

LBKA Market Rasen District (Reg. charity no. 500360)
Apiary Manager's report for year ending 31st December 2022

5 colonies were successfully overwintered to enable a good start to 2022. These included one that had been overturned by the horses when they got into the apiary during the previous winter. As this was not the first time that the horses had got into the apiary it was decided to set up our own electric fencing which has been very successful. Thanks particularly to Richard Harrison for organising this and to Jamie Jackson for continuous monitoring of the system.

Unfortunately due to continuing covid problems it was not possible to hold a Beginning Beekeeping course, as had been hoped, in Spring 2022. The situation improved later in the year so the apiary was used then for a small group of members who followed a Basic Assessment course. This led to 2 members being assessed and passing with credits. Our apiary was also used to assess 3 members from Boston District taking their Basic Assessment. In addition during the summer 2 more experienced Market Rasen District members worked on developing their beekeeping skills in the apiary, which enabled them to achieve success in the more advanced Bee Health Certificate.

The colonies produced a good honey harvest, some of which was used for sales at Open Farm Sunday but the main focus of working with the bees has been on methods of comb replacement as part of the required assessment tasks.

In order to have sufficient colonies for assessment purposes it was necessary to build up to 6 good colonies. 1 of the original colonies had to be destroyed as it was a drone layer with suspected CBPV but another good colony was kindly donated. 2 new queens were introduced into nucs and built up which enabled us to nip one of the 2021 queens with poor temperament.

All colonies have been treated for varroa, initially with Varromed in early September but then with Apivar as Varromed became unobtainable. It was necessary to set up wasp traps around the edge of the apiary as wasps became a serious problem. These proved effective. All colonies have been well fed with syrup and at the end of November had entrance blocks replaced with mouseguards.

Special thanks are due to Claire Baines for help in the apiary throughout the year and to Jamie Jackson for regular grass cutting and ground maintenance.