



Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association Trustees' Report for the 2025 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

The highlights

What do members want? At the end of 2023, trustees were puzzling over the best way to serve the needs of our members. So, in 2024, the spring pulse survey asked questions about this. Members most value talks, seminars and meetings. And yet it is these events that the trustees are worrying are poorly attended!

Bees and beekeeping. A jolly wet spring worried beekeepers that their winter loss rate would escalate - however with feeding going later into the year than many can ever remember, the winter loss rate remained the same as the year before at 20%. Without the diligence of beekeepers, the bees would have experienced the same trauma of the weather that wasps had. The year saw very few wasps, creating a peaceful autumn for the bees. The resulting honey harvest was a bumper year for many beekeepers, with an average of 312 lbs per beekeeper.

Education. In-person training and online training continued strongly, with 6 talks from external speakers, an in-person improvers training day, an in person Asian hornet monitoring training day, two beginners courses and 6 zoom 'ask the expert' open chat sessions with Wally Thrall, Colin Hall, John Macdougall and Richard Smith. In addition, there were 15 talks given to a variety of schools during 2024.

For the public. Another well attended Honey Show and Honey Festival, for the first time at Marston Moretaine Forest Centre. We were pleased to welcome the MP Blake Stephenson who showed interest in the issues relating to beekeepers during his visit and enjoyed purchasing honey. In addition, we were also pleased to welcome the MP Mohammed Yasin to the AGM who showed interest in beekeeping and being photographed with beekeepers to promote the craft.

Finances and Assets. The Association's assets and finances remain in good order, with a £3,810 surplus. This is largely due to the budgeted expenditure of £2,000 to EARS not being collected. With the intention to increase the reserves as discussed at the 2024 AGM, the membership fee increased to £18 at the end of 2024 for the 2025 year.

Membership. The numbers of members remain high at 524 (down 3% from 2023).



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Insurance. We have remained with the ANSVAR insurance policy again this year, renewing on 31st January 2025. The terms of the policy remained the same as last year, but due to a general rate increase across the market our policy went up by 5.5% to £2,913.47.

Yearbook. This is the proudest production of the year and treasured by many. In 2023, the autumn survey showed that 49.2% members would be happy with an electronically accessible yearbook only. The trustees considered this in 2024, and decided to continue with the publication until they could make it fully accessible online. Once this has happened members will be given an option to select receiving the yearbook online only. A paper copy will continue to be produced for those that want it.

Asian Hornets. Phil Howes and his team of assistants began their monitoring in earnest in 2024 following the shocking increase of nests found in 2023. Possibly due to the wet spring that killed so many wasps, the anticipated spike in reported Asian hornet nests did not occur, with a total of 24 nests found in 2024, mostly in Kent and East Sussex. Two of the nests have been DNA verified to have originated from queens that overwintered in the UK from nests found and destroyed in 2023.

Website. Paul Lawrence, our longstanding website manager, decided to step down from his role at the end of 2024. We are extremely indebted and grateful to Paul for his contributions and efforts over many years. He has been the custodian of the website and YouTube channel for a significant period of time, giving his energy, expertise and guidance willingly. He made the members-only area on the website possible and has assisted every year with the honey show application process. Thank you Paul! You will be missed!

And now in more detail...

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 |
|------|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 2024 | 51 | 59 | 294 | | 102 | 15,929 | 52 |
| 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 2024 Survey include:

- Our response rate is down. We are not sure why.
- Overall, a year with spring weather challenges keeping beekeepers on their toes - feeding continued late into spring.
- Winter colony losses remained consistent to the year before at 20%.
- The average number of hives going into 2025 is 5.4
- Wasp presence was low.
- An average of 312.34 pounds of honey per beekeeper showed that many had a very good harvest, but not all.
- The pulse survey asked beekeepers what they most valued about BedsBKA. The top five are:
 - Talks, seminars and meetings - 67%



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- Insurance - 54%
- Meeting other beekeepers - 52%
- Bulk purchase scheme - 50%
- Training 46%
- In addition, members also specifically mentioned that they value Wally's newsletters, John and Wally's online webinars, the training received from our apiarists and the loan of association equipment.

Nucs. From the Survey, the average is unchanged at one nuc for every beekeeper. There continues to be 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.

Services to Members and Beginners

Yearbooks. Our 2024 Yearbook was yet again beautifully produced. Thank you to Andrew Ulyett and Rosemary Long who both worked tirelessly to create an informative and fun yearbook.

Talks. Six excellent talks (open to members and the public) were hosted by BedsBKA during 2024:

- "Swarm control" by Sean Stephenson
- "All about foulbrood" by Prof Giles Budge
- "Spring Management" by Margaret Murdin
- "Asian hornet management" by Marc Maissonnette
- "Practical Beekeeping" by Prof Robert Pickard
- "Rational Varroa Control" by Prof David Evans

Events. There were some memorable events in 2024 with many commenting on how informative or helpful they were. Events included an Improvers Day at Flitwick village hall and the Honey Show and Festival at Marston Moretaine Forest Centre.

Beginners Course. Two in-person courses took place, one led by Mike Niemann (and team) ran successfully at Stockwood, attracting 11 participants; with the second run by Matt Alabaster (and team) at Bedford with 22 participants. 5 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.

Honey Show and Festival. The 2024 Honey Show and Festival was held on Sunday 22nd September 2024 at Marston Moretaine Forest Centre. Well done to Sue Lang and Dawn Talats for their herculean efforts to make this yet again another wonderful event for the Association. The weather and earlier timing of the event in the year meant that an observation hive was present which wasn't possible the year beforehand.

There was torrential rain on the day - with photographs of flooded and abandoned cars on the A421 nearby reaching national news. Despite this, the Show and Festival were well attended by the public and the local MP Blake Stephenson.



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The Show had 266 entries - the highest number in living memory....and therefore requiring a phenomenal effort from Sue Lang to organise.

The 2025 Honey Show and Honey Festival will be held on Sunday 21st September at Redborne Upper School on the Flitwick / Ampthill border. The venue is large, parking free and Sue and Dawn intend this to be an extra special occasion. 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, Graham Canfield 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 swarm-collection service to the public remained operational. 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. The annual survey showed that from the 51 who responded, 102 swarms were collected.

Asian Hornet Advice and Monitoring. Phill Howes, supported by John Macdougall and Karen Glasse, set up an Asian hornet monitoring team consisting of 28 people. This includes nominated contacts from our neighbouring beekeeping associations. A training session on identifying, tracking and tracing Asian hornets was run for the BedsBKA volunteers. Each volunteer was given a small kit including the bait 'Trappit', a monitoring trap, and an Asian hornet specimen in aspic. Several calls from the public were received with each being followed up by the team. No Asian hornets were identified in Bedfordshire. Creditably, many members have been implementing their own monitoring activities.

Talks and Visits. Fifteen requests for visits to schools were received and also satisfied during 2024. 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. Also, please let Stephen know if you would be willing to do a talk for the many requests we receive (there is an already available presentation that can be shared).

Attendance at outside events. We have been busy representing the Association at several external events:

- Phil Howes and Mike Neiman attended the Keech Farewell Weekend at Stockwood in September. A popular weekend long event with lots of visitors.
- Colin Hall and Rosemary Lang supported the Bee Awareness Day in Luton. A team of staff from the management of Luton Point (the huge shopping mall in Luton) ran a very successful Bee Awareness Day on Monday 28 October. The team included two of our Beds BKA members, Tracey Bateman and Tina Hall. Its success owed much to the display materials loaned by Beds BKA, especially the pop-up banners and the art-work activities for children. The event attracted lots of attention and interest. It was during half term, and many children participated creatively. Honey-tasting was hugely popular with young and older alike. The honey all came from the apiary on top of the shopping centre. 71 jars of honey were sold at £10 each, with all of the **£710 being donated to Luton Foodbank**. One outcome was



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contact with a local primary school requesting a visit and talk. Further projects and events may result.

- Steve Gale attended Party on Potton Arts, Craft and Small Businesses day then the following weekend the Potton Show. Lots of chatting with the public about the Association and beekeeping.
- Bromham Mill Apple Day and Marston Vale Christmas Fayre were both attended. supported by Dawn Talats, Helen Vaughan, Phil Howes, Neil Blakemore, Graham Canfield and John MacDougall.

Attending a variety of events enables us to inform the public about the Association, training available and talk about our favourite subject - honey bees! Raising awareness about the Yellow Legged Asian Hornet has also been an important part of these events too. And of course, the public enjoy sampling locally produced honey and the opportunity to buy it.

Honey Festival. The Honey Festival, excellently organised by Dawn Talats, proved yet again to be popular with the public. Please see above for more information.

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 one change over 2024, with Mary Marriott stepping down. She continues to organise the Improvers Day in January for which we are very grateful.

Membership numbers. 2024 membership totalled 524. In 2024 there were 472 Full Members, 39 Associate Members, 13 Student Members and 2 Honorary.

IT and Communications. Officers and secretarial team members continue to manage the Association's newsletter, website, membership database, YouTube channel and Facebook presence as well as responding to requests for information from the public and members.

Insurance. The Insurance policy renewed on 31st January 2025. The cost of the policy increased again by 5.5%, reflecting the general increases across the market. Our brokers, Towergate Insurance, managed to negotiate this down from an initial proposed 10% increase. The previous policy with Howdens/BC Underwriting policies back in 2022 were £4,136 per year, compared to today at £2,913.47, so we are still making a worthwhile saving.

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.

We truly 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 2024

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 2024

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 2024 – see table below.

| | Trustee | Note |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Matthew Alabaster | Whole of year |
| 2 | Nicolas Arter | Whole of year |
| 3 | Neil Blakemore | Whole of year |
| 4 | Graham Canfield | Whole of year |
| 5 | Simon Cockle | Whole of year |
| 6 | Anne Cross | Whole of year |
| 7 | Richard Dowsett | Whole of year |
| 8 | Karen Glasse | Whole of year |
| 9 | David Goodridge | Whole of year |
| 10 | Colin Hall | Whole of year |
| 11 | Phillip Howes | Whole of year |
| 12 | Christopher Jenkins | Whole of year |
| 13 | Caroline Jordan | Whole of year |
| 14 | Rosemary Long | Whole of year |
| 15 | John Macdougall | Whole of year |
| 16 | Mary Mariott | Resigned 24/07/2024 |
| 17 | Michael Niemann | Whole of year |
| 18 | Paul Rubens | Whole of year |
| 19 | Dawn Talats | Whole of year |
| 20 | Walter Thrale | Whole of year |
| 21 | Jennifer Tysom | Whole of year |
| 22 | Helen Vaughan | Whole of year |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Signature |  |
| Name and position | John Macdougall, Trustee and Assistant Secretary |
| Date | 21 st October 2025 |

Treasurer's Report to the members of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association

As your Treasurer, it is my pleasure to present the financial report for the year. I extend my thanks to this year's Independent Auditor, Andrew Young. Andrew brings huge experience, having been a Chartered Accountant since 1985, most of which has been served in Industry with National Freight and Leica. I thank him for his time and diligence in examining the accounts and records and confirming they comply with the requirements of the Charity Commissioners. We have once again successfully allocated funds towards the education of the public about bees and beekeeping. We have trained new members of our beekeeping community and given existing members the opportunity to refresh their beekeeping knowledge, and the ability to source wax, frames and jars at extremely competitive prices. All this to ensure the sustainability and relevance of our Association for now and in years to come. I would also like to thank all the Stockists and Simon for their efforts this year, in particular their willingness to maintain "live" stock quantities using tech available to us.

Income

- Total Income: 2024 £44,601 vs 2023 £42,980
- Bulk purchases: 2024 £31,100 vs 2023 £29,923
- Subscriptions: 2024 £7,274 vs 2023 £5,673

The majority of annual income for this year has been generated through membership subscriptions, training and honey sales from the apiaries and, of course, the bulk purchase scheme. Our total income increased by 3.8%. Bulk purchases rose by 3.9%, due to increased jar sales in 2nd half of 2024 as a result of the excellent honey crop this year. Subscriptions income rose due to the increase from £12 to £15 in 2024, with membership numbers remaining at similar levels.

To give an example of the value for money of the subscription, assuming a membership rounded to 500, the "average" member buys around £63 from the bulk purchase scheme, let's say a box of jars and some wax. A single box of jars from our jar supplier would cost £58 delivered, compared to buying and collecting from the Association for £35. Four (x10) packs of wax, say 2 wired national brood and 2 wired supers costs £28 from the Association, from Thorne's the equivalent would be £46.80 (without carriage). A saving to the "average" member for wax and jars of £41.80.

Expenditure

- Total Expenditure: 2024 £11,537 vs 2023 £14,868
- Year book & Postage: 2024 £3,143 vs 2023 £2,875
- Honey Show/Other Events: 2024 £2,448 vs 2023 £2,385
- East Anglian Research Student/ Other: 2024 £0 vs 2023 £2,120
- Training costs: 2024 £331 vs 2023 £1002
- Asian Hornet Expenses: 2024 £317 vs 2023 £0
- Insurance: 2024 £2,761 2023 £2,183

Treasurer's Report to the members of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association

Total expenditure dropped by £3,331, the principal reason was that there was no EARS project in 2024, so we were not asked for our regular donation. Year book costs and postage increased by 9% but considering a Centenary booklet was also supplied in the previous year this was actually higher, like for like. Honey show costs only increased by 2.6%. Training costs reduced as no anaphylaxis course was run in 2024. In 2024 we created a new cost category for the costs related to dealing with the Asian Hornet. We budgeted £800, but costs were less as fortunately the early cold, damp summer slowed the progress of the Hornet northwards towards us. Insurance costs increased by 26.5% partly due to increasing the turnover value of the Association and members to £425,000 for 2024 from £385,000 in 2023 and general rate increases in the market. However, still about £1,700 less than the 2022 Howdens policy.

Balance Sheet

- Cash balances: 2024 £32,770 vs 2023 £26,693
- Stock: 2024 £8,653 vs 2023 £6,759
- Debtors: 2024 £1,340 vs £4,193
- Creditors/Deferred Income: 2024 £4,198 vs 2023 £3,217

Our cash balances increased in the year by £6,077 compared to 2023; £3,834 was due to the movements on debtors and creditors when compared to 2023. Stock increased by £1,894 at the year end with £1,493 in wax and frames, £4,228 for jars & accessories, £1,684 for food, £913 for buckets, traps and bait. Fixed asset purchase were restricted to the purchase of a point of sales unit to allow a Stockist to take card payments.

Future Financial Plans

Looking ahead:

- We need to replace much of the equipment we use at outside events including banners, gazebos.
- We have been notified that the EARS research project will be starting again in 2025.

In conclusion, our financial position remains quite strong, and we are able to continue with our activities to support our members in the coming year. Thank you for your continued support of the Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association.

**BEDFORDSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PROFIT/LOSS 2024**

| | Actual | Budget | Actual |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Full Year | Full Year | Full Year |
| | 2024 | 2024 | 2023 |
| | GBP | GBP | GBP |
| REVENUE | | | |
| Subscriptions | 7,274 | 7,091 | 5,673 |
| Bulk purchase scheme | 31,100 | 30,000 | 29,923 |
| Training | 3,005 | 3,000 | 3,039 |
| Events | 103 | 500 | 665 |
| Apiary sales | 2,318 | 2,600 | 3,028 |
| Donations | 71 | 140 | 145 |
| Interest earned | 731 | 650 | 507 |
| Other revenue | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total revenue | 44,601 | 43,981 | 42,980 |
| COSTS | | | |
| Bulk purchase scheme | 29,254 | 28,050 | 28,287 |
| margin % | 5.9% | 6.5% | 5.5% |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Subscriptions | 576 | 780 | 992 |
| Print & Post | 3,143 | 2,875 | 3,382 |
| Committee | 270 | 550 | 495 |
| Events | 2,448 | 2,100 | 2,385 |
| Training | 331 | 500 | 1,002 |
| Apiary | 516 | 1,150 | 251 |
| Insurance | 2,761 | 2,795 | 2,183 |
| Donations | 0 | 2,000 | 2,120 |
| AHT Expenses | 317 | 800 | 0 |
| Bank charges | 668 | 550 | 466 |
| Depreciation | 506 | 768 | 768 |
| Total expenses | 11,537 | 14,868 | 14,045 |
| Surplus | 3,810 | 1,063 | 648 |

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31/12/2024

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | GBP | GBP |
| ASSETS/LIABILITIES | | |
| Fixed Assets | 978 | 1,306 |
| Cash | 32,770 | 26,693 |
| Stock | 8,653 | 6,759 |
| Debtors | 1,340 | 4,193 |
| Creditors/Deferred Income | -4,198 | -3,217 |
| Total | 39,543 | 35,733 |
| REPRESENTED BY | | |
| Surplus b/f | 35,733 | 35,085 |
| Profit for period | 3,810 | 648 |
| Total | 39,543 | 35,733 |

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees/ members of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association on accounts for the twelve months to December 2024 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:



Date:

7/2/2025

Name:

Andrew Yornth

Professional qualification or body:

ICAEW

Address:

58 PARK ROAD, STEVINGTON, MK43 7QG

Disclosures:

None to report

**BEDFORDSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
PROFIT/LOSS 2024**

| | Actual | Budget | Actual |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Full Year | Full Year | Full Year |
| | 2024 | 2024 | 2023 |
| | GBP | GBP | GBP |
| REVENUE | | | |
| Subscriptions | 7,274 | 7,091 | 5,673 |
| Bulk purchase scheme | 31,100 | 30,000 | 29,923 |
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| Total revenue | 44,601 | 43,981 | 42,980 |
| COSTS | | | |
| Bulk purchase scheme | 29,254 | 28,050 | 28,287 |
| margin % | 5.9% | 6.5% | 5.5% |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Subscriptions | 576 | 780 | 992 |
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| REPRESENTED BY | | |
| Surplus b/f | 35,733 | 35,085 |
| Profit for period | 3,810 | 648 |
| Total | 39,543 | 35,733 |