

**Minutes of the Healthy Bees Plan
Project Management Board
7th Meeting 23rd July 2010
Defra, Foss House, 1 – 2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX**

Present:

Helen Crews	Food & Environment Research Agency [Fera] (Chair)
Helen Carter	Food & Environment Research Agency (Secretary)
Liz McIntosh	Food & Environment Research Agency (Project Manager)
Andy Wattam	Food & Environment Research Agency
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association [WBKA]
Dinah Sweet	Welsh Beekeepers' Association
Bob Smith	Amateur Beekeeper
Brian Ripley	British Beekeepers Association [BBKA]
Martin Smith	British Beekeepers Association

Participation via telephone conference:

John Howat	Bee Farmers' Association [BFA]
Huw Jones	Welsh Assembly Government [WAG]
Tim Lovett	British Beekeepers Association

Apologies:

John Home	Bee Farmers' Association
Chris Hartfield	National Farmers' Union [NFU]
Nick Ambrose (observer)	Scottish Government

1. Welcome and introduction. Note of 6th meeting on BeeBase. Actions from 6th meeting

Introduction

The Chair welcomed attendees to the 7th meeting of the Healthy Bees Plan Project Management Board and thanked Huw Jones (WAG), Tim Lovett (BBKA) and John Howat (BFA) for joining the meeting via telephone conference. Andy Wattam, National Bee Inspector, was attending his first meeting following the Office of Government Commerce's recommendation that his involvement would strengthen membership of the Board.

Note of 6th meeting on BeeBase

The minutes of the 6th meeting were agreed by the Board and would now be posted on BeeBase.

Actions from 6th meeting

Huw Jones (WAG) had agreed to provide the Board with the Welsh Budget for 2010/11 which was £486,000 to be divided between:

Statutory Bee inspection programme
Statutory Bee diagnostic programme
Applied Experimental programme
Consultancy
Import risk analysis
Random Apiary survey
Training and education.

ACTION: Secretary to post the minutes of the 6th meeting on BeeBase.

2. June Highlight report. Budget 2010/11. Risks and Issues log (PMB 7/1)

Budget 2010/11

The Chair reminded the Board of the current situation regarding the Food & Environment Research Agency's budget which she had referred to at the last meeting. Fera did not currently have an agreed Business Plan as it had not been signed off before the General Election. Fera needed to re-draft its Business Plan and re-submit it to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and it would then form part of their revised Business Plan which would be submitted to the Treasury for approval. Following this, the Healthy Bees Budget would be confirmed.

The Chair was confident that funding for the Healthy Bees Plan would be of a similar value to funding for 2009/10 at £271,000. It was likely that £40,000 would be allocated to T&S, leaving £231,000 for other initiatives. Martin Smith (BBKA) queried whether the sum of £231,000 was currently available to the Board and the Chair confirmed that it was. The Chair urged the Board to invoice for all costs by the end of February 2011 in order that they were incorporated into the 2010/11 budget.

Tim Lovett (BBKA) asked for clarification on particular areas of spending for the 2009/10 financial year and the Chair confirmed that the following had been funded by the Healthy Bees Plan:

- between 7 - 9 full-time equivalent Senior Bee Inspectors (SBIs) which had brought the number of SBIs to 52 in England and 8 in Wales
- approximately 6 or 7 National Bee Unit (NBU) staff
- £60,000 for BeeBase

The Chair agreed to circulate full details of the end of year spend for 2009/10 to the Board.

Martin Smith (BBKA) requested an update on the situation regarding the recruitment of a new Project Manager following the recommendation made by the OGC that this would allow the current post-holder to fulfil her role of Defra Policy lead. The Chair said that the post had now been lost as the candidate which Fera had hoped to

recruit had taken another position. This had resulted in the current Project Manager remaining in post. The Chair did, however, intend to incorporate the OGC's recommendation into the Business Plan.

Highlight report/Risks and Issues log (PMB 7/1)

The Project Manager introduced the June Highlight report and Risks and Issues log and asked the Board if they had any comments/amendments.

In relation to the Contingency Plan, for which the due date was April 2010, Huw Jones (WAG) thought that there needed to be more detailed discussions on exclusion zones and the role of the CVO in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in declaring these zones; and that the agreed approach would need to be reflected in the MOU between WAG and the NBU. WAG would send detailed comments to the Project Manager for reflecting in the next draft of the Plan.

The following points were noted:

Risk 2 - insufficient samples from Random Apiary Survey (RAS) due to priority given by inspectors to statutory disease control – an initial analysis of the first year's data from the RAS was due at the end of August and would be considered by the Science and Evidence Workstream during early September. The Project Manager agreed to circulate the data to the Board at the same time. Bob Smith suggested this was now moved from 'amber' to 'green' as progress had been made.

Risk 5 – poor uptake of 'train the trainer' programme by beekeeper trainers - John Howat (BFA) suggested that the timing of 'train the trainer' was not ideal and may have resulted in a reduced uptake. Dinah Sweet (WBKA) also mentioned that it had been difficult to find recognised courses in Wales. The Project Manager confirmed that invitations for the autumn intake of 'train the trainer' were due to be issued shortly.

Risk 9 - poor partnership working with beekeeping associations to help in the delivery of the plan - Tim Lovett (BBKA) suggested this was moved from 'amber' to 'green' as there was now good partnership.

The Project Manager requested that any additional comments/amendments were emailed to her for incorporation in the July Highlight report.

ACTION: 1. Chair to circulate the end of year spend figures for 2009/10 to the Board. 2. WAG to send comments on the draft Contingency Plan to the Project Manager. 3. Project Manager to circulate initial analysis on 1st year of data from the Random Apiary Survey to the Board. 4. Board to send further comments on the Highlight Report and Risks and Issues log to the Project Manager.

3. Emerging Healthy Bees education programme (PMB 7/2)

The Chair thanked the Board for their on-line discussions regarding the emerging healthy bee education programme. It was essential that Fera were assured of the

Board's endorsement of key elements of the programme and also of their likely effectiveness in improving beekeeping skills. The key elements of the emerging programme were discussed in turn:

BBKA's CiC (BBKA's first proposal)

The Board had been asked whether they were content for the Healthy Bees Plan to fund the BBKA's CiC, for which the BBKA sought 50% funding of their £169,960 total spend. This would essentially fund the second year of the BBKA's 3 year programme to develop course materials for Novice, Improvers and Proficient competences. The Board confirmed that they were content subject to the following concerns being addressed:

- i) how the BBKA will set up an infrastructure to deliver the course and
- ii) how they will ensure that the trainers were more than one page ahead of their students.

Local delivery of CiC (BBKA's second proposal)

In order to address the Board's concerns the BBKA had put together an additional proposal which had been circulated to the Board on 1st July. This proposal was split into two main sections:

1. The CiC is distributed throughout the beekeeping associations within England and Wales
2. The CiC is used by appropriately trained people to:
3. Improve beekeeper competence at all levels

The Chair invited comments from the Board regarding this additional proposal.

Tim Lovett (BBKA) was on the Project Board for CiC and was concerned that we did not lose sight of amateur beekeepers. Although education and training was important it was also essential to ensure that some funding was channelled into applied research and development.

Bob Smith was concerned that the BBKA's CiC did not take funding away from the BBKA Examinations Board and that modules were not sidelined. Martin Smith (BBKA) said that initial discussions between the BBKA and their Examinations Board had already taken place regarding this and that it would not be the case.

The Board felt that the CiC should be aligned as far as possible to the relevant BBKA examination modules. This would ensure that beekeepers could seek formal qualifications following training via CiC. Brian Ripley (BBKA) confirmed that the intention was that they worked in parallel and that their common aim was raising the practical competence of beekeepers. He went on to say that there was currently a low uptake of the BBKA's 'driving licence' examination which left a gap in knowledge which could be filled by the CiC.

The Chair asked for suggestions on what criteria might be used to assess the competency of potential trainers as this could have an impact on the effective

delivery of CiC. Martin Smith (BBKA) was concerned that potential trainers may not apply if their competency was being assessed and they thought that they might be turned down. Tim Lovett (BBKA) agreed saying that the BBKA did not want to be in the position of turning down potential trainers. Brian Ripley (BBKA) suggested that Branch Chairs could be asked to endorse potential trainers as they would be aware of those who had experience or an aptitude for delivering training. This system had worked well for some recent training which the BBKA had carried out in the Northumberland area. The Board confirmed that they were content with this approach.

Martin Smith (BBKA) explained that an essential part of the proposal was the short-term (6 month) appointment of a Co-ordinator with the following main objectives:

- Visiting all Associations in England and Wales with the aim of finding 1 or 2 trainers per local Association (approximately 500 – 600 trainers)
- Encouraging co-operation between the local Associations
- Arranging and managing 'train the trainer' events across England and Wales.

The Board agreed that a Co-ordinator should be recruited and that they should report back to the Board on a regular basis so that progress could be monitored. Martin Smith (BBKA) said that he would begin the recruitment process as soon as possible.

In order to ensure that we received value for money from both 'train the trainer' and the CiC the Board agreed that there needed to be regular feedback from both i) beekeeper trainers at 'train the trainer' sessions and ii) beekeepers who had been trained using the CiC model. A summary of this feedback needed to be reported to the Board.

The Project Manager would reflect the Board's discussions in the emerging contract with the BBKA. The regional delivery element would be developed further and shared with the PMB in the coming weeks. This would be circulated to the Board for comment. Dinah Sweet (WBKA) said that she would seek the views of the WBKA regarding CiC and report back to the Board.

NBU's plans to update their training videos; best practice templates

The Board were keen that the BBKA and the NBU worked together on scripting, filming and editing of video clips related to disease management and control. Andy Wattam (Fera) said that all RBI's and some SBI's will attend 'train the trainer' and he agreed to circulate a list of those who had already been trained to the City & Guilds 7303 and 7304 standards.

NDB's Proposal on Train the Trainer (specific skills)

It was noted that Dinah Sweet (WBKA) attended NDB Board meetings as a representative of the WBKA and that Bob Smith held the National Diploma and had an authoring interest in the proposed short courses.

The NDB had submitted a proposal for the development of specific training modules for training trainers which had sought £71,200 from the Healthy Bees Plan. Subject to the NDB agreeing to share these costs, the Project Manager asked whether the Board were content to fund this. Unfortunately, some members of the Board had not received the proposal so the Project Manager would re-circulate it to them for comment by 28th July.

Bob Smith said that the NDB plan was to illustrate process and approach from basic to advanced modules. It would involve a great deal of practical training including teaching techniques. Four modules were under active development and can be delivered by March 2011 to align with the BBKA interim training plans.

Andy Wattam (Fera) queried whether the modules would be accredited and the Chair confirmed that the issue of accreditation was an important area which needed to be developed in the longer term.

Martin Smith (BBKA) wanted to make the Board aware that it may be problematic to arrange a contract with the NDB as they were a set of individuals rather than an organisation. He suggested that any contract could be via the BBKA as a corporate organisation but this would involve the NDB agreeing to the BBKA's terms and conditions.

ACTION: 1. Martin Smith to begin the process of recruiting a Co-ordinator. 2. Project Manager to reflect the Board's discussions in the emerging contract with the BBKA. 3. Andy Wattam to circulate a list of RBI's and SBI's who had received 'train the trainer'. 4. Board to give feedback on the NDB's proposal by 28th July.

4. Encouraging Voluntary Registration of Beekeepers on BeeBase – Progress by PMB Members

The Chair thanked the Board for their very positive response to encouraging the voluntary registration of beekeepers on BeeBase. The Chair had been working with Brian Ripley (BBKA) on a draft letter encouraging registration which would be published in October's BBKA News with supporting comments from the President. The Chair suggested that the letter could be used by the Board as a template. Martin Smith (BBKA) said that BBKA members can currently opt out of registration but he did not want to sanction compulsory registration as it may deter people from both BeeBase and the BBKA.

In addition, Fera had produced a leaflet highlighting the benefits of registering on BeeBase which was to be circulated with the October issue of the BBKANews. The Project Manager wanted to make the Board aware that there was currently a freeze on all marketing activity, including the production of advertising and marketing. Fera was currently seeking approval from Defra that the Healthy Bees work was exempt from this which would allow the distribution of the leaflet to go ahead. Dinah Sweet (WBKA) suggested that the leaflet was also made available for distribution at events, for example, the Royal Welsh Show, which she had recently attended. Andy Wattam (Fera) agreed to find out if this was happening.

Martin Smith (BBKA) queried how many people had registered on BeeBase so far this year. Andy Wattam said that there had been 1,799 new registrations; of those, 1,188 were self registered. There was now a total of 30,000 people registered on BeeBase and the expectation was that the data was now 95% correct following a recent clean up exercise. This figure excluded Scotland, whose data was still being entered into the system. In addition, the Chair understood that Jersey were very keen to join BeeBase. Andy Wattam (BBKA) would confirm the exact figures to the Board.

John Howat (BFA) said that most bee farmers were now registered but was aware of a hard core who did not want to register. He suggested that a personal visit from the Chair may help to allay their concerns about the security of their data. The Chair said that she would attend one of the forthcoming meetings of the bee farmers and asked John to notify her of the dates.

Huw Jones (WAG) said that WAG's new agri-environment scheme included keeping bees on land within the schemes but only on condition that the beekeeper was registered on BeeBase. This approach was worthwhile building into other land-based schemes which were funded by government.

ACTION: 1. Andy Wattam to ensure that the BeeBase leaflet is available for distribution at events. 2. Andy Wattam to circulate data on BeeBase registration. 3. John Howat to liaise with the Chair regarding forthcoming dates when she can meet with bee farmers. 4. Project Manager to seek advice from SEAG on how best to estimate the total number of beekeepers in E and W – was this feasible/practicable?

5. Beekeeping Education in Schools (discussion paper by Ian Homer) PMB 7/3

The Board was asked to consider whether they wished to pursue the idea of beekeeping education in schools as part of Healthy Bees implementation. Since there had previously been little interest shown from schools, Brian Ripley (BBKA) felt that it was more beneficial to encourage education via groups should as the Scouts, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh, and so on. Brian was also aware of the work which the University of Sussex and Kew Gardens were currently doing with schools. The Board agreed that this was not a priority for Healthy Bees funding.

6. Update on Discussions with Honey Packers about AFB risks

The Board had previously seen an information note on the spread and possible risk locations associated with American Foul Brood infection. The Chair and the Project Manager had visited the two potentially affected plants and held informal meetings to ascertain whether previously recommended actions had been taken. They were content that practices were being changed in response to the recommendations made and, in addition, one of the honey packers was working with the Honey Association to produce a draft code of practice on biosecurity which was due to be finalised in the coming months.

Brian Ripley (BBKA) had also visited one of these sites and had been content that changes were being implemented. He would send a copy of his correspondence with the sites involved to the Chair.

ACTION: 1. Brian Ripley to copy his correspondence with honey packers to the Chair.

7. Development of business case: what happens next?

The Chair thanked all of the members of the Board who had been able to attend the Healthy Bees Implementation Workshop on 21st July in York. The feedback was that it had been a worthwhile meeting with a great deal of consensus reached and some novel ideas produced. The Project Manager then distributed a summary of the workshop and would also produce a formal summary for circulation at the beginning of August. In addition, a summary note would be provided to the beekeeping press in the event that they wished to update the bee community about the workshop.

Bob Smith queried whether anyone had been tasked with taking forward the quality mark for honey which was discussed at the workshop. Brian Ripley (BBKA) felt that this needed further discussion as there needed to be a measurement for quality in order for the system to work. The Project Manager would discuss this with Bob and Brian when they next met.

Bob Smith and Brian Ripley (BBKA) had been agreed, at a previous meeting, as the Board's representatives who would work with the Project Manager and Andy Wattam to further develop the proposals from the workshop into a set of refined proposals. These proposals would be incorporated into the business case for the next phase of Healthy Bees implementation which the Project Manager was aiming to complete by end September. Subject to Defra's views on the business case against its other priorities, and any changes they may wish to make, they will put it forward for approval for future funding.

ACTION: 1. Project Manager, Bob Smith and Brian Ripley (BBKA) to discuss the use of quality marks on honey.

8. Any Other Business; Date of Next Meeting

Bob Smith queried whether any funding was available for Associations for the purchase of computers, printers and other items. Brian Ripley (BBKA) had previously received a grant from the Community Foundation in order to make improvements at the branch level.

The Board were asked to consider the following papers:

PMB InfoNote 7/1 – current/emerging issues

For information only.

PMB InfoNote 7/2 and 7/3 – VMD's updated Action Plan on the availability of bee medicines and list of products authorised by VMD for import under the Special Import Scheme

Tim Lovett (BBKA) briefed the Board on developments regarding the availability of medicines for bees. .

PMB InfoNote 7/4 – Insect Pollinators Initiative: list of projects to be funded

For information only.

Date of the next meeting

21st September 2010 at 11.30 am, 9 Millbank, London