

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



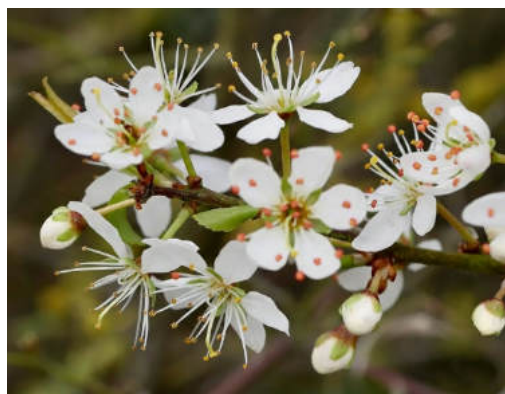
A DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

CONTENTS

Notes from the Chair	2	• Meeting report: considerate beekeeping
Yellow-legged Asian Hornet report	2	• Education and events round-up
Seasonal hints & tips	3	• A note on our finances
• Spring inspections		Events
News from the Division	4	• West Sussex BKA Convention
• Annual General Meeting report plus photos		Meetings and contacts
		• Events, names and faces
		7
		10

EDITORIAL



The birds are showing us that spring is definitely here, we see flowers, like the blackthorn above, and of course, our bees have been flying on those days when it's

been warm enough. The season is starting.

Incursion risk

Amid this mounting excitement, I have to urge caution: I found a queen wasp in my bedroom towards the end of February, and she probably came down the chimney. And if it's warm enough to for a wasp to start the year, it's probably warm enough for the Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet too.

Our AH team co-ordinator Rachel has a trapping scheme worked out—see next page—especially around Lewes, so please consider setting out traps as she requests.

Your bees will thank you.

Manek Dubash, Editor

March 2026 events

Date	Event	Location	Leader
Sat 28 February	WSBKA Annual Convention	Pulborough	
Wed 4 March	Bee Chat	The Ladies Mile, Brighton	
Sat 14 March	Open apiary meeting	Barcombe apiary	Ian White
Sat 14 March	Very new beekeeper support	The Barn, Westdene	Jude New
Wed 18 March 2026	Introduction to Apitherapy	Lewes	Chris Park

Bee Chats start at 19.30. **Open meetings** start at 19.00 for 19.30.

You can find the full list of 2026 events and meetings [on the back page](#).

EVENTS

- Winter events
- Festive fare
- Wax workshop

NEXT MONTH

- Seasonal hints and tips
- Asian hornet update
- News news news!
- Latest events
- Meetings & more

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS & STORIES

Do you have interesting photos or video links you'd like to share? Or an insight from your beekeeping that would could enhance the hobby for others? Do you have skills that could be useful to other members? Anything else you'd like to see in this newsletter?

Ideas and contributions welcome; all contact details are on the back page.

ONLINE

[B&L website](#)
[Facebook group](#)



QR link to B&L website

Notes from the Chair



Manek Dubash
Chairman

It was with a little trepidation that I approached the Annual General Meeting, as it was my first chairing of a B&L AGM since I took on the chairmanship in 2025. As it was, I had little to worry about, as there was no controversy—the atrocious weather definitely kept the numbers of attendees down anyway.

The end result was that you re-elected the existing committee team which, despite the occasionally warm discussion, is a bunch of people determined to do the best by Brighton and Lewes Beekeepers.

We also heard a delightful presentation from Mim who told us about her beekeeping journey, warts and all. And the

innovative (as ever) Ross was there providing waistband-expanding cakes, biscuits and hot drinks before the meeting even started. Thank you Ross! [More on p4.](#)

And afterwards, a couple of us nipped into the Lewes Arms for a debrief.

Some have argued that we should hold the AGM over Zoom. Yes, there might be more people present at a virtual meeting but there's nothing like a physical meeting for a bit of bonding.

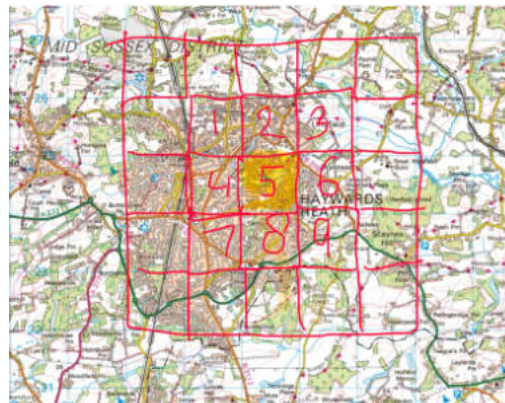
While we do provide courses and other benefits for individual members, B&L is also about the social side of beekeeping; I'd hate to lose that.

Your thoughts on the matter?

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet report



Rachel Ramaker
*Asian Hornet Team
Co-ordinator*



It's time to start spring trapping.

Spring trapping is needed when the temperature reaches around 12°C for at least three successive days. This is when the first Asian hornet foundress queens emerge from hibernation. That's now.

So we need as many traps as possible in the squares around the nests found late last year. Please get friends and family involved!

Traps are available and here's an easy bait recipe.

Ingredients (equal parts - 1/3 each):

- Dark or blonde beer: its fermentation odour is an excellent basic attractant
- Dry white wine: its acidity and alcohol act as a strong bee repellent
- Red fruit syrup (blackcurrant, grenadine, raspberry): it provides a strong sugary scent that attracts hornets from afar.



Blackcurrant is often cited as most effective.

Preparation: Mix the three ingredients directly in the trap.

If you haven't yet been allocated a trap square, please [contact me](#).



Asian hornet queen growing her primary nest

Seasonal tips for March

I hope your bees survived the cold wet days of February—but beware: this can be the starvation danger time, with lots of bees but little incoming forage yet.

Feeding the growing brood

As the days lengthen and the temperature rises the queen will start to increase her laying rate, building a new foraging force for the approaching spring. The fondant you've been using is a source of carbohydrate that helped the bees maintain the hive temperature. It will need to be supplemented with a source of protein to help with the development of the new brood.

In the absence of stored pollen in the hive you can use pollen patties either home-made or shop-bought. They can be either substitutes (without pollen) or supplements (with pollen)

Here's one I found on the internet:

- 226g (8oz) soy flour
- 340g (12oz) granulated sugar
- 28g (1oz) Brewer's yeast
- 340g (12oz) sugar syrup (2:1) or your honey
- Add water as needed to mix.

BeeBase provides a similar one [here \[pdf\]](#). Or you can use a fondant mixed with pollen such a Candipolline Gold (other brands are available).

On warmer still days, later on in the month when the temperature is getting towards about 12°C you can do a limited examination of the hive to see how things are going. Does the queen have enough spare space to lay new brood? If not, move a frame of



Choose a sunny day for the first inspection

empty drawn comb nearer the centre of the brood to help her along.

Check if they need feeding. If the cluster is low down on the comb and there is plenty of sealed stores, good. If they are clustered on the top of the frames and there is little sign of stores, then feed. Use a contact feeder filled with thick syrup. Sugar and water mixed in the ratio of 2:1 or commercial syrup. Caution, do not feed too much as the bees will store it and reduce the space available for the queen to lay.

Varroa, treatment & hygiene

Check varroa mite drop rate. If you're unsure what it should be, BeeBase provides a calculator or leaflet [here \[pdf\]](#). If the measurement is high you can trickle with oxalic acid or use Formic Pro. Note that the latter should only be used in temperatures above 10C and with a strong full-sized colonies. Please read the manufacturer's instructions.

Even at this stage of the year, it's necessary to keep a record of any approved medicines that you've given your bees; 'approved' means those approved by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). Legislation requires that you keep a record of the purchase, use and disposal of these

medicines. Records should be kept for a minimum of five years. Again a helpful leaflet is available to download from BeeBase.

Now may also be the opportunity to change the floor and get rid of all the debris that has accumulated over the winter, and take the nadired super out from underneath as this should be empty of stores now.


Do not drop litter in the apiary. Put it in bucket and dispose of it in the dustbin at home or in your garden burner. When the weather is warm enough, I will change the rest of the hive components, from floor to roof, except for the brood frames, unless they have become too black to be reused.

Stimulation & planning

Later in the month, when there is little fear of freezing, you may think about stimulation feeding. This where you use a thin syrup (1:1) to simulate a nectar flow.

However, if you start feeding you will need to continue until natural sources of pollen and nectar become available. For example, in my apiary there is a large willow tree that flowers in late May early April.

A strong colony can use up to 2Kg of stores during this period. Bees take six weeks to grow from egg to flying forager; so, if the cluster is small when you start feeding, they may not be able to maintain the correct temperature



Animal & Plant Health Agency

National Bee Unit

Best Practice Guideline No. 11.

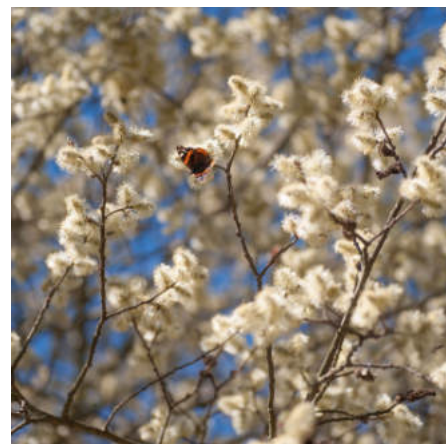
April 2024

Varroa

It is important to be able to recognise and manage Varroa mites in honey bee colonies. If mite numbers are not controlled, a colony may collapse within two to three years. The purpose of this factsheet is to provide an overview of Varroa biology and the best practices for Varroa management.



If you see this many varroa on your Correx board, it's too many



Willow tree in flower

Seasonal tips for March



Splitting the hive

for rearing the new brood if you stop.

It's also time to think about what your plans for the bees this year. Replacing or rebuilding your stock of bees and how you'll go about it. You could pick the biggest and best hive that you have identified from your hive records (ha, ha, ha).

More bees please

But back to that nice healthy colony, are you going to split it into three or four new nuclei/hives, letting the bees develop new queens in the process?

You could wait until swarms become available and go and collect them. The risk is they may be carrying disease and unless you have somewhere to quarantine them, you don't want them mixing freely with your bees. Whatever you're planning to do with them, also check whether

you have enough equipment to carry out this adventurous programme of bee husbandry.

Or you could buy them. If you do buy them, make sure it's from a known dealer or that they have an inspection certificate from the Bee Inspector.

The BBKA advises colonies should:

- Have a combination of adult and flying bees, brood in all stages of development over 3-8 frames
- Have this year's or last year's marked queen.
- Be in the position to be able to start to expand immediately.
- Include frames constructed properly, new or last season's at the least.
- Enough stores to last about two weeks, as the bees may not be able to fly due to bad weather.
- If at all possible, buy bees that have been bred locally; they are used to the climate.

If you are new to beekeeping, remember to secure the nuc/hive for the journey home. Really secure it. You don't want to stop suddenly and then have a car full of bees.

Make sure the nuc/hive is out of the sun and that there's enough ventilation so they don't overheat.



Free bees: but is a swarm worth it?

Recording for the future

Keeping records, no matter the size of your operation, will make your life easier. I still struggle to write everything down, even now after all the years I been keeping bees.

When I first started with just one hive, it was easy to remember everything I saw and did. However, as the number of hives increased, and the manipulations got more involved it all became a little confusing. Several types of record cards are available, including paper-based or computer-based ones, and cards can be designed by yourself; as long as they meet your needs, they will be fine.

Writing this has whetted my appetite: I can't wait to go and see my bees.

Another veiled beekeeper

2026 Annual General Meeting: report

The AGM was held at 19.30 on 18 February, with 18 members attending. Existing officers and committee members were all re-elected:

Chair	Manek Dubash
Secretary	Mat Budgen
Membership Secretary/ Treasurer	Graham Bubloz
Newsletter editor	Manek Dubash
Events Secretary	Jude New
Training Co-ordinator	Jude New
Asian Hornet Team Co-ordinator	Rachel Ramaker
Webmaster	Gerald Legg
Swarm Co-ordinator	Ian White
Facebook Administrator	Graham Bubloz

Apologies were received from 11 members. Reports from the following officers were given and accepted:

Chairman; Membership; Treasurer (given by the Chairman in the Treasurer's absence); Training; Events; Swarm Co-ordinator; Asian Hornet Team Co-ordinator.

The following motion was proposed by Graham Bubloz:

"I should like to propose that we offer to fund the life membership fee of Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers for the President of our Division, in

recognition of their status and guidance."

The motion was carried *nem con*.

The date of the next AGM was agreed for 17 February 2027.

Successful exam candidates present were awarded their certificates.

After the formal business was concluded, there followed a presentation by Mim about her four-year beekeeping journey.

The meeting closed on a cold, wet and windy Wednesday at 20.30.

Photos (by MD) are overleaf.

2026 Annual General Meeting: in pictures



Considerate beekeeping: meeting report



Simon Tuck, Sussex BKA's Education Officer, came and gave us a talk in January about being considerate to others when siting and managing our bees.

The issues he addressed included apiary siting, swarm control,

aggression (the bees', not yours!), following, bee poo and more.

He summarised the issues thus: considerate beekeeping is better bees, fewer excuses, wider thinking.

Manek Dubash, Editor

Education and events round-up for March and beyond

Education summary

Honey Bee Health sessions for summer 2026: Assessment Zoom meetings on Monday evenings started in January, moving into the apiary for the practical sessions.

Support sessions for very/nearly new beekeepers at The Barn and in the apiary, start on 14 March in the afternoon. We will meet again in April, May, June, July and August for theory and practical work. See the B&L website and as events on our private Facebook page.

Please [click here](#) to book your place.

Bee Chat

4 March, 19.30, The Ladies Mile, 2 Mackie Avenue, BN1 8RA
Topic: anything you like

Next winter meeting

Wednesday 18 March, Eastgate Baptist Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes BN7 2LR.

Speaker: Chris Park

Topic: General Introduction to Apitherapy

Open apiary meeting

Saturday 14 March, Barcombe Apiary with Ian White

Topic: disease inspection/ replacing OMF. Check WhatsApp Buzz group for times. Subject to weather conditions.

Support for very new beekeepers

Wednesday 14 March, 13.00-15.00

Topic: From beehive to beekeeper

Venue: The Barn Westdene, Barn Rise, BN1 5EE.

Register for the full course, which runs from March to August, on B&L Facebook, under Events.

First Aid Events

First Aid course: In response to posts in the active season of 2025 about bad reactions to bee stings.

We invited a paramedic to speak about first aid in the apiary for beekeepers who often manage their bees alone in isolated places. He gave some new insights into self-



medication being prepared for accidents with special reference to anaphylaxis.

Discussion and changes

We hope that you are enjoying the winter events and speakers—we chose them to appeal to all levels of beekeeping experience.

There are two remaining winter meetings, one a talk by Chris Park, the other from beekeepers of Buckfast Abbey (below), talking about swarming and how to manage it.

Plans and plots

We are planning the education and events programme for the next 12 months:

- Basic Assessment course and queen rearing are planned in May and June
- Bee Safari: we are planning a

reimagined Bee Safari at different venues in the summer

- Honey Show: we are looking at venues for the Honey Show for 3rd or 10th October
- Additional trainers and courses: if you would like to help deliver training or would like additional training opportunities that we don't offer now, please do get in touch. My contact details are on the back page.

Thoughts for the future

Our membership is changing, so maybe we could make some more changes. Bee Chats around the division are well attended, so are winter meetings needed; some beekeepers attend Bee Chats (above) but don't come to winter meetings for a variety of different reasons.

Could we deliver the winter programme via Zoom? This could attract those who don't normally attend.

Could we hold the AGM over Zoom? It might be more inclusive and encourage attendance from the comfort of home, particularly if the weather is bad.

Jude New, Training Co-ordinator



Buckfast Abbey. Photo: Stefan Schwartz (CC)

A note on our finances



As we all know, some years are better than others in terms of honey production.

In 2025, our divisional apiaries had

a good year. Honey sales are one of our main sources of income but which we have rather taken for granted in recent years.

I am keen to try and increase our bank balance to give us a little bit more of a budget surplus.

So, in the latter part of 2025, I approached a few members to try and get some help in selling the Brighton & Lewes Honey directly to the public.

names below are already well-known. However, I would very much like to thank and applaud the following members who very kindly sold our honey.

The star performer was at Hove Apiary, from where Adrien Parker managed to bring in over 100Kg of honey. But as you can see from the table below, Ross, Jude and Jeff also made substantial contributions.

I sincerely hope that I haven't missed someone off the list. If I have, please do let me know.

Thank you each and every one of you for your help and for boosting our funds so fantastically.

Adrien Parker	£358.00
Ross Eager	£232.00
Jude New	£159.20
Jeff Rodrigues	£79.50
Total	£828.70

Graham Bubloz, Treasurer

Help abundant

I was pleasantly surprised to find that some agreed to help. Some of the

2026 Sussex BKA Bee Market: stallholders wanted



SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION'S

BEE MARKET

MARKET STALL HOLDERS WANTED

WHEN: SATURDAY 9TH MAY 2026
10:00-1500

WHERE: UCKFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
DOWNSVIEW CRESCENT, UCKFIELD, EAST SUSSEX,
TN22 3DJ

STALL FEE: £20 FOR ONE 6 FOOT TABLE

ALL TYPES OF CRAFTERS WELCOME, DOES NOT
HAVE TO BE BEE RELATED

WE ARE INVITING STALL HOLDERS TO APPLY FOR A TABLE NOW TO
AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT NEARER THE DATE.

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFO AND HOW TO APPLY



MORE INFO

SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS HAVE FOR MANY YEARS RUN THEIR ANNUAL BEE MARKET TO CELEBRATE ALL THINGS RELATING TO BEES AND POLLINATORS. WE MOVED TO UCKFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE YEAR OF 2023 TO ACCOMMODATE THE MANY STALL HOLDERS WHO NOW JOIN US.

THERE IS A LOT GOING ON THROUGHOUT THE DAY TO ENSURE AN INTEREST FOR BEEKEEPERS AND NON-BEEKEEPERS ALIKE. INCLUDING SALE OF EQUIPMENT, A LIVELY AUCTION OF EQUIPMENT, CHILDREN'S TALK AND ACTIVITIES, AND A PLANT STALL TO NAME JUST A FEW OF THE MANY STALL HOLDERS WHO REGULARLY JOIN US.

THE POPULAR EVENT ATTRACTS PEOPLE FROM EAST AND WEST SUSSEX AND FURTHER AFIELD.

FOOD STALLS HAVE ACCESS TO AN ADJOINING TERRACED AREA.

PLEASE EMAIL STUART ON S_WALTER@SKY.COM TO RECEIVE THE APPLICATION FORM

West Sussex BKA Annual Convention: 28 February

A one day Beekeeping Convention is held annually at the beginning of the year. Intended to suit all abilities, it consists of three main lectures plus a choice of seminars.

Last chance to book

We have a renowned group of speakers and an impressive mix of lectures and seminars with something for everyone. We really hope you will come.

The main speakers are Prof Giles Budge, Dr Ben Woodcock and Dr Beverley Adams-Groom.

Apart from the three main lectures, there are two sessions where you can choose which seminar to join (see itinerary below).

The seminars will be run by Peter Smith, Simon Tuck, Dylan Gussman and Peter Smith.

All details, topics and speaker profiles can be found in the booking form (see below).

A simple lunch will be included and there will be many opportunities to catch up with fellow beekeepers from around the county and beyond. It is a full day that promises to be both

educational and entertaining. Booking is brisk and we are hoping for record numbers to attend and encourage you to book early to ensure that you secure a place on your preferred seminars.

The booking form is also available on the [WSBKA website](#).

Where and when

Saturday 28 February 2026, 09.30-16.30. Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough

Chrissy Blakeman, West Sussex BKA



Main Lectures

- Chronic Bee Paralysis, an Emerging Threat to Honey Bee Health — Prof. Giles Budge
- The Effect of Pesticides on Bees — Dr Ben Woodcock
- Forensic Palynology: Use of Pollen, Spores and other Microscopic Entities in Criminal Investigation — UK pollen and forensics expert, Dr Beverley Adams-Groom, Worcester University

In addition there is a choice of seminars:

Seminar 1—you may attend one of these

1. In Praise of Wasps and Hornets, (Except the Asian Hornet!) – Peter Smith
2. Smoke but no Mirrors—Making Queen Rearing Doable – Simon Tuck
3. Winter Losses, Colony Post Mortems and Over Wintering Techniques – Dylan Gussman

Seminar 2—you may attend one of these

1. The Apidea – Getting a Lot for a Little – Simon Tuck
2. Guarding Behaviour and Dealing with Defensive Colonies – Dylan Gussman
3. Bees and Honey: Tradition, Myth, Symbol and Magic – Peter Smith

Spring events

Date	Event	Location	Leader
Sat 28 February	WSBKA Annual Convention	Pulborough	
Wed 4 March	Bee Chat	The Ladies Mile, Brighton	
Sat 14 March	Open apiary meeting	Barcombe apiary	Ian White
Sat 14 March	Very new beekeeper support	The Barn, Westdene	Jude New
Wed 18 March 2026	Introduction to Apitherapy	Lewes	Chris Park
Wed 15 April 2026	Oops! My bees have swarmed	Lewes	Martin Hann & Clare Densley

Bee Chats

- 19:30 in a pub

Winter/spring meetings in Lewes

- From 19:00 for 19:30, Eastgate Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes BN7 2LR

From our neighbours

West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention, 28 February 2026, 09.30-16.30. Lodge Hill, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1LZ. Booking required, details [here](#).

Newsletter deadlines

Please send all contributions, **including photos**, to the Editor (contact details on the right). Max length 500 words.

Copy deadline: 18th of the month before publication date, except 11 December. Email photos for the website to Gerald Legg (details on the right).

National Bee Unit Inspectors

Seasonal Bee Inspectors

Daniel Morgan

daniel.morgan@apha.gov.uk

07500 954 390

Helen Hadley

helen.hadley@apha.gov.uk

07871 320 316

B&L newsletter's award certificate



We are grateful to the following for their support:



Lewes Town Council



Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector

**Co-operative Membership
Community Fund**

Contacts

President: Norman Dickinson

Chairman: Manek Dubash

chair@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07788 923557

Hon Secretary: Mat Budgen

matbudgen@hotmail.com
07776 468513

Treasurer / Membership Secretary:

Graham Bubloz

treasurer@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07758 866278

Training Co-ordinator: Jude New

newapiary@hotmail.com

Events Secretary: Jude New

meetings@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07875 895285

Newsletter Editor: Manek Dubash

editor@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07788 923557

Librarian: Alasdair Nicol

librarian@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07939 689356

Swarm Co-ordinator: Ian White

swarms@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07999 987097

Asian Hornet Team Co-ordinator:

Rachel Ramaker

blbka.ahat@gmail.com

07762 312592

Webmaster: Gerald Legg

gerald@chelifer.com

Apiary Managers

Barcombe: Ian White

Grassroots: Jude New

Hove: Adrien Parker

Rottingdean: Jeff Rodrigues

B&L Facebook Group

Group Administrator: Graham Bubloz

facebook@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07758 866278

Sussex BKA Representatives:

Ian White & Manek Dubash

National Honey Show Rep: Vacant

Disclaimer: Brighton and Lewes Division of the Sussex Beekeepers Association cannot accept any responsibility for loss, injury or damage sustained by persons in consequence of their participation in activities arranged by the Division.