

Minutes of Moray Beekeepers Association Committee Meeting held at Benmore House, Elgin, on Monday 14th March 2011, commencing at 7.05pm

1. Committee Members Present

A. Tassell (in Chair), G. Hill, D. Clark, A. Harris, & G. Thompson. Apologies: V. Hill, A. Watson and A. Laws,

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of meeting held on 14/12/10 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed G. Hill, Seconded D. Clark

CARRIED

3. Matters Arising

Basic Bee Master Course – 7 members had signed up and the course was starting on Sunday 20th March.

Viv Hill and Donna Clark had manned a stall at The Science Festival at Moray College. Moray Beekeepers Association (MBA) and honeybee conservation had been promoted to the three and a half thousand visitors on the Saturday and it was considered a huge success.

Gerry Thompson was now updating the Blog and he had started a Moray Beekeepers Face Book page.

Tony Harris had made enquiries re publicity material and 5 beekeeping posters and 2 DVDs had been purchased from BBKA for use at shows etc. It was Proposed A. Tassell, Seconded D. Clark that we get the 5 posters framed, at a cost of about £4.50 per poster.

CARRIED Action D. Clark

4. Correspondence

A. Harris read a letter from the Office of Scottish Charities (OSCR), which stated that if certain conditions were met, Moray Beekeepers Association would be placed on the charity register and issued a charity number.

After discussion, in order to meet the 'charities test' it was Proposed A. Harris, Seconded A. Tassell that no honoraria be paid to any Office Bearers in the 2011 year.

CARRIED

It was further Proposed A. Harris, Seconded A. Tassell that the following line in the Constitution, (the last line on the first page under heading, 'Executive Committee and Office Bearers'), '*Such honoraria as may be paid to these officers shall be decided at the Annual General Meeting*' be proposed for deletion at the AGM.

CARRIED

The Secretary agreed to comply with OSCR's requests and send a letter of reply.

Action A. Harris

5. Treasurer's Report

D. Clark reported a bank balance of £2,247. It was agreed to use excess money to purchase equipment for the Training Apiary at Birnie, the Queen Rearing Project and in promoting MBA and honeybee conservation.

6. Beekeeping Courses 2011

MBA plan to hold 3 Taster Sessions and 4 Introduction to Beekeeping courses this summer. The rota for speakers and assistants both in the classroom and at the Birnie Apiary was discussed and filled and it was agreed that efforts would be made by all to publicise the courses.

It was Proposed D. Clark, Seconded G. Thompson, that after the 22nd March meeting, non-members be charged an admission fee of £2 for talks, part of our winter programme, currently held at Elgin library.

CARRIED

7. Summer Apiary Meetings

The Duty Beekeepers Rota for summer apiary meetings was filled and the Secretary agreed to liaise with those members hosting meetings over the summer with regard to health and safety issues.

Action A. Harris

It was agreed that an Association Heather Stance would be good for the membership and the Secretary said he would ask for ideas for possible locations in the Newsletter. In principle it was felt that the August meeting, 'Trip to the Heather' would go ahead if a suitable venue could be found.

Action A. Harris

8. Apiary Inspection Visits

Birnie Apiary Inspection Visits will take place every 14 days throughout the summer (dates on website). A Duty Beekeeper will lead each session and members who want to improve their beekeeping knowledge are encouraged to attend. A. Harris said that the apiary should be run as a 'model of excellence' and communication between Duty Beekeepers was vital. Hive record cards should be fully completed and signed. Disposable gloves have been purchased and must be worn over own gloves and disposed of by all beekeepers going into the hives at Birnie. Hive tools to be scorched with blowtorch before use.

9. Queen rearing Project 2011

Gerry Thompson will head up the Q rearing project for 2011. Several members have expressed an interest in assisting. After discussion it was agreed that the provision of bees to members was most important and honey production would therefore be a secondary outcome at Birnie Apiary.

An 'Adopt a Nucleus' programme will be introduced this summer aimed at new or novice beekeepers who have attended one of our beekeeping courses and don't have bees. An initial £35 will be paid to adopt the nucleus, which will be kept at Birnie Apiary, where the member can learn to look after the bees. At the end of the summer, the member will be given the option to buy the bees for an additional payment of £45 and assistance will be given to hive the bees at the member's own apiary.

CARRIED

It was also felt that efforts should be made to provide nucs to members who had lost bees recently.

It was proposed G. Thompson, seconded A. Harris that MBA purchase 10 empty National nucleus boxes, and a quantity of mini nucs for the Queen Rearing Project. The Secretary agreed to research the best price and report back to the Committee.

CARRIED

10. MBA Website

A. Laws has continued to work on the new website which she designed and launched in 2010. Unfortunately Allison couldn't attend tonight to report on implementing Committee recommendations from the last meeting, i.e. 'It was felt that further improvement could be made by including

- *back issues of the Newsletter with the links from the Home Page*
- *a Gallery page (members to be encouraged to send in photos), link from the Home page*
- *a Guest book for visitors to sign, link from the Home Page*
- *Beekeeping suppliers on the 'Links' page, e.g. Thornes, BB Wear etc*
- *Change the 'Members Button' to something like 'Join us or Join MBA'*
- *A link to the MBA 'Introduction to Beekeeping Course' which is on You tube'*

As the website is the key way we communicate with members and the general public it was felt that it must be as professional as possible, checked daily and updated regularly, in particular with details of upcoming events and latest news items. This involves a full time commitment of time by the Webmaster.

Allison has done a brilliant job designing and publishing the website, but is very busy with work commitments. G. Thompson offered to help Allison with updating the website on a more regular basis or if pressure of work is hindering Allison in this, then Gerry agreed to take over the maintenance of the website.

Action G. Thompson to liaise with A. Laws

11. Any Other Business

Moray College had applied for a Leader Grant for honeybee research last year and had been unsuccessful. D. Clark agreed to look at the prospect of MBA re-submitting an amended application, and she will report back.

Action D. Clark

G. Hill reported that the access road to the Birnie Apiary was in a poor condition with large ruts in places. It was agreed to hold a working party to address the issue and also to contact the owners of the land, Tarmac, to see if they could offer any assistance.

Action A. Harris

A member had suggested that after the AGM, which traditionally doesn't last long, the Committee should hold a Q & A session for those present as well as asking for ideas on how to improve the running of the Association. It was agreed that this was a good idea and would be implemented for the 2012 AGM.

G. Hill wished to place on record the thanks of the Committee to the Secretary, Tony Harris, for his efforts in applying for charitable status for MBA. It is hoped that this will be granted soon and it will open up further avenues for funding and honeybee conservation projects for the Association.

With thanks to G. Hill for his hospitality, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20.45 hrs.

Date of next meeting: June 2011