

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

November/December 2024



Chairman's Broodbox

In the last few days, we have held Tiverton Beekeepers' Annual General Meeting for 2024. Quite often AGMs can be rather formal, dull affairs which generally put members off from attending. Well, this meeting was anything but that; a good turn-out of members, the meeting informally run so everyone felt able to contribute and plenty of laughs during the evening. This, of course, was followed by tea and an impressive selection of home-made cakes.

I am very pleased to say that our officers and committee members, from President to Apiary Manager, were all willing to stand again and unanimously voted in for another twelve months. We will be joined on the committee by two willing volunteers: Sylvia Whitby and Martin Stott. You will find a table containing details of our committee for 2025 on page 3.



This year's beginners learning to put frames together -lots of activity as you can see but lots of noise as well.



**Tiverton Beekeepers are a branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association
Registered Charity No.270675**

Opinions expressed in articles in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect either the opinions or the policies of The Devon Beekeepers' Association

Masthead photo by Kat Smith: <https://www.pexels.com>



At the Annual General Meeting we were able to taste a wide range of types of honey produced by bees and beekeepers from across Mid Devon.

Some suggestions were made by members at the meeting that we can look forward to next year which include:

- Improving our facilities at the Branch Training Apiary at Knightshayes - initial discussions have started with the National Trust but there is a long way to go. If you have some ideas or useful skills on this, please let us know.
- We hope to carry on our tradition of educating the public about the importance of bees to the environment by developing our talks to schools, U3A groups, Gardening Clubs and other community groups. We hope to produce PowerPoint presentations that anyone with a basic knowledge of bees and beekeeping can pick up and use in conjunction with our projector.
- Our Apiary team suggested it would be a good idea, by way of thanking Tesco for their donations of sugar, on a suitably convenient day in the summer to promote our Branch with our display at the store entrance.
- Following our visit to Mid Devon Bees during the summer we intend to invite them to our Apiary and work closely with them.

We would welcome your help and assistance on any of these projects plus, of course, at our regular events at Devon County, Mid Devon and Plymtree shows.

By now you will have received an invitation, by email, to renew your annual subscription and many of you have already completed the on-line form and paid directly into our account or by cheque. A reminder to those who haven't will be sent out soon. We hope you will choose to stay as a member of the Branch which includes membership of the Devon and British Beekeepers' Associations. You have until the 31st of December to renew but if you decide not to do so then I would be grateful if you'd let me know.

I would like to thank all of you for the support you give to bees and beekeeping across Mid Devon during the last twelve months but, in particular, a big thank you to the officers and committee members of the Branch. They do an enormous amount of work in their own time and every one of them contributes significantly to the benefit of the branch. I don't want to pick out anyone from the rest, but I would mention that the quality and range of homemade cakes at meetings and events this year has surpassed even last year - long may it continue.

It's the time of year to wish you a very Merry Christmas but more importantly don't forget to check your bees are well fed. I look forward to seeing you in 2025 and doing it all again.

Happy Beekeeping

Tiverton Branch Committee 2024/25

President	Keith Owers	Bulk Purchasing Co-ordinators	John Cummings
Chair	Tony Lindsell		Richard Thomas
Vice-Chair	Ian Sorenson	AHAT Co-ordinator	Tracy Frankpitt
Branch Secretary	Jon Davies	Microscopist	Lesley Ayre
Treasurer	Steve Willis	Buzzette Editor	Frances Salisbury
Membership Secretary	Tony Lindsell	Committee Members	Charles Bradfield
Programme Secretary	Lesley Ayre		Clive Rowe
EC Delegate/DBKA Trustee	Tony Lindsell		Martin Stott
Minutes Secretary	Louise Scott		Sylvia Whitby
Press and Social Media Officer	Vicky Morrish	Apiary Manager	Malcolm Crook
Webmaster	William Lines	Apiary Assistant Manager	Alan Barrow
Education Co-ordinator	Clare Williams	Apiary Advisor	Keith Owers

A Christmas Poem

The Bee Carol by Carol Ann Duffy

Silently on Christmas Eve,
the turn of midnight's key;
all the garden locked in ice -
a silver frieze -
except the winter cluster of the bees.

Flightless now and shivering,
around their Queen they cling;
every bee a gift of heat;
she will not freeze
within the winter cluster of the bees.

Bring me for my Christmas gift
a single golden jar;
let me taste the sweetness there,
but honey leave
to feed the winter cluster of the bees.

Come with me on Christmas Eve
to see the silent hive -
trembling stars cloistered above -
and then believe,
bless the winter cluster of the bees.



Photo: Ian Sorenson

Diary Dates

Our meetings are the third Wednesday of the month and start at 7.30pm at Uplowman Village Hall.

Saturday 7th December

Christmas Social

7pm - 10pm at Uplowman Village Hall.

Wednesday 15 January

John Walters

Talk on "life in the undergrowth"

Wednesday 19 February

Paddy Wallace

An insight into commercial beekeeping at Quince Honey Farm

Wednesday 19 March

Liz Westcott

Preparing honey for showing

Wednesday 16 April

Martin Hann and Clare Densley

How to keep calm and carry on when things don't go as planned (with your bees)!

Wednesday 21 May

Nosema testing

Bring 30 bees along(recently humanely killed) for testing.

It would be lovely to see you at these events.

The Buzzette - last date for submission for the next issue is 23rd January.

Send your news and views to buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk



The Beekeeping Year

November

- Raise inner covers for winter ventilation.
- Protect hives against woodpeckers if they're a problem in your area.
- Protect hives against livestock.
- In windy locations, place a weight on the roof to prevent it flying away.
- Leave your bees alone. You must not disturb the winter cluster as they are trying to maintain a very carefully regulated temperature. The bees in your hives are not individuals. Now, perhaps more than any other time in the season, they function as a colony.

December

- Check on your bees every couple of weeks to make sure all is well.
- Use your records to review the past year.
- Identify what worked well and why.
- Determine what didn't work and why not.
- Plan your activities for the coming year - colony increase, queen rearing, migratory beekeeping.
- Make or buy any additional equipment you'll need. If you can saw straight you can make a beehive.

From **Haynes Bee Manual** The complete step-by-step guide to keeping bees. By Claire and Adrian Waring.