

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

September 2026



Chairman's Broodbox

It appears Summer has come to an abrupt end, the nights are colder and temperatures are more in keeping with the start of Autumn. We have eventually had the rain we so desperately needed. The ivy is coming into flower so there is a chance of some late pollen for the hive, it's very welcome.

My hives have had mixed fortunes. One hive is still putting down honey the other I found to be starving with no feed at all. So I started feeding this hive back in the middle of August the other still has plenty of stores and I've not started feeding yet. Just shows you need to let the bees dictate what and when to feed.

The queen of will now be laying her winter bee brood and if we over feed there is a chance the bees will fill the cells with syrup and she won't have any room for eggs.

As our season comes to an end why not write an article for the Buzzette. Tell us about how you came into bee keeping, what experiences you have had this year. Why not a write technical article on the frame construction of a hive etc. Maybe you craft items using hive products like wax for candles or even your favourite cake recipe, there's always room for cake.

The AGM is coming up, if you would like to join the committee in any capacity, as one of the executive posts or just to join debate and to help out let me or any committee member know.

The Christmas get together is on the 5th December so keep the date free, it's always a good evening.

Finally keep your eyes open for Yellow Legged Asian Hornets,

they are closing in, one was found near Street in Somerset and reports that a hive was being tracked in Ashbrittle just outside Wellington.

My bait station only five miles from Ashbrittle only attracted European hornets, thankfully. Get to know your hornets and be vigilant!

Ian Sorenson

European hornets at a bait station



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

Meet the Bees

On Saturday 5th September we held our annual meet the bees event. Various prospective beekeepers who signed up to the event at the shows we visited or from our facebook posts turned up at Knightshayes and were taken up to the apiary by Malcolm and Vicky. They returned to the wood yard for tea and cake and a chat about bees with members of the committee and Jodie and Simon Williams from last year's course. Some of them signed up for this year's beginners' course.

We still have spaces on this year's beginners' course. So if anyone knows of someone interested in beekeeping, it's a great Christmas present at £90 per person. The attendees have monthly theory sessions through the winter, a Haynes beekeeping Manual and a year's membership of the club. In April they can start coming along to the apiary with any other members interested in improving their practical beekeeping skills. If you have a friend who is interested please pass the education email on to them, education@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

When the Buzzette goes out, the first theory session may have gone by but everything covered in that introductory session is covered again in the later sessions.



Setting up the teas and cakes ready for meet the bees.

Meet the Committee

Louise Scott Branch Secretary

Hello! My name is Louise Scott, I have been a member of Tiverton Beekeepers for almost four years, having started the beginners course in September 2022 with my friend Tracy Frankpitt.

I am currently the Branch Secretary for the club; it is me who sends out emails to you from time to time. Prior to taking on this role, in November 2025 I was Minutes Secretary and before that an AHAT Coordinator with Tracy. That's a lot of roles in a short space of time, but I think I will continue as secretary for the foreseeable future.

I was born in the Northwest of England, in Blackpool, and from an early age had a fascination with all things natural. I used to sit for hours watching ants carrying crumbs that I dropped for them! I love most animals, except for spiders! I have always found bees to be incredible creatures but had never thought about keeping them until I retired from work.

I left Blackpool at 19 years old to study Environmental Biology. I have gradually moved to the south of the country and finally moved to Devon with my family nearly 30 years ago.



I have to say that I have found beekeeping to be a bit of a roller coaster. I made some silly mistakes during my first couple of seasons and got quite badly stung on a couple of occasions. But I have learnt from my mistakes and have had my best season to date this year. I have had a bountiful harvest and was able to leave a full super of honey for my beautiful stripy friends to feed them through the winter. Also, and I'm probably asking for trouble here, I haven't been stung once this year.

I took the Basic Assessment in early August, it was a very positive experience and one that I would recommend to anyone who is looking to increase their beekeeping knowledge. I am happy to say that I passed and I have found that my confidence around my bees has definitely increased as a result.



Scary moment!

I found this on my raspberries this summer. I have to admit I was thinking the worst at first, until I had a good look. Then I was intrigued so did a bit of research to find out who this visitor was. Any ideas?

Lesley Ayre

Yellow Legged Asian Hornet



Two European hornets attracted to a bottle of Trappit.

Our Asian Hornet Action Team Co-ordinator, Charles Bradfield is out of the country at the moment but he dropped off some jars of hornet attractant to me before leaving.

A Yellow Legged Asian Hornet primary nest has been destroyed in Street, Somerset and this is a little too close for comfort. Now would be a good time to monitor for Asian Hornets.

The best way is to create a bait station. A jam jar containing attractant with a hole drilled in the lid and a piece of jay cloth hanging out is the best bait station. I did not have much time so stuck a kitchen towel in a plastic bottle of attractant. I put my bait station on the kitchen windowsill where I'd frequently pass it.

The next morning I had two European hornets on the bottle most of the morning. It was pouring with rain but they just sat there. The attractant (commercial name Trappit) is amazing stuff. Hornets and wasps find it easily.

If anyone would like a jar of Trappit, do send me an email education@tivertonbeekeepers.uk and we can work out a way of getting it to you.

Tracy Frankpitt

September Branch Meeting

Dan Basterfield gave an excellent talk about 'Foraging Behaviour' /

Dan and his family run Blackbury Honey Farm, located in South East Devon at Colyton. They run 120 hives, producing honey and related products that are available to purchase at their café/shop. Dan holds the NBD in beekeeping, is a BBKA Master beekeeper and is

an examiner for both of these examinations. He recently published 'Using Apideas', a manual for queen mating nucs.

Together with his father Ken, they set up 'Advanced Beekeeping Courses' in 2020 to offer practical hands on courses aimed at beekeepers with 3-5 years experience, using facilities that are purpose built at the Honey Farm.



Photograph by Tracy Frankpitt.

September Committee Meeting Report

Nine members attended and eight sent their apologies.

Finance review - Current account - £1545.15
Reserve account - £6951.72

Membership update - 133 members, 21 partner members, 3 local members

Apiary - There are now five healthy colonies of which two were ready for the 'Meet the Bees' on Saturday 5th September.
There has been no response from the National Trust re the dialogue over what facilities we could have use of at Knightshayes.
It was suggested that we approach those that have offered to host colonies of bees to see if they would be happy to host our apiary, to include parking for up to 20 cars. Ian will draft a letter to be emailed to each interested party. Tracy will write and send a letter of thanks to North Devon Beekeepers for the use of their apiary for the recent basic assessments.

Education - Tracy advised that there are five signed up for the Introduction to Beekeeping course. Dates for the sessions have been booked and Tracy is busy confirming the speakers - Malcolm and Derek Evans have confirmed their availability.
Tracy did a presentation to the Macular Society which was well received.
Uffculme Scouts have requested a presentation on a Wednesday evening - Tracy and Vicky to co-ordinate.

Events - Christmas Social is 5th December, arrival 7pm for 7.30 meal. Vicky has sent a 'save the date' message via the Buzzette and WhatsApiary. The cost will be £17.50 per head. Meeting dates have been booked at Uplowman Village hall but Lesley is finding it hard work to book speakers for the January and February meetings and suggestions were discussed.

Shows - The Mid-Devon show was highly successful; the club receiving two prizes for best trade stand and best educational stand. Honey sales were strong at 180 jars, and 200 candles and deeley bobbars were made. Five people signed up for the meet the bees and ten people offered to host bees on their land.
The Plymtree Fayre was very successful too, with over 20 jars of honey sold, two offers of land to host bees and two people signed up for 'Meet the Bees'.
The Classic Vehicle show at Uplowman was less successful with fewer children there and a generally lower attendance. Committee decided not to attend again owing to the amount of work required to prepare, set up, and dismantle the stand. The new tent has been a partial success; it was supplied with an incorrect panel and the carry/transport bag is still awaited. TF to chase.

Social media and Press - We have 340 followers, there have been 36000 views of some of Vicky's recent posts featuring the Mid Devon Show and honey extraction. Consideration will be given to purchasing a tripod to make creation of videos a little easier! To be reviewed by Vicky and report back next meeting

Yellow-legged Hornet Update - A nest was found in Street and destroyed. William has set a bait station but nothing untoward has been recorded.

Beginners' Welcome Pack - Malcolm has forwarded the version used by Canterbury Beekeepers to be used as the base for our own version.

Website Update - William said that the website is up to date.

Bulk Buying Update -
The invitation for frames and foundation will be issued in November.

Save the Date

**Tiverton
Beekeepers
Christmas Social**

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

Photograph by Nurgül Kelebek <https://www.pexels.com>

2026/7 Calendar

October 21st 7.30-9.30pm

**Branch Meeting - Speaker David Packham -
Strategies for a healthy colony**
Upplowman Village Hall

October 21st 7.30-9.30pm

Beginners

The Hive and its components
Upplowman Village Hall

November 5th 7.30-9.30pm

Branch Committee Meeting
Upplowman Village Hall

November 18th 7.30-9.30pm

Branch AGM
Upplowman Village Hall

November 25th 7.30-9.30pm

Beginners

The Colony
Upplowman Village Hall

December 5th 7-9.30pm

Christmas Social and meal
Upplowman Village Hall

January 6th 7.30-9.30pm

Beginners

Plants and Hive Products
Upplowman Village Hall

January 20th 7.30-9.30pm

**Branch Meeting - Speaker Dan Basterfield -
Making and using Nucs**
Upplowman Village Hall

January 27th 7.30-9.30pm

Beginners

Bee and Colony Health
Upplowman Village Hall



The Buzzette

Last date for submission for the next issue is

10th October

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

Photograph by Frances Salisbury.

Ready for extraction. A frame from the Sustainable Tiverton Apiary in Sampford Peverell.