



## **Trustees' Report Year Ended 31st December 2021**

### **The Charity's Objects**

"The Objects of the Association are the conservation, restoration, study, selection and improvement of native honey bees (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) and near-native honey bees of the British Isles."

"In furtherance of the above aims the Association supports and encourages the education and the raising of awareness of beekeepers, and members of the public, as to the importance of native and near-native honey bees."

(Clause 3 of the Constitution)

### **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 9th March 2019. Its principal address is Glenwood, Wood Road, Longsdon, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 9QB.

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

The Charity's Bankers are:

- CafBank Ltd., P.O. Box 289, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA,
- PayPal., 22-24 Boulevard Royal, L-2449, Luxembourg
- Santander, Customer Service Centre, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 4GB
- Redwood Bank, The Nexus Building, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3TA

The Accountants are Azets, Ruthlyn House, 90 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2SP.

### **Strategy Statement**

During the first half of the year the Committee reviewed the Charity's strategy and strategic direction and adopted a new Strategy Statement, which will be reviewed annually. This is appended.

## Organisational Structure

The Charity is administered by a Committee of Trustees comprising three Officers: President, Secretary and Treasurer, together with a maximum of fifteen Committee Members elected at the AGM for a renewable term of one year. The Officers and Committee Members act as the Trustees of the Charity. At a meeting following the AGM the Committee of Trustees elects a Chair and Deputy Chair from among their number. The Committee may make co-options to fill vacancies amongst Officers or Committee Members who shall serve as Trustees with full voting rights on the Committee. The Committee appoints Members to represent the Association on other bodies and organisations and posts of responsibility. The Committee may appoint volunteers or advisors, as non-voting Members.

As from the 2021 AGM the Charity has been administered by a Committee comprising of fourteen Trustees:

Roger Patterson	President Lead Trustee: Education & Training, and Publications Liaison with the BBKA
Stephen Barnes	Secretary
Alla Neal	Treasurer
Selwyn Runnett	Chair Lead Trustee: Special Apiary Projects Joint Editor of BIBBA Monthly Liaison with the WBKA
Nick Mawby	Deputy Chair Lead Trustee: Membership & Membership Services Website Manager Joint Editor of BIBBA Monthly
Nick Bentham-Green	Lead Trustee: National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP)
Jonathan Brookhouse	Lead Trustee: Research & Science, and Natural Resilience
Liz Childerley	Lead Trustee: Marketing, Media & Communications
Iain Harley	Immediate Past Treasurer
Terence Hitchman	

Brian Holdcroft	Lead Trustee: Local Bee Improvement Groups
Peter Jenkins	
Richard Senior	Lead Trustee: ICT Support
Jo Widdicombe	Immediate Past President

## **Governance**

The Trustees have ensured that the operation of the Charity complies with the Charity Commission's 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 Commission Guidance, which is published on the Commission's Website.

## **Meetings of the Committee of Trustees**

The Committee of Trustees held monthly Committee Meetings by Zoom. The Committee regularly communicated by email and telephone between meetings including a limited number of e-mail decision requests. The final decisions from email decision requests were ratified at the next Committee Meeting.

Record of Trustee attendances at monthly Committee Meetings (actual/possible) in 2021 were:

Roger Patterson	11/11
Stephen Barnes	11/11
Alla Neal	11/11
Karl Colyer (resigned 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2021)	1/1
Selwyn Runnett	11/11
Nick Mawby	9/11
Nick Bentham-Green	9/11
Jonathan Brookhouse	10/11
Liz Childerley	9/11
Iain Harley	10/11
Terence Hitchman	10/11
Brian Holdcroft	11/11
Peter Jenkins	8/11
Richard Senior	10/11
Jo Widdicombe	9/11

## **Sub-Committees**

Following an organisational review which commenced after the 2021 AGM, the following Sub-Committees were established:

- National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP)
- Research & Science (formerly Science & Technical)
- Education & Training
- Marketing, Media & Communications
- Publications

These were chaired by the relevant Lead Trustee. In addition, during the year a Monitoring & Co-ordination Sub-Committee was established comprising of the Officers, the Chair, and the Deputy Chair.

## **Representation**

BIBBA is a Special Interest Member of the BBKA (in England) and in 2021 the Trustees were delighted when BIBBA was accepted as a Special Interest Member of the WBKA (in Wales).

We were unable to attend most of the usual Conferences, which did not take place due to Covid-related restrictions. Nonetheless, the National Honey Show in England did take place in October. We were unable to take a Stand - however, one of our Trustees (Jo Widdicombe) was a speaker, and other Trustees helped in chairing various sessions. It also gave us an opportunity to speak with a number of our Members face-to-face, which was very welcome.

## **President's Report**

It was a great privilege to be elected as the President of BIBBA at the 2021 AGM and a privilege to work with our dedicated Team of Trustees. We are a 100% volunteer organisation and the huge time commitment that each Trustee gives ensures that BIBBA continues to grow and thrive. Our membership has passed the 1,000 level and, despite the on-going Covid-related issues during 2021, we managed to continue with our well received programme of Webinars and other activities, including our flagship National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP). We all hope that 2022 will allow us to resume a broader range of activities.

We are also grateful for the support of our Members, old and new, as a strong membership base allows us a greater opportunity of changing things for the better in the beekeeping world. Now that we are emerging from Covid we can start to plan for how BIBBA needs to develop and change in the 2020s. The new Chair of our Committee has started this process of carrying out a thorough review of BIBBA's strategy and activities which will lay the foundations for taking us forward to address the challenges, old and new, that BIBBA faces in the future. One of the key building blocks in this process is our conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which Members asked us to consider at last year's AGM. Our view as Trustees is that we should proceed with conversion and we are recommending this to the membership at this year's AGM.

Finally, I just want to re-iterate our commitment to transforming beekeeping by encouraging the adoption of what we are calling 'sustainable bees' and

‘sustainable beekeeping’. This includes phasing out all bee imports and achieving a maintainable improvement in the genetic stability and quality of our bees. It is important for BIBBA to be relevant to all beekeepers, whatever their circumstances and to help everyone to secure a better future for the bees of Britain and Ireland and for pollinators more generally.

## **Chair’s Report**

I was appointed by the Trustees immediately after the 2021 AGM with a brief to review BIBBA’s strategy and activities and lay the foundations for taking BIBBA into the 2020s.

In relation to strategy, the starting point was to ask: what is the purpose of BIBBA? And also to re-read Beowulf Cooper’s seminal book “The Honeybees of the British Isles”. The formation of BIBBA in 1964 was prompted by what was perceived to be a deterioration of the quality of local bee populations. The answer was breeding and bee improvement. What Cooper, and the other early pioneers, were referring to was honey bee genetics, although genetics as a branch of biology was not developed to the extent that it is now. Nonetheless, he makes an explicit reference to what he terms “ecological genetics” in Chapter 2 of his book. In addition, since the Bruntland Report in 1987, we have had the emergence of the sustainability agenda, which is of increasing concern to modern beekeepers.

We have responded this year by developing what we call BIBBA’s ‘Four Sustainabilities’: a sustainable environment, sustainable bees, sustainable beekeeping, and sustainable honey markets. We have also identified the key issues for BIBBA in the 2020s as: genetic stability of local bee populations, bee-centred bee husbandry, and bee health. We have started by producing a Strategy Statement (see the Appendix) and we are continuing to work on developing a range of policies and programmes. These are the essential first stages in achieving a step-change in delivering concrete on-the-ground activities and results

In relation to activities, we need to look at how to achieve our aims and objectives through a 100% volunteer UK-wide organisation, which is no easy task. Firstly, we are overhauling our legal structure through conversion to a CIO. This will enable us to operate effectively through modern contracts and, in the future, by potentially employing staff at some point in the future.

Secondly, we are also modernising our structures and operating procedures. All of this takes time and is not directly related to bees or beekeeping. However, without an effective organisational structure, BIBBA will not be able to sustain its achievements. So, this year we introduced a system of Lead Trustees and Sub-Committees. We have plans in place to carry out a skills audit of our existing Trustees, to identify our skills requirements for the future, and to recruit new Trustees to produce a future mix of skills which will take BIBBA forward. We are also working on a Volunteer Policy and introducing Advisory & Support Panels

where Members can contribute their advice, skills and experience to particular areas of BIBBA activity.

In addition, we have also focussed on the bees and beekeeping. We are pushing forward with our flagship Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP) and re-establishing a network of Local Bee Improvement Groups. We are working on a number of Special Apiary Projects (to protect *Amm* populations where there is a low level of introgression) and we are looking to move forward with a research and science programme. This has all been underpinned by a significant education and training programme (delivered mainly through Webinars), a new marketing, media, and communication programme, and a significant increase in our publishing activity.

Overall, BIBBA has moved forward in 2021. However, we know we have a lot more to do as we move into 2022 and beyond. In conclusion, I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Committee of Trustees. They have provided me with a fantastic level of support. Taking on the role of Chair in a UK-wide Charity is not an easy task but I have been privileged to work with them. They have given a considerable amount of their time during a year when there has been a lot to do and each one has made an essential and valued contribution. I cannot thank them enough.

## **Finance Report from the Treasurer – Alla Neal**

### ***Financial Statements***

These are as presented to the AGM.

### ***Income and Expenditure***

The Charity has no paid employees and relies entirely on the goodwill and voluntary work of Officers, Trustees and volunteer Members. All expenditure involved direct expenses to support BIBBA's duties and strategy.

The Charity's main income is from member subscriptions, education/training events and sales of publications. Further funding is obtained from occasional donations, bequests and sponsorships. Thank you to everybody for their support. A valuable source of funds is the Gift Aid Scheme. Those who have not already done so can go to [bibba.com/giftaid](http://bibba.com/giftaid)

### ***Investment Policy***

The Trustees have the power to invest in such assets as they see fit. Monies not required for immediate running costs were held during 2021 in a Redwood 35 day notice account at the same interest rate. A small reserve was also held in a CAF Gold account linked to our CAF Cash current account. BIBBA does not have a defined level of reserves but the current Unrestricted Reserve of £109,259 equates to approximately seven years of operating costs and is reviewed quarterly. A further £2,585 is held as a Restrictive Reserve and

represents the balance of the funding received from the Cooperative Society. 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. A further Restrictive Reserve of £975 is held as the balance of donations from Essex and Suffolk Water (Northumbrian Water) and the Tesco Local Charities scheme via Groundworks to support the 'Essex 4 Bees' project based at the Abberton Reservoir in Essex.

### **Report from the Lead Trustee for the National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP) – Nick Bentham-Green**

The National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP) has been successfully launched in the UK and Ireland. The online NatBIP GUIDE, on the BIBBA website is up and running and provides useful information on all aspects of the Programme. Methods of queen rearing, nuc making and a downloadable Record Card, to help with the selection of breeder queens, are all available.

The purpose of NatBIP is to provide an alternative to imported queens and to improve the quality our honey bee population. Ideas associated with this are becoming widely accepted in the beekeeping community. For example, a preference for locally adapted bees and native or near-native stock is becoming the norm for many beekeepers and imported stock is falling out of favour.

Apart from BIBBA, no major beekeeping association has agreed to support NatBIP so far, although some actively campaign against imports. We hope to see many more beekeepers and associations join the programme to improve our bees in the coming months and years.

### **Report from the Lead Trustee for Research & Science – Jonathan Brookhouse**

During the year we have looked at genetics and DNA and the effect of pesticides on honey bees. We will be looking at DNA services for *Amm* bee populations and we have agreed that BIBBA should take a different view on research and science issues. There is a lot of science and scientific researcher led material being published. However, much of it is inaccessible because it is not written for a beekeeper audience. Our aim is, therefore, to produce summaries or digests which will enable beekeepers to apply scientific research to their everyday beekeeping activities and support this with applied research into issues relating to bee husbandry. We are also looking into a beekeeper focussed guide to honey bee genetics and looking at current research into resilience issues (including, for example, varroa tolerance).

### **Report from the Lead Trustee for Local Bee Improvement Groups – Brian Holdcroft**

For BIBBA to develop its future plans for Local Groups there has been an effort to establish which Groups are currently still active amongst those that are listed and obtain valuable feedback on how BIBBA can further support them. The recent aim has been to make contact with the lead members to establish the current status of each Group and confirm, where necessary, their

willingness for BIBBA to publish, on the Groups page of the BIBBA website, their contact details and any revised Group statement in accordance with current GDPR .

Moving forward there is the intention to establish more local Groups to form a strong foundation for future plans to broaden all areas of Group activity. Allied to this is the intention to improve communication and create better networking with and between Groups. This will ensure that they are fully supported in their activities and are aware of the BIBBA resources available to them. The aim is to promote BIBBA’s policies including NatBIP to bring about a more stable and sustainable honey bee population within the given Group localities.

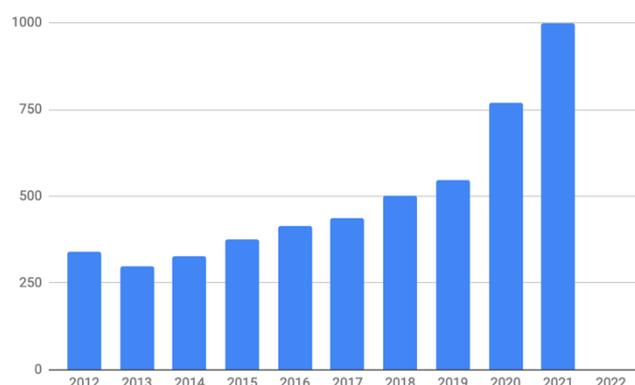
### **Report from the Lead Trustee for Special Apiary Projects – Selwyn Runnett**

The new Special Apiary Project at Sandringham is a conservation project to establish an *Amm* population on the Sandringham Estate and the surrounding area. Lead Beekeeper Eric Marshall and his team are developing this Group and its activities, at a steady rate and regular updates will be provided for Members throughout the season. We also continue to support the existing successful Special Apiary Project at Abberton Reservoir in Essex and the Project’s Lead Beekeeper, Kevin Thorn. We look forward to developing further Special Apiary Projects.

### **Report from the Lead Trustee for Membership and Membership Services – Nick Mawby**

BIBBA Membership Report 2021:

The steady growth in membership seen over the last eight years has continued, and we passed the 1000 mark by the end of December.



Geographical Distribution of Members: previous year (2020) in brackets with percentage increase

United Kingdom:

England	830	(627)	32%
Wales	69	(57)	21%
Scotland	45	(31)	45%
N. Ireland	17	(8)	112%
Rep of Ireland	41	(26)	57%
Rest of World	30	(19)	58%

Membership System and CRM: The Trustees have been considering how we can make significant improvements

The growth in membership has made the current system very onerous, even though 84% of our membership now pay by direct debit or standing order. We have looked at many systems and had initiated a change to an automated system, but found it did not have the expected functionality. We are continuing to explore other options.

### **Report from the Lead Trustee for Marketing, Media, and Communications – Liz Childerley**

In March 2021 BIBBA published news of our re-brand at the AGM and shared news of forthcoming initiatives that would help us embed the new branding into our services and communications. We have taken steps to ensure that the narrative, messaging, and visual tools are reflected in all internal and external communications. This includes the overall and re-design of all our 'display kit' for industry trade shows and conferences, which will be visible to all delegates in 2022.

As of March 2022, we will be attending: Beetradox, the WBKA Convention, the BBKA Spring Conference, Sandringham Flower Show, and The National Honey Show.

In September 2021, we formed a Marketing, Media & Communications Sub-Committee to ensure that we are able to push forward with our strategic objectives. This Sub-Committee serves all other areas of activity within BIBBA and is responsible for brand marketing and strategic communications, PR etc. In the latter part of 2021, we worked with our Chair, Selwyn Runnett, to clarify the strategic direction of BIBBA, and we began to bring the new positioning to life. As it has undergone a metamorphosis, we have worked hard to raise the profile of BIBBA in 2021/22 - here are the highlights:

- Publication of article in the National Allotment Society magazine,
- Exposure in *Beeecraft* magazine,
- Collaboration with the Environment Correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*,
- Production of film to support the aims of NatBIP - featuring Sir Tim Smit,
- Review of routes to communicate with BKA's and creation of database to serve this purpose,
- Support our Training and Education initiatives via social media and other channels, and
- Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to guide our 2022 strategy.

### ***Communications***

Social Media: At the end of end of 2020 we had 600 followers on our Facebook Page. This has increased to 2,100. We have also created a NatBIP Page and this now has 700 followers.

BIBBA Monthly (BM): BM is now jointly edited by the Chair and Deputy Chair and both are aiming to increase the range and interest of articles for Members as well as the regular sharing of information and events information.

NatBIP Supporters: We are now producing regular Newsletters for our registered NatBIP Supporters, which are proving useful and popular.

Beekeeping.events: A separate website has been set up to publicise BIBBA events and any other beekeeping-related events around the UK. The content and list of contributors is slowly growing. Its aim is to be a one-stop website to show what is happening around the UK beekeeping scene.

### ***Focus forward - 2022 goals:***

Having embedded our new brand positioning, our aim is to continue to support the need for wider publicity and recognition amongst key member and stakeholder groups. With the confirmation of a new legal structure (CIO), and additional Trustees and Volunteers, the MMC will continue to support the aims of BIBBA through:

- National Broadcast media
- Increased use of social media
- Focus on 'Digital BIBBA' - reviewing all digital tools and platforms

We will be seeking to recruit two key volunteer roles in 2022 - Designer for print and digital media and a Digital Media Assistant. If any of our members are interesting in learning more about the role and the skills we are looking for, please contact Liz Childerley: [publicity@bibba.com](mailto:publicity@bibba.com).

### **Report from the Lead Trustee for Education & Training – Roger Patterson**

For the second year running there have been disruptions to face-to-face events, but we have found other ways of presenting education to beekeepers. Much of it has been virtual, which has given BIBBA opportunities that we may not have considered without suffering a pandemic that has changed everyone's lives. BIBBA is often popularly seen as an organisation that is confined to "black bees", "native bees" or whatever people wish to call *Amm*, but it is much more than that and always has been.

In the very early days BIBBA (or VBBA as it was previously called) was very diverse in its appeal, which was reflected in the publications and items that were sold, as well as recognising that many beekeepers don't have pure *Amm*, but heavily mongrelised bees that with a little selection can be significantly improved. In the last few years, we have returned to providing good, sound information, help and tuition to beekeepers of all abilities. This has been achieved in several ways by the hard-working Education and Training Sub-Committee.

Webinars on a wide variety of beekeeping topics have proved popular, with all ability and interest levels catered for. Not only specialist subjects, but Q&A sessions have provided answers to many questions that beekeepers ask. These have been recorded and are indexed in five categories on the BIBBA website.

“Live @ the Hive” developed from an idea to live-stream a beekeeper inspecting colonies as the title suggests, live, without any script or previous preparation of the colonies. There were about 20 of them that Members could be part of by asking questions and making comment. Recordings are also on the website. “Let’s go Beekeeping” is a series of videos that concentrate on practical beekeeping. They will be added to on a regular basis.

We introduced a video for prospective beekeepers called “Beekeeping: What’s it all About” that gives an indication of what is involved in the Craft. This leads to the online course “Introduction to Beekeeping”, which is intended for people who are thinking about starting beekeeping, but need to know more before enrolling on a course.

Feedback suggests that our material is well appreciated for the content and delivery, with viewers from around the world. Although no courses were run in 2021, a course for semi-commercial beekeepers was road-tested, so hopefully this can be available in 2022.

### **Report by the Lead Trustee for Publications – Roger Patterson**

The Publications Sub-Committee has been busy increasing the number of books that we publish, although we are unable to hold copyright or publish, so these are currently in the name of an individual on behalf of the Charity (an issue that can be addressed as part of the conversion process to a CIO). The increase in our publishing activity has involved quite a bit of learning and we were lucky in finding a good designer to help us. Following much discussion, we decided on a distinctive cover and format that immediately identifies BIBBA books. Sales have been encouraging.

## **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

**Selwyn Runnett – Chair**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Strategy Statement**

BIBBA supports and promotes the sustainable conservation, restoration, study, selection, and improvement of honey bees that are native to the British Isles and Ireland (often referred to as the European Dark Bee or *Apis mellifera mellifera*).

It supports:

- The restoration, study, selection and improvement of both the native honey bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) and the near-native honey bee;
- Breeding and queen rearing programmes to support native and near-native bees;
- Voluntary Conservation Areas for native bees;
- Sustainable beekeeping management practices, including disease resilience;
- Breeding and rearing of locally adapted bees as a stepping-stone towards the restoration of native and near-native bees; and
- Scientific research on issues relevant to native and near-native bees.

For all beekeepers and the general public, it does this by:

- Providing information on all aspects of native, near-native and locally adapted bees;
- Designing and delivering education and training programmes for beekeepers of different experience levels;
- Developing and supporting initiatives to increase the availability of native and near-native bees through queen breeding and rearing, and the production of 'nucs', including Bee Improvement Programmes in the British Isles and Ireland;
- Supporting and developing queen-rearing operations and local/regional mating stations for the use of beekeepers in the relevant area;
- Supporting local Beekeeping Associations who are interested in supporting native and near-native bees;
- Campaigning to change beekeeping practices that work against native, near-native and locally adapted honey bees,
- Working with other beekeeping organisations, conservation organisations, and others (including commercial organisations) both within both the British Isles and Ireland and internationally;
- Opposing the importation of queens and package bees from outside the British Isles and Ireland.

For its Members, it does this by:

- Providing practical and technical advice on native, near-native, locally adapted bees, and sustainable beekeeping;
- Specialist education and training courses;
- Holding events, including seminars and conferences;
- National and Regional Networks. These will develop contacts between Members, provide information and resources, hold events, support Local Groups, and liaise and assist local Beekeeping Associations:
  - National networks in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland will provide information, resources and events

relevant to each national area. They will also work in partnership with other organisations with similar aims to BIBBA.

- Regional Networks in England (based on a County area or groups of County areas) will also provide information, resources and events relevant to each area. They will also work in partnership with other organisations with similar aims to BIBBA; and
- Establishing and developing Local Groups of BIBBA Members and Supporters who are looking to breed bees and rear queens and/or want local opportunities for training and support;
- Establish a Mentoring Scheme for Members who would like support on issues and activities relating to native or near-native bees and sustainable beekeeping management practices; and
- Establishing specialist Groups of Members who have particular interests in relation to native or near-native bees.

Adopted by the Committee of Trustees – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021