



DBKA Education Sub-Committee (DESC) & Implementation Plan

DBKA Charitable Objectives

To further and promote the craft of beekeeping

To advance the education of the public in the importance of bees in the environment.

The Vision

- All new beekeepers should be encouraged to attend a beginner's course. Upon joining their chosen branch, new beekeepers should ideally be given a mentor to help them through the first two years of their beekeeping.
- Every beekeeper is able to access the education resources they require to fulfil their beekeeping potential
- Through the activities of DBKA members, the public will gain an increased level of knowledge and understanding of the importance of honey bees and other pollinators within our countryside and economy.

Structure of the DBKA Education Sub-Committee (DESC)

Devon Beekeeping Association is an organization consisting of eleven branches, each covering a local area in Devon. DESC is a sub-committee of the DBKA Executive Council (EC) and is answerable to the EC. It has no voting right within the EC, but will feed back to it on a regular basis through a nominated trustee. DESC will have a chairperson who will be elected on a yearly basis and approved by the EC.

Each of the eleven branches in DBKA will nominate an Education Representative who is a member of the DESC. Other branch members who have an interest in Education may attend from time to time as visitors or be co-opted on to the Sub-committee as required.

Education Resources and Provision

Education of the Public (currently restricted because of Covid-19 regulations)

This is undertaken through the Bees and Honey exhibit at the Devon County Show on three days in May each year. All branches are invited to contribute to this through exhibits and interaction with the public. Education is also undertaken by all Devon branches at open days, local shows, arranged visits to apiaries by members of the public, and by branch members visiting other establishments.

Member Education

Since the onset of Covid-19, much of the educational courses have had to be curtailed throughout Devon. There may be scope to provide these courses virtually through the DBKA website or by the use of Webinars.

Arrangements Prior to 2020

Beginners - most branches ran taster days or longer beginners' courses which ran in the autumn/winter months followed by practical sessions in the branch apiary or at members' apiaries throughout the spring and summer months. These courses were delivered by experienced beekeepers from within each branch and from the apiary teams.

Improvers - after one year of keeping their own bees, a member is eligible to take the Basic Assessment. Local Assessors approved by the Examinations Board of BBKA are timetabled by the DBKA Examinations Secretary. Improver beekeepers could have accessed education by attending sessions and workshops which may or may not have been organised at the branch apiary on a regular basis and by forming groups to study for specific BBKA Modules. These were formed within branches or groups of branches as the need occurs and the group may invest in a correspondence course from the BBKA.

It is recognized that while wishing to improve their knowledge of beekeeping, many beekeepers are not particularly motivated to sit examinations. In order to assess what the county's needs for

education are, a survey was done in 2019 by Viv Thorn. The findings are summarized in Appendix 1. Details of BBKA Modules M1-M8 can be found at www.bbka.org.uk.

DESC Objectives & Prioritisation

1. Teaching around Modular Subjects

There is a genuine enthusiasm in the branches to improve education & training throughout the county. DESC members are generally of the opinion that Public Education and Beginners' courses are currently done well. However, if social distancing rules continue to apply, then it may be necessary to offer beginners' courses through an e-learning platform. It is also recognised that the area which requires further development is in the Improving Beekeepers' category. This too, will have to be offered as e-learning for the coming season.

2. Website

The Education section of the DBKA website will develop both a general education page and password-protected pages for resource material. On the general education page, it is planned to develop a beekeeper's timetable of skills, from novice through to year 5 or 6 of beekeeping, matching skills and knowledge from the BBKA curriculum to those years. This will enable members to judge where they are on the learning spectrum and assess their on-going needs which in turn will help determine further learning resources. The password protected pages will contain short template presentations on subjects based around the module syllabus that may be accessed by branch Education Officers and used as a resource for further training.

3. Events

Although currently postponed, Devon was fortunate to have the Holsworthy Spring Convention and the South Devon Convention in the Autumn which have had excellent speakers and have the capacity to attract large numbers of beekeepers. Support from the EC is ongoing for both these events should circumstances allow these to go ahead once more. Similarly, at a future date, the BBKA Spring Convention, the National Honey Show, and Apimondia are all to be recommended. Attendance from DBKA Members may be improved by having a forum where members can find out who is going and have the ability to share transport, etc.

4. Members' Forum

There is a members' forum on the BBKA website, but it might be advantageous to have a DBKA Forum with a group of experienced beekeepers available to answer members' questions.

6. Use of External Agencies

In general, DBKA does not wish to endorse any particular private or commercial agency. However, there are resources within Devon and surrounding areas which could be used to deliver education to our members. It may be advantageous to invite these people to deliver educational talks or demonstrations at particular branches and advertise this to all DBKA Members.

7. Staffing the Learning Resource

We are fortunate in DBKA to have a large cohort of beekeepers who have the skills and knowledge with the potential to be shared with the county as a whole. This historically has relied on volunteers giving up their expertise and time. Expenses are usually found by the hosting branch. Where speakers are invited by DBKA from out of the county, more substantial expenses will be incurred.

Implementation Plan & Costings

An uplift of £250 has been agreed, which would give a total annual budget of £500 for the development of DBKA Education initiatives. Branch projects and expenses would still be found from individual branch funds.

What	How	When	Cost
Agree a program for Improvers	Collate course material from branches	By July 2020	nil
General resource page on website	Working party to design; MT to create page	End of 2020	Travelling expenses of working party, webinar, or Zoom subscription

Password protected page for Educators	Agree presentations	End of 2020	?
External speakers for DBKA events	Invite specialists from national or international field	Annually	As required
Members' Forum	Page on website, adjudicator required	On going	May need to pay adjudicator's time

Appendix 1- Branch Education Survey 2019

Dr. V Thorn

Branches were asked to answer 20 questions. All but two returned the questionnaire. Of the two branches who did not reply, some answers were obtained from their websites. The first two questions were the branch name and contact - these are omitted here.

Numbers in branches - range from 74 to 220.

Branch Apiary - 9 out of 11 branches have a branch apiary.

Beginners' Course - all branches now run beginners' courses and some also run taster days.

Cost of Beginners' Courses - 5 branches include branch membership with their beginner's course. The average cost is £124. Three branches run a beginners' course without membership, average cost £78.

Beginners' Courses Delivery - generally delivered by a variety of speakers, the majority of whom have some sort of teaching certificate, one is a seasonal bee inspector. A minority have done one or more BBKA modules.

Numbers Attending Beginners' Courses - varies from 12-36. There is often a waiting list. 30-60% of those on the beginners' course are retained as members after the first year.

Basic Assessment - on average, only 3-4 people per year sat the basic assessment in each branch over the last 3 years.

Demonstrations within Branches during the Spring/Summer - all branches had on-going teaching. Numbers of members attending were usually less than 20. Subjects covered - Handling bees, swarm control, shook swarms, oxalic acid demo, varroa treatment, Bailey Comb change, Taramov board, Snelgrove board, Queen introduction, Honey extraction, monitoring hive build up, June gap management, robbing, disease assessment, drone laying queens, queen caging, Autumn preparation, kit cleaning and maintenance.

Other Branch Activities - included Microscopy groups, Queen rearing groups, Candle making, Asian Hornet trap making, Bee Safaris, Wax & Propylis use and all branches had a lot of tea drinking and cake eating!

Winter talks - these were mostly monthly, but some were two monthly. 20-40% of members attended winter talks on average. Subjects included - preparing hives for winter, Asian Hornet, Viruses, Pollen, Starting the season, Artificial insemination, Queen rearing. Branches usually attempted to assess what members wanted to learn by feedback after talks, annual questionnaires & emails.

Educators in Branches - some branches have given details of who gave talks within the branch. It is not known if those mentioned would be willing to give talks in other areas of the county. Members who give talks to the public have been omitted from this list. This list is not exhaustive. Contact details can be found on the members e-Return2 page on the DBKA website.

Branch	Person	Subject
East Devon	Dan Basterfield	Has NDB - all subjects
	Jon Badley	General beekeeping
	Leila Goss	SBI, Diseases, AH, Plants
	Simon Foster	Swarm Prevention
	Richard Simpson	Drone Assemblies
Okehampton	Simon O'Sullivan	AH, Bee care/husbandry
	Marian Minton	Gen bee husbandry
	Will Pyne	Gen bee husbandry
	Neil Lamey	Queen rearing, commercial beekeeping
	Sue Baxter	AH & Wildlife
	Liz Ledsham	AH
	Terry McAuliffe	Beekeeping and the law

Honey Shows - 6 out of the 11 branches either had annual honey shows alone or in conjunction with other branches or their local community

Modular Study Groups - 6 out of 11 branches ran these when requested, but in general this was not frequent amongst all the branches

Branches were asked:

- if they felt their members would travel to study; most said possibly, but not too far.
- if members were interested in e-learning; most were doubtful if this would be attractive.
- for other suggestions for learning. Responses included natural beekeeping, wild insect education and the effects of beekeeping on them, a timetable for learning so that members could track their progress, training but not necessarily studying for modules.