

Hi All Members

News

Firstly I'd like to welcome 4 new members – Kevin, Tony, Julie and Joanna

We were joined at our February meeting by one of our new members, Kevin Cowle, who has many years of beekeeping experience, both in the UK and in France. Kevin shared some slides and stories about his experiences, while running through the beekeeping year and sharing some hints and tips.

We then had another very informative round table discussion – this time on how we each monitor and treat varroa-no right or wrong-just different!! but the main thing is that we all treat in some shape or form.

Beginners Beekeeping course will be held the weekend of 18th/19th March.

I'd like to say“thank you” a couple of members

Martyn – for keeping our website bang up to date – have a look at www.wgba.co.uk.

Richard – for posting on our Facebook page. Please “Like” or make a nice comment if you see the posts to give Richard a wee bit of encouragement!

Bee jobs this month

Don't be fooled by the “false spring” we are having. The bees may be flying and will hopefully be bringing in some nice fresh pollen from crocus, pussy willow and whin – but it's still too early for blossoms and nectar. So more of the same – keep an eye on the stores.

February and March are the most likely months for colonies to starve so we must ensure our colonies have enough stores.

Unless you are an experienced beekeeper, don't be tempted to “have a look” in the brood box. It should be “tee shirt” weather before full inspections are done and that's usually in April – though last year I recall it was in to May, as April was wet and colder than usual.

The question to ask is – what will I achieve by going in too early? You risk damaging your queen and it's too early to raise a new one. You also risk chilling the brood by letting out hard worked for heat from the brood nest.

A lot can be learned from looking at activity outside the brood box – pollen coming in usually indicates a laying queen, food sharing at the entrance is nectar being transferred from forager to house bee, varroa inserts can be monitored to show where the bees are working, removal of dead bees indicates hygienic behaviours, bees taking down fondant gives comfort that there is life in there!

Maybe towards the end of the month the mouse guards can come off as they can knock pollen off the bees legs.

I promise that things will start to happen in April!!

Any questions - ask your bee buddy or drop me a note

Committee activity

The committee met in February. The agenda included, among other things, new Glenrazie trophy, Wigtown Show stand, reduction of WGBA equipment and library, summer workshops + apiary visits.

I am sorry to say that we do not have a fully functioning committee, as we no longer have a secretary and two committee members do not have time to commit to the committee. The main functions of the committee work (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) are being done by one person and this cannot be sustained. If you can help in any way please contact me through the website contact form.

Meetings

Our next, and final, winter meeting will be on Sunday 26th March

Gary and Graham are working on a list of our equipment + books/dvds which are not being used. The March meeting will be your opportunity to pick up some of that equipment for your shed or books for your bee shelf. Watch this space for the list and details of how the process will work.

Following the equipment and books dispersal, Fiona will give a presentation on alternative varroa treatments, which are non-chemical – it's not a bad thing to look at alternative solutions to the varroa problem.

We will then move on to summer apiary visits and we hope to run workshops on swarming, queen rearing and pests + diseases. Details will be sent once the Beginners course is out of the way, so that you can get the dates in to your diary

Happy Beekeeping

Linda

Chair