



Newbury and District Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity No. 1016603

74th Annual General Meeting



2025 Chair's Report

Adrian Doyle

I would like to start my last Chairs report by stating what an honour it has been to serve this association as Chair for the past five years. I am incredibly proud of our association after these years of service. I have met some wonderful people along the way and had the pleasure to work with some very talented and dedicated committee members.

I have sat as a member prior to becoming Chair sometimes wondering what a committee member does. Rest assured I now know that every one of us as members should be very grateful that our group of committee members work so very hard to allow our association to thrive in not only the association but within the general public, local authorities, schools and event teams across the whole region. As Chair we get to understand how the other regional beekeeping societies are operating and the challenges they face in these difficult times. Many are on the edge or just do not have the resources to deal with the issues at hand. We work incredibly hard to ensure we are not in that position.

As this busy year comes to a close and although we had a difficult start to the year whereby for the first year in many we had a large degree of colony loss despite our two weekly winter checks. We had to regroup and invested as early season education is at the core of the association goals. I am pleased to say that we dealt with the issues at hand and ran a successful beginners beekeeping course with twenty five new beekeepers making it through the practical course ran at the association apiaries at Mary Hare and Oare. I am pleased to say that several of these I see at association meetings.

In dealing with the training apiary we have made the decision to add a further shipping container to the association apiary as space has ran out in storage of all the event equipment and the fact in the course of the last five years to have to meet the demand of the Apiary courses. We have increased running from eight to our current stocks of twenty one hives and all the work these entails.

We built on our improvers course with a record number of attendees and we hope to build upon this again next year.

Our free taster session had ten people and many of those have now signed up for the winter beginners course.

We continue to raise funds for the association through local grants which will assist in providing the association with interesting opportunities and this year we have invested in a long hive and two WBC hives to prove points of interest at association meetings and education sessions.. These grants have been put together through Ben's knowledge and work in obtaining these funds.

Our new Yellow Legged Hornet officer Andrew Fromont continues to monitor the moving situation and will provide advice to any member who so requires this.



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Our membership secretary Julia Roberts continues to deal with all issues around membership and gives valuable information to the committee about trends and feedback on how we can support our membership.

Back in 2022 we invested in brand new 21st century beekeeping equipment and am pleased to say this was fully utilized this year by members seeing what great value the association offers in hiring out equipment. A great deal of thanks goes to Louisa Houghton for organizing this and ensuring this equipment continues to be kept in good order. An invaluable resource to our members.

Our secretary Rebecca Hall's enthusiasm continues to impress covering all aspects of the association and dealing with association meetings, committee matters and continuing the newsletter. Ably assisted by Ruth Masterman and Yvonne Horner.

Our swarm collections were yet again numerous this year. The team led by Stephen Greer helped collect these swarms and should be incredibly proud that the phone calls and public have dealt with in an extremely professional manner.

We continue to interact through the facebook group giving ample forums for our members and committee members to spark up interesting advice and debates.

Our outreach programme this year included talks and beekeeping experiences to several scout groups, Winchcombe School, Thorngrove School and many more. We have reached literally hundreds of children and teachers this year. As well as talks at Gardeners groups, historical societies and Womens institutes.

One of our core principles in our constitution is to organise and hold exhibitions of bees, honey and appliances and the only way to achieve this is to go out to public events for which we went to Greenham Common Celebrations, The Discovery Centre, Highclere Show, Swallowfield Show and Newbury Show. Newbury Show was our third attempt since its reincarnation and yet again our displays were built upon from last year and were incredibly well received. We had over 200 entries which is a record.

A special thanks to all the volunteers who have helped during the year without your support we cannot continue to have a presence at these events

This association was formed in 1952 and has had many highs and some lows where its existence has been in jeopardy. As I stand down a new group of committee members will take this association through to its 75th Anniversary in 2027. As always there will be a period of change and whilst this takes place I hope you continue to support the association in all its endeavours to allow it to be as successful as I know it can be. I wish to thank all the committee members new and old who have supported this association in reaching the heights it currently enjoys and I know the team of new incumbents will mean the association is in safe hands.

One last personal note a big thanks for all of your support and I wish you all every success in this incredible world of beekeeping.



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NDBKA Membership Report AGM 2025

Report prepared by Julia Roberts for Members of NDBKA

Members

- 190 active members up from 170 members in 2024
 - 164 Registered members
 - 15 local members
 - 7 partner members
 - 4 country members
- We lost 27 of our 2024 members (which is 15% current active members, so significant. Last year we lost 10%). Some reasons for not renewing are given as no longer have bees, moving out of the area, giving up. We had a lot of new joiners from the beginners course which have boosted the numbers significantly.
- 439 extra hives are insured (over the standard 3) up from 402 last year – 50 members insure extra hives. The maximum number for one individual is 35 and we have 3 members that insure 35.
- Bee diseases have not increased insurance rates for 2026, currently up to 3 colonies insured in our standard membership fees of £33 (which has also not increased)
- Up to 5 colonies: £1.20
- Up to 10 colonies: £4.70
- Up to 15 colonies: £7.75
- Up to 20 colonies: £9.50
- Up to 25 colonies: £11.10
- Up to 30 colonies: £13.60
- Up to 35 colonies: £16.10
- Up to 39 colonies: £18.10

Fees

Of the standard membership £33 fee, only £10 stays with the club. The rest goes to BBKA and bee disease insurance. We plan to hold the membership fees for 2026 at the same level as 2025.

Equipment Hire

One of the benefits of memberships is the ability to hire extraction equipment. The club invested, a couple of years ago, in new 12 frame extractors, one manual which can be hired with the necessary filters, uncapping forks and buckets for £20, and an electric one which can be hired with all the kit plus a heated uncapping tray for £40. These are expensive bits of kit to buy yourself, and I can heartily recommend both sets of kit. Louisa looks after the kit, is very friendly, and accomodating about collection and drop off. We are lucky to have this kit, and it makes extraction a much easier and less sticky process. It gets hired 17 times a year and has made £480 this year.



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AGM – Tuesday, 4th November 2025

Secretary's Report – Rebecca Hall

As this is my first year serving as Secretary, it has been an enjoyable and valuable learning experience. The role has given me a greater insight into the many areas that contribute to the success of our Association, and I've especially appreciated the opportunity to support members in their beekeeping journeys through improved communication and coordination.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and proactive committee, who have worked collaboratively throughout the year to ensure the continued strength and progress of the Association. The committee met formally six times over the past year, including two open event meetings where all members were welcome to attend.

Each meeting provided a space for reflection and updates across the various facets of the Association, including:

- Treasurer's financial report
- Membership updates
- Association apiary developments
- Programme planning for members
- Education and training opportunities
- Swarm line activity
- Yellow-Legged Hornet monitoring and response

Meeting actions were formally recorded and progress was monitored between meetings. I'd like to highlight a few key areas of focus during the year:

- **Programme for Members:** Continued efforts to offer a varied programme including talks and visits to apiaries.
- **Yellow-Legged Hornet Monitoring:** Ongoing updates and discussions around best practices, including the balance between trapping and monitoring.
- **Financial Health:** The Association remains in a strong position as a charity. There was discussion around exploring higher-interest bank accounts to optimise funds.
- **Digital Tools:** Consideration and use of Google Drive and email for smoother communication. These tools have proved especially useful for surveys and the Honey Show.
- **Equipment:** Regular reviews of equipment usage and needs at both the Association apiary and for the swarm line.



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We have continued to circulate updates from the BBKA, including information on training, events, and additional Zoom talks — all of which are forwarded to our members to ensure they can make the most of their BBKA membership. The BBKA's increased activity on social media, particularly their helpful monthly tips on Facebook, has also been a welcome resource.

Newsletter

A special thanks goes to **John Broadbent** from the Vale & Deane District Beekeepers for his continued dedication to producing our monthly newsletter. His expert advice and thoughtful editing, combined with contributions from our membership, make this a valuable communication channel. I'd also like to thank **Brian McMath**, **Louisa Houghton**, and others who have contributed articles and updates throughout the year.

In closing, I'd like to thank everyone for their support in my first year as Secretary. It's been a privilege to help behind the scenes and I look forward to continuing to support the Association in the year ahead.

Rebecca Hall

Secretary

Newbury and District Beekeepers Association



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Programme Report – Rebecca Hall

Organising the programme for NDBKA members throughout the year continues to be one of my favourite roles. As set out in our charity's constitution, our aim is to improve the practice and science of apiculture for the public benefit — and our programme of winter talks and spring/summer apiary meetings is a key way we deliver on that goal.

These events are not just about learning and practical skills, but also about debating new ideas and, perhaps most importantly, socialising with fellow beekeepers. They provide a space for support, shared experience, and enjoyment — all of which are essential for a thriving beekeeping community.

Winter Programme 2024–2025

Our winter meetings were once again held at **St Mary's Church, Shaw-cum-Donnington**, and I'm pleased to report a good turnout at each session. We aim to provide a diverse mix of topics, with input from both external speakers and experienced NDBKA members.

This year's talks included:

- **"Honey Ready for the Honey Show"** – *Clare O'Brien*
A practical and eye-opening look at why our honey may not always meet judging standards. We plan to revisit this topic in 2026.
- **"Encaustic Art"** – *Kate Bessant*
A fascinating exploration of this unique art form using beeswax, with many members captivated by the beautiful creations on display.
- **"Flora and Pollen"** – *Jenny Morgan*
A detailed talk delving into the essential relationship between bees and plants, and how pollen analysis plays a key role.
- **"Beeswax: Save Every Scrap"** – *Clare O'Brien*
Practical and sustainable tips on processing wax with minimal mess and waste.
- **"Pests!"**
 - *Yellow-Legged Hornet Monitoring & Traps* – *Andrew Fromant*
 - *Integrated Varroa Management* – *Ben Tichband*
Two critical and timely topics covering pest detection and control.
- **"Swarm Collection and Colony Management"** – *Adrian Doyle, Tim Nash & Ben Tichband*
A valuable session on techniques and strategies for successful swarm capture and colony handling.

A heartfelt thank you to **Ruth**, who faithfully provides tea and coffee at each meeting — your efforts are greatly appreciated by all and certainly fuel the lively discussions that follow!



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Apiary Meetings 2025 Season

- **May – Upper Bucklebury Apiary Visit**

We were warmly welcomed by **Jim, Brian, and Ann**, who generously shared their beekeeping journey with honesty and humour. Their openness to share a “warts and all” view of their colonies made the visit even more valuable. We explored a range of setups — Nationals, Langstroths, double broods, and supers — and even witnessed the puzzling situation of a queen up in the supers with a confused brood nest below!

The apiary container was the envy of many, and the refreshments were a real treat — thank you, Brian, we’re all still waiting on that coffee mead recipe!

- **June – Rebecca’s Apiary Visit**

I was proud (and a little nervous!) to open my own apiary to members. The encouragement and enthusiasm from everyone made it a very enjoyable experience. A special thank you to those who rose to the challenge of bringing **honey-themed culinary delights** — we were certainly well fed!

- **July – Cancelled Due to Heat**

Sadly, we had to cancel our July visit to Oare Apiary due to extreme heat. Safety always comes first, both for beekeepers and bees.

- **August – Oare Apiary Visit**

Thank you to **Rob Nickless**, who kindly stepped in to lead the session. As always, Rob demonstrated a calm, professional approach, guiding us through varroa treatments and key end-of-summer tasks.

Reflections and Thanks

Apiary visits continue to be a much-valued part of our programme. They offer a chance to see a wide range of practices, challenge our own methods, and support one another — all with the shared aim of keeping bees safely and responsibly.

As the saying goes, *ask three beekeepers a question and you’ll get four answers!* Every time we meet, we share not just knowledge, but also opinions, passions, and sometimes strong perspectives. It’s important to remember that our strength lies in our diversity — of experience, approach, and opinion — and to ensure we always engage with one another with kindness, patience, and respect.

We are a learning community, and our members are at many different stages of their beekeeping journey. Let’s continue to support, encourage, and grow together.



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Looking Ahead

- **Winter 2025–2026:** Thank you to **Yvonne** for compiling a member survey to guide the development of next year's winter programme. Your feedback will directly shape our future sessions.
- **Apiary Visit Hosts Wanted:** If you're willing to host a visit next year, please do get in touch — these sessions are at the heart of our practical learning.
- **Oare Apiary:** With **Adrian stepping down** as Chair and Apiary Manager, we'll be reviewing how best to manage our two apiaries. The Oare site now features a wider variety of hive types, including Nationals, a Long Hive, and a WBC, offering even more learning opportunities for members.

Thank you all for your ongoing enthusiasm and participation in the programme. I look forward to another year of shared learning, community, and (of course) bees!

Rebecca Hall

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Swarm report 2025

Stephen Greer

The 2025 swarm season was exceptionally busy, with a strong spring leading to many early calls, starting on April 11th. We handled a total of 116 calls, managed by a dedicated group of volunteers. A huge thank you to Andrew, Bob, Becca, Aidan, Joanna, Louisa, Matt, Vics, and Stephen for their great work triaging all the calls throughout the season—it's no small feat!

We successfully collected 70 swarms across the district this year, and providing this vital service to our community would not be possible without our amazing Swarm Collection Team.

Members dedicate countless hours of their time every year, for which we are incredibly grateful. One of the benefits of our members collecting swarms is that bees can be passed on to other members. In 2025, we successfully rehomed 14 colonies to members.

The public and our members receiving bees from swarm collections are always very supportive of our work and have again this year generously donated £845 to the association's JustGiving page. Our biggest single donation was for £200!

So again, a huge thank you to all our volunteers - we couldn't do this without your continued support year after year.

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Treasurers Report

We ran at a surplus in the year ended June 2025 of £7,646 versus a surplus of £2,749 in the previous year. The largest single contributor to the surplus was receiving a back payment of Gift Aid totaling £5772.

Basis of preparation.

Our accounts are prepared on a payments and receipts basis in line with the Charity Commission guidance for small charities with an income of less than £250,000 per annum.

Training

- We made a surplus in the year of with £7,269. There were outstanding bills for the period of about £2,500 for teaching fees leaving a £4,700 surplus.
- The courses were filled well which leads to a higher surplus given the generally fixed cost of running them.



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- It is worth noting through that we did separately spend c1,600 on nucs for the training apiary to ensure that there were adequate stocks for these course.

Fundraising

- We have achieved £1,800 from donations from Easyfundraising and Go fund me. This includes donations from members of the public for swarm collection.
- We received £4,780 in grant funding towards buying Asian hornet traps, upgrading our swarm collection equipment, a education hive and buying a long hive and 2 WBCs for the training apiary.
- We received a £500 donation from the Swallowfield Show and £500 from Adstock Limited for swarm collection.
- We received £140 in donations for talks given by members to other organisations.

Capital Investment

- We spend the money from the grants on Asian Hornet traps which have been distributed to members, improving our swarm kit with more nuc boxes and a bee vac, buying two WBC and a long hive for Oare, and buying an education hive.
- We purchased a set of second hand gazebos at a bargain price.

Newbury Show

- Newbury show ran for the first time after a break. We spent a net £2,900 on the event after allowing for entries and sponsorship.
- The key areas of expenditure were the prize money £662, printing including prize cards and banners £836 , upgrading our display stands £1,032, tickets for volunteers £522, then various other smaller costs, judges, bulbs etc.

Independent Review

- The Associations Constitution refers to an Audit which in current legislation refers to a statutory audit by registered auditor. However, the charity commission provides guides (included at Appendix A) which allows the Trustees scope to interpret this. We have determined that an audit from a registered auditor is excessive and cost prohibitive and that inline with guidance for external scrutiny for small charities and independent examination by a competent individual is acceptable.
- This years accounts are were reviewed, an experienced accountant who didn't note any issues in their feedback. .

Post year end items

2026 Membership Subscriptions

- The Committee has reviewed our plans for next year and has proposed to maintain the current level of subscription for the Association given that the Associations reserves remain in a healthy position.



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- In addition to the NDBKA fee the BBKA membership and BDI insurance is charged for registered members – this is passed on at cost.

Ben Tichband

Treasurer

Statement of Income and Expenditure

	Year Ending 30 June 2025			Year Ending 30 June 2024		
Income and Expenditure						
Income	Receipts	Payments	Net	Receipts	Payments	Net
Subscriptions	5,255.50		5,255.50	5,103.80		5,103.80
Gift Aid	5,771.55		5,771.55	-		
Bank Interest Received	66.43		66.43	48.77		48.77
Donations received	7,764.10		7,764.10	1,934.42		1,934.42
Swarm Collection Donations						
Equipment hire & sale	1,188.92	8,228.58	(7,039.66)	495.00	883.50	(388.50)
Bee courses	9,580.00	2,310.20	7,269.80	9,490.50	3,790.02	5,700.48
Association Apiary	1,852.40	4,754.86	(2,902.46)	723.67	2,642.11	(1,918.44)
Total Income and Activities			16,185.26			10,480.53
Expenses						
BBKA		3,919.00	3,919.00		3,262.50	3,262.50
Bee Disease Insurance	687.00	650.00	(37.00)	542.00	526.40	(15.60)
Meetings		334.00	334.00		730.50	730.50
Repairs and depreciation				-	-	
Bee Charity					-	
News letter				-	-	
Publicity					-	
Insurance		190.13	190.13		396.50	396.50
Miscellaneous expenses		1,234.01	1,234.01		1,069.19	1,069.19
Newbury Show	1,350.00	4,249.22	2,899.22	956.00	3,243.94	2,287.94
Total Expenses			8,539.36			7,731.03
	33,515.90	25,870.00		19,294.16	16,544.66	
Surplus (Deficit) for year			7,645.90			2,749.50

Our closing cash balance was £35,575

Appendix A Charity Commission Guidance on interpretation of Governing Documents.

5.1 What determines the need for an audit or other external scrutiny?

The short answer (legal requirement)



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In addition to statutory thresholds, the governing document of any charity may contain specific provisions about the external scrutiny of the charity's accounts. In such cases the charity must follow the higher standard of scrutiny required by either the statutory framework or the governing document.

In more detail

In older governing documents, the word 'audit' might be intended to cover a range of different types of external scrutiny from full audit by a registered auditor to an independent check by a non-accountant.

Trustees will need to interpret the precise wording of their governing document. For instance, 'audit by a bank manager' would not normally mean a full statutory audit. On the other hand 'audit by a qualified or chartered accountant' suggests that a statutory audit by a registered auditor is required, even if the charity is small and not required to have an audit by legislation.

Trustees of charitable companies can amend their articles of association to change any specific provisions which might exceed the statutory provisions. The Charities Act gives trustees of non-company charities the power to make similar amendments. The Commission should be notified of such changes.

The Commission recommends that trustees keep a record of how they interpret the charity's governing document, and, if in doubt, consult the Commission regarding their interpretation.