

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

July 2026



Chairman's Broodbox

With heatwaves in June and July it's time to keep an eye on your supers as the colony will fill them fast, if you have bees on two thirds of the frames add another super. Watch out for swarming as the colony blooms and be ready for splits. If you cannot accommodate a split there are new beekeepers looking for swarms who would love to take them on. Make sure your bees have water nearby.

Wasp numbers are rising so keep a eye on your hives and take the appropriate action to help your bees out .

You should have seen the bulk buy order form for jars and syrup, and I hope you have been able to take advantage of the price benefits we get. The mid Devon show will be on us at the end of July and your committee has been busy preparing for our stand. If you

are visiting the show make sure you pop in to see us. We are sited at the countryside arena. I would like to thank those members who have been able to offer us honey to make up the anticipated sales above the clubs honey supply.

The club have two extractors , hydrometers, and uncapping knives that we lend out. If you need to borrow equipment contact me via a personal

message on WhatsApp to arrange collection. They are popular and we like to have them turned around fairly quickly due to demand. If demand is high, my extractor can also be borrowed.

Don't forget the usual Apiary sessions. If only for the tea and cake. But most of all this month enjoy your bees and I hope you have a good harvest.

Ian Sorensen



Photograph by Ian Sorensen



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

Hive Side Training

For February's Buzzette, Bryan Wright sent in an article that explained that DEFRA was offering free hive side training to beekeepers with a couple of years experience. I, along with some other members of Tiverton beekeepers decided to give it a go.

There was a certain amount of online study of varroa control, bee diseases and the best ways of expanding your colonies. This was interesting and informative in itself but I found the actual practical day going through hives with experienced beekeepers Bryan Wright and Malcolm Pierce so useful.

I spent an hour with Bryan looking for disease and signs of swarming in his hives and learned so many small pieces of information that have really stuck. Here are a few examples that I had never considered or may have forgotten:

- If you have brood and a half, always tip the super before lifting it off so you can see any queen cells and avoid squashing them.
- Always clean off any dead bee bodies between boxes as these could harbour disease.
- You can tell the difference between a practice queen cup and one that is about to have an egg laid in it because the inside has been polished.

We noticed a capped brood cell that had a hole chewed in it. Bryan told me to grab some tweezers and



take a look. The larva was covered in varroa. The bees had detected it and opened up the cell to destroy it.

When working with my bees now I'm that little bit more confident and capable than I was before I did the hive side training.

If hive side training is offered again next year, do set aside some time

and give it a go. Probably the most enjoyable part was seeing Bryan's amazing shed full of pristine bee equipment and having pasties and his home produced apple juice for lunch.

The photograph is Bryan's beautifully cleaned and maintained hives.

Tracy Frankpitt

July Committee Meeting Report

Eleven members attended the meeting and fivesent their apologies.

Finance review - Current account - £750.57
Reserve account - £6925.23

Apiary - Two swarms have been donated – one from Charles, one from Colin – developments are awaited.

There have been very few swarms about – few of our collectors have been called into action. Malcolm will again try to contact the NT re our rapidly deteriorating “club house” and try to make progress on the possible options open to us. Martin has confirmed that mid-Devon bees have some 12oz jars available – cost £40 for 72.

Education - Basic assessments are taking place at North Devon Beekeepers’ apiary as ours is short of stable colonies.

Tracy said that although the beginners’ theory classes were very well attended, not many have shown up for the practical sessions. This could be because the shortage of swarms means few actually have bees yet but it is disappointing nonetheless.

The paperwork for those interested in joining the next Introduction to Beekeeping Course will be ready for the Mid Devon Show and plenty of copies will be available on the day.

Tracy and Louise gave a talk at ACE special education school in Tiverton on World Bee Day which was very well received

Events - *The Christmas Social* was agreed for 5th December, arrival 7pm for 7.30 meal – Vicky to organise a “save the day” message for members.

Dr O Visick from University of Plymouth was contacted re a talk about wild honey bees - he wanted to come in May but we needed him in October - he can’t do that as his funding will have stopped. Shame, that would have been an interesting talk!

Devon Beekeepers’ Day will be held on 26th September in Crediton.

Shows - The plans for Mid-Devon show are well in hand – There are 72 jars of club honey for the Mid Devon Show – Lesley can supply 201lb jars of set honey, Brian Wright can supply up to 80 and Ben from Crediton can supply 20.

Vicky has a virtual reality headset that gives an internal view of a hive – she is tweaking her ideas on this front and in particular a power source is needed to recharge it – Steve thinks he might have a solution. This would make a really interesting addition to the stand and adds to our educational credentials.

We hope to have a solar wax melter on the stand which will highlight how materials are recycled and help beekeeping be sustainable. We will provide samples of real v cheap honey for tasting.

Vicky is designing a banner that says “Cheap Honey Isn’t Real and Real Honey Isn’t Cheap” Also we might have one pointing out that vegan “honey” isn’t real honey (it’s just a sugar solution).

Lesley has arranged for bee friendly and bee unfriendly flowers to be provided by Cove garden centre.

The trestle tables – have been sourced. Tracy has found some inflatable bee suits on line for the Plymtree show - £36 each – it was agreed to buy one.

Vicky will source seeds for bee friendly plants and envelopes to give away at the MD Show. We took a break for tea and cake – big thanks to Sylvia for an excellent Rocky Road and Louise for the cakes supplied. Steve’s cherry cake was sadly missed.

Social media and Press - We currently have 309 followers. There have been 5000 views of recent posts. Vicky continues to produce high quality material to post to the social media pages.

Yellow-legged Hornet Update - No sightings or nest found in our local area.

Bulk Buying - The latest invitation has been issued.

Website - William said that the website is up to date but he would welcome timely advice of dates particularly re education matters.

AOB - Tony and Tracy Lindsell represented beekeeping at Coldharbour Mill in Uffculme at their recent Nature Day - he said the children in particular loved having their photo taken wearing a beekeeping suit and holding a smoker

and a hive tool!

Louise has requested a copy of MS Office for the club laptop. This was agreed.

After the recent meeting re the MD Show where a relaxed and fun evening was enjoyed, Ian suggested more ad hoc meetings in pubs for a relaxed pint and a chat.

Next meeting Thursday 4th September.



Photograph by Tracy Frankpitt

2026 Calendar

Club Apiary Visits NT Knightshayes

Have started - they are on the afternoon of the first Saturday and third Sunday monthly.
2-4pm.

August 1st

Save the Date

**Tiverton Beekeepers
Christmas Social**

**Saturday 5th
December
7pm at Uplowman
Village Hall**

Branch Committee Meetings

Branch Committee Meeting are held
at Uplowman Village Hall
7.30-9pm

**September 3rd
November 5th**

The Buzzette

Last date for submission for the next issue is

10th August

Send your news, views, comments, stories and photographs to
buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk