

Cheshire Beekeepers Association – Mid-Cheshire Branch

Draft Minutes of the AGM held on 09th January 2023
(Blue Cap - Sandiway)

1. Chair's welcome and summary

Karl Colyer welcomed the following members to the meeting: Peter Ashley +mate Jonathan Arnold, Bob Beards, Lorraine Butcher, Ian Carroll, Stuart Forbes, Ken Houghton, Josh James, Nick Johnson, Sarah Johnson, Nick Mould, Lesley Parker, Steve Purkis, Erica Thompson, Ian Turley, Jane Turley, Jo Zielinski.

Karl gave a brief overview of the current state of the Mid-Cheshire branch and how we are continuing to grow and establish ourselves with another year of significant growth in numbers and hoped that this trend will continue in the future.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Natalie Bushell, Dave Curbishley, Mary Daniel, Jan Haynes, Lesley Jaques, Simon Raeburn and Dave Wright.

3. Approval of minutes of 2022 AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 10th January 2022 were approved by Jane Turley and seconded by Steve Purkis.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

MCBK Constitution

A draft version of the proposed constitution was sent to members before the meeting for members' review.

BB congratulated the committee on the work that had been done.

There was only one change suggested by JT around the request for a proposition to the AGM and that they must be presented in person. It was felt that this will ensure only bona fada propositions will be considered and actioned.

The change was:

1. Any propositions to be put forward at the Annual General Meeting must be received by the Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting, together with supporting statements.

To

2. Any propositions to be put forward at the Annual General Meeting must be received by the Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting, together with supporting statements and must be presented in person at the AGM by the proposing person.

This change was agreed and the acceptance of the constitution, with this change, was proposed by Bob Beards and seconded by Sarah Johnson. The meeting voted 19 for and none against for the adoption of this constitution.

5. Secretary's report

Ian Turley presented the Secretary's report, a copy of which had been circulated to all members before the meeting. A more comprehensive version of this report can be found in the CBKA 2022 Report and Balance Sheet which is sent to all branch members.

Ian highlighted a few points from his report including the highly successful launch of the Bee Chat/Apiary Training which has helped to continue our growth in membership in recent years from 41 members at the start of 2020 to 103 members by the end of last year, a trend which will hopefully continue. We also managed to launch a beginners training course developed and run by Lesley Jaques.

To increase our visibility and communication we launched a new version of the branch website in 2022, a revamped Facebook Group (Open Mid-Cheshire Beekeepers), a twitter account (@MidCheshBKA) and a WhatsApp group to help, support and communicate. Other initiatives include the start of a "buying group" concept – something to improve on in 2023 – to help our members by bulk buying to get the best deals (still very much in development).

Our meetings continue to be very successful, with a full program planned for 2023, with the first Branch meeting entitled "Bee Prepared" by Diane Drinkwater. A calendar of the 2023 events has been sent to members and can be found on the branch website (midcheshirebeekeepers.co.uk).

The branch continued its external support and is hopefully to be at more external events in 2023.

Ian also made an appeal for contributions to the website and other social media as these platforms are only as strong as the membership make them.

Stuart Forbes also thanked everyone for the tremendous participation and attendance at our Honey Show, especially after the disappointment of the 2021 show.

We concluded the year with a highly enjoyable Christmas Meal expertly organised by Jo Zielinski.

6. Treasurer's report

Sarah Johnson presented the Treasurer's report and accounts, a copy of which had been circulated to all members before the meeting showing a healthy growth in funds largely due to some kind donations and to our apiary hosts and speakers for not taking/taking little in expenses. We also raised money through honey sales at both the Royal Cheshire Show and Arley Garden Festival.

Sarah pointed out that the figures for 2023 may not be as positive due to venue costs, speaker costs and our plans for a training apiary, but that we are in a strong position to increase our growth. It is hoped that the establishment of a training apiary, although an initial expense, will provide a source of future income.

Bob Beards raised a question on the cost of the original web site which was set up in 2021 using an existing account from a member, which Karl Colyer explained how this had led to some problems around maintenance and one reason we have created a new website this year. Bob stressed his concerns about lesson learned which Ian Turley explained that this is in progress, starting with the

use of standardised generic email addresses (not individuals) for MCBK accounts, non-personal account use and common IT systems such as SharePoint/OneDrive for storing documents. Ian pointed out that this will continue into 2023, but is a slow process, partly due to the need to train people in the use of these systems, often with people unfamiliar with the use of IT.

Lorraine Butcher asked whether there was a Risk Register and Business Continuity plan and general governance. This was recognised as lacking and something that needs to be addressed in the coming year, recognising that everyone involved is a volunteer and may not have the required knowledge and skill.

Bob Beards also mentioned about the sharing of key passwords and Ian Turley stated that these will be stored in a document on SharePoint, to ensure the committee has access. Ian also stated that ensuring there is a backup person is difficult and relies on the knowledge and willingness to be involved, of the committee and members. We are all volunteers and may not have the time needed to dedicate to the required learning. This is an ongoing task.

The Treasurer's report was approved by Ian Turley and seconded by Stuart Forbes.

7. Election of Officers and Committee

Karl Colyer stated that he will be stepping down from the position of Chair and from the committee. Nominations had been invited for positions and for other committee members prior to the meeting. Steve Purkis had expressed his willingness to become Chair and was proposed by Bob Beards and seconded by Jo Zelinski. This was unanimously accepted. No other nominations had been received for officer roles. Ian Turley was re-elected Secretary, proposed by Jane Turley, seconded by Sarah Johnson. Sarah Johnson was re-elected Treasurer, proposed by Ian Turley, seconded by Bob Beards. Both these nominations were accepted unanimously.

Nominations for committee members were received from Natalie Bushell, Bob Beards, Lorraine Butcher and Ken Houghton. These were proposed and seconded on masse by the meeting.

The other committee members said they were willing to remain on the committee. Karl Colyer proposed that Lesley Jacques was willing and should continue as Vice-Chair. Stuart Forbes then pointed out that under the newly accepted constitution the role of Vice-Chair is not a named role and as such is not voted on by the AGM. There was considerable discussion on the many committee roles and continuing membership of committee. It was mentioned that any role could be added, as required such as Apiary Manager, to the constitution at future AGMs. For present, Vice-Chair would be considered, along with other non-officer roles such as librarian, if the committee felt they were required for the successful running of the branch. It was agreed that this would be discussed in more detail at the next committee meeting.

The current 2023 branch committee is therefore:

Chair: Steve Purkis

Secretary: Ian Turley

Treasurer: Sarah Johnson

Other committee members: Natalie Bushell; Bob Beards; Lorraine Butcher; Stuart Forbes; Ken Houghton; Lesley Jacques; Nick Johnson; Jo Zielinski.

At this point Steve took over as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Steve congratulated Karl on the success of the branch in 2022 and for the healthy situation that he leaves behind for the 2023 branch and committee.

8. Programme of events

Ian Turley outlined the 2023 branch programme of events had been sent on email prior to the meeting. He said that the introduced series of informal monthly meetings (“bee chats”), Apiary training visits and general apiary visits will be alongside our normal branch meetings. We will again have our beginner’s event at the beginning of March, followed by a new “Lets Build a Hive” session to show new beekeepers how to get the hive ready.

If anyone has any suggestions or contacts for future events, then they will be more than welcome.

We will again be supporting external events and an appeal was made for volunteers to help out, pointing out the advantage of free admission for most events for volunteers.

A current list of events can be found at <https://midcheshirebeekeepers.co.uk/events/>.

NB Note for the apiary visits that these are subject to change owing to weather and the condition of the bees.

9. Date of next year’s AGM

The next AGM will be held on Monday 8th January 2024.

10. Date of next branch meeting

The next branch meeting will be held on Monday 6th February 2023 at the Blue Cap in Sandiway, which is the new venue for our monthly branch meetings. *“Bee Prepared” by Diane Drinkwater*

11. Any other business

Ian Turley mentioned that the committee has recognised the need to investigate an approach to safeguarding, but at present does not have an approach. Ian stated that this may be dictated to by the overall CBKA due to the importance and need to have specific welfare officers.

Jane Turley volunteered to help on any requirement, as she has a level 2 certificate in Safeguarding for Hartford Tennis Club.

Steve Purkis closed the AGM at 9.30pm.

The meeting was followed by a highly entertaining talk by Jonathan Arnold and Nick Mould on some of the trials and tribulations that they have encountered in their beekeeping. A much enjoyable talk.

Ian Turley (Mid-Cheshire Branch Secretary)