

Chairman's Report 2021

I am pleased to say that 2021 has seen a return to some semblance of normality, and DBKA is moving from strength to strength, with growing membership numbers and a healthy financial position.

A number of members have taken BBKA assessments and examinations over the year, and we will have the opportunity following the AGM, of celebrating their successes with them, whilst at the Denes Apiary, the Beginners Course, and Bee Experience days were held, and proved to be both popular and successful.

Negotiations with Darlington Borough Council (DBC) regarding a lease on the Denes Bowling Green have been ongoing since 2019, and prolonged due to Covid lockdown, but we now have a draft lease from DBC which the committee believe is one we can sign so we have security of tenure. Once the lease is in place, we intend to apply for planning permission to have toilet facilities installed on site. This will allow DBKA to ensure it can carry out its educational aims, as schools and other groups now require certain facilities to be available.

The Association was offered a site on the Banks Moorhouse Windfarm and were granted a license to have an apiary. We were able to apply to the Banks Community Fund to provide money to pay for the materials for an Apiary enclosure similar to the Denes. Thanks to a group of dedicated members, the enclosure was completed in late August this year, and was opened by Councillor Heather Scott the Council Leader. So we now have a second apiary (which supplements the teaching Apiary at the Denes) where swarms can be taken, members who cannot keep bees at home can have their hives, and where Queen raising can take place. The Apiary is now in use and some beginners have moved their bees there, and the Association has 3 hives in the enclosure to overwinter.

The Denes Apiary site continues to look impressive, due to the hard work of those who undertake gardening, and maintain the apiary enclosure and equipment - thanks go to all who take on this work across the year, making such a difference. Members will be made very welcome if they come along on a Tuesday morning to join in and help out with gardening, which is very important for the bees.

It has been another very good year for honey/honey sales, the bees have done us proud, and so have those who have processed the honey, enabling us to sell it to our growing number of first time and repeat customers.

Again, I would personally like to thank the Committee members for their support and hard work throughout the year, and take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate all that they have done for the Association.

Annette McGaughey - Chairman