

HBKA AGM minutes, held on 14th October 2026

Church of the Good Shepherd. Mytholmroyd

1. Apologies for absence

Tim Plant

Sue Roberts

Peter Nicholls

Hermione Berry

Ely Doodson

Bob Lesiak

There were 31 members present.

2. Minutes of 2025 AGM agreed as a correct record. (Accepted by IB, seconded by AB)

3. Matters arising - none

4. Correspondence - None relating to AGM.

5. Chairman's report RP

RP welcomed **Linda Beaumont**, Chair Huddersfield BKA and our BBKA Link Trustee.

Past season could be described as a close call.

1. Asian Hornets, got off at Manchester but are likely to get back on the M62 next year- thanks to **Richard Searle** for keeping us up to date with the good news.

2. Foulbrood- both EFB and AFB, potential for a large outbreak which, perhaps did not materialise. Thanks to **Kay** and the other Seasonal Bee Inspectors - very arduous work in challenging weather.

Reminder about BDI insurance. Exceptional value and very efficient. The bee inspector puts the claim in and the payout is generous. Note: Sufficient cover is needed for all hives or no pay out at all.

3. Wasps- took a year off

4. Varroa- alive and well and thriving in a hive near you. Winter losses nationally on average last year 40%. Multiple reasons but failure to treat for varroa seems to be a significant risk factor. Unless monthly monitoring is in place you need a plan now! There is still time to treat with Oxalic Acid in December.

Thanks to all **Committee members** particularly those with specific roles -will be hearing from them in due course.

Halifax Show- huge effort with more than 20 helpers, and excellent and informative shop front. Brisk honey sales a bonus to members.

The **Honey Show** itself needs some re-invigoration and we propose to form a sub Committee to spread the organisational load and enthuse members to take part.

6. Secretary's report AB

The HBKA website hosting is still provided by Matthew Beardsworth, free of charge to the Association.

Communication with the membership is by email using ER2 from BBKA.

AB is concerned that some members do not receive or read the emails from HBKA.

Many members now rely on phones not laptops or desk computers for emails, and AB asked for suggestions as to how to engage more members with HBKA events.

Jess Jones suggested trialling WhatsApp, Linda Beaumont said this worked well in Huddersfield, although they had had to include a Code of Conduct for users (they used the one from YBKA, and will forward to AB). AB agreed to trial this.

7. Treasurer's report and membership RB

Rowena gave details of the annual accounts, receipts and payments document.

Much of the income of the Association comes from the Beginners course, membership fees and Gift Aid.

The Halifax Show had been a success, with income of over £5000, of which over £4000 paid out to members for honey purchases.

Expenditure included capitation fees to BBKA and YBKA, and £1500 spent on Association Apiary equipment including £500 for new shed roof, and then painting the shed.

Expenditure included room hire at the Good Shepherd for meetings, capitation fees and BDI.

There are 141 members of the Association currently. Members were reminded to renew membership by the 4th November if not already done (for £10 saving).

8. Apiary Manager's report MB

MB said 2026 had been a challenging year, because of the weather and early swarming, although the current state of the Association Apiary is that there are 6 healthy full hives going into winter.

However there has been a lock-down at the site for the second summer running, this was because of foulbrood infection. This meant that the Apiary site could not be used for its primary roles as a site to hold educational meetings and exams.

No other Yorkshire beekeeping association allows members to house bees on the Association Apiary site long-term.

The Committee have taken the difficult decision that members will not be able to keep bees, hives or equipment at the Apiary site, with effect from February 2027.

Some temporary emergency placing of bees/hives may be available after discussion with the Apiary managers. Members who currently keep bees at the Apiary have been informed.

Graeme Lindley has been appointed as assistant Apiary manager.

Matthew thanked Kay for her help this year with inspection visits and advice. He thanked Tim for help with much donated sugar. All were reminded that taking sugar from the Apiary for feeding bees over the winter should be appreciated by donating a jar of honey for the Tesco staff.

9. Education and Exam officer's report CD

CD discussed that the primary aim with regard to education was to provide support and materials for beginners and other members.

The Winter and Summer programs are produced by a sub-committee, but CD said suggestions for other topics and/or new speakers would always be welcomed.

The winter talks have been enhanced by the recently acquired high spec AV equipment, meaning at least one winter meeting is a Zoom meeting.

The summer apiary visits have been curtailed this year because of the Foulbrood episodes.

CD reminded members he manages an extensive library of beekeeping books including recent donations from Margaret Crossley, Elaine Robinson and Paddy Walker.

The beginners course includes 7 lecture sessions, 1 practical session and personal mentoring. Members taking the Basic exam are also invited to 2 theory and 1 practical session near the time of the exam.

CD thanked his co-teachers from the beginners course, Roger, Ian, Elaine, John and Liz.

With regard to the Basic Exam, the national pass rate is 97%, but he stressed that many HBKA members succeed in passing the exam with distinction or credits.

Not all participants of the beginners course take up beekeeping as a hobby. Of the 21 starters who began the beginners course in 2026, there are currently 12 actively beekeeping.

Following the beginners course approximately 25% of participants are still practical beekeepers after 3 years, some with communal bees, eg Wadsworth Group or Outback Beez. CD felt that those beginners who did not still deal with bees had probably learned much useful information.

Linda Beaumont mentioned that BBKA also runs a General Husbandry course on-line.

Jess Jones, a beekeeper for the last 10 years, and now with 15 hives, introduced herself and spoke of her ambition to become a Master Beekeeper. To succeed in this she will need to pass many exams, and hopes to set up a WhatsApp chat group for members interested in taking modular beekeeping exams.

The country has only 194 Master Beekeepers, and there are approximately 30 000 British beekeepers.

10. YBKA Area representative's report

Jonty attends YBKA meetings every 4 or 6 weeks, which recently have dealt mainly with politics and finances. There is currently discussion on-going over advice on safe sterilisation of centrifuges.

11. 12. 13. Election of Chair and officers and other posts - Ian Bairstow

Ian congratulated and thanked Roger for yet another successful year as Chairman of HBKA, and asked if any others were keen to take over the role, but none were forthcoming. Roger has said he will step down in time, but was willing to continue for the next year as Chair.

The following current members were duly re-elected to serve for another year. All were re-elected en block; proposed by Chris Dale and seconded by Ian Bairstow.

Ian Bairstow	Vice Chair, program secretary and Halifax Show liaison
Rowena Bairstow	Treasurer
Alan Brook	Secretary and webmaster
Jacky Brook	Minutes secretary
Chris Dale	Education Secretary and Basic Training
Liz Bolton	Safeguarding Officer
Sarah and Matthew Baldry	Apiary Managers
Jonathan Ring	YBKA liaison
Richard Searle	YLAH coordinator
Peter Nicholls	Honey Show secretary
Retirement	Paddy Walker, previous Exam secretary and Halifax Show liaison Josh Jones retired as YBKA rep during the year
New appointments	Graeme Lindley Assistant Apiary Manager Jan Takhar, Committee member Alan Bewsher, Committee member

14. Award of BBKA Certificates

Linda Beaumont presented the certificates and badges to the following members:

Ely Doodson (not present)
Jan Takhar
Bob Lesiak (not present)

15. Award of trophies from the Halifax show

As Peter was absent, Jacky Brook announced the winners and Linda presented the trophies.

JB pointed out that only 21 HBKA members submitted entries for the 23 classes, and that this was a sparse show. Linda said this was not just a local problem, but was widespread, and stressed how “having a go” and submitting entries is fun and even addictive.

A sub-committee will be formed next year with the purpose of encouraging members to “have a go!”.

Halifax Trophies 2026

The Limetree Apiary Rosebowl - **Alan Brook**

For the most points in classes 1-23 inclusive

The Winifred May Badger Challenge Cup - **Chris Dale**

For the most points across all honey classes 1-7 and 9-10

Northern Bee Books Trophy - **Jacky Brook**

For the best exhibit of a photograph in classes 17 or 18

John Phillips Award for Beeswax – **Alan Brook**

For the most points in the wax classes 11,12 and 13

The Jeff Gill Cup - **Alan Brook**

For the best home-made piece of beekeeping equipment, class 21

Novice Cup - **Julia Pollard**

For the winner of class 8

Best tasting honey as voted by the public - **Veronica Williams**

Best in Show - **Rowena Bairstow**

For the best exhibit (Honey Cake) selected by the judge across all classes

16. YLA Hornet update RS

Although there seem to be fewer hornet sightings currently than at the same time as last year, the Ecosystem remains vulnerable.

Clare McGettigan, Chair of Trustees of the BBKA has written to the Secretary of State for DEFRA asking that the Government will make three commitments on the YLAH before the end of this year.

These 3 commitments are:

- A rolling three-year, fully funded eradication and containment program
- A decision on 2027 policy by 31st December 2026, and on each following year by the end of the year before, made in consultation with stakeholders
- Funding for the National Bee Unit to publish guidance on protecting colonies if nests go undetected

RS promoted his new book, Overwintering Honey Bees, which he has compiled and edited with Jerry Burbridge and Julia Hoggard. This book was available at the AGM for a discounted price of £18.70.

RS also reminded members that “Harvest Beer”, an amber ale made with local honey and green hops would be available at the Fox and Goose pub, Hebden Bridge, on Saturday 17th October.

17. Program for 2026/27 IB

Ian detailed the forthcoming program:

November 11th	Navigation and Foraging - Roger Pool
December 9th	Bee Quiz and pie supper
January 13th	Bee chat - Mark Millard, Derrie O'Sullivan, Kay Phillips
February 10th	Beekeeping: Challenge what you are told - Roger Patterson (Zoom)
March 10th	Swarming - Karl Colyer
April 7th	I love/hate my hive
June/July TBC	Practical Honey Extraction - Alan Brook

The Beginners course will start in March.

There will be Apiary meetings in May and June

July 10th BBQ Social at Barbara Beardsworth's

August 7th Halifax show

August 18th Preparing for Winter

October 13th AGM

18 . AOB

Jess Jones volunteered to help teach on the Beginners course and was welcomed to this role.

Jan spoke of the Association heather honey extractor which appears faulty, this was condemned by RP, and will be disposed of.

RP spoke about Phil Gee, who will be closing his beekeeping equipment business and is moving away. RP said a leaving event will be arranged for Phil who has been an active member of the Association and Committee for years.

JB wished to minute thanks to Paddy Walker for his roles on the Committee for several years.

The meeting closed at 21.00