

## Trustees' Report

For the Year Ended 31st December 2016

### Legal and administrative details

The *Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association* is registered with the Charity Commission (No 273827) and governed by the Constitution dated 10th April 2016. Its principal address is the *National Beekeeping Centre*, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG.

The Charity's working name is the *Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA)*.

The Association's bankers are *Santander*, Customer Service Centre, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 4GB, *CafBank Ltd.*, P.O. Box 289, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA and *PayPal*.

The Independent Examiners are Rawlinsons Chartered Accountants, Ruthlyn House, 90 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 2SP.

### Organizational structure

The Charity is administered by a Central Committee comprising three officers, President, Secretary and Treasurer, and a maximum of twelve committee members elected at the AGM for a renewable term of one year. The officers and committee members agree to act as Charity Trustees. At its first meeting following the AGM the committee elects a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from among their number. The committee may co-opt up to three additional non-voting members to serve on the committee. The committee appoints members to represent the association on other bodies and organizations and posts of responsibility. The committee appoints, as non-voting members, representatives from national beekeeping organizations. The committee appoints one or more Custodian Trustees for the purpose of holding any monies or property belonging to the association.

During 2016/17 the Charity was administered by a Central Committee comprising:

Joseph Widdicombe	President
Iain Harley	Treasurer
Philip Khorassandijan	Chairman (until November 2016)
Roger Patterson	Deputy Chairman
	Conference/Workshops Secretary
	Website Editor

Nicholas Bentham-Green	Groups Secretary Chairman (from November 2016)
Nicholas Mawby	Membership Secretary Website Manager
Patricia Marlow	Publicity
Terence Hitchman	
Stephen Rose	

At the 2016 AGM, there was no nomination for Secretary and the position remained unfilled until November 2016 when Brian P. Dennis was co-opted as acting-secretary.

An issue of "no confidence in the Chair" was raised on the 8th May 2016. It was agreed after considerable discussion to defer the question until after the Isle of Man Conference. In a specially convened committee meeting held 27th November 2016, a *vote of no confidence in the Chairman*, passed by 5 votes to 4, resulted in Philip Khorassandjian's removal and his replacement by Nicholas Bentham-Green.

Co-options:

Brian P. Dennis:	Acting-Secretary (from November 2016).
Kevin Lincoln:	Shows Secretary.
Eifion Williams:	Minutes Secretary (from November 2016).

Editor (BIM): Philip Denwood.

Representatives:

<i>BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting:</i>	Roger Patterson.
<i>National Honey Show:</i>	Brian P. Dennis Kevin Lincoln.

Custodian Trustees: Brian P. Dennis  
Brian Milward.

The Central Committee met 5 times between April 2016 and March 2017. In addition, 4 teleconference meetings were held together with electronic discussions via *Google Group*.

Record of Trustee attendances (including teleconferencing)  
(actual/possible):

David Evans resigned April 2016.

N. Bentham-Green 8/9, I. Harley 8/9, T. Hitchman 9/9, P. Khorassandjian 9/9,  
P. Marlow 5/9, N. Mawby 7/9, R. Patterson 9/9, S. Rose 8/9, J. Widdicombe 9/9.

The Charity has no paid employees and relies entirely on the goodwill and voluntary work of officers, trustees and members.

The Charity's main income is from members' subscriptions and sales of publications & merchandise. Further funding is obtained from donations, bequests and sponsorships. Some funding consists of the surpluses from training events (such as this year's Conference).

### **Charity's Objectives**

The objectives of the Charity as set out in its Constitution are "*the conservation, re-introduction, study, selection and improvement of native or near-native honey bees of Britain and Ireland*".

### **Governance**

The trustees have ensured that the operation of *BIBBA* complies with the *Charity Commission* requirements. In order that the Trustees carry out their duties, to the best of their abilities, it is essential that they keep themselves up to date with the latest Charity Commissioners' guidelines, which are contained in '*The Essential Trustee What you need to know*'. There is also a free 12 module e-learning course for trustees in the voluntary sector.

They have reviewed the Constitution (Governing Document) and undertaken a risk analysis review.

### **Risk Management**

The trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that a risk analysis has been produced to demonstrate that we as responsible trustees have considered the risks associated with running the organization. The identified risks, their impact and mitigation have been reviewed.

### **Investment Policy**

The trustees have the power to invest in such assets as they see fit. Monies not required for immediate running costs are held in an interest bearing account at the *Charities Aid Foundation* in a *CAF* Bank account.

*BIBBA* does not have a defined level of reserves but the current Unrestricted Reserve of £58,384 equates to approximately five years of operating costs and is reviewed quarterly. A further £3,696 is held as a Restrictive Reserve and represents the balance of the funding received from the *Co-operative Society for Project Discovery*. This is being used to support the establishment and equipping of individual bee improvement groups to accelerate the process of raising native and near-native queens.

## Activities during 2016

### Membership

Total membership at the end of 2016 was 416, compared to 372 in 2015 (11.8% increase). This figure comprises 379 Ordinary, 12 Honorary and 25 Life Members.

The conference boosted membership, but it will not be known how many decide to renew until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. Retention is an issue. The overall growth of membership is gradual – each year the increase in new members is offset by non-renewals.

### Subscriptions

Methods used to pay in 2016:

PayPal	171
Bank Transfer	2
Cash	8
Cheque	63
Standing Order	123
Direct debit	3

### Gift Aid

The original paper-based system failed over four years ago when *HMRC* moved to an online claim system.

An online declaration system has been set up and *Gift Aid* declarations are now integrated with the membership database so that claiming is much easier as the data can be copied and pasted easily.

Money reclaimed through *Gift Aid*:

2012	£335 (received)
2013	£600 (received)
2014	£575 (received)
2015	£860 (projected)
2016	£1000 (projected)

### Groups

1. Some steady interest from people who want to start their own *BIBBA* Groups. There was some follow-up as a consequence of the Isle of Man Conference – interest was shown from Thetford, North Devon, South Devon, and *Somerset Black Bee Alliance (SBBA)*.
2. *Cheshire BKA* is looking to reinvigorate their existing county structure.

3. An agreement has been established between the *Ministry of Defence (MOD)* via the *Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)* to allow mating apiaries for native/near-native bees to be set up on *MOD* training estates. *Bee Improvement for Cornwall (BIPCo)* has had such an apiary on *MOD* land at Tregantle, Cornwall, for the last two years. The aspiration is to get similar agreements between *BIBBA* and the *MOD/DIO* to establish apiaries at Topley, near Sheffield, and Thetford, East Anglia.
4. *BIPCo* has been buying very good quality *Apideas* at a very reasonable price from Belgium. *BIPCo* would be happy to purchase additional *Apideas* for *BIBBA* members, with particular emphasis on newly formed groups. Exact details need to be worked out, but the trustees' approval is needed (in principle) so that this can be progressed.

### Publications

Two issues of the magazine *Bee Improvement and Conservation (BIM)* were produced during the year.

### Communication

*BIBBA-Buzz* No7 issued 30th April to 320 subscribers.

*BIBBA-Humm* No7 issued 2nd May to 674 subscribers.

*BIBBA-Buzz* No 8 issued 11th Aug to 334 subscribers

*BIBBA-Humm* No.8 issued 11th Aug to 689 subscribers

### Website

1. Shop. This had become non-functional over the past four years and cost £300 a year to run. The store has been reinstated and cost a one-off \$50 payment with no ongoing cost.

Website sales have increased.

2. Subscriptions. Payment by direct debit via *GoCardless* has been setup and is now available, in addition to *PayPal*, as a choice for members.
3. Content. The focus has been on sourcing content for *BIM*, at the expense of the website: hopefully, more new material will be available on the website.
4. Members' Area. A 'members only area', accessed by individual login, is being investigated. The 'members only' content could include:
  - i. BIM online. A system has been created to allow members to download some past issues of *BIM* and is awaiting committee approval; it is hoped to upload more issues before it is rolled out.

- ii. Forum. There has been discussion about setting up a forum for members, but no decision has been made by the committee.
  - iii. Map. A map of approximate member locations was proposed earlier in the year. This should be in a ‘members only area’ and could probably be achieved by early summer.
  - iv. Members’ List. A new members’ list will be sent out twice a year, but if we proceed with a ‘members only area’ we could consider putting this online.
5. Layout. The old website was very much text dominated. The modern style of having a lot of images has been followed. Each item is stored as a separate post, which enables change in layout without complete rewriting. Feedback from members is welcome; some changes are easy to make, others are not.
6. Speed. The website can be slow to load, partly due to it being dynamic. Experimenting with setting up a cache, so that pages will be served faster, has been undertaken. Currently we have free charity hosting, but we may need to pay for a faster server in the future.

### Visitors by country

1		United States	24,800
2		United Kingdom	22,323
3		Unknown	8,960
4		Germany	7,983
5		Ukraine	4,654
6		China	4,297
7		France	4,076
8		Russian Federation	2,078
9		Ireland	1,874
10		India	1,764

In the last year there were 72,000 visitors by unique IP address with 230,000 visits. There were 21,300 search engine referrals, mostly from *Google*.

### Publicity

In addition to the essential face of *BIBBA* at shows and other events, a significant input was made to the success of the *BIBBA* Conference behind the scenes using social and other media to advertise the event. The success of this was monitored using “short links” which will be effective in increasing the effective reach for future events.

To reach existing and new members effectively using social media, a research project needs to be undertaken but this was not a priority for this conference year. Our *Facebook* group has yet to reach critical mass at 500 *Likes* and needs to be developed by the new committee in 2017.

In addition there is further collaboration needed with the website team to optimize its reach and ensure it “speaks” to search engines in an effective way.

### Gormanston Summer School.

*The Federation of Irish Beekeepers Associations (FIBKA)* holds an Annual Summer School at Gormanston, County Meath. It is attended by 250-300 beekeepers of all ages and abilities, many coming from overseas. It is a great occasion with lectures and workshops being held at the same time. Ireland is a stronghold of native and near-native honey bees, due mainly to some dedicated work by a large number of beekeepers.

Traditionally there has been a meeting for *BIBBA* members on one evening, but this is now shared with members of the *Native Irish Honey Bee Society (NIHBS)*. We share the same problems of importations of honey bees and their subsequent hybridisation, which many experienced beekeepers believe often causes aggression in subsequent generations of bees. That was the main point that was raised by many of those who spoke. With an open meeting and no agenda, there is little that can be discussed that will result in any co-ordinated action, but it does give members the opportunity to report on what they have experienced in their respective areas.

### Conference and Workshops

The main purpose of conference and workshops is to provide tuition to beekeepers of all abilities, which is achieved in a number of ways. 2016 was a busy year, with three main event types. The highlight was the very successful conference that was held on the Isle of Man in September. *BIBBA* moves the biennial conference to different parts, so all beekeepers get a chance of attending. The last time it was held on the Isle of Man was in 1973, so it could probably be said they were overdue to host it.

The Island, venue and local beekeepers didn't let us down at all. The Manx beekeepers did a tremendous amount of work on the ground in performing the organising locally and obtaining funding. The 180 attendees enjoyed a choice of two presentations at each session, being delivered by around 25 presenters overall. We were incredibly lucky in attracting Randy Oliver from California, who although was seen as a little controversial by some, was appreciated by many. All speakers gave a good account of themselves, although some only occasionally give presentations. It is refreshing to know there are knowledgeable people we can call on, many being asked to speak because they had knowledge to impart that is not often heard from other sources.

A post-event questionnaire was sent out resulting in many positive responses, particularly about the programme, organisation and the friendliness of the Manx beekeepers. Unfortunately during the conference it was confirmed that Asian hornets were discovered

in Gloucestershire. Several Bee Inspectors attended the conference, all of whom were drafted into Gloucestershire to look for Asian hornet nests when they got home.

*Bee Improvement For All (BIFA)* days were held in a number of locations during the winter months. These usually generate a lot of interest and some attendees have been to more than one. *BIFA* days give us an opportunity to encourage beekeepers to investigate native and near-native bees, when perhaps they may not have otherwise done so. Comments are very positive, but there needs to be follow-up facilities to expand on the interest generated. Working together with groups is being pursued, but this is a medium term project, as many interested beekeepers are fairly new to the craft and often don't feel they have the knowledge or confidence to start a group. This should come later.

Apiary-based one- and two-day *Bee Improvement* courses were held during the summer. These are a follow-on from *BIFA* days and are good for getting a small number of attendees involved with the practical side of bee improvement and queen rearing. All courses fill up quickly, one within 48 hours of launch, resulting in a second being arranged at the same venue. These courses are good for their social side too, with everyone getting on well together, even though they may come from some distance away from each other.

#### Academic collaboration

*BIBBA* has continued to support research done by Universities, mainly by work at group level, but also by attracting funding for a new research project by Bangor University. This consisted of a £10,500 donation, paid direct to Bangor University, towards the development of a 'back-pack', which will enable researchers to better track the movements of bees over long distances. The device promises to be much lighter and have a greater range than previous devices and will be powered by harnessing energy from vibrations of the bee's thorax during flight. The whole of the funding was derived from a single donation specifically given for the purpose.

#### Representation

*BIBBA* is a specialist member of the *BBKA* and a representative attended the *Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM)*. *BIBBA* was represented at the *National Honey Show AGM*.

At the *National Honey Show*, a certificate was presented in recognition of *BIBBA*'s many years of support.

#### Constitution

The *Charity Commission* model constitution (GD3) has been used to review the constitution.

#### Archives

At present housed with a committee member, there is a need to safeguard them for the future and form an electronic repository.

## **Future Plans**

In the next year the trustees will continue efforts to improve benefits to members and communication, provide courses and support bee improvement groups. In particular, consideration will be given to developing the *Facebook* group & the website, reprinting books, forming an electronic archive repository and negotiating with *BIPCo* the purchase of *Apideas* for *BIBBA* groups.

## **Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare a financial statement for each financial year, which gives a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities during the year and its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing the statement, the trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees with one dissension

Nicholas Bentham-Green.  
Chairman