

# SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

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Branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>



## AGM and Prize-Giving

The branch annual meeting and prize-giving took place in November. Chairman, Cliff Hayward, told members that this year's honey show, which was combined with a craft fair for the first time, had been so successful that it would continue in the same format in the future. He said that having a stall at events such as Sevenoaks Climate Fair had been a good way of talking about beekeeping with members of the public. He appealed for more beekeepers to volunteer to help out at such occasions next year.

Membership of the branch fell by 16 over the past year. Membership Secretary, Liz Birchenough, said that many of those who left were newer members who decided that beekeeping was not for them. At the same time 36 new people joined. Liz, who is also the treasurer, said that during the year the branch had to pay for tree felling at the Barrwood apiary. Tree surgeons spent five days dealing with several dangerous trees. Looking ahead she said there would not be so much income from sales of honey this year because the apiaries had produced less honey than in 2022.

Liz also raised the issue of attendance at the branch winter talks. She said that it might make sense to coordinate with neighbouring branches to share meetings. This is going to be discussed by the committee.

Sue Knights gave an update on the Asian Hornet problem and passed round some interesting, simple traps that are being developed. They consisted of an ordinary jar with a special top that would trap the hornets but allow other insects to escape.

All the officers and committee members were re-elected:

Chairman: Cliff Hayward

Vice-Chairman: Martin Barrett

Treasurer: Liz Birchenough

Membership Secretary: Liz Birchenough

Secretary: John Farrow

Committee Members: Sarah Rapley

Chris Stewart

Bob Blair

Sue Knights

Liz Seal (minutes secretary)

Huw Griffiths

Representatives to the KBKA Council: Sue Knights

Cliff Hayward

Cliff awarded the Chairman's Cup to Martin Barrett, who has deputised at Barrwood Apiary through the season. Cliff said he had chosen Martin for being "a real help to me and helping others and a huge asset to the club".



*Martin Barrett & the Chairman's Cup (picture: Paul Abbott)*

Honey show certificates were awarded, this time in a new, large format with winners receiving one card displaying the names of all the classes where they had been successful. Tim Johnston was presented with the cup for the highest overall number of points. He was by far the biggest winner and took home the majority of the other cups too.

*Mary Staffurth*



"Apis Mellifera collecting nectar"

*This was Tim Johnston's winning photograph in the Branch Honey Show.*

## Course for New Beekeepers

The branch is running a classroom-based course for people interested in starting beekeeping. It will introduce beginners to the responsibilities of beekeeping, the basic lifecycle and behaviour of honey bees, and the logistics and commitment needed to keep honey bees in a domestic environment.

Sunday 21st January 2024 10am to 4pm

OR Sunday 18th February 2024 10am to 4pm

Venue: Weald Memorial Hall, Long Barn Rd, Sevenoaks  
Weald TN14 6PT

The course fee is £50 for members or friends of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers, £60 for non-members.

To book contact Liz Birchenough:

[membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk)

*Send photos or articles for the newsletter to:*

[marystaffurth@yahoo.com](mailto:marystaffurth@yahoo.com)

## Asian Hornet Update 2023



Each BBKA branch or association has a team that can assist with local requests for help in identifying Asian Hornets. The team in our association currently consists of nine members. We could do with more and it is super simple to join simply by going to the BBKA website and taking the simple quiz: you will automatically appear on the AHAT map so the NBU know you are there to assist.

It is essential that all beekeepers and members of the public can identify Asian Hornets: the ID sheet, poster and postcard can be downloaded from BeeBase or ordered from the NBU office [nbu@apha.gov.uk](mailto:nbu@apha.gov.uk) and it is the role of the team to increase public awareness and be on hand if the NBU call them. AHAT team members have given many talks on Asian Hornets through this year and more are planned for the coming year. We have distributed hundreds of leaflets and provided many monitoring traps.

All beekeepers are encouraged to keep an eye out for Asian Hornets in their apiaries. It is important to register on BeeBase and to ensure our contact and apiary details are up to date. There is a facility to record that you are using Asian Hornet monitoring at your apiary. If an email address is included this makes it super easy for individuals to receive alerts from the NBU when Asian Hornets are close by.

The best chance of being notified of anything is to register your monitoring traps, become an AHAT team member and provide contact details as this means the NBU can contact you if they need to.

I plan to run a series of one hour workshops in Hever focused on Asian Hornets:

Why should we be worried about Asian Hornets? Saturday 27 January at 2pm

Monitor more, trap less - Saturday 10 February at 2pm

Management techniques for beekeepers - Saturday 24 February at 2pm

If you are interested in attending a workshop please email me: [vanessapjones@btinternet.com](mailto:vanessapjones@btinternet.com)

*Vanessa Jones*

*Go to our website for all the latest beekeeping news: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>*