

**Minutes of the Healthy Bees Plan  
Project Management Board  
19<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012  
Room 50F23, Fera, Sand Hutton, York**

**Present:**

Helen Crews	Food & Environment Research Agency (Fera)
Liz McIntosh	
Marie Holmes	
Andy Wattam	
Mike Brown	
Kate Parker	
David Aston	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
Martin Tovey	
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
Margaret Ginman	Bee Farmers Association (BFA)
Bob Smith	National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB)
Mark Tatchell	Chair of SEAG
Nigel Robins	Beekeeping Representative

**Apologies:**

Carl Reynolds	Chair of CWG
Chris Hartfield	National Farmers' Union (NFU)
Dinah Sweet	Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA)
Tim Lovett	British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)
Steve Sunderland	Scottish Executive
Ken Edwards	Chair of HEG
Huw Jones	Welsh Government

**1. Welcome and introduction**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Healthy Bees Plan Project Management Board.

**2. Presentation on NBU spend, including training (PMB 19/1)**

Mike Brown tabled paper 19/1 which was a breakdown of costs by activity for 2011/12 for the England and Wales Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This was a breakdown of staff costs by activity (logged on Fera CMS time recording system) into broad categories which included inspector and lab time. The below illustrates further detail of each category:

- BeeBase development (4%) – NBU and KIMS (knowledge and Information Management Systems) time;
- Advice to policy (7%) – input into policy review and advice;
- Exotics/ imports checks (5%) – surveillance and exotic pest surveys;

- Call out by beekeeper/ registration (6%) – administration of new beekeepers by office staff and inspectors;
- Applied R&D (6%) – part of MoU i.e. not specific projects;
- Staff training (8%) – training for all staff including technical training sessions and office staff;
- Random Apiary Survey (12%) – lab diagnostics, logistical support and inspectors;
- Beekeeper training programme (21%) – formal events (totalling nearly 900 in 2011/12) including workshops, lectures etc. office staff and inspectors;
- Foulbroods treatment/ prevention (31%) – inspection programme.

All activities were reported to customers through the MoU and KPI's.

The chart didn't include the £300k-£500k additional income generated from the 18-20 projects which included research, ecotox work and commercial work. EURL (European Reference Laboratory) would be an additional income stream in 2012/13.

*The following questions were raised in discussion:*

Q Had the stability of the pie chart changed during the last 5 years?

Funding from the Healthy Bees Plan was an important injection and funding was confirmed for the next 3 years, the research base had also grown in this time.

Q How often were MoU's reviewed?

Yearly, so the opportunity was there to revise with regular reporting. NBU and Welsh Government held meetings with a change of emphasis this financial year which had been implemented (NBU were asked to deliver specific training programmes).

England MoU training element targeted training events in areas where there was high disease and few members of associations.

Q What was the range of the 900 training events?

Training events ranged from 2 day workshops on pests & diseases held at colleges to smaller lectures for local associations, or apiary sessions etc with a mixture of theoretical input and a practical element. More transparency and classification of training events was worked into the MoU this year.

Q training at 21% was about £500,000 of the available funding – suggesting costs of about £500 per event. What did this equate to in terms of costs per contact/student?

Would cover 30,000 beekeepers in total. This sum did not include 1-to-1 training at the apiary during inspection visits.

Q Could resource used show different type of beekeeper (farmer or hobbyist)?

This had not been done.

Q Had the 900 events been broken down into experience or the type of beekeeper (farmer or hobbyist)?

No, however, feedback forms were distributed at all training events and a time code to reflect type of training event was planned.

### **3. BeeBase demonstration and plans for development**

Mike Brown and Kate Parker presented an overview of BeeBase and provided the Group with a live demo. Key points included:

- All jobs for BeeBase were recorded on a job list for Fera's IT team (KIMS) to work through. From that job list priorities were identified and the list was continually evolving;
- Training event element was developed internally for inspectors with the view to roll-out to the wider website so visitors could read the range of events and upcoming events. This would be on the training events section of the website and those who were registered could book onto courses;
- Electronic import notifications – this was available to registered beekeepers who could electronically notify NBU of their intentions to import. Previously there were issues of beekeepers not notifying relevant authorities, this notification system would keep track of imports and numbers entering the country;
- Bee movement records – this recorded sales of bees and equipment. When added it inserted the record of movement into the Bee Inspectors inspection list who could trace and flag if someone had received bees or equipment from potentially infected stock. From this a RAG status would be allocated and inspected accordingly;
- Regional summary report of inbound and outbound movements – this report enabled the NBU to understand suppliers of risk areas. NBU and inspectors had regular contact with suppliers and Inspectors could establish whether clean or risky. This was assessed through historical disease data. Liz McIntosh informed the Group that Fera was aiming to meet nucleus suppliers again in the autumn to review the code of practice developed earlier in the year and to discuss whether to develop further into a red tractor/bee type scheme of approved suppliers;
- Email notification system – this would link together the bee tracking and events calendar;
- Capital bid - major development this year (from winning extra funding of £142k from Defra made up from £35k e-learning, £30k mobile technology, £24k mobile apps, £24k user testing and acceptance, £11k mapping, £10k project management and £8k revamp of content) was to speed up delivery of functionality from HBP/ CWG recommendations on making BeeBase more user friendly and an authoritative source of information. There were 5 main elements included in the capital bid which covered:
  - Development of mobile devices;
  - Improve communications through You Tube and twitter etc;
  - Development of apps similar to Fera's existing 'crop monitor' app for notification of pests and diseases;
  - Revamp content of BeeBase pages;

- Develop e-learning systems including a self-test module on pest and disease recognition – it was suggested by Nigel Robins to investigate ‘uduto’ ([www.udutu.com](http://www.udutu.com)) as a free online course authoring tool.

A Fera resourcing committee was in the process of reviewing whether the applications were of use wider across Fera.

The Chair asked whether the Group felt informed about BeeBase and its future developments which they were. Mark Tatchell asked would any comment from this Board influenced the Fera resourcing committee on accepting this money. Yes, Fera would be able to report favourably on the Board’s support for the proposed developments.

#### **4. Gateway recommendation 7**

The Chair reminded the Group of gateway recommendation 7 which was to consider how to improve transparency to PMB of NBU’s inspection and education services and improve co-ordination between the educational work of both PMB and NBU.

In the light of Mike Brown’s presentation and input under items 2 and 3 of this meeting, the Chair suggested that the first part of the recommendation was now addressed, but we needed to consider how to address the second part ie, improve co-ordination between the educational work of both PMB and NBU. The Board offered the following proposals on improving coordination:

- Bob Smith suggested that including BBKA/ NDB courses in the events calendar on BeeBase and links to other association courses. Courses should be reviewed to ensure there weren’t gaps between the delivery/training bodies and there should be a co-ordinated approach in joint campaigns and initiatives. This would go further than sharing calendars and to look at how to work together to develop courses etc.
- Mark Tatchell suggested highlighting in the calendar those courses which gave new entrants the core competencies required – this was essential for the next generation of beekeepers.
- David Aston said that BBKA were happy to host a meeting on this co-ordination approach later in the year and report back at the next PMB meeting and suggested establishing this work as a standing ‘shared common thread’ agenda item.
- Nigel Robins cautioned that progress needed to be made to address the Gateway recommendation which was more than agreeing a plan of action.

The Chair asked the Group whether they were happy to sign off gateway recommendation 7 in light of the information provided and future work which they were.

**ACTION:** Marie Holmes to update highlight report.

**ACTION:** Bob Smith and David Aston to forward contact details to Kate Parker to establish a common contact point between NBU/ BBKA and NDB.

**ACTION:** David Aston to host a meeting to discuss co-ordination approach including the BBKA Education Coordinator and to report back to PMB at their next meeting at end September/early October.

## 5. HBP governance (PMB 19/2)

The Chair provided background to the Board on the recently established Plant Health Strategic Advisory Forum which was chaired by Fera's policy programme and was a gathering of plant health stakeholders to advise and influence plant health policy.

In the light of this development within Fera's policy programme, the Chair proposed that PMB should be re-badged as the bee health advisory forum to mirror what was already underway in plant health. This would build on something that was already working well. The Healthy Bees Plan would be one element of the Forum's remit which would be formalised to include input and advice to policy development (which already featured on the Board's meeting agendas under 'advice and views'). The benefit of the Forum was in providing an opportunity for early discussion on emerging or developing issues as well as increasing transparency and understanding for all participants of positions across the range of interests.

To help shape direction, one specific intention was to use the Forum to engage stakeholders at the start of the policy process to help inform Government thinking ahead of the formation of proposals/options for wider comment. Through this the aim was that those most affected by policy decisions should have increased opportunities to play a full role in influencing those decisions. Agreed text capturing the views of the Forum on policy issues would be included in a specific section of submissions to Ministers.

It was proposed for the advisory forum to be made up of no less than 10 and no more than 14 members which were considered as the optimum number to function efficiently and could include rotated attendance. Helen Crews would continue as Chair and Fera would continue to provide the Secretariat. The Forum was not vastly different to the way we had already worked but were asking stakeholders to be involved in a wider spread of issues for bee health which would advise Ministers and policy. It was suggested to use the plant health forum terms of reference as a straw man.

**ACTION:** Helen Crews to circulate draft terms of reference to the Group for comment.

The Chair paused to seek views on the proposal and the following points were covered during a brief discussion:

- Alignment with other approaches within Fera made sense. Would the stakeholder group remain the same or should it be expanded to include honey packers, nuclei suppliers, equipment suppliers etc.? The feeling was yes, a working principle for the Forum should be to invite whoever necessary to attend to cover specific issues.
- Overall the Board supported this approach. David Aston welcomed the rationalisation and would like to see the proposed terms of reference to ensure members of the Board were actively involved in the decision making process and to demonstrate that Fera had consulted with stakeholders and taken into account what was said.
- Margaret Ginman asked for clarification of which organisations would be represented on the Forum as she would want to consult within BFA about this.

The Chair said that the PMB would simply become the Bee Health Advisory Forum with 10 to 14 representatives – BFA, BBKA, NDB, WBKA, NFU and working group chairs/subject experts. Scotland would continue to attend as an observer. More than one representative from the organisations could attend.

In summing up, the Chair said that Fera would circulate a before and after diagram of the board/ forum to illustrate where it sat within the policy programme. It was also envisaged that the advisory forum would have a work plan which included Healthy Bees Plan delivery as one element.

**ACTION:** Liz McIntosh to forward before and after diagram and list of proposed organisations to PMB. And a draft workplan for the new Forum.

### Working groups

The Chair suggested the idea of still having access to the 3 working groups but rather than regular meeting of the working groups, the Board would commission work for them to complete on an ad hoc basis. The proposal was to include membership on the Forum of the Chairs or leads of the 3 working groups as members, and the Forum would commission those Chairs on a piece of work who would involve members of the working groups where necessary or others as they saw fit. It was envisaged to move to a 'task and finish' approach which was more nimble but still retaining the existing network to draw on (this approach had been in place during 2011/12).

David Aston asked who in Defra would make decisions on the advice the Forum. Julie Hitchcock was Fera's customer in Defra for this work. Fera policy programme would present recommendations developed by the Forum to Ministers in submissions.

The Chair wanted to take the opportunity to thank Carl Reynolds for his valued work as Chair of CWG. Carl has officially stepped down as Chair of CWG and the Board would be seeking to replace Carl as soon as possible.

### Change of roles

Helen Crews updated the Group that she was changing roles from 1 October and would be working to the Director of Policy and Regulation as the Head of Better Regulation. This new role wasn't 'pure' policy but fell into a policy remit hence retaining the Chair position for PMB. Immediate tasks were to set up task forces on plant health and also become Account Manager for Defra. Kelvin Hughes was currently acting Head of Inspectorates.

Liz McIntosh was also changing roles and was moving from bee health policy to plant health policy to work with Richard Harris on the EU review of plant health regime to deal with the vast amount of work it presented. Richard Watkins would be taking over the Project Management of the Healthy Bees Plan and line management of x3 bee health policy staff.

Helen took the opportunity during the meeting to extend her thanks to Liz for her hard work and wished her well in her new role.

## **6. Draft proposal from disease control policy review**

Liz McIntosh presented an overview of the pest and disease control policy review which included; a recap on reviews terms of reference, key questions, members of review group, current policies/ interventions; sources of evidence for the review; outputs and plans for public consultation; headlines from the review – proposed changes; closer look at pests and diseases looking particularly at changes on EFB and Varroa, and costs and impacts of pests and diseases from the prioritisation exercise.

The following points were made during a brief discussion on the recommendations from the review:

- Bob Smith was concerned that deregulation of EFB was going to one of the recommendations, and was happy that this was not the case and that the destruction policy was encouraged. The recommendations would raise the profile of EFB in beekeepers' minds and the importance of managing it. A good outcome would be more peer pressure on those who weren't controlling EFB properly.
- Nutrition had come up as an issue but it wasn't within the remit of this group. In addition, there wasn't a body of evidence which could be applied, although it was recognised that it was important.
- Turning to the specific questions in the consultation document, Mark Tatchell thought the questions were quite general and suggested to include more specific questions for those areas in the consultation document where we required specific responses.

It was asked what the next steps were, these included:

- Details, proposals and plans to be confirmed;
- Issue proposals for consultation – September (tbc) until November;
- Possible workshop with stakeholders towards end of consultation period;
- Publish summary of comments made by consultees and government's response and Defra and WG decision in light of consultation (published within 3 months of close of consultation);
- NBU [supported by the associations] work up implementation plan by end of 2012/13 [for implementation over 3-5 years tbc];
- Draft implementation plan reviewed by stakeholders (PMB/bee health advisory forum) – early 2013 and progress reviewed into future.

David Aston asked about consultees and whether there were merits in collating responses from local associations (potential of 260) into county associations (potential of 60). Nigel Robins had prior experience of going to consultation and suggested that to give Ministers greater confidence that we had gone deeper than the usual stakeholders it was important to let individuals respond. David said the BBKA could issue a communication stating the consultation was out and encourage responses from its members.

In summary, the Board was generally supportive of the proposed recommendations from the review. Liz McIntosh would circulate the draft consultation document to them when ready to seek their views particularly on the consultation questions, as a sense check before finalising it for public consultation.

## **7. HBP workplan for 2012/13 (PMB 19/3). NDB's proposal for 2012/13**

Activity No.3 – This was a continuing activity from phase 1. Bob Smith said that NDB was contracted to deliver 14 training courses which were now complete so this activity could be removed. NDB's intention was to write another 3 to 4, 2 day training courses partly funded by Scottish Government. This would give them access to the courses already written and the

hope to deliver 4 courses in Scotland this financial year. The intention was to develop and run further high quality 2 day courses. Dates for Scottish events were set but rest of framework was yet to be populated.

NDB would like to use Fera teaching suite for NDB courses but Fera were obliged to charge commercial rates for hiring the teaching suites. It was asked whether any of the £20k funding for NDB could be used for funding accommodation. The Board supported this in principle but David Aston would write to the Fera Executive to ask them to reconsider charging.

Activity No. 4 – This activity was underspent, it was suggested to place an advertisement in the beekeeping press as there was funding available for the next 3 years. David Aston said to consider the merits of continued professional development.

Activity No. 5 – Marie Holmes would follow up with associations regarding data sharing. Associations were initially invited in February to share data with the NBU. Marie would report back on the updated action plan to the Board (forum) at its next meeting

Activity No. 6 - VMD were the lead on this activity and had developed an action plan. Martha Spagnuolo-Weaver who was instrumental in setting this up had left and Nick Wren would be continuing this work. Mike Brown suggested inviting medicine manufacturers to attend PMB to explain the process involved to enable the Board to understand the complexities of medicine manufacture.

Activity No. 8 – This was covered by Kate Parker and Mike Brown earlier in the meeting (agenda point 3). David Aston queried whether there was any intention to create a more comprehensive site map for BeeBase? Yes, this was on the job list.

Activity No. 15 – remove from HBP workplan, this could become an issue for the advisory Forum to consider.

Activity No's. 14. 17 & 18 – These were all SEAG items and should be retained on the work plan.

Discussions turned to consideration of a workplan for the advisory forum. David Aston suggested not restricting the work plan to just one year and to think about what the forum wanted to achieve over the 3 years and include a benefits realisation plan as a new activity. Mark Tatchell proposed that continuing professional development of beekeepers and delivery of core competences for the next generation should be a key element of the workplan.

Liz McIntosh said that there would be one workplan for the Forum and implementation of the Healthy Bees Plan would be one element (which would have its own workstreams).

## **8. Sign off draft notes of 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and June highlight report, including revised risk register**

### Notes of 18<sup>th</sup> meeting

Bob Smith noted that only minutes up to the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of PMB were posted on BeeBase.

**Action:** Secretary to post minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> meeting on BeeBase.

There was a note to remove the opening paragraph of the minutes and to list Belinda Phillipson's name in full on page 2. Following these suggestions the Group agreed to finalise the minutes.

#### Highlight report

Bob Smith said he would forward comments following the meeting. There were no other comments from the Board on the highlight report.

**ACTION:** Marie Holmes to include proposed suggestions from Bob Smith in the July highlight report.

#### **9. AOB and date of next meeting**

Margaret Ginman sought approval from the Board to agree to £1000 from the Healthy Bees Plan funding for 2012/13 to be allocated to a BFA training event to improve bee farmers competence. She was also seeking funding from the Scottish Government. The Board was supportive in principle. Liz McIntosh asked Margaret to email the Board with her request.

The next meeting was planned for late September/ early October.

Fera  
17 August 2012