



Photo: Snowdrops by Bee Dale

February 2021

WVBKA Charity Registration Number: 517008	Queen Colour of the Year 2021 is: <b>WHITE</b>
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### Notes from the Chair

This is my first letter of 2021 and it will be my last in post. I have just attended the annual BBKA delegates meeting (ADM) online. It was quite a marathon. There was an agenda document running to 87 pages (did I mention that last year?).

The meeting followed the usual pattern except for being remote or virtual or whatever one may call it, still using electronic three-way voting. Proceedings were divided into three sections dealing with standing orders, finance and propositions. The nominations for officers and trustees had been previously matched to vacancies and the Executive proposed that all be accepted and so they were.

An important item was the intention to raise the capitation fee for 2022 by £2.00, which was passed. The detailed financial statements were presented with a balance at year end of £988,719. This raised a question as to why the fees were going up. The answer was to do with saving up to afford improvements to accommodation at HQ and for eventually moving to other premises.

So, then to the major part of the voting on 14 propositions. Some were to do with simple changes to phrasing in the constitution. Next, one to require a report by BBKA on its implementation of the National Equality legislation which was passed.

The two largest items, including four or five proposals, were all about whether and how to admit new AAMs (Area Associations) to the BBKA and whether to change the voting procedures (these were closely linked). There was much discussion on the criteria for assessing candidate associations and voting on what should be the smallest membership allowable. This eventually settled on 75 members, having excluded 50 as too small and 100 as too large a number.

The proposition to get rid of the current two-tier voting at an ADM in favour of a single vote was complicated. Bearing in mind that calling for a membership vote to challenge the result of a delegate vote may allow the delegates representing larger associations to outweigh the smaller. A method proposed was to modify but not remove this advantage, using a weighted-average formula to address the variation in size of each association. This square root formula was fully explained in the agenda. A vote (75% threshold) on whether to adopt the new method was passed by 78% delegates. But, guess what... a membership vote was called and the vote was reversed. Not really a surprise, as any Lib Dem seeking proportional representation will tell you – the fact is not many turkeys vote for Christmas.

Next there was a motion to have annual meetings online in future, Covid-19 precautions notwithstanding, which failed. Finally, a vote in favour of BBKA petitioning the Government to prevent usage of neonicotinoids under emergency measures in farming. This is an ongoing issue, with individual members writing to MPs and via online petition. Altogether, six hours of listening-in and voting was hard work and harder still for the organisers but at least travel time and costs were saved.

I've nothing else to report besides what's in the agenda which you received recently.

Happy New Year and all good health to our bees and ourselves. Just a snap of the small amount of colour in our garden.

Rob D



Witch Hazel (Hamamelis) by Rob Doran

# DAVE'S BLOG

## Apiary Notes

*These notes are from a few years ago but I thought they may make interesting reading.*

As I'm writing these notes I am looking out of the window. It's dry and quite mild for the time of year and I think about the bees clustering on the combs in the hives. It seems strange that only 14 days ago I was doing some work in my extracting room when I observed a bee trying to come in through the open window, obviously the smell of the honey attracted it and bees have a keen sense of smell.

It's surprising what activity there is even in winter. The winter bulbs are showing their tips in shady places, our currant hedge is showing signs of life and I guess it won't be long before we see the snowdrops. This is all quite interesting because it seems to be about this time that the queen starts to lay a few eggs. I can't say I have ever observed this at this time of the year but it seems entirely reasonable that this takes place which naturally makes me think of the food requirements of the bees.

It goes without saying that bees should have received sufficient stores in the autumn (approximately 40lbs) to see them through until mid to end of March. In most cases this will be 'just what the doctor ordered' but there always seems to be the odd hive that goes short. If at the end of March you find this, it may be warm enough to feed syrup or a block of 2-3lbs of candy or fondant. This will keep the bees together until you can feed properly in the spring if required.

If you are anything like me, then you're probably fed up with hearing about Varroa and its associated problems. My aim is to keep you informed of current developments. Apistan has now been made available for use legally, so we now have two products that we can use. Both these products, Apistan and Bayvarol, are closely related so is this really an alternative treatment? I will leave you to judge that for yourself. There are also other interesting developments with thymol which is showing some promise. I personally feel you should keep an open mind about all treatments and I've many friends in the veterinary world who tell me it's a good idea to alternate treatments if possible and over the years I've found that good advice. Indeed the Ministry say just that in their original Varroa booklet printed in 1996- page 13, item 4 *"where possible alternate treatments using unrelated products (see table 13). Rather than depending on one chemical treatment or one biotechnical method alone, it will generally be more effective to use 2 or more in combination"*.



Another point worth remembering is DDT. Years ago it was heralded as our saviour but we subsequently found out that it was not. Remember that AFB, EFB and Varroa are natural diseases and there is no disgrace whatsoever if they occur in your apiary. If you think about diseases in other species such as Foot and Mouth, Swine Fever etc then this attitude doesn't exist. This is probably due to farmers being more open about it and that the Ministry's attitude is different.

I hope what I have said will make you think!

Dave



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## Announcements

Would any member who is able and willing to help out occasionally at the Association Apiary please contact Duncan.

The BBKA is currently making some teaching material available online.

[www.bbka.org.uk/bbka-talks](http://www.bbka.org.uk/bbka-talks)

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## WVBKA Articles

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER SO PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

We need your photographs, articles, crossword puzzles, seasonal advice, recipes - anything relevant will do.

Just one article a year from each member will provide enough content to keep the newsletter interesting and varied.

The deadline for articles is the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month

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