

**THE HEALTHY BEES PLAN  
HUSBANDRY AND EDUCATION GROUP (HEG)  
SUMMARY NOTE OF 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING ON 17 FEBRUARY 2010  
RODBASTON CAMPUS, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COLLEGE**

Attendees:

Norman Houston (Chair)	Richard Ball (NBU)	Ken Basterfield	Kim Chadwick (Fera) Secretary
Celia Davis	Ken Edwards	Terry Gibson	Ian Homer (NBU)
Roger Lacey	Liz McIntosh (Fera)	Ged Marshall	Margaret Thomas
Andy Wattam (NBU)	Serena Watts	Selwyn Wilkins (NBU)	

### **Welcome and introductions**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Group and explained that the purpose was agree the terms of reference for the group and to identify priorities for the education and training programme for 2010/11. The Chair suggested that accreditation of training was an important area for the Group to consider. In addition to the formal members of the Group, Geoff Critchley had agreed to be an informal member; in practice, he would not attend meetings and would be invited to provide input on specific aspects of the Group's work, such as the draft workplan.
2. Apologies had been received from Mike Brown (NBU).

### **Healthy Bees Plan**

3. Liz McIntosh updated the Group on progress with implementation of the Healthy Bees Plan highlighting the various groups working on implementation and some of the practical achievements such as the train the trainer initiative and the action plan to raise the profile of BeeBase and the importance of registration.
4. The Group noted the need to avoid duplication of effort when considering education activities – particularly with reference to the BBKA and its proposed 'course in a box' which was to be launched at the Spring convention. It was also important to reach the 'unknown' beekeepers who were not known to the NBU or members of associations through locally available leaflets and articles in the local press and possibly incentives as a means of engaging them. Liz McIntosh commented that reaching unknowns was important part of the action plan to increase registration on BeeBase. The Group also noted that the Communications Working Group's view was that they should focus on communicating with and providing advice to the 'knowns' rather than the 'unknowns'.

### **Draft Terms of Reference**

5. The Chair introduced the draft Terms of Reference for the Group (paper HEG 1/1). These set out the Group's purpose and responsibilities. No suggested amendments were put forward and the Terms of Reference were agreed. There was general consensus that the Group should not simply be a sounding board or coordination body,

but should aim to produce specific products, such as a future model for beekeeper learning. Given the BBKA's important role in beekeeper education learning, the Group agreed that it would be important to include them in these discussions.

6. Two further members of the Group were suggested – Chris Deaves (BBKA) and Geoff Hopkinson (education specialist) and it was agreed that they should be invited to the next meeting. The Group agreed that we should review the numbers on the Group after the first couple of meetings to ensure that it was a reasonable and effective size.

### **Progress with workplan**

7. Liz McIntosh reported that there had been an encouraging response to the C&G Train the Trainer courses being funded under the Healthy Bees Plan. So far, approx. 70 beekeepers from over 35 associations had submitted applications for courses commencing between February and September. Ian Homer and Richard Ball reported on the two recent roadshows that had taken place. A key aim was to attract new beekeepers to attend, and also beekeepers who do not usually attend training events or who are not members of local associations. The overall feedback from the roadshows had been favourable although most attendees were 'known' beekeepers. Learning styles and methods would be explored during future roadshows. Although a number of leaflets have been published, and others were in preparation, the extent of their use needed to be considered. Practical knowledge and the delivery of this was a very important element of the learning package.
8. Members of the Group offered the following suggestions about 'unknown' and new beekeepers:
  - local associations should keep in contact with new beekeepers who attend their courses;
  - local association secretaries should phone all members of associations about forthcoming training events;
  - training provided by regional apiaries should be better coordinated and promoted.

### **Identification of priorities and key education and training activities for 2010**

9. The following priorities and key training activities were discussed during the workshop session:
  - Train the trainer courses- important to have consistent and quality delivery of training/basic level of standardised training
  - Information need to be in bit size chunks – single page
  - Best practice templates/guidelines (already scheduled) and practical training of them
  - Swarm management collection
  - Buddying/mentoring – volunteers competence
  - Local apiary activity – delivery /standardisation

- Use of BeeBase – important to get beekeepers to use it. Include interactive training
- Develop ‘improvers’ and ‘experts’
- Need audit of what already available – important to avoid duplication
- Have some sort of accreditation/quality control
- Blended learning- distance learning, courses, practical, etc
- Need BBKA to rejoin group to work together

A draft workplan incorporating these points would be prepared and circulated to the group for comments.

### **Presentation by Ken Basterfield**

10. Ken Basterfield gave a presentation of the NDB’s proposed short courses aimed at delivering targeted practical health and husbandry modules. The proposed 6x2hr modules were:

- Queen raising and stock improvement
- Colony handling
- Managing for increase
- Adult disease diagnosis
- Microscopy techniques
- Medications and IPM
- Balanced nutrition and floral sources
- Successful wintering

7. The Group agreed to consider this proposal as part of the workplan.

### **Next meeting**

11. It was suggested that the next meeting take place w/c 19 April and would seek to further develop and agree the draft workplan and to start to plan how to develop a future model of beekeeper learning.

Healthy Bees Project Team

12 March 2010