

**Final Minutes of the Healthy Bees Plan
Project Management Board
16th Meeting, 14th December 2011
Room 631, Millbank, Defra, London**

Present:

Helen Crews	Food & Environment Research Agency [Fera] (Chair)
Liz McIntosh	Food & Environment Research Agency (Project Manager)
Helen Carter	Food & Environment Research Agency (Secretary)
Belinda Phillipson	Food & Environment Research Agency (for item 2)
Andy Wattam	Food & Environment Research Agency (via telephone)
Tim Lovett	British Beekeepers' Association
Martin Smith	British Beekeepers' Association
Dinah Sweet	Welsh Beekeepers' Association [WBKA]
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association
Murray McGregor	Bee Farmers' Association
Bob Smith	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Carl Reynolds	Chair of CWG
Steve Sunderland	Scottish Executive
Huw Jones	Welsh Assembly

Apologies:

Chris Hartfield	National Farmers' Union
Mark Tatchell	Chair of SEAG

1. Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed attendees to the 16th meeting of the Healthy Bees Plan Project Management Board. The Chair thanked the Board for agreeing to meet with the Gateway Review Team which meant that some Board members would be called upon throughout this meeting for individual meetings with the Team. The draft report from the Gateway Review Team, including a Delivery Confidence Assessment (DCA), was due by close of play on 15th December 2011. The Gateway Team's recommendations and the DCA would be shared with the Project Management Board but their full report would not be published.

The 15th meeting had been Brian Ripley's (BBKA) last meeting and the Chair extended her thanks to him for the time he had spent as a member of the Board.

-----**ADVICE AND VIEWS**-----

2. Small hive beetle – walk through Beacon 1 exercise and outcomes. Escalation scenarios. Implications. Communications (PMB 16/1)

Belinda Phillipson (Fera) attended the meeting to brief the Board about Fera's response to a potential small hive beetle outbreak. She reported on the scenarios used in, and lessons learned from contingency exercise Beacon 1 which was a one day exercise carried out at Fera in March 2011 to test the strategic and policy response elements of the contingency plan. Representatives from Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government had contributed via telephone conference.

Escalation scenarios

An important lesson from the exercise was that it was highly likely that the response would move from eradication to containment very quickly, mainly due to the huge number of apiaries that would require inspection to eradicate and the associated high level of resources required. Following the exercise, the NBU had developed various outbreak/escalation scenarios to show the inspection and resourcing requirements and these were distributed for discussion:

Table 1: Examples of different outbreak scenarios for the small hive beetle – implications for eradication versus containment.

Table 2: Examples of differing outbreak scenarios for the small hive beetle – resource implications and impacts on beekeepers, and associated maps for each of the 5 scenarios.

Belinda explained that the figure of 3,500 'apiaries' mentioned in the documents was incorrect and should be 'beekeepers'. Statutory Infected Areas (SIA) of 16km radius would be designated as required by domestic/ EU legislation.

The Board made the following comments:

- For scenario 1 of the exercise – suspect SHB in another Member State – beekeeping stakeholders would expect the UK to ban imports from that Member State.
- The figures in Table 1 seemed implausible, eg, for scenario 2 where SHB was only found within one designated SIA, the apiaries of up to 3,500 or 10% of total estimated beekeepers in the UK would need to be inspected. This seemed too high for one SIA.
- The time of year and locations of hives needed to be accounted for in the scenarios since these factors would also impact on the spread of the pest.
- It was important to look at the lessons learned from *Varroa* to ensure that the United Kingdom was prepared for any outbreak.
- Had the true level of risk been properly assessed? Small hive beetle was commonly spread on African fruit flies and, after many years of importing fruit from Africa, how were we sure that we've not already had SHB here in the UK, but it has not become established.
- Could Fera revisit the risk assessment to take into account the experiences of SHB in the USA, in particular whether it had moved northwards and become established in northern States and Canada? Current evidence had suggested that SHB was only just able to survive in Canada.

In response, Fera and WAG said that:

- They recognised the Board's concerns about imports from Member States where SHB was detected, but it was unlikely that the UK would be able to ban imports from that Member State(s). For example, if SHB was found on a pineapple, what would the Board expect the UK to ban? However, each case would be considered on its merits.
- In relation to the figures in Table 1, these were worse case scenarios and given the Board's comments, it would be important to be certain of the figures/assumptions before using this information to influence decisions and before sharing the scenarios more widely with beekeepers. Belinda Phillipson (Fera) agreed to review the figures and the risk assessment and to also seek input from SEAG and CWG. Revised outbreak/escalation scenarios would be presented to the Board at their next meeting.

Identification of/treatment for SHB

Dinah Sweet (WBKA) said that it was important that any diagnosis for SHB took place as soon as possible and preferably within 24 hours of the sample arriving at Fera. Tim Lovett (BBKA) said that swift identification of SHB rested on how diligent individual beekeepers were – the onus was on beekeepers to spot it. Wally Shaw (WBKA) thought that it was more likely that Inspectors would identify the presence of SHB rather than beekeepers themselves.

Tim Lovett (BBKA) queried whether the necessary pharmaceuticals were stocked in preparation for an outbreak and the Chair confirmed that stocks of Check Mate Plus were held by the NBU. Andy Wattam (Fera) said that the use of soil drench was probably not an option for SHB but the use of lime might be considered.

Communications

Tim Lovett (BBKA) felt that more information regarding small hive beetle needed to be made available and beekeepers needed to be prepared for its arrival and be ready to spot and report it. The Chair said that Gay Marris (Fera) was in the process of producing an article on escalation scenarios to be put into the BBKA News early in 2012 in order to raise awareness.

Carl Reynolds (CWG Chair) said that before we shared the escalation scenarios and implications for the response with beekeepers, we needed to be sure the figures were correct.

The Project Manager said that, in the event of an outbreak, we needed to be able to inform as many beekeepers as possible but were also aware that not all were registered on BeeBase. Tim Lovett (BBKA) confirmed that, in the event of an outbreak, the BBKA would co-operate by sharing their members list with Fera. The Chair said that she would also consider using the press and TV to reach as many beekeepers as possible.

The Chair then thanked Belinda for attending the meeting and updating the Board on small hive beetle.

ACTIONS: 1. Fera to review and sanity check figures used in the escalation scenarios circulated to PMB before we share more widely with beekeepers (as part of the revised contingency plan due to be ready by March 2012).

2. SEAG and CWG to review revised contingency plan before putting back to PMB in March. 3. Fera to revisit the SHB risk assessment to make sure that the experiences of SHB in the USA, in particular whether SHB has moved northwards and become established in the northern states? Also how do we know that over many years of trading fruit etc with South Africa and other African countries we have not already had SHB here in the UK, but it has not taken hold – if we've had intermittent arrivals that have not led to establishment, what does this mean, if anything, for the risk assessment?

3. Asian hornet – proposed response (PMB 16/2)

Introducing this item, the Project Manager that the Asian hornet was a non-native species and had been considered by the GB Non-Native Species Board. In practice, the NBU had no statutory powers with regard to this pest and their role would be advisory. However, in view of the potential impacts on honey bees, Fera was currently working with Defra's Non-Native Species Secretariat to develop a response plan on two levels:

Level 1 – rapid response aiming to intercept and prevent establishment of the pest.

Level 2 – in the event of establishment, longer-term management of the pest by stakeholders/others.

Murray McGregor (BFA) said that Asian hornet was currently being plotted as it made progress through France. Bob Smith thought that a more proactive approach was needed with regard to Level 1 and suggested that overwintering queens were trapped, thus stopping the initiation of new nests, as was currently being done in France. The Project Manager said that this was problematic since Fera did not have a statutory remit (nor resources) with regard to this pest.

The Board agreed that action needed to be taken, at least for sentinel apiaries in the South West and South East of the country. Bob Smith agreed to circulate further information regarding the traps which were currently being used in France.

Murray McGregor said that following arrival this pest would become a normal husbandry issue and that beekeepers should deal with it and the risk themselves and not expect others to do it for them.

In relation to communications, Carl Reynolds (CWG Chair) advised that the key message should be that government would do what they could to prevent establishment of this pest, and beekeepers had an important role too.

ACTION: Bob Smith to circulate further information regarding Asian hornet traps to the Project Manager.

4. Policy Review – progress update

The latest meeting of the Policy Review Team, which looked at EFB options, was held on 12 December 2011. The Chair confirmed that John Howat (BFA), Andy Wattam (Fera), Huw

Jones (Welsh Assembly) and Steve Sunderland (Scottish Executive) were members of the Policy Review Team. It was intended that the January meeting would revisit AFB and EFB recommendations in light of the full random apiary survey (RAS) results. It was likely that the review would then move on to *Varroa* or small hive beetle.

Tim Lovett (BBKA) thought it was important that there was a policy review on *Varroa* and that lessons were learned from this.

The Project Manager said that a paper for the beekeeping press on the RAS results was to be produced by Fera in early 2012 and would be circulated as a draft to CWG for input.

ACTION: 1. Paper for beekeeping press to be produced by Fera on RAS results in early 2012 to be circulated as a draft to CWG for input.

-----PROJECT DELIVERABLES-----

5. Sign off notes from 15th meeting for posting on BeeBase. Sept to Nov Highlight report. Risks and Issues log (PMB 16/3)

Minutes of the 15th meeting

Item 2 – update on the RAS results – the Chair said that if the final report was not accepted by a scientific journal it was to be re-written. Gay Marris was yet to circulate a draft article for Bee Craft and WBKA News. The Project Manager would ensure that this went to the CWG for their approval in Gay Marris's absence.

Item 5 – a breakdown of train the trainer attendees had not yet been circulated to the PMB and HEG and the Project Manager agreed to follow this up.

Item 6 – the NBU had not shared the map on gap analysis (beekeeper registrations) with the Board and the Project Manager agreed to circulate this. Andy Wattam (Fera) said that a large number of beekeepers still thought that the NBU was automatically made aware of them when they joined an association and a consistency of approach among the associations needed to be encouraged.

Annex 1 'Working paper on EFB – views from PMB September 2011'

Bob Smith suggested that the text was altered to say that there was a metric which could be used to indicate apiary hygiene (page 11, paragraph 4).

Andy Wattam (Fera) said that the promotion of hospital sites should be developed (page 12, paragraph 4), and asked that the wording was altered to reflect that there was spread of EFB between apiaries (page 12, paragraph 7).

Sept to Nov Highlight report. Risks and Issues log (PMB 16/3)

September to November Highlight report

Education and husbandry workstream – point 4 – sale of nuclei –updating the Board, the Project Manager reported that Fera had a meeting with the major nuclei suppliers on 6 December 2011 to discuss how best to work together to reduce risks of disease through the sale of nuclei. Of the 7 main suppliers of nuclei who had been invited to attend the meeting, 4 had accepted: Thornes, Easybees, Fragile Planet, and Paynes Bee Farm Ltd, and the 3 others were not available: Weald Place Farm Bees, National Bee Supplies and Maisemore Apiaries Ltd, although Fera would inform them about developments. Richard Ball, Andy Wattam and Mike Brown (Fera) had also attended the meeting which had been constructive and all had agreed to develop a voluntary scheme based on the BBKA standard. Martin Smith (BBKA) and Tim Lovett (BBKA) confirmed that they were content for this to be used as a basis of what would be a Healthy Bees standard.

John Howat (BFA) thought that the Bee Farmers' Association should be involved in any further meetings and also suggested that Chris Deaves (BBKA) should attend. The Project Manager agreed to invite them to the next meeting which was planned for January 2012; the outcome of that meeting would be reported to the Board at their next meeting.

Murray McGregor (BFA) advised against setting up a scheme which would allow suppliers to self-certify nuclei. He also proposed that if NBU-issued health certificates were to be part of the scheme, then suppliers should pay for them.

Risks and Issues log

Risk 4 – data protection rules restrict access and use of beekeeper contact details, held by bee inspectors, for registration on BeeBase. John Howat (BFA) said that we were still losing valuable data and thought that this needed to be addressed urgently, especially since the Board now had a better understanding of the relevant data protection issues. Tim Lovett (BBKA) said that we needed to communicate with local associations more and to use the correct route of communication. Martin Smith (BBKA) said that some associations were still not forthcoming about sharing their details. However, provided beekeepers were known to the BBKA they were still 'in the system'. The Board agreed that the status of this risk was changed from 'Green' to 'Amber/Green'.

ACTIONS: 1. The Project Manager would ensure that the CWG progressed the RAS article in Gay Marris's absence. 2. Project Manager to ensure that a breakdown of train the trainer attendees is provided to the Board. 3. Project Manager to share the revised map on gap analysis (beekeeper registration) with local associations through the NBU and/or BBKA. 4. Secretary to update the minutes of the 15th meeting and post onto BeeBase. 5. Fera to invite BBKA and BFA representatives to attend the planned next meeting with bee suppliers to discuss assurance scheme for nuclei. 6. Project Manager to alter the current status of risk 4 (data protection) to Amber/Green.

6. Workplan for Phase 2 – review of progress with implementing activities in plan (PMB 16/4 – workplan 23/11/2011 version)

Activity 6 – Work with medicine producers/manufacturers to encourage new medicines

- John Howat (BFA) had not seen the draft SQP course from AMTRA and it was suggested that activity 6.2 on the workplan should be altered from ‘Amber’ to ‘Red’.
- Medicines card (PMB 16/6). Tim Lovett (BBKA) proposed that this should be designed to be as a simple medicines card provided to bee suppliers to be distributed with every sale of a medicine. Since beekeepers only used a limited number of medicines, it was intended that all of the necessary information was contained on one easily portable card. Tim indicated that the BBKA Executive might be willing to fund distribution of the card to suppliers.

The Board then gave their comments as follows:

- Bob Smith queried whether this had been agreed by the Communications Working Group and the Chair said that they should agree the final version. He was also concerned that it was consistent with the best practice templates.
- Huw Jones (WA) queried whether it had been compared with animal health medicines literature and the Project Manager agreed to cross check this for best practice.
- John Howat (BFA) thought that the Board should see a draft before it was finalised.
- Wally Shaw (WBKA) said that some medicaments were still ‘under the radar’ e.g. tonics, hive cleansers. He was concerned that beekeepers may be pushed into the direction of using these.

The Board agreed that they would provide any further feedback to the Project Manager who would then liaise with Tim Lovett (BBKA).

Activity 17 - Indicators of progress measuring implementation of the Healthy Bees Plan (PMB 16/5)

The Project Manager explained that this was the final version of the indicators following SEAG’s comments in September and it was therefore an updated version of the one circulated to the PMB in September. The Chair reminded the Board that this was a ‘living’ document which would be updated and developed over time. The Board then commented as follows:

- Martin Smith (BBKA) suggested that an additional indicator was added which could be called ‘beekeeper churn’ and would show how long new beekeepers remained beekeepers.
- Bob Smith suggested that it needed to be decided whether indicator 2 ‘do you feed your colonies’ was a measurement or a metric.

- Carl Reynolds (Chair of CWG) said that the document did not mention behavioural change but it was assumed within the document.
- Martin Smith (BBKA) said that the indicators tended to focus on amateur beekeepers and it should be amended to also include indicators relevant to bee farmers.

The Chair thanked the Board for their comments and said that any further suggestions should be sent to Belinda Phillipson (Fera) so that she could update the document. The Chair said that the Gateway Review Team had also been provided with this paper and it was likely that there would be additional feedback from them. An updated paper would be provided for the next meeting of the PMB.

Activity 13 – Securing sponsorship for HBP education and research

John Howat (BFA) presented a proposal under this element of the workplan aimed at introducing an apprenticeship scheme for potential bee farmers. He introduced a paper - reversing the decline in hive numbers; a BFA appraisal and made the following points:

- It was in the UK's interest to take measures to build the number of hives back up to at least the level of 20 years ago.
- More than half of Bee Farmers were currently over the retirement age and there was therefore a potential gap in numbers to be filled.
- It was more practical to recruit, train and retain one bee farmer with an average of 200 hives rather than a number of hobbyists with 4 hives each.

Funding was sought for one year for a person to set up the scheme with a budget of £30,000. The BFA were seeking to co-finance this with funding from supermarkets, the honey industry and the BFA. They had additionally considered grants from Europe but, as yet, had not been able to find a way to access this funding. John Howat (BFA) confirmed that initial indications from the honey industry were positive and they were generally supportive of the scheme.

The Chair then asked for the PMB's views on the proposal:

- Carl Reynolds (Chair of CWG), Bob Smith and Andy Wattam (Fera) supported the proposal.
- Tim Lovett (BBKA) supported the proposal but queried whether additional funding might be available from the Department of Trade.
- Huw Jones (WA) supported the proposal and Wally Shaw (WBKA) and Dinah Sweet (WBKA) agreed.
- Murray McGregor (BFA) supported the proposal but thought that the scheme needed to be extended beyond a single year. Martin Smith (BBKA) agreed with this view and said that future funding needed to be considered to continue this work during next year.

- Steve Sunderland (Scottish Executive) supported the proposal and said that he could arrange for the apprenticeship scheme to be advertised in the Scottish Beekeeper magazine.

The Project Manager reminded the Board that £20,000 remained in the Healthy Bees workplan for the current financial year (2011/12) for Activity 13.

In summing up the discussion, the Chair noted that the Board had agreed that in principle the BFA's proposal was a good idea, although considered that more time would be needed to develop a detailed plan and it would make sense to include an explanation of how this proposal fitted into the overall strategic plan of growing the bee farming sector.

BFA agreed to provide a detailed plan to Fera as the basis for a meeting with potential sponsors to explore the viability of the proposal. A progress update would be provided to the Board at their next meeting.

Activities 5 and 18

Due to shortness of time, the Project Manager would produce a short note on progress with activities 5 and 18 and circulate to the Board.

ACTIONS: 1. Project Manager to alter draft SQP course from 'Amber' to 'Red'. 2. PMB to send any comments and suggestions on the indicators (PMB 16/5) to Belinda Phillipson by 13 January. PMB's next meeting would include an item on indicators. 3. PMB to send any comments on the NBU's medicine leaflet (paper PMB 16/6) to Liz McIntosh who will work with Tim Lovett to develop a revised text which will then be reviewed by the HBP Peer Review Group before publication. 4. BFA to develop and provide more details of their proposal to Fera and Fera to work with BFA to invite potential sponsors to a seminar/workshop to explore the scope of the campaign and potential sponsorship. Aim to meet in February. BFA to develop and provide more details of their proposal to Fera by 13 January, including how this fits as part of a strategic plan to grow the bee farming sector.

7. Update on BBKA and NDB education programme including progress with embedding new materials/courses into local associations training programmes during 2011/12

Martin Smith (BBKA) reported on progress with the BBKA education programme for winter 2011/12. The BBKA coordinator, Bill Cadmore, had separated the programme into two strands:

- Strand 1 consisted of 8 sessions for local beekeeping groups where education and training had a low profile with the aim of explaining the benefits of education and to help embed the new materials/courses into the local associations' training programmes.

- Strand 2 was aimed at the people who would lead study groups in their areas and was targeted at those who had gained/were intending to gain BBKA's general husbandry levels 1 and 2.

Martin reported that there had been limited take-up of these sessions and this had been discussed by the Delivering Education Group to identify corrective action. The aim was now to focus on experienced/qualified beekeepers to increase the numbers of study group leaders by the end of March.

Bob Smith reported on the NDB education programme. During 2011 to end November, 238 training places had been taken up on NDB courses and 254 would be taken up by the end of December. Those who had attended courses had been issued with a newsletter as a way to keep in touch. Whilst uptake was good, Bob considered that £140 course fee was a possible barrier to uptake.

Huw Jones (Welsh Government) considered that training and education by the Inspectorate was a key deliverable under the Healthy Bees Plan and suggested that their work should also be brought to the Board for review alongside the BBKA's and the NDB's education work. The Chair agreed and said that some of the Inspectorate's education work had been recorded, for example, Fera was aware that the Inspectorate carried out approximately 700 visits per year to conferences/talks etc in England and Wales. However, she was also aware that work which was done by Bee Inspectors 'out of hours' was currently not captured although it should be. Andy Wattam (Fera) agreed saying that this type of work was often done with associations and should be recorded in some way.

Bob Smith suggested that the NDB courses could be part of the continuing professional development for the bee inspectors.

Wally Shaw (WBKA) questioned whether the microscopy and anatomy NDB courses were entirely relevant for good beekeeping. Murray McGregor (BFA) also questioned whether these two courses contributed directly to the Healthy Bees Plan. Bob Smith said that the courses had been very popular and had provided attendees with a detailed understanding of the internal workings of bees. Andy Wattam (Fera) supported this saying that microscopy was an important consideration when keeping bees.

Summing up, the Chair said that the Board would look at what had been achieved through Healthy Bees funding of education at the next meeting, covering BBKA, NDB and the NBU/Inspectorate.

ACTION: Next meeting of PMB to review impact of overall bee health education and training programme, including BBKA, NDB work plus the NBU/inspectors' programme.

8. BeeBase coordinator – progress and priorities for this work; implications for budget (PMB 16/7)

The Chair explained that items marked 'red' on the paper (PMB 16/7) were currently uncertain.

Funding for 2011/12

The budget was as follows:

- £81,000 of funding available to Fera IST from April 2011 – March 2012 as part of the Defra MoU.
- £15,000 was available via subcontract with Andy Cuthbertson for December 2011 – March 2012.
- an additional £45,000 was available for sub-contractors working for Fera IST between October 2011 – March 2012.

With regard to 2012/13 the Chair said that Mike Brown (Fera) had submitted a capital bid to Defra for £130,000 to finance the upgrade of BeeBase to make it accessible by blogs, tweets, barcodes, mapping, and so on.

The Chair said that the use of social media needed to be developed further during 2012/13 and this had already started with a short video currently available on You Tube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr6xSSdrrgw>

Bob Smith was concerned that not much time had been spent on BeeBase development, eg, on BeeBase optimisation, search engines still listed the BBKA and natural beekeepers before BeeBase. He was also aware that the Wikipedia entry for BeeBase and the NBU was mainly about Germany rather than the United Kingdom. The Chair asked Bob Smith to email her about these issues so that she could follow them up with Mike Brown (Fera).

Carl Reynolds (CWG Chair) said that CWG would review this paper at their next meeting, and suggested that BeeBase needed to include a diary of a beekeeper with practical tips through the year.

Summing up, the Chair agreed that the Board would review progress with BeeBase development at their next meeting.

ACTION: Next meeting of PMB to review progress with BeeBase development in light of additional resource deployed under the HBP.

9. Planning for 2012/13 (subject to Defra's approval of funding) (PMB 11/01 – extract from Business Case)

The Project Manager said that she had invited the BBKA and NDB to put forward proposals on education and training from Healthy Bees funding during 2012/13 (subject to Defra's approval of the business case). In response to this the BBKA and the NDB had produced papers as follows:

- i) BBKAProposal to Healthy Bee Plan Project Board (PMB 16/8)

Martin Smith (BBKA) said that he was currently the Chair of the delivery education group within the BBKA but said that this was likely to change in January 2012. Martin presented a three year funding proposal designed to improve beekeeper competence. Initially this would involve the recruitment of a 50% FTE Regional Education Co-ordinator to ensure that CiC and other training materials were used effectively at local level. This had been agreed by the BBKA Executive independently of the Healthy Bees Plan but the BBKA hoped that an additional three 50% FTE Regional Co-ordinators could be funded including one using Healthy Bees funding. It was proposed that funding would start on 1 April 2012 and run for three years. The project would come to a natural end after the three years once a cadre of trainers at local level had been achieved.

The Chair asked Martin Smith (BBKA) what he intended to do if the additional post was not supported by the Board and he said that recruitment of one post would go ahead. The BBKA intended to advertise the first post in the BBKA News before Christmas and, provided a suitable recruit was found, it was intended that he or she started work in the Spring of 2012.

The Chair asked the Board for their thoughts, which were as follows:

- Dinah Sweet (WBKA) asked what the BBKA's intention was after the three years. Martin Smith (BBKA) said that it was likely that the scheme would continue in some format in the future and may be sustainable via the local associations.
- Bob Smith said that he would support this proposal and that, provided part of it was run centrally, and part locally, it could potentially become self-perpetuating.
- The Chair felt that the posts were a positive move in terms of providing a more direct line into the local associations. She was also keen that some existing staff might be able to become involved perhaps by spending 50% of their time on Inspectorate work and 50% of their time in these posts.
- The Project Manager asked for BBKA's view on the delivery of this proposal within the associations since it was quite different to the CiC which had been delivered 'top down'. Martin Smith (BBKA) said that he hoped the associations would have a sense of ownership since this was not being imposed upon them.
- The Chair asked whether the success of this initiative was measurable and Martin Smith (BBKA) said that it was his intention that the individuals recruited would report directly to the Chair of the Delivering Education Group who ideally should also be a member of the PMB in order that progress could be monitored.

Summing up, the Chair noted that the Board supported the proposal at the 50% level of funding. She said that the Healthy Bees business plan was due to be submitted to the Defra Local Approvals Panel during February 2012. She therefore suggested that one additional Regional Co-ordinator was held on reserve, subject to funding, which would be confirmed at the end of March 2012. Provisionally, the Chair said that she had been told to assume level funding, at £579,000, for next three financial years of the Healthy Bees Plan.

ii) NDB Short Courses – Proposal for 2012/13 (PMB 16/9)

Bob Smith introduced this paper saying that the NDB consisted of a handful of individuals with finite resources. They had put together a three year plan to design and develop new courses which could be a mix of the existing two day courses, one day courses or up to three day courses. The plan had been developed as a result of feedback from previous students which had shown that a limiting factor to the delivery of NDB courses had been the cost to students which, at £140 per course, had been discriminatory. To overcome this the NDB proposed that the courses were subsidised by £90 per student which left the individual to pay only the remaining £50.

The Board commented as follows:

- Dinah Sweet (WBKA) was keen that general husbandry was progressed as many beekeepers were interested in this and it would increase standards.
- The Chair asked about the evidence/metrics and Bob Smith said that approximately 250 people had now gone back to their associations and trained others.
- Carl Reynolds thought that it was important that, where a subsidy was paid, attendees realised that they had an obligation to teach others. The Chair agreed that the metrics needed to be clear and also queried whether local associations could part-fund the trainees if the Board was not able to meet the full amount.
- Steve Sunderland (Scottish Executive) said that there had been significant interest in getting some of the courses up to Scotland and a subsidy of £50 per student was currently being considered.
- The Project Manager, Bob Smith and Steve Sunderland (Scottish Executive) agreed to discuss the metrics further.

ACTIONS: 1. At their next meeting the PMB would consider progress with the BBKA's recruitment of one education coordinator. 2. Project Manager, Bob Smith and Steve Sunderland to discuss the proposed subsidy for NDB courses.

10. AOB and date of next meeting

Any other business

Bob Smith commented that there was a large amount of information to discuss at each meeting of the Board and Carl Reynolds (Chair of CWG) asked whether much of the routine work could be carried out via email. The Chair said that she would consider this but in the past emails had been problematic as responses were not always forthcoming.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board would take place during the first two weeks of March 2012.

