

**Minutes of the Healthy Bees Plan  
Project Management Board  
4<sup>th</sup> Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
Agriculture House, Stoneleigh**

**Present:**

Helen Crews	Food & Environment Research Agency [Fera] (Chair)
Helen Carter	Food & Environment Research Agency (Secretary)
Liz McIntosh	Healthy Bees Project Manager Fera
John Howat	Bee Farmers' Association [BFA]
David Bancalari	Bee Farmers' Association
Chris Hartfield	National Farmers' Union [NFU]
Huw Jones	Welsh Assembly Government [WAG]
Amy Byrne	Welsh Assembly Government
Wally Shaw	Welsh Beekeepers' Association [WBKA]
Dinah Sweet	Welsh Beekeepers' Association
Bob Smith	Amateur Beekeeper
David Shannon	Yorkshire British Beekeepers Association (YBBKA)

**Also in attendance:**

Richard Ball	Food & Environment Research Agency
Ian Homer	Food & Environment Research Agency
Norman Houston	South Staffs College

**Apologies:**

John Home	Bee Farmers' Association
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**1. Introduction. Note of 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on BeeBase**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Project Management Board and thanked the NFU for hosting the meeting in Stoneleigh.

The Chair introduced David Shannon (Yorkshire BBKA) as a new member of the Board who would strengthen the amateur beekeepers perspective. The Chair also welcomed David Bancalari (BFA) who was standing in for John Home and was also present for item 6 regarding training DVDs.

The Chair also introduced Richard Ball and Ian Homer, NBU Education and Extension Officers (Fera) and Norman Houston, Head of Curriculum (South Staffs College) who was now interim Chair of the Education & Husbandry Working Group.

Apologies were received from Scotland. They would aim to send an observer to the next meeting.

The notes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting were agreed by the Board and would now be posted onto BeeBase.

Articles had now appeared in the BBKANews and Beecraft and an article would appear in 'The Welsh Beekeeper' in the March 2010 issue. David Bancalari (BFA) suggested that an article in the 'Professional Beekeeper' would be

beneficial and the Chair agreed to consider this. The Chair went on to say that she had asked Gay Marris of the Food & Environment Research Agency to act as Communications Co-ordinator for bee issues. Gay's contact details were [gay.marris@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gay.marris@fera.gsi.gov.uk).

The Chair updated the Board regarding recent interactions with the BBKA. The BBKA had attended two recent 'All Party Parliamentary Groups' (APPGs) to give their views on the Healthy Bees Project Management Board and other issues to Lord Davies. Further information was at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty/register/memi185.htm>.

The Chair had also been invited to give the Chair's perspective on the progress of the Healthy Bees Plan at the following meetings:

- The South West Counties Joint Consultative Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010
- Cambridgeshire Beekeepers Association on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Huw Jones (WAG) and Chris Hartfield (NFU) expressed concern that time was being diverted from the important work of implementation to attempts to get the BBKA to engage. The consensus from the Board was that:

- We had important work to do and progress could not be delayed.
- The door was open for the BBKA to attend the Board either for particular issues or as full Board members.
- The Board would like to write to Lord Davies reiterating these points copied to the BBKA.

**ACTION: Chair and Project Manager to draft a letter to Lord Davies copied to the BBKA.**

## **2. November Highlight report. Spend to date. Risks and Issues log. Inter-working group dependencies**

### Spend to date

The Chair reminded the Board that they should send travel claims to Helen Carter and that they should ideally arrive before the end of February so that they are paid during this financial year.

The Chair reminded the Board that there were 4 pots of money relating to bee health as follows:

- *Living with Environmental Change*: Honey Bees and other Pollinators Initiative – consortium of BBSRC, NERC, Wellcome Trust, Defra and Scottish Government.
- *Defra applied R&D* – for applied research by the National Bee Unit around bee health.
- *Bee Health Programme* – funded by Defra. Supports advice, inspection and enforcement in support of bee health supplied by NBU and its Inspectorate.

- *Healthy Bees Plan* – funded by Defra. Devolved responsibility of HBP to Fera.

Part of Healthy Bees Plan funding for 2009/10 was £180,000 for educational and promotional activities. Some of this would fund 'train the trainer'. Another part of Healthy Bees Plan funding was for the Education and Extension Officer posts and for travel and subsistence of the HBP Project Management Board.

### Risks and Issues log

The Project Manager updated the Board on the Highlight Report (paper PMB 4/1).

Huw Jones (WAG) suggested that the status of risks R1 (delay in steers and advice from PMB) and R3 (insufficient resources due to increased work - Ministerial profile increased) might be moved to 'red' due to lack of progress in these areas. The Project Manager would consider this and would also add 'risk owners' and 'mitigating actions' to future logs. In addition, the risk of [not] expanding BeeBase registration due to data protection issues would be added to the log. The budget section of the Highlight Report would be completed in future editions.

In addition to work featured in the Highlight Report, it was noted that Defra (Science Group) was funding the following additional project which had started in November 2009:

1. Nosema risk assessment
2. Small hive beetle risk assessment
3. Beekeeping practices – better evidence for training and education materials.

### Inter-Working Group Dependency

John Howat (BFA) would like to see more inter-group working between the Workstreams. The Project Manager confirmed that the HBP Implementation Brief (SSG 1/2) had sought to establish these links between the Workstreams and once the groups were fully established the links would be strengthened. Currently Richard Ball (Fera) and Ian Homer (Fera) were members of the Education & Husbandry Workstream and also attend the Communications Workstream with the purpose of ensuring coordination. In addition, all work programmes (which would include any dependencies between the Groups) would be signed off by the Project Management Board.

**ACTIONS: 1. HBP Project Management Board to send travel claims to Helen Carter. 2. The Chair would circulate a revised copy of the table which summarises the budgets (SSG1/1). 3. Project Manager to update the Risks Log. 4. The Project Manager will circulate details of mid-year funded projects to the Board and would also ensure that these details are on BeeBase. 5. Project Manager to circulate the Work Programme for the Communications Workstream to the Board for their comments and endorsement.**

### **3. Draft Healthy Bees Communications Strategy produced by Communications Working Group (PMB 4/2). Effectiveness of communications channels**

The Chair invited the Board to comment on the draft Communications Strategy for Healthy Bees (PMB 4/2). Bob Smith (Amateur Beekeeper) suggested some alterations to the bee communications interrelationships diagram and these would now be incorporated. The Project Manager invited further comments on the paper either at this meeting or before the Communications Workstream meeting which was to be held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

**ACTION: PMB to send comments on PMB 4/2 to the Project Manager.**

### **4. Progress on implementing education and training workplan. Paper on regional training apiaries (PMB 4/3)**

The Chair had invited the BBKA Education lead to attend this meeting but they had declined. She would, however, be involved in a bilateral with them in January 2010 and would update the Board regarding this discussion at the next meeting.

#### Pilot Roadshows

Planning for the pilot roadshows was underway and 2 of the 4 were well advanced and were to be held on the following dates:

Northwest Region was on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
Southwest Region was on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Ian Homer (Fera) was able to estimate the approximate cost as £30 per head based on a previous workshop which was held in the Southwest last year.

John Howat (BFA) asked whether the Board was to see cost/benefit analyses (CBA) to support any proposals (such as the workshops) which were put to them to endorse. The Chair confirmed that we would circulate an investment appraisal of the roadshows to the Board. To assess response to the roadshows we would issue a 'happy sheet' or similar at the end of each event. We also needed to record the following:

Numbers of attendees

Outcomes/successes

What could have been done differently/better?

Follow up 3 months after the workshop e.g. disease levels before and after and increase in numbers registering on BeeBase.

#### Regional apiaries (PMB 4/3)

Richard Ball (Fera) introduced his paper on regional apiaries which was requested by the Board at the last meeting. The current location of regional apiaries may be discriminatory as they can be situated up to 200 miles away from

any one individual. It was noted that Dan Basterfield had previously offered the use of apiaries for training purposes at a cost. However, the Board felt that as approximately half of associations had apiaries it may be beneficial to work with them to maximize numbers available for specific training purposes. In addition, as these apiaries would be maintained by the associations themselves we would not have to dedicate time and resources to them. The Board agreed to that we needed to do a scoping exercise of existing training apiaries and gaps in geographical coverage, including which land-based colleges had training apiaries. Norman Houston (South Staffs College) and Richard Ball (Fera) would work together on this exercise and come back to the Board with their recommendations on next steps with training apiaries for education workplan in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

**ACTIONS: 1. PMB to inform Norman Houston and Richard Ball about existing training apiaries. 2. Norman Houston and Richard Ball to undertake scoping exercise and bring recommendations to the next meeting.**

## **5. Paper on information delivery options (PMB 4/4)**

Ian Homer set out the various ways in which we deliver information, as requested by the Board at the previous meeting. The main ways were as follows:

- Printed matter
- Computer based information retrieval
- DVD's
- Lectures/conventions
- Tutor training

The consensus from the Board was that a number of different delivery methods were needed. The Board's support for offering City & Guilds 'train the trainer' courses to beekeeper trainers through Healthy Bees funding should result in more effective delivery of learning. Norman Houston (South Staffs College) would obtain costings for a 4 day condensed option for 'train the trainer' and bring these back to the Board.

**ACTION: Norman Houston to provide costings for City & Guilds 'train the trainer'.**

## **6. Training DVDs**

David Bancalari (BFA) demonstrated an example of an interactive training DVD. David had demonstrated this during the Apimondia Congress in September 2009 and it had been met with interest. The Chair asked to Board for comments on what they had viewed today. Dinah Sweet (WBKA) suggested that it could be a useful way to learn if used in conjunction with seeing real thing. Huw Jones (WAG) agreed that it could be useful if used in conjunction with other tools. Bob Smith (Amateur Beekeeper) felt that it did have a potential use for identifying pests/diseases which cannot currently be seen in the UK e.g. small hive beetle and that it could also be used to improve husbandry. John Howat (BFA) suggested that it could be made available on BeeBase.

As there was interest from the Board, the Chair would commission David Bancalari to complete a proposal for them to consider. The Chair would meet with David during February/March to discuss the proposal with him.

If the Board were content with the proposal then filming needed to take place during the forthcoming season. Ian Homer (Fera) suggested that an alert system for disease could be used so that filming could take place as soon as possible. Biosecurity would, however, be an issue and we needed a protocol agreed by the NBU.

**ACTION: 1. The Chair will provide a business case template to David Bancalari. 2. The Chair would meet with David Bancalari during February/March to discuss the business case.**

## **7. Progress with setting up working groups (PMB 4/5)**

The Project Manager introduced paper PMB 4/5 which sought the Board's views on whether independent (interim) Chairs of working groups should be paid for their role. We needed to consider the system used elsewhere e.g. the Non-Native Species Secretariat in Fera paid £550 per day to the Chairs of their working groups. Huw Jones (WAG) and John Howat (BFA) agreed that we needed to move forward with the selection of Chairs and lack of any incentive could discourage some people from applying. The remainder of the Board agreed that interim Chairs should therefore be paid up to a maximum of £550 per day. This would now allow the Husbandry and Education Working Group and the Science and Evidence Advisory Group to be progressed and it was likely that Mark Tatchell would become the interim Chair of the latter.

## **8. Progress on Defra study of beekeeping practices. Action plan to raise awareness about Bee Base and to encourage registration. Train the trainer**

### Defra study of beekeeping practices

There had been a good response so far from volunteers who were to be interviewed for this study. The questions to be addressed included:

- i) Effectiveness to communications channels
- ii) Reasons for not registering on or using BeeBase

### BeeBase awareness

An action plan on BeeBase awareness was being implemented in response to National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee recommendations to increase significantly the number of registered beekeepers. This included:

- 1) Requests to approximately 40 organisations to include a BeeBase link and information on the importance of registration on their websites. Of these, there had been 10 responses agreeing to do this.
- 2) Requests to landowners who allowed hives on their land to encourage beekeepers to register on BeeBase.

We could monitor the effectiveness of the above measures by looking at BeeBase over the next 6 to 9 months to see whether there had been any increase in registration.

Huw Jones (WAG) suggested that if BeeBase were as user-friendly as possible then it would encourage users. It was considered that an alert system may encourage registration but this would require beekeepers to provide their email addresses and/or mobile phone details. These issues would be considered by the Communication Working Group.

John Howat (BFA) was also concerned that there were issues in getting information to 'unknown' beekeepers. However, due to data protection issues we were unable to enter unknown beekeepers on to BeeBase. The BBKA had previously offered to compare their list of stakeholders with the list held by the National Bee Unit on Beebase. The Chair would pursue this with the BBKA.

Richard Ball (Fera) was concerned that BeeBase does not appear on a search for 'bees' on Google. The Chair confirmed that Fera was looking at Google optimisation to solve this.

#### Train the trainer

The Education Programme was underway and a letter regarding generic 'train the trainer' courses had now been sent to secretaries of county associations to see what the potential uptake was.

**ACTIONS: 1. Project Manager to discuss an alert system on BeeBase at the Communication Working Group. 2. Chair to discuss the comparison of contact lists with the BBKA.**

#### **9. Update on UK's Apiculture Programme 2011 – 2014**

This programme was to be reviewed for 2011 to 2014 and needed to be submitted to the EU by April 2010. The Chair asked the Board if they were content for Fera to seek their views on the draft programme and/or to seek views from other beekeeping stakeholders (based on our stakeholder contact list), rather than issuing the draft programme for formal consultation. The consensus of the Board was that the draft programme was circulated via email to the Healthy Bees Project Management Board, BBKA and other interested stakeholders. The final programme would then be circulated to the Board before formal submission to EC in April 2010.

#### **10. Any other business/date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held during February/early March 2010. Teleconferencing would be available.

17 February 2010