for it next time you go.



The Hilton Green apiary goes from strength to strength with support from the Hilton Green Directors and the team of local beekeepers. We have enjoyed a number of excellent events in the poly tunnel and I hear that more are planned for the future. Well done to all at Hilton Green.

The main purpose of our association apiaries is to teach beekeeping.

I attended the club beginner beekeeping course in 2012 (April) and listened in amazement as Geoff Hopkinson gave his traditional introduction to beekeeping talk. It was a sad day when he passed away last year but we still have the memories of a special man and a very passionate beekeeper.

Today, continuing the teaching tradition, the education team of Wendy Woodward and Trevor Smith along with their education teams successfully ran two beginners' beekeeping courses and a number of Honey bee Experience sessions during 2022. The courses were well attended and we had a lot of positive feedback from students. I understand that the courses planned for this year are already fully booked. An excellent result.



The Thursday evening meetings were well supported with excellent talks and discussions. I am sure that we will get more of the same this year. Remember that a lot of work and planning goes into these meetings, please help where you can. Just attending makes it worthwhile.

Our summer BBQ on August 20th was well received.



The honey show in October was a great success and I received lots of comments from members saying how much they enjoyed it.



The social evening at Shareshill in November completed our social calendar for 2022.



Again, thank you to the members who gave their time, effort and cake in support of these events, we couldn't do it without you and it is very much appreciated.

Our close involvement with the National Trust has continued with support for the club in the form of a secure storage area at the apiary (much to the delight of Alan Brewin). And as part of Shugborough's heritage programme the club ran a honey bee information stall in the walled garden during the summer.

Looking forward, this year will be the 40th anniversary of the club apiary at Shugborough and I know that the committee is already planning to celebrate this special occasion.

Please support this event by helping where you can. It is an important milestone for the association and our continuing partnership with the National Trust at Shugborough.

So, it is thanks to all of you, members of SS&DBKA, that we are still going strong after more than 100 years as a beekeeping club. Keep up the good work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank club Officers, Claire George, Ed Bennett and Julie Hamer for doing a grand job on the Committee.

Dayna White, our outgoing quartermaster gets special praise from me. Dayna has done a fantastic job of keeping us in ambrosia and jars and storing our equipment for the past three years. She is stepping down and taking a well-earned to rest to spend more time with her bees.



Well done, Dayna, your efforts have been very much appreciated by me and the membership.

And finally, as the club goes from strength to strength, I would like to wish the new incoming committee all the best for the coming season/year. It has been a real honour being President. And... ..It has been fun.

Thank you  
Alan G

### 3. Treasurer's report by Julie Hamer

- a. Matters arising from the report: None.
- b. **Appointment of Independent Accounts Examiner:** an independent person is being sought; if anyone knows of someone suitable or would like to come forward to help us with this, please let us know.
- c. Question received: Phil Atkin asked: Have we sold all of last year's honey and if not is the remaining in good condition?



Response (Thanks to Chris & Alan Brewin): We still have around 620lbs of honey to sell, 400 lbs in buckets and 220 lbs in jars ready to sell. All the honey has been transferred to Shugborough for storage. It all appears to be still in good condition. Chris Shaw jarred 100 lbs from both Shugborough and SureStore at the end of February and didn't raise any concerns, in fact Chris Brewin took 2 jars from Shugborough to the pancake night in February that had been stored in jars over winter and it was still clear.

We have a lot of events this year, National Trust walled garden, Stafford County Show and Beginners courses which we are preparing to sell honey at, however, if anyone has an outlet, please let us know.

Robert Chesworth suggested giving a jar of honey to new Beginner Beekeepers if there was a surplus.

- d. The report was accepted by the Committee and Members as a true record.

#### **4. Other reports (included in AGM Pack) – Any questions?**

##### **a. Education & Exam Secretaries Report from Trevor Smith & Wendy Woodward**

- i. No questions received.
- ii. The report was accepted by the Committee and Members as a true record.

##### **b. Apiaries Report from Alan & Chris Brewin and Chris Shaw**

- i. Question received: Kevin Rowe asked: How long will the apiary be at The Kennels?
- ii. Response (Thanks to Alan & Chris Brewin): The National Trust have said we will have to move in the winter of 24/25 but nothing has been confirmed yet or indeed, where we will be relocated to.
- iii. The report was accepted by the Committee and Members as a true record.

##### **c. Events report from Wendy Woodward**

- i. Questions received:
  - 1. Chris Williams asked: The BBQ last year was free; will it be free for members this year?
  - 2. Jane Davis asked: The honey show last year was at the Northfield Centre, will it continue there and in the same format?
- ii. Responses (Thanks to Wendy Woodward):
  - 1. The BBQ last year was paid for via tea and coffee donations - we plan to do this again this year.
  - 2. The honey show has been booked for the 21st October; we will amend the format following last year's feedback and run it as a half day event, rather than a full day.
- iii. The report was accepted by the Committee and Members as a true record.

##### **d. Membership Report from Chris Shaw**

- i. Question received: Martin Davis asked: How many 2022 beginners became members? Response (Thanks to Chris Shaw): 16 out of the 30 went on to become members of the association.
- ii. The report was accepted by the Committee and Members as a true record.

e. **Minutes of 2022 AGM** – were accepted by the committee as a true record and this was seconded by last year AGM attendees – Robert Chesworth and Alasdair Lewis.

f. The Committee was also grateful to receive the following suggestions:

- i. Establishing a forum for beekeepers (suggested by Peter Bell).
- ii. Bringing back monthly Zoom meetings to give those that can't make the apiary sessions opportunities to stay in touch.

#### **5. Constitution Changes:**

None were proposed.

## 6. Presentation of BBKA Certificates and the David Battersby Shield

6.1: Trevor Smith our Education Lead handed the BBKA certificates to our President, Alan Greenman, whom presented them to the following members:

Elizabeth and Nancy Bennett;



who both achieved the Junior Certificate.

Jan Horstink;



for Modules:

1: Honey Bee Management and  
3: Honey Bee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning  
plus he has gained the *Intermediate Theory Certificate* \*.

Jo Berriman;



for Module 6, who has also gained the *Intermediate Theory Certificate*.

David Primrose;



for Module 3: Honey Bee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning and the *Intermediate Theory Certificate*.

\* The *Intermediate Theory Certificate* in Beekeeping is awarded after passing modules 1, 2, 3 and one other from modules 5, 6 and 7.

Congratulations to Stephen Gibbins who also passed Modules 1 and 3.

6.2: Thanks to the Education & Apiaries Teams for another successful education programme this year.

**6.3: The David Battersby Shield:**

was presented to Stuart Roberts for winning the best tasting honey, as voted by members at the SS&DBKA 2022 Honey Show.



**7. We remember Geoff Hopkinson by Stuart Roberts BEng, CEng BBKA Master Beekeeper**

Stuart shared his memories of Geoff.

His presentation included photos, anecdotes and videos of Geoff giving us beekeeping advice.

Thanks to Stuart for sharing personal insights on a much loved and admired beekeeper, whom inspired many of us.

7. We remember Geoff Hopkinson



Remembering Geoff

Stuart Roberts BEng, CEng, BBKA Master Beekeeper

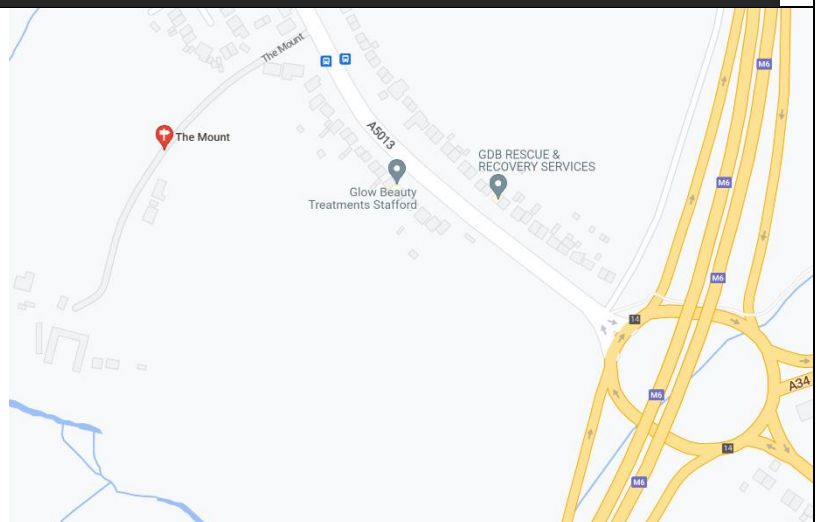
Written by Stuart Roberts - 2023

**8. Any other business by permission of the Chair**

Chris Williams invited members to attend the open garden at:

“The Mount, Creswell, Stafford, ST18 9QS”

in aid of Katherine House and Childline/NSPCC on Jul 14-16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 – 16:00 – Entry fee (£5) includes tea and cake.





## 9. Elections

9.1: The following were elected, by a show of hands:

#	Role *Required by Constitution	Previous Role Holder	Nominations Received	Elected to 2023-24 Committee
a	President *	Alan Greenman	As right	Paul Twibil
b	Chair *	Claire George	As right	Wendy Woodward
c	Secretary *	Ed Bennett	As right	Penny Darlington-Twibill
e	Treasurer *	Julie Hamer	As right	Ed Bennett
f	Membership Secretary	Chris Shaw	As right	Chris Shaw; <i>Supported by Alasdair Lewis</i>
g	Education Lead	Trevor Smith & Wendy Woodward	None	Trevor Smith
h	Apiary Coordinator(s)	Chris & Alan Brewin	As right	Chris & Alan Brewin
l	AHAT Coordinator	Clive Stuart	As right	Clive Stuart
J	Health & Safety Coordinator	<b>Vacant</b>	None	<b>Vacant</b>
K	Communications Lead	Alan Greenman	As right	<b>Rosie Kent;</b> <i>Supported by Paul Mann for the Newsletter</i>
L	Events Co-ordinator	Wendy Woodward	As right	Wendy Woodward
M	Quartermaster	<b>Dayna White</b>	None	<b>Vacant**</b>
	General Committee		As right	<b>Kevin Rowe</b>

9.2: Many thanks to those committee members stepping down: Alan Greenman, Claire George, Dayna White and Julie Hamer.

9.3: Congratulations to new Committee Members: Rosie Kent (Communications) & Kevin Rowe (general Committee).



9.4: Congratulations to Paul Twibill [in image on right] for returning to the Committee as President.

9.5: Congratulations to existing Committee Members taking new roles: Wendy Woodward (Chair) [in image on left] and Ed Bennett (Treasurer).

9.6: A big thank you to Committee Members who are continuing in role; Trevor Smith, Alan & Chris Brewin and Chris Shaw.

9.7: Thank you to Members who have offered support to Committee Members: Alasdair Lewis (membership), Paul Mann (newsletter), Gemma Phillips (website), Clive Stuart (Asian Hornet Action Team – AHAT), Jessica Bennett (Safeguarding) your help is really appreciated.

**9.8:** Please note post-election there were still vacancies on the Committee highlighted above.  
**\*\* Post Meeting Note: The Brewins have agreed take on the role of Quartermaster.**

9.9: The 1<sup>st</sup> Committee Meeting for 2023-24 will be Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

## **10. Honey Marketing & Selling - David Primrose**

A request was made to complete Honey Marketing & Selling survey and an outline of plans to discuss the outcome on 27<sup>th</sup> April was given.

## **11. A year at the Association in pictures**

A four-minute slide show was shown of the Associations Activities in 2022-23. Thanks to Alan Greenman for putting this together.

The music accompanying the slide show was "Queen Bee" by the blues musician [Taj Mahal](#) from his 1997 studio album [Señor Blues](#).

The presentation is available to members [here](#).

**Thanks to all members for taking part in our activities this year.**

## **12. The year ahead – 40th Anniversary at Shugborough preparations - Wendy Woodward Penny Darlington-Twibill**

- 12.1: South Staffordshire & District Association was formed for members residing in the south of the district in 1913, but as the association grow it became apparent that it would need a permanent home for its beehives to meet its aim of training and guiding novice beekeepers.
- 12.2: In 1982, a small piece of land was granted to the association at the farm on the Shugborough Estate for an apiary which also included the use of a farm outbuilding to set up a beekeeping museum, in which traditional beekeeping equipment and an observation hive were sited.
- 12.3: On the 3 September 1983, the apiary was officially opened by Lord and Lady Lichfield who unveiled a plaque commemorating Chris Horton, a former president of the Association who had lobbied for many years to set up the first permanent apiary site for the Association.
- 12.4: This year, working with the national Trust we are arranging a to celebrate our 40th Anniversary at Shugborough. This will include a members tea party on the 3rd September; an open day for the public on the 2nd September to share the work we do and raise awareness of beekeeping, as well as monthly events in the walled garden (June to August).
- 12.5: We would like to gather information from over the 40 years which could be displayed in Shugborough during the year. This includes previous newsletters, beekeeping memorabilia, and any photos. We would also love to hear from anyone who has any memories of the event.
- 12.6: There will be more information coming out soon.

### 13. Role Handovers, Thankyous & Close of the AGM

Committee medals and badges of office were transferred to new role holders.

Leaving Committee Members were given a pot of plants, which had been specially selected by Jessica Bennett from the book "Plants for Bees" (Aubretia, Grape Hyacinth & Winter Aconite; all recognised as providing sources of pollen and nectar early in the season – with colours matched to the SS&DBKA logo).



The pots were presented by our new Chair Wendy Woodward, with help from junior members Elizabeth & Nancy Bennett.

	Name	Years' Service	Roles Undertaken	
Leaving Committee	Alan Greenman	9	Communications, Chair & President	Thank you
	Claire George	6	Treasurer, Membership & Chair	
	Dayna White	4	Quartermaster	
	Julie Hamer	2	Treasurer	

**The new Committee hope to still see you and be able to seek your advice at the apiary!**

Special Thanks to:

- Chris & Alan Brewin for the attendance Registration.
- Trevor Smith and son for the sound system.
- Lynne Lacey for cakes and refreshments.
- Sugar Sellers - all the team at Hilton Green.
- Paul Mann for event photography.
- Dayna for selling merchandise.
- Shareshill Village Hall.

Thanks to all members for attending our AGM this year – we will see you again soon at the apiary and next AGM.

### 14. Next AGM Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (TBC).