



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

May, 2022

This month's monthly meeting has been moved online and will now be on moving bees (instead of Bee Health day) but next month's will be our second in-person meeting of the year at The Foundry, so do come along. Incidentally, the Foundry is looking for an Apiary Manager (17-19 Oval Way, SE11 5RR) – see details on page 6.

LBKA has been busy running its Introduction to Beekeeping course and full programme of School Food Matters in which we introduce school children to the wonders of pollinators and pollination in June. We are also seeing the feasibility of having a stand at the Lambeth Country Show (16-17 July). **We need your help to help make these things happen** including **drivers** able to move kit, people to **help man stalls** and people to help **deliver School Food Matters content**. Contact David on treasurer@lbka.org.uk if you think you might be able to help. We will only be able to be at the Lambeth Country Show if we have sufficient volunteers.

The weather has been good and colonies are in more of an advanced state than there usually are. See Howard's tips on page 7 and don't forget to log the swarms you collect on the LBKA-swarms Whatsapp group.

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Tut thank you to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Martin Hudson, George Kozobolis, Annie McGeogh, Eugene McConville, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Paul Youthed**. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me.

Aidan Slingsby, Editor, services@lbka.org.uk

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From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

This is the time of year when LBKA is joined by a cohort of new members who have completed the Introduction to Beekeeping Course. On behalf of the membership, I welcome you all to the community that is the London Beekeepers' Association. You are especially welcome this year because we had to suspend our training during the lost covid years so it is nearly 3 years since we have had a mass influx of new members. I think this return to full operations is something we can all welcome.

Of course, I am not suggesting that LBKA has been shut down during lock-downs: far from it, we seem to have been busier than at any time. But, speaking personally, I have really missed the social aspects, the real meetings, the spontaneous meetings at someone else's hives, those unscripted moments when there is so



Spotted by Eugene: "Sizing up a *Camassia leichtlinii*..."
Photo and caption: Eugene McConville.



Spotted by George: "A solitary bee pollinator (not sure but possibly a Carpenter Bee) is flying towards a young leaf which has fallen on the ground trying to inspect the hole on it perhaps mistaking it for a cavity and suitability for a nest." Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

much more chemistry and chance to lead who knows where.

I hope new members will soon discover the value of membership in many forms. But for long-standing members maybe this is an opportunity to reflect on they way things were before lock-down and rather than take a "return to normal" for granted, re-evaluate how it really worked, or not. at a personal level and let me or any of the Trustees know their thoughts and ideas.

In trying to restart full services for members, the Trustees have certainly realised that many things have just been inherited from way back and have never really been examined in today's context. They might be little things like, when and where are monthly meetings best held? Or more fundamental questions about members' needs at different stages on their beekeeping journey. This is especially true of intermediate and experienced beekeepers – it is not so difficult to recognise or supply the requirements of new beekeepers. Equally, it is relatively easy to judge the importance and effectiveness of something like BeeBanter, because we can see it but it is less easy to judge what is important and effective about Monthly Meetings and to whom, unless we get feedback. Ironically, it is the meetings themselves and things like the Pub Social, that provide good opportunities for off-agenda chat which can so often catalyse new ideas or improvements.

So, I do urge members to keep an open mind about meetings or any other aspect of our Association. Come along to meetings if you can and see what happens. They are good opportunities for informal engagement, airing and sharing as well as more formal discussion and prepared talks.

Stay well.



Spotted by George: "The abundance of blossom on the apple trees this time of year, becomes a source of nectar and pollen for a multiple number of pollinators. In the photo a branch of a Granny Smith's tree buzzing with their flying." Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.



Spotted by George: "A honey bee, half loaded with pollen, attracted by a Granny Smith's apple tree blossom is flying towards the centre of a flower to collect more pollen and nectar and in the process to provide the pollination of flowers turning them into tasty apples for us to eat! What a wonderful, simple but very essential process!" Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

Announcements

This is our official place for announcements. If you only read one section of the newsletter, it should be this one!

May's Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

In a change to previously-advertised, May's Monthly Meeting will be via Zoom (usual place – see [members' area of the website](#) or your email) on **moving our bees on Sunday 8th May**.

The Pub Social this month will be on **Tuesday 31st May** from 18:30 onwards at [The Trinity Arms](#), 45 Trinity Gardens, Brixton, SW9 8DR. It's a beautifully refurb-



Spotted by Annie: LBKA's delivery of School Food Matters session for London's schoolchildren are inspiring the next generation pollinator appreciators. Photo: Annie McGeogh.

bished pub on a quiet residential square between Brixton and Clapham North. Catch up with all the latest news over a pint in a nice food-serving pub.

June's Monthly Meeting will be at The Foundry (17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR), a fantastic venue (that even has an apiary on-site – see [p6](#) if you'd like to be the beekeeper) on how bees forage, including details about undesirable nectars.

Lambeth Country Show

Lambeth Country Show is back again this year! It will be at Brockwell Park on 16th and 17th July.

LBKA has traditionally had a pitch at this event and has been offered one again this year. We are planning to attend again, to spread our messages around Responsible Urban Beekeeping and The London Bee Situation, talk to the public about bees & flowers, show an observation hive and to give members an opportunity to sell hive products.

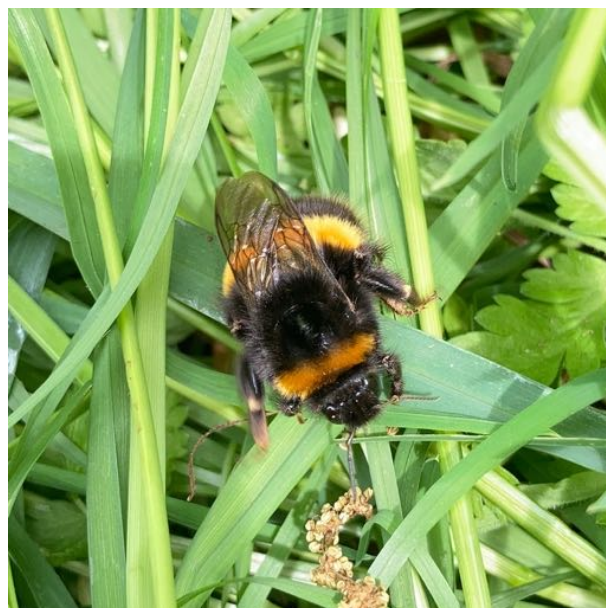
But **we won't attend unless we can be sure of having members on hand** to help set up on the Saturday morning, staff our stall during both days, and help dismantle on the Sunday evening. We'd like to confirm our attendance early in June, so **we need volunteers to commit as soon as possible**. We're looking for about 10-12 members to give a couple of hours of their time over that weekend. Members who wanted to use the opportunity to sell honey or other hive products will be expected to offer some time. If you are interested, please contact treasurer@lbka.org.uk to discuss.

Without your help we won't be able to take part in this event.

Winter Lectures

David Hankins

The Winter Lecture "season" has come to an end for another year. All the lectures over the past 5-6 months have been recorded and are available for viewing on



Spotted by Richard: Bumblebee using "a lowly [iPhone] SE but with 3rd party App, Camera+ 2." Photo: Richard Glassborow.

our YouTube channel, (except the last one which will be posted in the next few days).

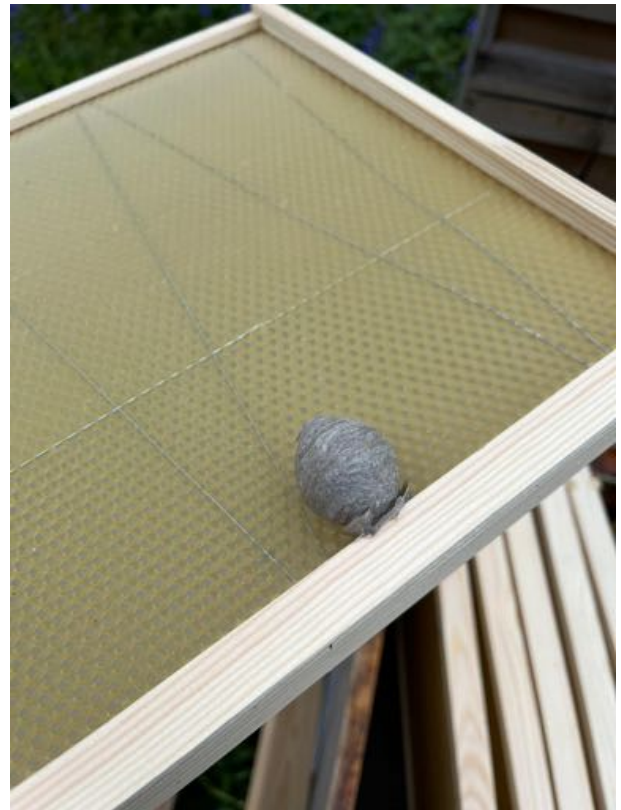
Many of you will remember that prior to the pandemic these lectures were physical events that served both an educational and a social function on dark winter evenings outside the active beekeeping season. These were comparatively expensive to deliver, and we seldom managed to secure more than a couple of guest speakers per year. Restrictions on such gatherings over the last couple of years have created an opportunity/imperative for both hosts and potential speakers to change the way these events are delivered – but do Zoom meetings deliver what you want? It would be great to get some feedback on these lectures, so we know what works and doesn't, what topics we should be exploring, and whether or not we should return to physical lectures in future. Please forward feedback and comments to treasurer@lbka.org.uk.

I'd like to thank Martin Hudson for the time and thought he put into the summaries of Torben Schiffter's lectures earlier this year. Those lectures were quite challenging for traditional beekeepers, and Martin followed up by discussing the research with Torben in order to deal sensitively with the subjects in his summaries. If you have not yet seen these, they can be [found in the February, March and April issues of this newsletter](#) – they're well worth the read!

I'd also like to thank Martin Kunz for translating the marketing material and technical drawings of the Schifftertree Hive from the original German. Torben provided these on the understanding that the designs wouldn't be made publicly available on the internet, so if members wish to access the technical drawings they can contact me at the above email address – but be warned, making one of these hives would require far more than just basic



First 20 trainees at our practical session as part of our Introduction to Beekeeping course. At our Holland Park apiary with waist-high forage. Photos: Annie McGeogh.



Spotted by Paul: "Wasp nest in bait hive". Photo: Paul Youthed.



Spotted by Elliot: A swarm in North London. Photo: Elliot Hodges.

woodworking skills and tools! LBKA is not advocating the use of the Schiffertree Hive in London's urban environment (at least not in the way Torben suggests),



Richard has finished making LBKA's new observation hive.
Photo: Richard Glassborow.

so we will not be uploading the marketing material to the website – again, if any members wish to access this information they can contact me at the above email address.

Thanks again to Martin Hudson and Martin Kunz.

Help needed: School Food Matters

Thank you to all those who have offered a day to come and help at a school. As people's arrangements for May and June change I find we need more people.

We need people to be able to volunteer one day on a weekday in term-time if you can in June (7th, 8th, 9th, 15th, 16th and 21st). Volunteers may be needed for **driving our kit to the various venues** and for helping deliver the content to children. Those helping deliver the content to children would meet an experienced LBKA person at the school (Richard, Geoff, Lucie or Annie) and spend the day (9-3) looking after the observation hive, giving children a taste of honey off a stick (many sticks), answering questions about pollination and bees. It's a very rewarding day.

Please email events@lbka.org.uk if you can do a day with a phone number and best time to ring and we

can talk through dates and find a school near you. Remember that we are looking for **drivers** and **people willing to help deliver content** (you don't need to do both!).

The Foundry is looking for an apiary manager

The Foundry (17-19 Oval Way, SE11 5RR) is looking for an Apiary Manager. Fantastic location and location of April and June's monthly meetings. Advert is on page 6.

LBKA's Pollinator Fund

Don't forget about LBKA's Pollinator Fund!

The LBKA Pollinator Fund operates all year round, with grants of up to £1,000 available for full- or part-funded projects that have London pollinators at their heart. Applications are sought from groups such as schools, allotment organisations, tenant & residents associations, horticultural societies, and other small charities. So if you are a member of such an organisation which is developing plans, or just has a "wish list" of projects that might align with LBKA's aims, **please contact treasurer@lbka.org.uk for a Pollinator Fund guidance document and application form.**

BBKA Advanced and General Husbandry Training

These are 3-day courses at Stoneleigh. You can book your place on one of these courses via the [BBKA Web Shop](#).

- **Advanced Husbandry Assessment Preparation Training.** An intensive residential course, with high tutor to student ratio, providing time and space for both tutor to student, as well as student to student interactions. Will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of the Advanced Husbandry Assessment. Participants are required to hold the BBKA General Husbandry Certificate and to be eligible to take the Advanced Husbandry assessment in the near future. The course is will be run from **15th July to 17th July**, costs **£350** (including accommodation and meals), and has a maximum of 12 participants.
- **General Husbandry Assessment Preparation Training.** A programme of 20 hours over three days which covers both theoretical and practical aspects of the General Husbandry Assessment, aiming to give the participants an understanding of what the assessment entails and what they need to do to be successful. Participants are required to hold the BBKA Basic Certificate and to be eligible to take the General Husbandry Assessment in 2023. The theory sessions will be held on 30th April 2022 and 1st May 2022, with the practical on 22nd May, costs £150.00 (participants bring their own lunch), and has a maximum of 12 participants.

Apiary Manager at The Foundry, 17-19 Oval Way, SE115RR.

Introduction

The Foundry is an amazing, vibrant environmentally sustainable building full of people working hard to make a difference. As well as workspace we also provide conference and exhibition space to many organisations working for change and to individual artists. There is a real sense of community within the building and we're looking for someone to help us build stronger links with the wider local community.

Individual responsibilities

- To lead weekly full inspections during the active season and fortnightly check on stores during the dormant season.
- To lead on hive and apiary hygiene and health and respond swiftly and with effectiveness to any issues that may arise.
- To keep abreast of the latest bee health treatment systems and to comply with government recommendations and standards.
- To maintain and replace, where appropriate, all elements of the beekeeping arsenal of tools and equipment.
- To apply ethical treatments, where appropriate, and to ensure best practice is observed so that bee colonies are always in the best of health.
- To manage colony behaviour and to use expertise in order to predict behaviours such as swarming and respond effectively and appropriately.
- To engage an ever developing team of bee keeping volunteers, satisfying the needs of both the apiary and learners and so that the next generation of beekeepers learn best, ethical practice.
- To plan and deliver successful outreach on beekeeping, the honey harvest, and the importance of pollinators in general (not just honey bees)
- Oversee the annual honey harvest, striking the right balance between honey production and bee health.

The post holder will share with staff the responsibility for the following:

- To comply with all Health and Safety regulations and to ensure the health and safety of all trainees and visitors to the site. Compliance with these regulations while working on external sites and ensuring the safety of the public at all times
- To maintain the site, including keeping the building and property clean and in good condition
- To respond to enquiries from the public, community, groups, or other organisations

Person Specification - Apiary Manager

- Weekends fortnightly + outreach and additional hours when required
- Hourly rate - £20
- We particularly welcome applications from those identifying with groups currently under-represented within beekeeping

Area		Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BBKA Basic (or other equivalent) as a minimum. 	X	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrable experience leading on beekeeping projects 	X	X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience running outreach with local community groups and individuals with a diverse ability and skill set 		
Skills and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of insect life cycles and biology, including but not exclusive to the honey bee Understanding of the history of beekeeping The 21st century challenges faced by keeping bees, with a focus on London bees Knowledge and understanding of 'wild' bees and other pollinators, and our responsibility for all insect life Ability to work with own initiative Able to work well with others Ability to build rapport with students and colleagues Flexibility in the working environment An interest in the environment and organic gardening Environmental issues that relate to horticulture, wildlife and beekeeping 	X X X X X X X X	X X X
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive, dynamism, enthusiasm, ambition and determination to succeed Ability to grasp and communicate information clearly Sense of humour Environmentally conscious, preferably organically minded Confidence and humility Be prepared to take further qualifications and to learn more 	X X X X X	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a full, clean driving licence Hold a current First Aid qualification 		X X

The Foundry is looking for a new apiary manager

LBKA videos

Just a reminder that videos of many of our Winter Lectures, Monthly Meetings and various other stuff can be found in the [Members' Area of the website](#).

Instagram

Please keep sending your bee related pictures to Lucie at instagram@lbka.org.uk or share them with your authorisation to publish on the Bee Banter WhatsApp group. And if you are on Insta do follow [@londonbeekeepersassociation](#).

Do you have any announcements?

If you've any announcements for the next issue of LBKA News, please send to Aidan at services@lbka.org.uk.

May's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discusses at our monthly committee meetings (and what keeps us awake at night). Let us know if you can help or have any suggestions that might help.

Aidan Slingsby
services@lbka.org.uk

We acknowledged that it is a busy time for us. The events we're running dominated the meeting. We are delivering the Introduction to Beekeeping course and the huge School Food Matters programme. We are also planning in-person meetings (last month's of which was not well attended), a possible Summer Social, perhaps the Lambeth Country Show and various other public events.

As well as discussing some of the logistics of these activities, there was a long but useful discussion about which events we prioritise. We simply do not have enough volunteers to enable us to deliver all the sessions that we

wish to run. This is particularly acute for the School Food Matters Programme – for which LBKA gets income – where most of the session are being delivered by a small number of volunteers. We really need more members to get involved if we are to continue doing all we do. We either need to either reduce what we do or we need more members who are both able and willing to help.

So anyone reading this who has opinions on what types of activities we should be focusing on, please **let us know**. Should we produce this newsletter? Should we have pub socials? Should we continue having monthly meetings? Online or in-person? Should we continue to do public outreach events? Should we continue to develop the London Bee Situation research and outreach? Please send any thoughts to services@lbka.org.uk.

May in the Apiary

Where we should be with our colonies at this time of year.

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

My own colonies are ahead of where they usually are this year. We are currently experiencing a brisk nectar flow in south London and I have been utilising this to use the bees to draw out frames of foundation.

May is all about swarm control. Routine inspections should be made every 7 days to check for queen cells. If 2 brood boxes are used (brood and a half or double brood) then the bees nearly always build some of their queen cells between the 2 boxes. A simple routine check may be made by lifting / tilting the upper brood chamber to inspect the bottom of the frames in the upper box. It is not necessary to remove all frames using this quick method although it is not foolproof. The only way to be entirely sure is to remove each individual frame then carefully and systematically inspect each one. Even then a queen cell hidden behind bees may be missed.

Signs of swarming. Swarm control action is only needed when 1 or more queen cells are seen. Build up of drones or drone brood is not a sign of swarm preparations. Neither is the building of queen cups unless containing larva and royal jelly.

Action to be taken. Quick but not immediate action is required. Do not feel intimidated into taking immediate action. There is time to close up the colony, think matters through and collate necessary equipment. Do not attempt to destroy the queen cells, as this will not remove the swarming impulse. Best solution is Artificial Swarm method but this does depend upon finding the

queen. Most beekeeping textbooks cover this method. The main advantage of this method is that it preserves the future honey crop as you have a brood box with both a mated queen and older, foraging bees and no break in brood cycle.

What if the queen is not marked? If the queen is unmarked and you cannot find her then shook swarm is an option. An empty, (no frames in it) spare brood box is needed. All bees on the brood frames are shaken into the empty brood box on the same site. A queen excluder is then placed above the empty brood box (now containing all the bees) and the original brood box with frames and brood is placed above the queen excluder, then crownboard and roof as usual. A couple of hours later the bees have reorganised themselves with the queen and some bees below the queen excluder and brood and some bees above the queen excluder. The 2 elements can then be separated. It is disruptive for the bees but not harmful. Again, textbooks cover this method.

Other action

Other action to be taken this month includes:

Brood disease inspection. A specific brood disease inspection should be carried out if not already done in April. This should involve shaking all the bees from each brood frame, one frame at a time, into the bottom of the hive and carefully checking each brood frame for signs of abnormality. As with any disease or pathogen, the sooner it is detected and a course of rectification commenced then the more the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Add supers. Add supers as necessary, adding another in advance of it being needed by the bees. A super may be required either below the queen excluder or above it.

Draw frames. Use the May nectar flow to draw out some foundation into drawn frames.

Varroa. Check varroa mite drop if not done in April.

Spares. Make sure you have sufficient spare equipment for swarm control.

Most of all, keep on top of things and enjoy your May month of beekeeping!

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is reprinted from last year.

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

Bees struggling to build up in April should now have an easier time as the spring nectar flow improves. One or two of my colonies are not doing so well this year whilst others are booming. The good weather and improved availability of forage is helping them to recover – though I will be unlikely to get a honey crop from these recovering colonies this year.

Plants important to bees this month include **Horse Chestnut** (dark red pollen), **Sycamore** (pale yellow pollen), Sorbus trees such as white beam and **Mountain Ash**, **Bird Cherry** (pictured) and **Elder**. In parks, gardens and municipal areas **Choisya**, **Cotoneaster**, **Ceanothus** and **prunus laurocerasus 'lunken'** are all shrubs visited by bees.

Herbaceous perennial plants important to bees this month include **Dandelions** which are coming to the end of their main flowering period in London, **Green Alkanet** (pictured; now at its peak), **Forget-me-nots** and **Spanish Blue bells** with their green-blue pollen.

Starting to make an appearance are the first of the summer flowers which will become much more important later in the season when the trees have ceased blooming. These include **Scabious**, **Knapweeds**, **Centurea**, **Valerian**, **thistles**, **milkweeds** and the simple flower of **umbellifers** and composite flowers.

Right now in my garden the bees are visiting my **Bowles mauve wall flowers**, **apple blossom**, **Pulmonaria** and **strawberries**.

As we transition from spring into early summer the flowers change guard and so do the wild bees.

Many of the early emerging solitary bees will by now have built nests, provisioned for their offspring and are beginning to die. Their offspring will emerge next March to begin the cycle again. Some are bivoltine meaning they have a second generation later in the summer but for many including the hairy footed flower bees their time for this season is coming to an end, the males now bleached grey by the sun instead of their fresh gingery blonde.

As the early Andrena bees and flower bees disappear, a new batch of pollinators will take over, equipped to forage on a different set of later emerging plants. Soon we'll see the yellow faced bees, wool carder bees and leaf cutters visiting the flowers in our gardens.

Jobs to do in the garden

- Dead head spring flowering bulbs



Rowan blooms.



Ceanothus up close.



Honey bees visiting my apples.



Bird cherry.

- Plant out non hardy plants such as **tomato, runner beans, cucurbits and peppers.**
- Continuous weeding
- Water if dry
- Sow biennials now to ensure you have flowering plants for next spring. These include **foxglove, honesty** and **echiums.**



Green alkanet.

Upcoming events

See our [website](#) for an up-to-date version

Sunday, 8th May: Monthly Meeting: Moving our Bees

11:00-13:00 at Same zoom link as usual (in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email).

Back online for this month, Howard will lead a session on moving bees in and out of the apiary.

Tuesday 31st May: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at The Trinity Arms, 45 Trinity Gardens, Brixton, SW9 8DR.

Our monthly trip to the pub will be heading to the Trinity Arms, a beautifully refurbished pub on a quiet residential square between Brixton and Clapham North. Catch up with all the latest news over a pint in a nice food-serving pub.

Sunday 12th June: Monthly meeting: How bees forage (and undesirable nectars)

11:00-13:00 at The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR

Our second in-person meeting this year in an incredible location (with bees!)

Howard will lead this meeting on how bees forage including details about undesirable nectars. We will also be able to see the bees at The Foundry.

The COVID-19 situation is ongoing and we will be taking precautions. Please do not come if you are feeling unwell, please wear a mask, disinfect your hands when you arrive (we will provide disinfectant).

Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions. We are:

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary:** Simon Saville, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Annie McGeoch, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Will Fry, resources@lbka.org.uk
- Stuart Kennon, stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk

Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/> and the pictures are in the same order as the names above.

