

# APIARY NEWSLETTER



July 2025 Volume 112, Issue 3

Founded in 1913

## The Shugborough Apiary Update 2025

In October 2021, the apiary at the side of the walled garden was moved to the Kennels. This was necessary as The National Trust (NT) had a programme of improvements which would see a new vehicle entrance, visitor facilities, car park, and greater use of the walled garden and surrounding land. These improvements were needed due to the increasing numbers of visitors to the estate.

Helen Royall provided an update on the improvements at our AGM in March, earlier this year. Members highlighted some concerns, primarily the apiary's close proximity to the public.

We have also been having regular conversations with Caroline, NT Head Gardener about the operational requirements for a teaching apiary. Some of the things we have talked about include apiary location, our need for teaching space, washroom and changing facilities, and adequate storage, all of which need to be within close proximity for the apiary.

### The Original Proposal

It was suggested that we move back to our original location with the new access road running along the boundary. Due to other factors, the road has now had to be moved even closer to the apiary making the original site too small and no longer viable as a teaching apiary.



We are discussing using this space for the promotion of beekeeping with information boards on supporting bees and pollinators, and raising visitor awareness of the Asian Hornet.

### So, what is the proposal for our new apiary site?

Some members will remember that we originally drove over a bridge, parking our cars and walking around the walled garden into the apiary. This area, from the bend of the new road to the back of the shop will become an apple orchard, with no public access.

Wendy, Chris and Alan Brewin along with Caroline and Marc (Senior Gardener) undertook a visit to the proposed site at the end of June.

It's fair to say that the area needs a lot of work but it has the potential to be a really good apiary site. The area is currently derelict and



will require landscaping and levelling, as it is currently sloping towards the walled garden. This work will be undertaken by the National Trust.



## What about the road being close to the apiary?

Hedge's will be planted on the right-hand side of the exit road from the curved wall to the Sherbrook hedge line with occasional tree dotted throughout. This will reduce visibility and access to the apiary from the road, increase security of the site and improve public safety by pushing the bees up high. The hives would be located running along the side of the wall.



## Will the area be used by the National Trust?

The proposed apiary site will be within an orchard area, but this is only a small part of the wider work to create a two-acre orchard, which will include 144 trees, including various varieties of apple, pear and quince – great for our bees.



## Where will our members park?

Members will park on the main car park and walk along the new pathways to the apiary. A rear, secure gate behind the plant centre will be our main access. Unfortunately, there are no parking bays for general use immediately outside the apiary but permission for vehicles delivering or collecting heavy goods can be arranged with the National Trust on specific dates.



## How will we provide our educational offer?

The current plant centre and shop will move to the new visitor centre. The plant centre will then be repurposed for use by the gardening team. The building will include a training space for the NT, which we will have access



to on a Thursday evening and Saturday morning throughout the beekeeping season.

The current male and female toilets will be repurposed and reduced in size; creating one new toilet for NT staff and us, the other for the public. This will be the only access the public have to this new building. The rest of the building will be used for storage for the NT gardening teams and us. We do not anticipate any changes to our current education programme.

## When are we likely to move?

The main construction phase is underway, but there is still a way to go. The National Trust anticipate that some of the new facilities, including the new car park and visitors' reception will be open in early 2026, as a result the Apiary will not move from the Kennels this winter 2025. We asked the National Trust when they anticipated the apiary would move; they said "We can't be clear on the timeline for 2026 as this depends on funding to develop the Plant Centre". The developments are evolving and it's a bit like a jigsaw, trying to fit all the bits that are needed into the space available

## What about the other developments around the walled garden?

The land around the walled garden previously had limited use, however, it is now the site of a developing forest garden as shared by Lizzy Pellowe, the NT garden who presented at one of our winter lectures.

There will be a range of connecting gardens, with a variety of trees and plants, some of which will provide our bees with pollen and nectar. The garden also has a range of ponds, streams and marsh areas, which the bees could visit.



The National Trust are working to ensure that the new forest garden and orchards will provide year-round interest planting saplings, spring bulbs and summer wildflower areas, making it an ideal haven for bees and other pollinators.



Connecting Arcadia and the Orchard is a path which will be shaded by a Yew Tree tunnel. Formed from an overgrown hedge, work began on the tunnel in 2022. Following a hard prune and crown reduction the internal side branches have been weighted, encouraging curved growth, and creating a playful tunnel journey between the two developing gardens.



## Invite to members?

Members have been invited to join Caroline and her team for a walk around the new areas on the 29th September at 10:30 am. The walk will last for 1.5 hours and numbers will be limited to 25.

If you would like to attend please email [ssbka-mail@southstaffsbeekeepers.com](mailto:ssbka-mail@southstaffsbeekeepers.com) to reserve a space.

The National Trust do tours of the new garden [Building Arcadia: Creating a Forest Garden | National Trust](#) every Thursday and there are still spaces available on 14th, 21st and 28th August. These are £5 each with the donation supporting our future projects in the Walled Garden.



Members are also welcome to join Caroline and her team to plant crocuses on Wednesday 15th October. They will be holding two planting sessions for 8 people at each session at 11:00 am and 14:00 pm. If you are interested please email Caroline [Caroline.Beacall@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Caroline.Beacall@nationaltrust.org.uk)



If you have any questions or queries, please get in touch;  
email [ssbka-mail@southstaffsbeekeepers.com](mailto:ssbka-mail@southstaffsbeekeepers.com)