

Hi All Members

News

I'd like to welcome new members Shaun and Justin,

March meeting

A great turnout – 20 members and 2 visitors – loads of bee chat!

Association equipment and book dispersal – thanks to Gary and Graham for pulling this together. A great session and all equipment dispersed. If you haven't received an email, I am afraid your bid wasn't successful. We have retained the small extractor (4 frame tangential) and the refractometer which are available to members to borrow. There are still some books in the hall cupboard.

Fiona, Younus and Shivani then gave a talk on their experience with an alternative varroa treatment, which was interesting – thanks guys.

Beginners Beekeeping course was held the weekend of 18th/19th March with 6 attendees. The weekend experiment worked really well (rather than over 8 evenings). Newbies are all sorted with bee buddies.

Bee jobs this month

First inspections - these usually take place during April but be patient and wait for a warm, dry day when it's not too windy (tee shirt weather) - then weekly inspections.

What will you be looking for?

FEDSS

F – Food – what is the situation with stores. Pollen should be coming in on good days. Nectar will start to come in during the month but it is very weather dependent. Dandelions are a great source of early nectar. If required feed some 1:1 syrup/fondant to keep them going until the nectar flow starts.

E – Eggs – this will likely indicate that you have a queen. What does the brood pattern look like? - slab of healthy looking worker brood (good) or only drone brood or pepper pot brood (problem?). If you find only drone brood you have a drone laying queen or laying workers and action is required. Requeen a drone laying queen (single eggs in cells, domed cappings). Laying workers (several eggs in cells laid randomly across the frames, with domed cappings) are difficult to remedy and this colony is doomed!

D – Disease – do the bees look healthy? does the brood look healthy? Plenty information on Bee Base to help with this. If in doubt phone your bee buddy/another beekeeper.

S – Space – does the queen have space to lay and is there room for nectar to be stored? Don't be tempted to put a super on until there is brood across around 7 frames in the brood box – and don't forget the queen excluder when you do. If they're store bound – remove a frame of stores and put in an empty frame or frame of foundation

S – Swarming – unlikely in April – but not unheard of! The trick is to prevent swarming by providing space – see above. Be prepared for swarming season by having enough equipment in your shed – your bees will try to swarm at some stage.

Mouse guards can come off this month.

If you have unmarked queens, this is a good time to get them marked, when the hives aren't too congested. You'll likely need to find the queen at some stage and you'll be glad if she is marked!

If you have dark comb which needs replaced – gradually move the frames to the side of the brood box and when empty replace with fresh frame and foundation.

Replace hive floors with a fresh floor.

If in doubt – ask your bee buddy or another beekeeper.

Committee activity

The committee will meet in April.

The agenda includes, among other things, new Glenrazie trophy, Wigtown Show stand, 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 us using the contact form on the website.

Meetings

Details of apiary visits and workshops will be sent out soon so that you can get the dates in to your diary

Provisional dates to start with –

30th April – Apiary visit

13th May – Swarming workshop

Queen rearing group meetings – details to follow

Watch this space for further details.

Happy Beekeeping – let the fun begin!

Linda

Chair