

**THE HEALTHY BEES PLAN
HUSBANDRY AND EDUCATION GROUP (HEG)
SUMMARY NOTE OF 2nd MEETING ON 22 APRIL 2010
RODBASTON CAMPUS, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COLLEGE**

Attendees:

Norman Houston (Chair)	Richard Ball (NBU)	Ken Basterfield	Kim Chadwick (Fera) Secretary
Celia Davis	Chris Deaves	Ken Edwards	Terry Gibson
Ian Homer (NBU)	Geoff Hopkinson	Roger Lacey	Liz McIntosh (Fera)
Ged Marshall	Serena Watts	Selwyn Wilkins (NBU)	

Welcome and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the group and introduced two new members – Geoff Hopkinson and Chris Deaves.
2. Apologies had been received from Mike Brown and Andy Wattam (NBU) and Margaret Thomas.

Approval of draft note of last meeting

3. The note of the last meeting was agreed and will be posted on BeeBase. The actions from the last meeting were to invite Geoff and Chris and to prepare a workplan. The latter had been prepared and will be discussed under item 5.

Preparing for Phase 2 of implementing Healthy Bees Plan (this was item 6 on agenda and was taken earlier in the meeting)

4. Liz McIntosh explained that funding had been received for the first two years of the plan and a business case would need to be prepared for the next two to three years. However, funding post election was uncertain. She proposed that a discussion should take place with stakeholders on what we want to achieve under the plan in the next phase. As the business case had to be submitted to Defra by the end of September, it was proposed that the Project Management Board and the 3 working groups meet/hold a workshop in May/June to discuss priorities. The Group agreed that a collective meeting/workshop would be useful and several points were discussed – the need to identify priorities and the mechanism for achieving them; the priorities should include costs but should be outwith financial constraints; and the need to ensure there was no duplication of effort (such as work being carried out by BBKA/NDB, colleges, etc).
5. Celia Davis commented that before we could consider future educational activities, it would make sense to understand the current training landscape. The Group briefly discussed the benefits of reviewing the current landscape and how the resulting information would be used. Thornes (supplier) had, what some considered to be a comprehensive list of courses on their website. It was agreed that a high level review would make sense, if only to understand the gaps in provision.

ACTION: Liz McIntosh to spell out the scope of meeting/workshop, and the timetable towards completion of the business case in September, to assist stakeholders' consideration; and to consider a review of the current landscape of available training to identify gaps and courses available for both beginners and improvers.

Report on pilot roadshows (preliminary report HEG 2/1)

6. Richard Ball reported that the 4 pilot roadshows had been generally well received and considered that these should be continued. However, the cost of the shows was a concern and measures to reduce these should be considered. There were also some practical considerations to bear in mind for future events. Ian Homer added that although there had been a high satisfaction with the courses, they had not reached the 'unknown beekeepers' and therefore the publicity had not been a success. There were a number of suggestions for future events in order to reduce costs: hold events at local schools/colleges – the latter may already run courses and therefore be willing to help as this would provide publicity for the college; use local inspectors and deliver publicity in house; involve local associations and possibly local beekeepers to run workshops; and charge a nominal entry fee, say £10. It was further suggested that it would be preferable to concentrate more on new beginners rather than devote a lot of effort in trying to trace unknown beekeepers.
7. The Chair noted that the Group's recommendation to the Project Management Board was for the Healthy Bees Plan to fund further roadshows, subject to their suggestions (above) on refining and/or changing the format.
8. Liz McIntosh reported that Fera would seek feedback in May and again in September from about 20 roadshow attendees to find out whether they had changed any of their practices as a result of the roadshows. Fera would report on this feedback to the Group.

ACTION: Liz McIntosh to report on further feedback to HEG in autumn 2010.

BBKA presentation

9. Chris Deaves gave a presentation of the BBKA's education programme. He explained that the BBKA were moving to a competency based programme. A series of aids had been produced at the different competence level –

Beginners
Novices
Improvers
Proficient
Masters
NDB

10. A self contained kit (course in a case) had been produced on how to teach beginners and these had been distributed to local association (one copy to each free of charge; any additional kits to associations would be charged to recover costs). BBKA was also aiming to set up a network of trainers who were using the course in a case. The BBKA was also looking at DVDs, instructional you tube videos, and other multi use media.

11. The BBKA were also starting work with LANTRA to create national OCC standards for beekeeping and it was hoped to interest colleges to develop courses. However, LANTRA were not clear on their allocation of funding and were under pressure from other areas. Accreditation of courses had been considered by BBKA but at present the benefits could not justify the costs involved. However, BBKA were considering whether to investigate further.

Draft workplan

12. A draft work plan (HEG 2/2) had been circulated to HEG members in advance of the meeting. The following points were discussed:

Train the trainer for generic skills – it was agreed that this programme should continue during 2010/11. Kim Chadwick would invite a second round of applications in summer 2010, having first reviewed the application criteria to ensure we excluded inexperienced beekeepers. The second round would first focus on those associations who did not respond to the first round of invitations in December 2009. She would also seek feedback from those who had been trained in the first round.

Train the trainer for specific skills/topics - it was agreed that the train the trainer concept should be expanded to include specific modules on particular skills/topics.

ACTION: Ken Basterfield and Chris Deaves to liaise on preparing a list of modules for funding by the Healthy Bees Plan, subject to HEG recommending this course to Project Management Board. Kim Chadwick to review the first round of applications and application criteria for the second round.

Best practice guidelines – Richard Ball and Ian Homer to liaise and produce list.

ACTION: List to be appended to workplan.

Develop model for beekeeper learning – the Group agreed that they would need to work in conjunction with the BBKA and NDB to develop a model. Healthy Bees Plan funding could catalyse key elements of the agreed model. The Group agreed that validation of courses was a laudable aim. Accreditation was an option and needed to be considered, although set up costs, and fees to be paid by students were downsides. Accreditation using 'customised provision' was a less costly and onerous option. Another option could be endorsement of courses by 'Healthy Bees Plan' (e.g. through this Group).

ACTION: Chris Deaves, Ken Basterfield and Norman Houston to explore further accreditation using customised provision, and other elements of a beekeeper learning model and come back to HEG with proposals for how Healthy Bees can help now and in the future. Chris Deaves, Norman Houston and Ken Basterfield to meet LANTRA to understand better what they would offer to help with accreditation and how Fera might be able to help.

Regional/training apiaries - Need to identify what is currently available and gaps on coverage across the country. Norman Houston has produced a list of training apiaries based at land-based colleges. This element of the workplan would focus on how best the available network of training apiaries could help deliver the Healthy Bees objectives and, as necessary, how we could ensure the quality of the training they provide. The work

could also consider incentives for local associations to set up training apiaries and scope and options for funding training apiaries from the Healthy Bees Plan.

Roadshows – agreed as described in the draft workplan.

Mentoring/buddying – many local associations already do this as it is part of the BBKA's competence development.

Develop BeeBase as a training tool – This was for the longer term and subject to future funding being available.

Develop training for 'improvers' and 'experts' - These needed to be defined. 'Expert' could be Master BBKA, or someone who has kept say 8 colonies/hives for 10 years (80 hive years of experience).

ACTION: Agree definition of improvers/experts

13. Summing up, the Chair noted that the workplan would be refined based on the points raised, and submitted to Project Management Board for their endorsement at their next meeting (May).

Next meeting

14. The next meeting will take place towards the end of July.

Healthy Bees Project Team

16 June 2010