

Hello! The 2019 Annual Meeting is almost upon us!

First of all, many apologies for the hiatus in newsletters from the latter part of 2018.

We've had a few changes through the year as people move on to new things. Maggie Duncan, our secretary, stepped down in the summer due to a large increase in the demands made of her particularly in one of her other major commitments. Then our dynamic pair near Peebles, Em Mackie and Kel Dyer, moved on to new things in their lives and stepped back, leaving us short of our newsletter editor and stand-in correspondence secretary. Finally, Dawn Rigby, sharing secretary duties for a while with Em, had her life turned upside down due to a fire destroying their family home! Dawn is coming to Kinross so feel free to give her your sympathy in person! A final stroke of bad luck for SNHBS and anyone expecting to receive an e-newsletter was me saying 'I'll do it' when clearly my organisational skills are not up to the job and my free time too small!

However, we are back on track with renewed vigour with our wonderful new co-opted secretary, Justine Swinney. Justine cannot make our meeting in Kinross but she will make herself known to you before long as she has volunteered to help Dawn re-start our e-newsletters after our Annual Meeting.

Gavin

Election of a new Board

Do you fancy helping SNHBS develop and improve? Do you have any particular skills of use to us? Time on your hands to help us out? This year we are specifically seeking someone to take on the role of Treasurer,

a role that we think may also encompass that of our Membership Secretary who is also stepping down. If you have an aptitude for writing and design then perhaps you'd like to join our communications team? Turn-over is an essential part of a vibrant association and even the Chair is happy to step aside if someone with the right qualities comes forward. To be part of our team we would expect you to:

- Be able to commit to roughly monthly meetings for a couple of hours in an evening
- Have a professional, cooperative outlook and be able to contribute constructively
- Be free of any history that precludes you from being a charity trustee

If you would like to put yourself forward as a trustee and possibly even a trustee to take on our Treasurer position then please speak to one of us before the end of lunch at the Kinross meeting if you can.

The Board is currently comprises: Gavin Ramsay (Chair), John Durkacz (Vice Chair), Justine Swinney (Secretary, co-opted), Kate Atchley (Treasurer), Ewan Campbell (Membership), Dawn Rigby, Jeff Baxter, Sandy Scott.

All Trustees step down at the AGM and may offer themselves for re-election. The new Board decides amongst itself which elected Trustees take on the various roles. The maximum number of trustees on the Board via member election is 10.

'Identify Those Native Bees Workshop'

Our Newbattle Workshop on 17 November 'Identify Those Native Bees' saw about 24 members coming to the excellent facility there and spending the day learning the skills to distinguish native honey bees from hybridised stocks. Read about it here:

<http://www.snhbs.scot/identify-those-native-honey-bees-winter-workshop-2018/>

Conservation Project

Our big effort in 2019 was to launch the Conservation Project, a three-phase project aiming to discover, test and share remaining native honey bees in Scotland. We were delighted to have the guidance of Ian Lennox, our initial coordinator, for the first phase and even more delighted to welcome him back to Kinross for our meeting tomorrow. The selection process whittled down possible candidate colonies using a novel system where digital images were scored by a panel of four trained and verified assessors. These selected stocks, plus some additional ones, were targeted for DNA analysis, thanks to a kind offer by Per Kryger of the Aarhus University, Copenhagen. Our Board member Ewan Campbell worked with Per on the EU SMARTBEES project and gathered and prepared the samples for DNA testing. Bees from 57 stocks have been through all of our tests: assessment of visible traits (from digital images and from microscopy sessions), wing morphometry (courtesy of Fred Mollison – thanks Fred!) and DNA testing using the SNP test developed in the SMARTBEES project and undertaken by Eurofins-Genoskan A/S.

Preliminary conclusions will be presented at the Kinross meeting. Whenever we receive the DNA results, and can compile them along with our other data, we will share the results with the contributing beekeepers and move on to the next phase of the project. In 2019 we expect to put some focus into distributing breeding material to breeding groups to start the process of further selection, breeding and distribution.

We also hope to be able to improve a system to share breeding material across Scotland based on the transfer of eggs through the post. Our 2018 trials of such an exchange did not go well but we may know why and still hope to make this work.

New Breeding Group for the North East

We are delighted to report that a new breeding group is getting underway

in the north east. This group contains a wealth of experience and bundles of energy and includes beekeepers from a wide area of Aberdeenshire and Moray. A report on the activities of this new breeding group, allied to SNHBS, and specifically on their experiences at a new isolated breeding site, are reported by Yvonne Davidson here:

<http://www.snhbs.scot/snhbs-queen-rearing-at-the-cabrach/>

Aims and Aspirations

The Board has started reviewing our Aims and Aspirations. Our Aims are on the website, currently on the home page but may move to 'About' soon. If you have any comments on them please get in touch with [Justine](#).

Career Change?

Finally, the Scottish Government are looking to replace Steve Sunderland, our much loved Lead Bee Inspector who is looking to hang up his hive tool next month. For anyone interested here is the official advert for the post:

https://applications.work-for-scotland.org/pages/job_search_view.aspx?jobId=13901

Hope to see many of you in Kinross – and look out for our new, improved newsletter with the outcomes of our Annual Meeting, further details of the Conservation Project and more!