

Minutes of Moray Beekeepers Association (MBA) Committee Meeting held at Benmore House, Elgin, on Wednesday 8th June 2011, commencing at 7.00pm

1. Committee Members Present

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

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of meeting held on 14/03/11 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed G.H. Seconded G.T

CARRIED

3. Matters Arising

G.H. pointed out that Ms A. Laws had now missed the last 3 meetings and asked that the Secretary write to her to find out her intentions re Committee membership.

ACTON T. Harris

4. Correspondence

T. H. read a letter from the Office of Scottish Charities (OSCR), informing us that MBA had finally been granted charitable status. This brings additional responsibilities, in particular, everything we do as an Association should now tie in with the below charitable purposes.

- a) Advancing education by providing training in the practice of beekeeping and production and distribution of educational information in the practice of beekeeping,
- b) To help preserve the natural environment by promoting the importance of bees in the environment, and
- c) To conserve the future of the honeybee in Moray and Scotland

It was proposed G.H. Seconded G.T. that a permanent agenda item, 'Charitable Purposes' be created so activities of the association can be regularly reviewed.

CARRIED

Several requests from community groups for talks on bees and beekeeping had been received. MBA now owned a projector, foldaway screen and a laptop loaded with a power point presentation for such talks.

It was proposed V.H. Seconded T.H. that a list of volunteers to give talks to community groups be compiled and trained, and that MBA ask for a donation of £25 for future talks from which travelling expenses for the speaker (30p per mile) be deducted, to be reviewed annually

CARRIED Action T. Harris

5. Treasurer's Report

D. Clark reported that we have 89 paid up members and a bank balance of £2,516.24. As we are now a charity we can claim Gift Aid refunds of 23% on all membership fees and donations from UK taxpayers and an extra transition payment of 5% from the Government, which can be backdated 4 years. A new membership form has been created to include the Gift Aid Declaration.

Our in income means that we are not required to produce audited accounts but our end of year income/expenditure account must be verified by a person independent of the Association, who is experienced in accounting. The Secretary agreed to ask members with help re this, i.e. a friend, associate or family member who would be willing to check the accounts once a year.

Action T. Harris

6. MBA Website

G. Thompson reported that the new website was now up and running and receiving hundreds of visits from all around the world. He had donated the first two years fee for the use of our URL to MBA.

A Pay Pal account for MBA is required and G.T./ D.C. agreed to liaise to set it up. Action G. Thompson/D. Clark

It was agreed to include a Gallery page – members to be encouraged to contribute photos. Action G. Thompson.

An MBA member had made an offer to donate 15% of profits from an online cosmetic products shop generated from a link/advertising banner that would be included on the MBA website.

The offer and the use of links/adverts on the website in general were discussed in full and while it was felt to be a generous and genuine offer, it was decided to decline it. The Committee did not want to set a precedent in advertising or promoting private businesses that were not in accordance with our charitable purposes.

Proposed T. Harris, seconded G. Thompson

CARRIED

The Committee asked the Secretary to write and thank the member concerned.

Action T. Harris

7. Birnie Apiary

After suffering losses over the winter, T. Harris reported better news, with 4 colonies of bees at Birnie Apiary, 4 nucs with Q or QC's and a quantity of mini nucs with QC's. He added that all were thriving at present and that he was donating to the Association the colony of bees he had moved to Birnie for training purposes.

MBA member John Baillie had made and donated 6 nuc boxes for use at Birnie. He also arranged for the access road to be levelled and repaired the leaking shed roof. As a one off thank you to John (in lieu of the cost of the nuc boxes) it was proposed T.H. Seconded G.H. that MBA arrange and pay for a year's subscription to Beecraft (£29) for John and send flowers to his wife, Dianna. CARRIED Action T. Harris

Two second hand good quality national hives had been purchased from retiring members for the apiary at a cost of £230 and a butane regulator and a spare gas bottle filled at a cost of £27.

It was proposed D. C., seconded A.T. that we also purchase a smoker, and various beekeeping tools that were for sale; these to be etched with the MBA name and kept at Birnie for use there. CARRIED

T.H. re-stated 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 (3 sizes available) 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 and the 10 Commandments of Apiary Hygiene (posted on the shed notice board) be followed.

G. H. raised the issue of Insurance: T.H. reported that the latest Insurance leaflet had just been received from Scottish Beekeepers' Association (SBA) and he summarised the cover. MBA are covered by the SBA insurance, which automatically covers Local Associations for 2 million pounds for Pollution, Products Liability and Public Liability for other events.

Also, Beekeeping Instruction classes are insured if the following conditions are met:

- Appropriate protective clothing must be worn
- The Instructor to be suitably competent and an SBA member
- It is advisable to have a first aider/mobile phone on site, and
- The SBA Risk Assessment must be observed.
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The Secretary pointed out that the excellent work done last year by Allison Laws on the MBA Risk Assessments for Apiary Meetings had been recognised by SBA who had provided it as a download on their website and were recommending it to all Local Associations.

In addition, the Compensation Scheme (financed by SBA) covered the loss of colonies of bees by fire, theft, vandalism or American or European Foul brood. Local Associations who maintain their own apiaries will be granted compensation cover free of charge for all stocks solely owned by the Association. The Compensation Scheme does not cover sheds or their contents other than stocks of bees.

8. Beekeeping Courses

T. Harris reported that 8 members will be taking the SBA Basic Beemaster Assessment on 2nd and 3rd July. An 'Introduction to Beekeeping Course' and a 'Honeybee Taster Day, both held in May had raised £240.

2012 Beekeeping courses were discussed, in particular an offer from MBA member, S. Palmer to host a comprehensive 6 week Beginners' Course in the classroom similar to what he had done for Aberdeen Beekeepers' Association. After discussion it was agreed to thank Mr Palmer for his kind offer but to decline it due to Moray being a lot smaller Association than Aberdeen, and the feeling that the more intimate courses held in Moray, based on small groups, was more beneficial to beginners.

However, the Committee felt that Mr Palmer was an excellent speaker and it was agreed to ask him to give a number of winter lectures. Action T. Harris

It was Proposed G.H. Seconded A.T that travelling expenses at 30p per mile be paid to anyone giving talks, lectures, running courses or attending other fundraising or promotional events for MBA. CARRIED

The Committee decided that travelling expenses would NOT include attendance at committee meetings, apiary meetings, visits or inspections. Any case not covered above will be considered on its merits.

To generate interest in Beekeeping Courses this summer MBA is to launch a 'Honeybee Conservation Pack', which will be available as a free download from the website and to include details of this and the courses available, in the local press. Action T. Harris

MBA will also launch a 'Donate a Bag of Sugar to Save the Bees' project in July when members of the public will be asked to leave a bag of sugar at various supermarkets around Moray. Action V. Hill

9. Queen rearing Project 2011

Gerry Thompson reported on the progress of the project (full information available on the blog at www.moraybeekeepers.co.uk). It had been a learning curve for all and he thanked those members who had helped out. MBA now had 10 mini nucs with sealed QC's in and time will tell if we have mated queens for sale soon. It is planned to repeat the Queen rearing exercise next month.

It was Proposed G.T Seconded T.H. that MBA sell queens at £15 each. CARRIED

It was proposed G.T. Seconded T.H. that MBA purchase 22 mini nucs from Modern Beekeeping at a cost of about £230, and 6 x 1 gallon contact feeders from Thornes (about £5 each). CARRIED Action T. Harris

It was also agreed to try and set up an account with Thornes Beekeeping Supplies. Action T. Harris

10. August and September Meetings

A possible location for an MBA heather stance and trip to the heather and meal in August was being explored via an offer from an MBA member in Ballindalloch. Action G.Thompson to inspect

V. Hill and G. Thompson agreed to host the September 18th meeting, 'Honey Extraction Demonstration'

11. Winter Programme 2011/12 (venue and dates to be confirmed)

October – Talk & Presentation, 'MBA Queen Rearing Programme 2011' G. Thompson, T. Harris

November – Ask Stephen Palmer

January – Annual General Meeting

February – Ask Stephen Palmer

March – Ask Kirsty Sutherland, Bee Inspector

12. Summer Shows

It was proposed G.H. Seconded A.T. that MBA continue our presence at the Forres Show this summer.

V. Hill agreed to continue as Show Organiser

It was agreed to include Honey Tasting and to distribute leaflets at the Show, and to introduce a new Novice Class with an entry of 1 jar of honey.

The website and Newsletter would be used to encourage members to enter exhibits in the Show.

MBA will consider attendance at other summer shows/events if invited with a view to increasing our involvement in such shows next summer

It was Proposed T.H. Seconded A.T. that MBA purchase 5 Royale posters on beekeeping from Thornes at a cost of £10 the set CARRIED

13. MBA Representation at SBA Meetings

MBA member and SBA Executive Committee member A. Joyce had asked the Committee to discuss this subject. Mr. Joyce has expressed his view that there is a danger of SBA becoming a 'central belt' focused organization if there were no representatives from Moray present. The matter was discussed fully with the following summary of views.

The SBA Aberdeen & Moray Area Rep, Hazel McKenzie does attend these meetings and represents Moray. The meetings (3 a year) usually take place in Perth so a considerable amount of time and expense is involved in attending.

In principle, it was felt to be a good idea for an MBA Committee member to attend SBA meetings and the matter will be decided later when the dates become known.

The person traveling to such meetings will have their traveling expenses paid.

14 Any Other Business

MBA Policy on sourcing honeybees - Members should be encouraged, if possible, to source bees locally. However, with a general shortage of bees, the Committee realizes that this is not always possible, so the following is recommended:

If sourcing bees from outside Moray, purchase from a reputable supplier of healthy bees and do not buy from a known previously infected AFB or EFB area.

The Committee did not feel that there should be an emphasis on purchasing, or selecting and breeding the 'dark native bee', *Apis Mellifera Mellifera*.

Membership Cards – It was agreed that the Secretary would post uncollected membership cards with S.A.E. to include the Gift Aid re-fund declaration.

A. Watson agreed to fill a new position of Equipment Officer for Birnie Apiary with responsibility for recording all equipment at the apiary and advising /ordering supplies when necessary. Action A. Watson

Floor Inserts at Birnie – D. C. had replaced the floor inserts in the hives at Birnie but later noticed they had been removed. The Apiary Manager, T.H. stated that they had been removed as it is not good practice to leave them in all year and he apologized for not informing her. Varroa should continue to be monitored however, using the daily mite drop method. This involves placing the inserts in the hives for say 4 or 5 days every couple of months and calculating varroa levels by use of a mathematical formula using the number of dead mites on the floor over the number of days the insert was in place. T.H. agreed to send D.C. a copy of the procedure and D.C. agreed to continue monitoring the varroa.

It was proposed G.H., Seconded D.C. that Ron Clark be co-opted onto the Committee. CARRIED

The next meeting will take place in August.

With thanks to G & V. Hill for their hospitality, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.30 hrs.