



Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association Trustees' Report for the 2024 AGM

In this report, the trustees provide a critical review of the work of the Association over the last year in relation to its objectives (objects), which are:

"To preserve the honey bee by furthering the craft of beekeeping and educating the public of the benefit of bees in the environment."

These objectives translate to services to bees, beekeepers (members and beginners) and the public.



Summary

Some great highlights - how best to go forward? The centenary AGM went with a bang - with cake, balloons and decorations to celebrate. The intermediate training day, first aid training, the healthy bee day, Bedfordshire activating against the Asian hornet threat, honey show and festival and many other events demonstrating some of the best of what the Association offers members for a very low subscription.

What do members want? The end of 2023 found the committee perplexed. The trustees are puzzling over the best way to serve the needs of our members. Many events were not well attended despite those attending stating that they were excellent. The trustees would very much like to understand this better so that precious effort and time spent is aligned to what members want.

Bees and beekeeping. After the sunshine of 2022, 2023 proved to be very wet during the late summer which impacted the beekeeping season. It may have been one of the hottest years on record worldwide, but in the UK we experienced a lot of rain when we least wanted it. Notably, the reported honey harvest was 41% lower than in 2022.

Education. In-person training and online training continued strongly, totalling 18 events.

For the public. Our contacts with the public continued including a well attended Honey Show and Honey Festival at Stockwood Park, with a reported footfall of just under 1,000.

Finances and Assets. The Association's assets and finances remain in good order, although finely balanced with £648 surplus. There were increased costs in the year with the Centenary publication in addition to our ever popular yearbook.

Membership. The numbers of members remain high at 540 (which is one more than 2022).

Insurance. Our new cover now renews at the end of January for administrative ease. The cost of the insurance increased by c8.3%. This is due to us increasing the overall turnover for our beekeepers from £385,000 to £425,000 in line with inflation of 10%.

Yearbook. This is one of the proudest productions of the year and treasured by many. However, the autumn survey showed that 49.2% members would be happy with an electronically accessible yearbook only. The trustees will consider how to take this forward during 2024.

And now in more detail...



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Services for Bees and Beekeeping

Preserving the honey bee. The Beds BKA Annual Beekeeping Survey each Autumn provides a very helpful guide to how well the bees are doing.

Year	Number of responses	Losses over previous winter	Colonies within Beds	Colonies outside Beds	Swarms dealt with	Honey harvest in lbs	Nucs going into winter
2023	70	164**	673**		125	11,840.8	81
2022	71	111	322	278	169	20,709*	68
2021	75	91	282	224	213	14,300	50
2020	132	166	780	489	286	39,759	188
2019	127	84	586	319	348	38,630	108
2018	111	174	448	240	154	29,982	?

*this total is less the impressive 1,200lbs in USA

** figures taken from Spring pulse survey with 81 respondents

Key points from the Survey include:

- Overall, a year with challenges and many reporting lower honey crops than usual.
- However, winter colony losses (2022 into Spring 2023) occurred at around 19.6%, slightly better than the previous year.
- The average number of hives is 8.3
- Some reported the swarmiest year ever - yet the overall figures from the survey show swarms collected were down.
- 65 respondents (of the 70...some left this question blank) reported a total of 11,840.8 pounds of honey which is an average of 182.17 pounds of honey per beekeeper that responded. In 2022 there was an average of 309 pounds - **2023 harvest was on average therefore 41% worse than 2022.**
- Questions around the yearbook showed that 49.3% would be content with the yearbook being accessible electronically only. As this is a significant cost, the trustees will consider this during 2024.

Weather and its effects. Very interestingly, despite a few weeks before Christmas 2022, there being an extremely cold week with temperatures at minus fifteen sustained for nearly a week, winter losses reported were slightly BETTER than that reported the year previously. After the sunshine of 2022, 2023 proved to be very wet during the late summer which impacted the beekeeping season. It may have been one of the hottest years on record worldwide, but in the UK we experienced a lot of rain when we least wanted it. Notably, the reported honey harvest was 41% lower than in 2022.

Nucs. From the Survey, the average is one nuc for every beekeeper, but this is misleading. Half of the respondents did not have any nucs going into winter. There are two schools of thought on overwintering nucs. The first is to strongly encourage nucs as insurance against winter losses and early queen failure. The second is to overwinter strong fully sized hives to increase the overwintering success, and to use nucs during the year for queen rearing.

Wasps. Many beekeepers have reported more wasps than usual, with wasps plaguing the bees at the end of season.

Health. The incidence of varroa seems to have been generally low, though we were still encouraged to treat in line with NBU policy. 92.6% beekeepers treat for varroa, with 42.6% treating both in summer and winter.

Other Pests. The yellow legged Asian Hornet may be in Bedfordshire in 2024, with the nearest nest destroyed a mere 2 days flight from the county border- in Hackney.

Support for beekeeping research. Our support for the Eastern Associations Research Studentship (EARS) continues with £2,000 donated to work related to CBPV.



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Services to Members and Beginners

Yearbooks. Our 2023 Yearbook was beautifully produced - an outstanding achievement as this was completed alongside the production of the very special one off centenary booklet. Thank you to Andrew Ulyett and Chris Jenkins - both worked tirelessly on these outstanding productions. As you can imagine, it was a huge workload and trying to produce two at the same time was complicated. We are very grateful to them for their contribution.

We know that our yearbooks are a marvellous record of the Association and a mine of information. However it is also a significant cost. So the trustees will consider the following feedback from the annual survey

- I am fine with the yearbook only being accessible electronically = 49.3%
- I don't mind having the yearbook only accessible electronically, but I'd prefer a full printed copy = 26.1%
- I don't like the idea of an electronic yearbook, I definitely only want a full printed copy = 21.7%
- I would like a slimline printed yearbook with some of the information accessible online = 2.9%

Talks. Six excellent talks (open to members and the public) were hosted by BedsBKA during 2023:

- "DIY For Beekeepers" by Prof David Evans
- "Communication in honeybee colonies" by Margaret Murdin
- "Wonders of Wax" by Sue Lang
- "Queen right queen rearing" by Prof David Evans
- "Learning from beekeepers Abroad" by Bees Abroad
- "Asian Hornets" by Phill Howes

Events. There were some excellent events in 2023 with many commenting on how informative or helpful they were. Events included an Improvers day at Flitwick village hall; a Healthy Bee Day at Bedford University; the Honey Show and Festival at Stockwood Park and a First Aid and Anaphylaxis course run at Maulden Church Hall. Sadly, the summer picnic was cancelled due to poor weather.

Beginners Course. Two in-person courses took place, one led by Mike Niemann (and team) ran successfully at Stockwood, attracting around 13 participants; with the second run by Matt Alabaster (and team) at Bedford with 19 participants. Around 9 people attended the online course.

For Improvers and more established beekeepers. Trustees recognise that they are unsure as to whether they are meeting members' needs. Carly Jordan kindly offered to run training for one of the BBKA modules. However she received a very low response from members as to which module they wanted with almost none committing to attend.

Wally Thrale organised an expert panel to be present for six intermediate improver sessions held monthly by zoom during the active beekeeping season. They were relatively well attended with between 20 to 40 attending on each occasion. Practical topics that beekeepers were encountering were discussed.

The Healthy Bee Day was incredible. We heard from bee inspectors who had been tracking, tracing and destroying Asian hornet nests. They brought along diseased combs so beekeepers could see exactly what AFB and EFB looks like. It was a pleasure watching and listening to the inspectors as they opened and examined the hives at our Association apiary.

Honey Show. The 2023 Honey Show and Festival was held on Saturday 7th October 2023 at Stockwood Park Discovery Centre. Well done to Sue Lang for her herculean efforts to make this a wonderful event for the Association. We were grateful to Stockwood Park for allowing us to use the venue again for free. Overall, just under 1,000 public attended - double that of the previous year - so a great success. However, numbers of entries to the honey show were slightly down versus previous years. Disappointingly, there were no entries in the dipped candles; wax models or Junior / Schools categories. The entry quality was good though, and the judges (Fiona Dickson from Norfolk and Mike Duffin from Hampshire) were very complimentary. Large numbers of entries in the Honey Cake and Limerick Classes made judging difficult! Congratulations to all the Trophy winners, and to Colin Hall who won 'Best in Show' for his entry in the Medium Honey class. Some of the winning entries were then put forward to the inter-county Federation Cup which is hosted by the National Honey Show. Bedfordshire came a very credible 2nd place, thank you to all the members who allowed their entries to represent Bedfordshire. Thank you to Karen Glasse and Mark Bolan who acted as Stewards, and



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all the volunteers who helped set the show up the day before, and to clear the room (in record time!) at the end of the event. Thanks also to Andre Cardona and Roger Trudgehill for storing the Show staging which is quite bulky. The 2024 Honey Show and Honey Festival will be held on Sunday 22nd September at Marston Vale Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine, MK43 0PR. Please put this in your diaries now!

District Advisors (DAs) services. We had the benefit of DAs in post for every area of the county. They are so important for members in terms of advice and support as need arises.

Stockists for our Bulk Purchase Scheme (BPS). Our BPS Manager, Simon Cockle, continues to organise this large-scale operation on behalf of members in terms of containing high costs and thus making beekeeping more affordable. Our stockists as ever continued to provide an excellent service, storing goods and supplying members with basic equipment at much reduced prices. The wax exchange ran very successfully again thanks to a small, hardworking team of members, in concert with Maisemore, our new supplier.

Facebook Chat Page. The Facebook chat forum continues to host lively debates and opportunities for beekeepers to ask questions and provide advice on a daily basis.

Teaching apiaries. Our two teaching apiaries continue to thrive under the guidance of our apiarists and their teams who give so much of their time and expertise (one apiary is at Stockwood Park in Luton managed by Mike Niemann and team, the other at Priory country Park in Bedford run by Matt Alabaster and helpers). Honey sales from both teaching apiaries continue to provide the Association with additional funds – our thanks to both Matt and Mike and their teams for their continuous efforts and sharing their knowledge with beginners.

Services to the Public

Swarm-collection. Our free swarm-collection service to the public remained operational. Reports from Sandy District and nearby were that it was the swarmiest year they had ever seen. However this was not mirrored through the whole county. Although it seemed a quieter year for the scheme, many queries from the public about bees (not only honeybees) and beekeeping were addressed. This is a vital service to our bees as many swarms would die if left to their own devices.

Talks and Visits. Several visits to classes in primary schools took place in 2023. Members may have given talks to schools or other groups that we do not know about. Do please contact the Education Liaison Officer (Stephen Edwards) to keep Trustees informed about this important work that is a fundamental part of our mission as a charity.

Attendance at outside events. Attendance at outside events continued, with stalls at Bromham Apple Day and the Bedfordshire Young Farmers Rally.

Honey Festival. The Honey Festival, excellently organised by Dawn Talats, that accompanied the Honey Show at Stockwood Park was well received with approximately 1,000 members of the public visiting. Activities included honey tasting and sales, face painting, yellow legged Asian hornet stand, virtual hive and beekeeping equipment display, trying on bee suits, candle rolling, children's colouring in activities, and apple pressing. We were honoured to have a demonstration table of wax flowers this year by Elizabeth Duffin as well as stalls of books, trying on bee suits, hive and equipment demonstrations. A big thank you to all involved in making the day such a special highlight of the beekeeping year.

Beds BKA Operation

Trustees and Officers. Trustees continued to meet throughout the year to monitor the state of the Association and to guide its activities. The Secretarial Team continued to work "behind the scenes" on the detailed management of the Association.

The committee of Trustees has had some changes over 2023, with four new trustees joining through the year. Nick Arter joined as NE Beds District Advisor; Graham Canford joined as Assistant Apiarist (Bedford); Mary Marriott joined to assist with training and Phill Howes as Asian hornet coordinator. In addition, Gemma Keys kindly runs the photograph of the month competition, Stephen Edwards assists the Association as Education liaison officer and Sue Lang as honey show coordinator.



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So much is done by our various officers to provide key services for which we are grateful.

Membership numbers. 2023 membership totalled 540, 1 more than last year. In 2023 there were 488 Full Members, 37 Associate Members, 13 Student Members and 2 Honorary.

Insurance. Thanks to the sterling effort of our Treasurer, we have changed our insurance to one renewal at the end of January. The cost of the insurance increased by c8.3%. This was due to us increasing the overall turnover for our beekeepers from £385,000 to £425,000 in line with inflation of 10%. Whilst the overall price is still good value, this meant that the premium increased by 8.3% compared to the previous year. With underlying rates having increased by 4.5% the further increase is due to increasing the turnover limit. We will be investigating over the year any additional cover that may be required by Asian hornet action teams which currently is not covered.

Policies. Last year the Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety policies were reviewed.

And Finally

Overall it has felt like a very busy year. Many have contributed and given their time, effort and expertise for which we are deeply thankful.

Sadly the yellow legged Asian hornet has come close to Bedfordshire - with the nearest nest destroyed in Hackney which is two days flight from Bedfordshire. Seven members of parliament have been contacted to highlight the urgent need for action. Four of these have tabled parliamentary questions to the "Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Environment" Secretary. Whilst responses have largely confirmed what we already know, the mere act of asking the question raises the profile of this urgent matter.

Finally, we would welcome any suggestions for improvement or new ideas, please do reach out to your District Advisor or any of the trustees or officers. We would genuinely love to hear from you.

Addendum to Beds BKA Trustees Report for 2023

This addendum provides the additional information for the Trustees Annual Return as required by the Charity Commission in the Charity SORP (FRSSE) - Statement of Recommended Practice (Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities). ([Link to SORP.](#))

SORP 1.9

- The reporting period (financial year) is 1st January to 31st December 2023

SORP 1.19

- Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.


SORP 1.26

- The governing document for Beds BKA is the Constitution (see <https://www.bedsbka.org.uk/membership/constitution/>)
- The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- The methods used to recruit and appoint trustees are included in the Constitution

SORP 1.28

- The CIO name is Bedfordshire Bee Keepers Association
- Charity registration number is 1184466
- Address of principal office is 30 High Street, Haversham, Milton Keynes, MK19 7DX
- Names of all trustees holding office at any time in 2023 – see table below.

	Trustee	Note
1	Matthew Alabaster	All year
2	Nicolas Arter	From 25/2/23
3	Neil Blakemore	All year
4	Graham Canfield	From 25/2/23
5	David Chapman	Resigned 25/2/23
6	Simon Cockle	From 25/2/23
7	Fiona Cook	Resigned 25/2/23
8	Anne Cross	All year
9	Richard Dowsett	All year
10	Karen Glasse	All year
11	David Goodridge	All year
12	Colin Hall	All year
13	Phillip Howes	All year
14	Christopher Jenkins	All year
15	Caroline Jordan	All year
16	Rosemary Long	All year
17	John Macdougall	All year
18	Mary Mariott	From 25/2/23
19	Michael Niemann	All year
20	Paul Rubens	All year
21	Dawn Talats	All year
22	Walter Thrale	All year
23	Jennifer Tysom	All year
24	Helen Vaughan	From 25/2/23

Signature	
Name and position	John Macdougall, Trustee and Assistant Secretary
Date	21 st October 2024



Treasurer's Report (2024 AGM)

The annual accounts for the Association were prepared by myself, for the second time and have been reviewed and examined in accordance with the Charity Commission's regulations. The review was carried out by Caroline Rainbow, also for the second time, Caroline is an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, England & Wales. She trained with KPMG as an auditor, and worked in local government as an auditor and has many years' of experience in this field. Once again, a big thank you to Caroline for agreeing to do this review.

Overall revenue increased by £1,904 to £42,980. Membership subscriptions were £5,673, £800 lower than 2022. This was principally due to the Gift Aid receipt of £1,002 from HMRC in 2022, not received in 2023. A Return for 2023 will be sent in 2024.

Revenue from the bulk purchase scheme increased by £2,640 to £29,923 a 10% increase on last year. The margin increased very slightly to 5.5% compared to last year at 5.4%. Whilst wax costs have stayed reasonably constant, the price of jars has increased again by approximately 10% in 2023 (2022 by 30%) , accounting for much of this increased revenue again. My thanks to all the stockists, and Simon Cockle to for all their effort, in continuing to supply members with very good value products.

Training revenue was higher in 2023 by £377, principally due to the Anaphylaxis Awareness Course that was run in November 2023.

Apiary sales were £3,028, slightly down on the record year of 2022 £3,393, although 2022 included selling bees to Brewpoint for £300, not repeated in 2023, which accounts for most of this difference.

Magazine sales ceased in 2022, so there was no revenue in 2023. Events revenue was also much lower than expected, as the Centenary Dinner at the Rufus Centre was cancelled due to insufficient support. Please also note that Event costs were also significant down against budget.

Overall expenditure for the year was £14,045, a decrease of £2,640. There 4 main areas of decreased expenditure. Firstly, moving our insurance from Howden to ANSVAR saved £1,953 compared to 2022. Secondly, following a higher year in 2022, Apiary costs were £1,458 lower in 2023. Donations were £780 lower in 2023 following the £900 donation in 2022 for the 100 trees at Marston Vale to mark our Centenary. Finally, no magazines were purchased in 2023 saving £740.

Other cost changes were:

- Print and post at £3,382 an increase of £600, which is almost entirely due to the additional costs in printing and distributing the Centenary Booklet with the Yearbook. The cost of this equates to around £6.75 per member.
- Committee costs were £137 more than 2022, due to some increases in costs of hiring venues for meetings.
- Training costs were £1,002 an increase of £737, which was due to the costs of running the Healthy Bee Day at Bedfordshire University and the Anaphylaxis Course.
- Subscriptions which are the costs of hosting the Webcollect site, our Website and the Zoom subscription were up by £575 in the year. This was primarily because Paul Lawrence had paid for 2022 and 2023 himself, before submitting a request for payment. Also we had to pay a subscription for Zoom for 2023, that we hadn't done in 2022.
- Events costs, which comprise the cost of speakers and the Honey Show were £414 higher than in 2022. The cost of Speakers and Judges for the Honey Show were the main reasons for these increased costs.

The net result was a surplus of £648, turning around a loss of £878 last year.



Treasurer's Report (2024 AGM)

BEDFORDSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION PROFIT/LOSS 2023			
	Actual	Budget	Actual
	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year
	2023	2023	2022
	GBP	GBP	GBP
REVENUE			
Subscriptions	5,673	6,500	6,473
Bulk purchase scheme	29,923	24,500	27,283
Training	3,039	2,600	2,662
Events	665	5,600	338
Apiary sales	3,028	2,600	3,393
Donations	145	100	184
Interest earned	507	80	108
Magazines	0	600	635
Other revenue	0	0	0
Total revenue	42,980	42,580	41,077
COSTS			
Bulk purchase scheme	28,287	23,153	25,808
margin %	5.5%	5.5%	5.4%
EXPENSES			
Subscriptions	992	430	418
Print & Post	3,382	2,450	2,782
Committee	495	550	358
Events	2,385	7,400	1,971
Training	1,002	300	266
Apiary	251	1,150	1,710
Insurance	2,183	4,350	4,136
Donations	2,120	1,500	2,900
Bank charges	466	550	475
Depreciation	768	925	930
Magazines	0	700	740
Total expenses	14,045	20,305	16,684
Surplus/(deficit)	648	-878	-1,415



Treasurer's Report (2024 AGM)

The key figures to point out on the balance sheet are:

Fixed assets: No purchases in the year, the book value of the assets decline to £1,306 after depreciation.

Stock finished the year slightly down at £6,759 compared to £7,063 last year. Stocks of fondant and Ambrosia were significantly less than last year.

Debtors at £4,193 versus £689 were higher. £3,180 was held by stockists at the end of December, and has since be paid into our account. £413 for honey due from Stockwood Discovery Centre has now also been paid. £299 were prepaid expenses for the venues for January 2024 Training Day and Bedford Beginners' Training and £300 was for prepaid Wax Credits.

Creditors of £3,217 versus £4,568 in 2022 were lower. Our donation to EARS of £2,000, our ANSVAR Insurance for December was not taken until January by Direct Debit. A Speaker was owed for a Talk. The balance results from Cash taken in advance for Subs and The Improvers Day and Beginners Course.

Our cash balance is £26,693, slightly down on 2022, which was £29,828.

Our Reserves at £27,669, are just above the lower band of £26,370, and significantly below the £29,300, set at the end of 2021.

BALANCE SHEET		
	2023	2022
ASSETS	GBP	GBP
Fixed Assets	1,306	2,073
Cash	26,693	29,828
Stock	6,759	7,063
Debtors	4,193	689
Creditors	-3,217	-4,568
Total	35,733	35,085
REPRESENTED BY		
Surplus b/f	35,085	36,500
Profit/(loss) for period	648	-1,415
Total	35,733	35,085

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees/ members of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association on accounts for the twelve months to December 2023 as set out on page 2 of this report.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts (under sections 43 of the Act).
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the Act), and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from us as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: CTRainbow

Date: 7/2/24

Name: CAROLINE RAINBOW

Professional qualification or body: ICAEW

Address: 45 PARK AVENUE, BEDFORD, MK40 2NF

Disclosures: None to report

BEDFORDSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PROFIT/LOSS 2023

	Actual	Budget	Actual
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