



BDBKA News



Issue 11, June 2018

Upcoming Events

Poly Hives

Date: 20th June 2018

Time: 8pm

Venue: Whalebones



Have you thought about using a Poly Hives or Poly Nucs? Polystyrene Hives are becoming popular in the UK and have been used in some other countries for some time, with popularity in colder areas such as Scandinavia, where they

outsell wooden hives. Steve Leveridge will be sharing some of his experience with poly hives in the apiary.



Preparing For The Honey Show

Date: 21st July 2018

Time: 2pm

Venue: Whalebones

Double Act Sue Carter & Bill Fisher from Bucks will be giving a talk on honey and wax presentation. Both Sue and Bill were on the panel as judges at the National Honey Show last year.

Find out what the judges are looking for at the NHS and what makes a prize-winning product.

Pampering Potions with Dr Sara Robb

Date: 8th September 2018

Time: 2pm

Venue: Whalebones



Make your own pampering potions with honey and beeswax. Dr Sara will demonstrate how to make cleansing clay and honey soap using her easy method. Learn to make soap without any special equipment that you can use on the same day (no waiting 8 weeks to cure). Following the demonstration, participants will make a few of Dr Sara's recipes, including; chamomile & honey

face cream, beeswax body butter and luscious lip balm in a tube. Each participant take home a luxurious selection of pampering products made with honey and beeswax.



Barnet Beekeepers' Honey Show 2018

Date: 22nd September 2018

Time: TBC

Venue: TBC

Barnet Beekeepers annual honey show. A chance for our members to exhibit honey and wax.

National Honey Show 2018

Date & Times:

Thursday 25th October

Lectures and Restaurant 9.00am – 6.00pm

Trade Hall 12:00 noon – 6.00pm

Honey Show 2.00pm – 6.00pm

Friday 26th October

9.00am – 6.00pm

Saturday 27th October

8.30am – 4.30pm



Venue: Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ, UK, from Thursday 25th to Saturday 27th October 2018.

Promoting the highest quality honey and wax products with international classes, lecture convention, workshops and beekeeping equipment trade show.

[Click Here To See The Schedule And For Entry Forms](#)



Middlesex Federation Honey and Hive Products Show

Date: 27th October 2018

Time: TBC

Venue: TBC

The Middlesex Federation Honey and Hive Product Show and the presentation of cups.

Note from the Chair

June is fast approaching as I write this. Will there be much of a June gap this year? I hope not since all the spring flow seems to have come late and all at once, much of it still going strong. Many of those in oilseed rape areas have had a good spring crop so lets hope we get a good summer crop too.

Thanks to Geoff Hood who stepped in at short notice to give us an interesting update on Small Hive Beetle in May. We look forward to Steve's rescheduled talk on 20 June.

Queen rearing has begun late this year. Our local group will meet again in the next few weeks to compare experiences. It would be good to set up so that we can supply our own and Association needs for new queens and also generate nucs to supply to our beginners in future years. Anyone interested in joining the group please contact Ripal.

Discussions on the future of Whalebones continue. Another Community Consultation event is planned this month at which the committee will be represented and further meetings with our artist colleagues and Trustees are taking place. Plans have yet to be finally drawn, so there is as yet no definite news.

I hope to see you all at Steve's talk on polyhives in June and the Honey Show Preparation advice meeting in July. After that we should have a magnificent Show in September.

Pat Morgan

Contributors

A big thank you to Geoff Hood for his contribution to this issue.

If there are any areas of beekeeping you would like to know more about, let us know and we will try to provide information on the subject. Also, if members would like to contribute any articles please get in touch [here](#). We have members who have been keeping bees for many years and some who have

just started: we would love for members to share their ideas and experiences so far through this newsletter.

In The Apiary - June

By Adam Armstrong



Another busy month in the apiary. The spring flowers are coming to an end and there is sometimes a gap between the end of the spring flow and the summer flowers appearing (the June gap). We need to ensure there are sufficient stores available to colonies at this time particularly if a spring honey crop has been taken from the hive.

We are well into the beekeeping season and our colonies have been building up. As well as our colonies growing in strength, varroa are breeding, so we need to monitor mite levels. The varroa population expands exponentially against the bees. If the natural varroa drop exceeds 6 mites per day we need to take action. Only some treatments can be used while there are supers on the hive, be sure to follow the manufacturers' instructions carefully.

Swarming is still a possibility in June, so continue to check for queen cells. Colonies on which Swarm Control has been carried out should now be building up well and be ready to benefit from the summer flow.

Disease checks should be part of your regular inspection. We have had EFB in North London and some members have had visits from the Bee Disease Inspector. If you suspect you may have EFB make sure you contact your Local Bee Disease Inspector. European Foulbrood, if caught early, can be treated without having to destroy the colony so remain vigilant.

The 51st Sting

By Adam Armstrong



As I conducted my first inspection of 2017 in March I found both of my over-wintered colonies to be very strong, on the first inspection both with 8/9 frames of brood. I am restricted by space to keeping no more than three colonies at

any one time but having previously lost a weak and small colony with Nosema in the winter months due to isolation starvation, I decided to take two colonies through the winter with the plan to unite them. I stuck to my plans hoping that my united colony would swarm early and before I went away on a wild camping trip to the Hebrides. The bees decided to stick to my plan and charged queen cells allowed me to complete the AS days before heading off. Lucie very kindly offered to inspect my bees while I was away, thank you Lucie.

When I arrived back in June everything was going to plan, I had more full supers than I had had in the previous year.

At the end of July I was ready to harvest the honey, I had cleared the bees from the supers and was removing the boxes from the hives when a bee crawled into my marigolds. How did this happen you may be wondering? The elasticated thumb loop broke off and I hadn't got around to getting it repaired and the sleeve of my suit lifted up. I decided to give the bee a good smack before the inevitable happened but as I went to smack my hand I felt the sting and I was already in motion of smacking the bee and it was too late to pull out receiving a full dose of bee venom very quickly and directly into a vein.

Immediately the area around the sting had swollen up which was unusual, I felt fine but in a hurry I closed up the hive and packed everything away, the supers were off, the hives stacked away. I started feeling an itchy sensation on the palm of my right hand and it was close enough to where I was stung to think it was just a greater reaction than usual. It was only when the palm on my other hand started itching that I realised this was a more severe reaction than I have previously experienced from a bee sting. At this point I was concerned about how the reaction might develop. I was focused on my breathing and at no point did I note any changes in my breathing pattern or have any difficulties but for the next hour I was staying alert. The itchy sensation quickly spread to my

scalp and I felt extremely hot all over. After an hour I felt quite sleepy and I went for a lie down and I ended up falling asleep. I woke up to a throbbing pain in my arm which was really swollen, it felt heavy. The swelling continued to get worse over the next few days, not helped by a set build project involving lots of lifting. By the end of the week the swelling started to recede and I could see my knuckles again.



Three days later... The result of the sting, the swelling was all the way to my elbow.

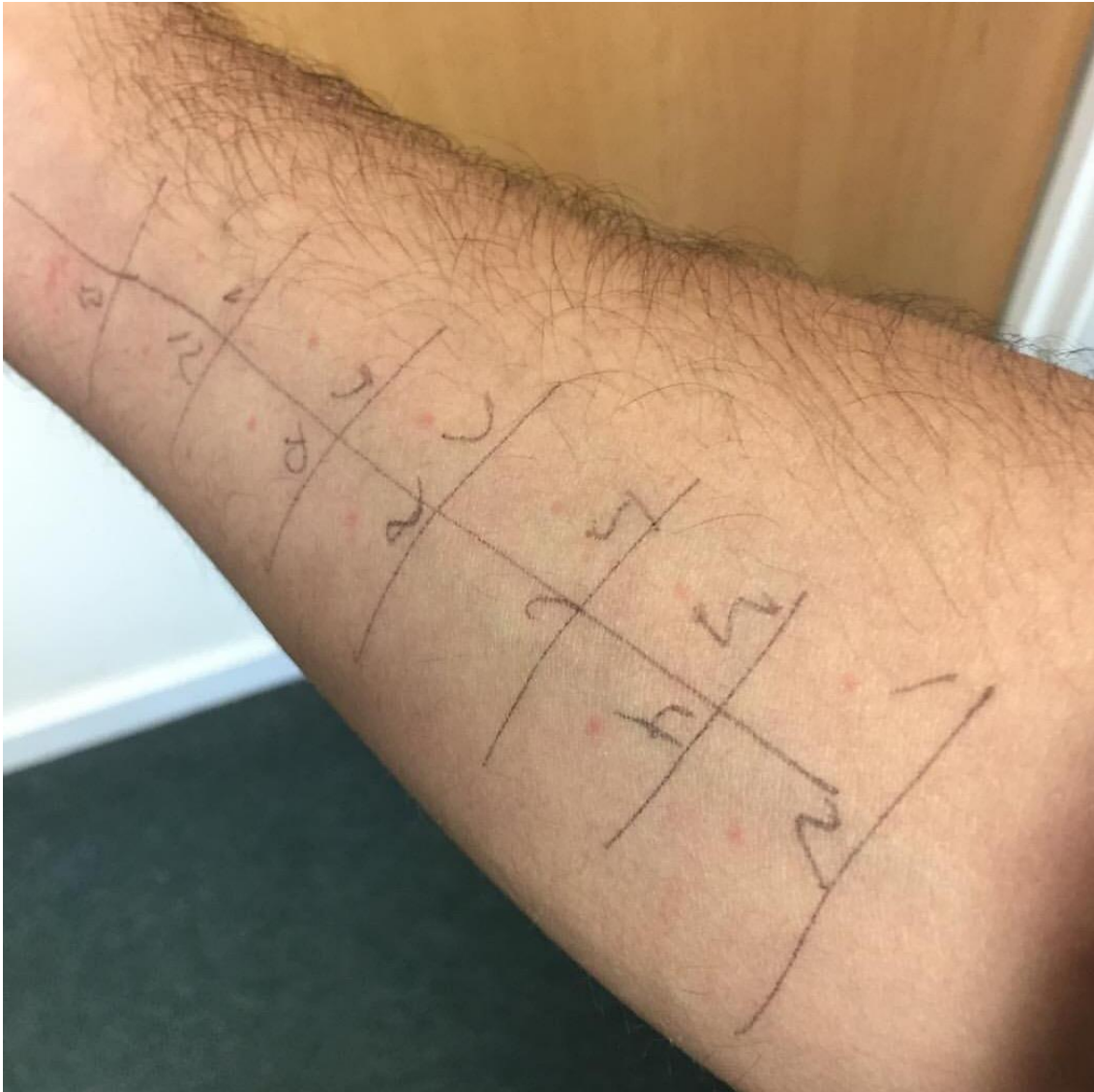
In a rush... well two months later, I went to see my local GP who recommended that I see a specialist particularly because of my weekly interaction with honey bees.

I went to see the allergy consultant and described my symptoms.

He replied, *"Would you be surprised if I said you were allergic to bee stings? Obviously that is the reason you have come to see me today because you think that might be the case. You did experience a serious reaction, you need to avoid being stung but I'm not going to tell you to give up, just avoid being stung"*.

He prescribed three EpiPens, first one for me to keep with my beekeeping equipment, the second one is to be kept in my car and the third one is for me to carry everywhere with me. I had never been stung by a bee until I started beekeeping. I remember my first sting in the training apiary at Whalebones, I said "I think I have been stung". So I was surprised to be told I should carry the EpiPen around with me all of the time, - they are not small, definitely not the size of a pen!

In the hospital I was sent for tests. Apparently, they didn't have bee venom to test on me but they tested me for many other things. I had no reaction to anything, just a slight reaction to the control to the surprise of the consultant. I went to the respiratory clinic for tests on lung function to make sure there were no complications when I fell asleep. I was also sent for a chest x-ray and then a blood test. Fortunately, the lung function tests showed no complications.



Sent for tests at the allergy clinic.

The consultant told me that I had two options: the first option would be to rely on the EpiPen alone and the second option would be to start desensitisation therapy. Apparently there are not many allergies that can be successfully treated but desensitisation to bee stings does actually work although it can take a while. I decided that desensitisation would be the best option for me and he referred me to a specialist at South Kensington Hospital to begin treatment.

The chemical make up of bee stings is different to that of wasps and hornets - although some chemicals are shared it is very unlikely that I would experience an allergic reaction.

Before I could begin the desensitisation I had to see another consultant, who said "Have you considered giving up beekeeping, I would". This was a completely different view from that of both my local GP and the previous allergy consultant. Both consultants did warn me that the sting reactions could get worse and while the next sting may not have much of a reaction, the following sting could be serious and potentially my last! I was also directed that, if I felt the need to use my EpiPen, not to wait until it's too late, but also not to use it if I didn't need to.

I need to be very careful around bees and now take twice as long preparing myself for inspecting colonies. I was stung in a vein and smacking the bee injected me with all of the venom very quickly, which I think made this reaction so much worse than previous stings. I would always scrape out the sting before getting a whole dose of venom from the pumping venom sack that remains.

I purchased a very expensive bee suit from Sheriff for 'sensitive beekeepers' with extra lining inside. It's hot enough in the usual apiarist suits, I am going to suffer in the summer heat when inspecting my hives.

Ok, so it's probably not the 51st sting, I stopped counting after the 15th but it's probably a good estimate.

It is suggested that beekeepers are more likely to develop an allergy to bee stings than the average person. I think it was my first sting of the beekeeping year - this was an important factor according to the consultants and something all beekeepers need to be aware of. I may have not received a bee sting for

nearly a year prior to this one because of the off season and what I consider to be good handling.

If I am not getting stung during inspections, it would suggest my handling of bees is good. The downside of this is that I'm not receiving enough stings to keep up my immunity against bee stings. I am not suggesting you should get stung more often, there is no target number to guarantee immunity.

As we begin the beekeeping year, we will not have been exposed to bee stings for a while, for me I don't think I had been stung since the previous year. I can't remember when exactly but it was likely to have been 10 months, possibly even 11 months earlier. This was a question asked by the consultant. Our body's immunity to bee stings changes and we can become more likely to develop a reaction as a result. It is important to understand the symptoms and know what to do if a bad reaction occurs.

It is said that 'Beekeepers' wives' are also at risk of bee sting allergies because they are exposed to faint traces of bee sting chemicals that remain in bee suits (not that it's just men that keep bees, beekeepers' husbands also).

May 2018

I have just started going through the process of immunotherapy. I got my first dose of 0.1mg of bee venom that will gradually increase to 100mg . It is quite a commitment. I am required to attend every week for the first 12 and then it will become a monthly visit, but it has been suggested that the therapy will last 3 years. After receiving the injection with a needle much larger than a bee sting, I am observed for an hour before I can leave. If I do have a reaction from a dose of bee venom they will reduce the dosage on the next visit.

In three years time I should have an increased tolerance to bee sting venom, I think the equivalent of 2/3 bee stings. I think even once I reach that point I will still need to carry an in-date EpiPen in my beekeeping kit.

None of us are exempt from suffering a serious reaction even if we have never shown any signs of a reaction to a bee's sting previously. It is very important for us all to be able to recognise the signs of a greater reaction and know what to do.

So make sure you are well protected when inspecting your colonies (especially when you are taking the bees' honey!).

Asian Hornet Watch App



The Asian Hornet (Vespa velutina) preys on honeybees. It has altered the biodiversity in regions of France where it is present and can be a health risk to those who have allergies to hornet or wasp stings.

In 2016, the Asian hornet was discovered in the UK for the first time, in Tetbury. After 10 days of intensive searching, the nest was found and later destroyed

and on the same day, a single hornet was discovered in a bait trap in North Somerset.

An app called 'Asian Hornet Watch' has been launched by Defra as an alternative way of reporting on suspected sightings of the Asian Hornet. The key to containment is catching outbreaks as early as possible and tracking and sightings back to a nest.

The native European hornet is a valued and important part of our wildlife, and queens and nests of this species should not be destroyed.

You can access the downloads through the buttons below.

[Download For Android](#)

[Download For IOS](#)

Learn to recognise this invasive species: sightings should be sent with a photograph and location details to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Notice Board

NBU - European Foul Brood

There are a number of active EFB notifications being sent out by the NBU. EFB has been found at a number of locations in London this Spring and beekeepers will be alerted by beebase if an outbreak occurs within 3km of a registered apiary.

It is important to recognise EFB in the hive so immediate action can be taken. Click the buttons below for more information about what to look out for and for the statutory procedures for controlling honey bee pests and diseases.

Geoff Hood
Bee Disease Inspector

[European Foul Brood - What To Look Out For](#)

[Statutory Procedures](#)

Regional Bee Inspector

As some of you may already know, our Regional Bee Inspector, Brian McCallum, has resigned and Sandra Gray's team is covering our area now. Sandra has asked that members who are concerned about their bees should contact her in the first instance and that emails or phone messages are accompanied by photos of the frames, larvae etc so she can advise accordingly.

Sandra Gray sandra.gray@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Tel No: [01787 211531](tel:01787211531)

Mobile No: [07775 119430](tel:07775119430)

Ann Songhurst

Secretary

Which Varroa Treatment Will You Be Using This Year?

By Geoff Hood



Five years ago there were only five approved varroa treatments. At the time of writing there are thirteen, all sounding confusingly similar: Api bioxal, Apiguard, Apifeed, Apiinvert, Apigold Apitraz, Apistan, Apivar, Apoquel & Apilife Var. It is even getting difficult to tell which medication is now approved by the Veterinary Medicine Directive for use in the UK: Apifeed, Apigold and Apiinvert in the

above list are of course just winter bee food, but what about the rest? And how are they used?

This article will go through the current veterinary Medicine Directive list as of the 1st May 2018, with each treatment's mode of operation.

1. Essential oils based treatments

Apiguard

A pack of ten trays of thymol gel that treats 5 hives. Each tray contains 75g of gel (25g of thymol). Technically the retailer should only sell you a pack of ten trays as instructions for use are not on each individual tray. You may therefore wish to share a pack.

Mode: Two trays per hive are required. After removal of honey supers, the 1st opened tray is placed in late afternoon inside a 35mm eke or empty super, on top of the brood frames, and replaced 14 days later by the 2nd opened tray. Trays and eke are removed on day 42.

When: Apiguard can be used in March and July to August, but not while honey supers are on.

Pros: Reasonable efficiency of 90% if applied in medium to high temperatures of 20c or above. Varroa are extremely unlikely to develop resistance to thymol.

Cons: Low efficiency below 15°C ambient temperature as the bees cluster and do not work the gel. American research shows that in temperatures of 15°C to 20°C, efficiency can be as low as 67% if the hive has top entrances or open

crown boards with varroa boards removed on OMFs. So, for best results seal the feed holes in your crown board, put a monitor board in your OMF and start the treatment before the end of August.

Apilife-var

A biscuit type tablet. The active ingredient is thymol plus Eucalyptus Oil, Menthol and Camphor.

Mode: Treatment is applied after the honey has been removed. Each hive requires a total of 3 tablets. For the first treatment break one tablet into about 4 pieces and place these in the corners of the hive on the top bars of the brood frames. Do not place them over the centre of the brood nest. This treatment is repeated at day 7 and day 14. No eke is required.

Cons: Very temperature dependant.

Thymovar

Wafer tablets which contain thymol.

Mode: Two applications are required per treatment. The 1st Thymovar wafers are placed on top of combs of the brood frames, but not directly over open or sealed brood. Remove the 1st set of depleted THYMOVAR wafers after 3–4 weeks, replacing them with the 2nd set. Removed after the end of the 2nd 3-4 week period.

Cons: Known to be very temperature dependant, similar to Apiguard

2. Organic acids

Api-bioxal

A 35g packet of Oxalic Dihydrate powder that treats ten hives.

Mode: It is mixed with 500ml of 1 to 1 sugar syrup, which is then dribbled at 5ml per seam of bees, normally in a winter broodless period. Alternatively 12-15 hives can be fumigated with 2.3g per hive using a sublimator

When: Two dribble treatments can be used per year, but only one sublimation.

Pros: High efficiency around 95-97% when colony is broodless.

Cons: Low efficiency if brood is present. Sublimating causes damage to operators lungs if inhaled so P3 mask needs to be worn.

Oxovar

A container plus pre-measure sachet of Oxalic Dihydrate, with a pre-measured sachet of Sugar. Both sachets are mixed with water to provide 500ml of treatment solution to treat 5 to 7 hives.

Mode: Solution is dribbled or sprayed onto the brood at a rate of 5ml per seam of bees while they are broodless in winter.

Cons: As for apibioxal

Oxybee

A container of syrup solution plus pre measure sachet of Oxalic Dihydrate. Only recently approved so fewer details are available.

Mode: Dribble or spray onto the brood at a rate of 5ml per seam of bees while they are broodless in winter.

Cons: Assume as Apibioxal.

VarroMed

35ml single-use sachets, or 550ml dribble bottle of ready-to-use liquid. The active ingredients are a low dose of oxalic acid and formic acid. VarroMed makes use of the bees own hygienic grooming behaviour. It replaced the product Hive Clean which the VMD asked to be withdrawn.

Mode: dribble at 20 to 35ml per brood box of bees in Spring, Autumn and Winter but not during a Honey flow.

Cons: VarroMed has not be tested for effectiveness or approved on heavily infected colonies. The mode of operation only removes phoretic mites.

MAQS

Supplied in either two or ten treatment sealed buckets. It consists of paper-

wrapped gel packs containing Formic Acid.

Mode: Two of the paper wrapped gel packs are placed on the top of the brood frames and left for 7 days. MAQS will kill both phoretic mites on the bees and mites in the brood. The American manufacturer recommends that it is not used within three days of brood inspection and only on colonies of greater than 10,000 bees. A super should be added above the brood box to enable the bees to expand upwards away from the treatment. (Remember that a super to the Americans is quite a large box, so you may wish to add two English BS national Supers not one).

Pros: MAQS is the only treatment that is authorised to be used with honey in the super of a hive. In fact the Manufacturers recommend that if treatment is undertaken in summer or early autumn that the supers with honey are left on during the 7 day treatment.

Cons: Some reports of Queen death, absconding and brood removal.

3. Pyrethroids

Cons: These apply to all three treatments below: Pyrethroids are much maligned due to overuse and misuse by beekeepers, hence varroa mites have developed resistance. Should now not be used in areas where varroa has developed resistance. Should not be used more than twice in any five-year period. Known to be absorbed by wax.

Apistan

A pack that treats five hives.

Mode: Impregnated plastic strip, which are placed between the brood frames for 6 weeks after removal of honey supers.

Bayvarol

A pack that treats five hives.

Mode: Impregnated plastic strips are placed between the brood frames for 6 weeks after removal of honey supers.

Polyvar yellow

Polyvar yellow is pack of ten Pyrethroid impregnated plastic mouse guards.

Mode: In Late July or August after the honey has been taken off, two of the polyvar yellow strips are place over the entrance of a hive so that bees must pass through the holes in the impregnated strips. Bees receive a dose of the pyrethroid by contact. The strips are left on for a minimum of two months or a maximum of four months.

4. Amitraz

Apitraz 500 & Apivar 500

Same active ingredient, dosage and delivery mode. A pack that treats five

hives. Very new of the market so varroa mites have not developed resistance yet. This used to be prescribed only by vet under the VMD cascade system and reserved for varroa infestation that could not be controlled by pyrethroids.

Mode: Impregnated plastic strip containing a 500mg of Amitraz. Place between the brood frames after removal of honey supers.

Pros: Easy to use and effective.

Cons: Varroa will eventually develop resistance, known to be adsorbed by wax.

None of which should be confused with Apoquel, which is the anti-allergy treatment I give to Tara my Labrador, as she is allergic to Little Legs, our cat!

Beginners Course Inspections



The theory sessions are complete and now we have reached the practical sessions in the training apiary. If members are planning to come to a beginner session could they please contact [Wilf](#) or [Lorraine](#) for details.

The sessions take place at 10.15am every Saturday in the new training apiary.

BDBKA News

Barnet Beekeepers On Social Media

Like us, Follow us and get keep up to date with Association news and events.





New Training Apiary

The Bees have been moved to the new training apiary.

With the prospect of development starting on the Whalebones site, the Barnet Beekeepers' committee has been busy finding a suitable site for our training apiary.

Apiarist Suit Discounts For Our Members

Discounts are available from two of the most popular brands in protective suits for Beekeepers to members of Barnet Beekeepers Association. Both BB Wear and BJ Sherriff offer discounts.



Please email our [Membership Secretary](#) who will confirm your membership with Barnet Beekeepers to the supplier you wish to purchase from.

Do You Want To Do The Basic Beekeeping Assessment?

The basic assessment is relatively straight forward and is split into two parts, theory and practical and is carried out in the training apiary.



Please email [Geoff](#) or [Pat](#) for more details.

Committee Members

Chair: Pat Morgan

Deputy Chair/Bee Disease Officer: Geoff Hood

Second Deputy Chair: Wilf Wood

Treasurer: Lester Doman

Committee Secretary: Ann Songhurst

Membership Officer: Mary Block

Social Secretary: Linda Perry

Publicity Officer/Newsletter: [Adam Armstrong](#)

Education Coordinator: Lorraine Patel

Queen Rearing Programme: Ripal Parekh

Association Apiary Managers

Arkley Apiary Manager: Pat Morgan

Cat Hill Apiary Manager: Geoff Beresford Cook

Mill Hill Apiary Manager: Lester Doman

Shenley Apiary Manager: Steve Leveridge

Whalebones Apiary Manager: Wilf Wood

Willows Apiary Manager: Geoff Hood



www.barnetbeekeepers.org.uk
