

Chairmans Report Cumbria Executive 2016

Weather

2016 was on the whole another poor year of weather for beekeeping, a slow spring , feeding colonies in the summer especially if OSR honey was taken, some difficulties getting virgin queens mated successfully in the summer, but a long sunny Autumn gave opportunities for good Heather crops and surviving colonies wintered well during a very mild winter. Except for those who were caught out by the floods and lost colonies. Mostly there was poor honey yealds.

Membership

County membership is holding up at just under 200 in the Cumbria Area Association, partly due to the continuing focus by the media on beekeeping problems, which persuades people to try beekeeping and the efforts at Branch level to recruit new members.

The finances of Cumbria are adequate allowing us to hold fees to £3 for another year.

Branch and Cumbria events

County wide activities, the Embleton Autumn Conference continues to attract enough support to keep going, as does the Cumbria Area Association honey show, both events with interesting speakers, however having more local beekeepers attending would be a benefit to these events. Cumbria Bee Supplies, Northern Bee Auction now an annual event is attracting a lot of local beekeeping interest.

The Cumbria Branches which are the backbone of the association continue to do a sterling job with education being a high priority, most branches are now managing branch apiaries as a focus of interest in the summer, running beginner courses, intermediate courses, Basic Beekeeping, numerous beekeeping events and winter meetings with varied speakers.

Branch volunteers are introducing and explaining beekeeping to the public at many Fairs and other County events.

Communication

The executive have mulled over communication a fair bit this year, in place are the Cumbria Bee Times, edited by Val Sullivan, Richard Robinson manages the Cumbria web site and slowly the facebook page is gaining traction but still less than a quarter of members have joined and even fewer use it. All have a roll in getting information out to members, between branches and beyond. Our thanks to Val and Richard for their efforts. Not forgetting direct mailing to branch secretaries.

NBU

Stewart Bettie has retired as Seasonal Bee Inspector for Cumbria, but is still taking an active roll in Cumbrian beekeeping, including taking on the job of Membership secretary. A new Seasonal Bee Inspector for the area has had finance allocated and the possition is now being advertised.

BBKA

We Thank Stephen Barnes for representing Cumbria at the BBKA ADM, SDM and BBKA forums a vital part of democracy in the organization.

A change in the BBKA's trustee representative for Cumbria, To Margaret Wilson from Martin Smith, Margaret would be the first port of call if you have any queries about the BBKA.

Much thanks to the committee members and Branch representatives for their efforts throughout the year.