

Positive Thinking News letter 23-7-20

We have been thinking about the delivering the module exams in November, taking into account the social distancing etc., the teaching could be by Zoom, certainly my own branch has managed that, or there are the correspondence courses as well, so I held back on further talk about the exams until the exam board met which they did Sunday 19th July and below I show you an extract of their decision:

'The global outbreak of COVID-19 has meant that we have had to limit socialising and gatherings, to help prevent the spread of this disease. Inevitably, this has had a huge impact on the BBKA exam system, that relies on candidates, assessors, and invigilators to meet in close proximity or travel some distance away from home.

Following the feedback from many associations and individuals on the matter, we have taken the difficult decision to cancel the BBKA assessments for the remaining part of 2020. These include Show Judge certificate in October as well as Module exams and Microscopy assessments in November.

The main concern of the Exam Board is the safety of all candidates, assessors and invigilators. While some associations have indicated that they may be able to facilitate the Module exams, others have advised against it. We want to offer equal opportunities to all members who wish to take the BBKA exams. With the current situation however, we do not feel this is achievable for all involved.

Candidates who have applied for assessments in 2020 will get free transfer for 2021, or get their fees refunded if they prefer. Due to the cancellations of the exams, the condition that candidates need to have taken all Modules within 12 years of the first module taken has now been removed.

We know how much value beekeepers put on the BBKA exam system. To support those who continue on their learning journey, we are exploring alternative ways to hold the Module exams and hope to have solution in place for the early part of 2021.'

The above statement is from the Exam Board who are independent from the Executive Committee of the BBKA. You will also find this statement on our web site and it will appear again in the BBKA News.

I know it will be disappointing to many of you, this virus is not doing us any favours at all, I wonder what the 'new normal' is going to be in the future.

On a brighter note, the work on the apiary at Stoneleigh started at the beginning of June and I believe it is going well, I would love to go and see how the design is developing, but I do not think that we will be having our meetings there just yet, certainly the 25th July EC meeting will be by Zoom again.

The apiary is used for education and training, so the bees are having a holiday this year, it will give them a chance to build up ready for any future plans we may have.

Our BBKA News editor has been investigating how we can make savings on the magazine. Where the main cost is the postage and this seems to increase each year. The weight of the paper matters quite a lot and Sharron has found an alternative paper; it comes from Sweden and it is a virgin fibre paper from a sustainable forestry. Every tree which is harvested is replaced by a further two to three trees; younger trees are better at neutralising Co2 than the older trees so that is good

The climate benefit last year was the equivalent of neutralising 800,000 cars driving around the world.

The paper Sharron has found is produced by an organisation called SCA which is the largest private forest owner in Europe.

The paper is not glossy, I have asked if the front cover could be glossed slightly to enhance its appearance and it is believed that they can do that.

This paper will reduce the weight of the magazine which means the postage will reduce, at the same time helping the new trees planted in reducing the Co2 in the world.

It also means that we can use paper envelopes which will again reduce the impact on the world and also reduced costs again.

We should thank Sharon Blake for all her work on this and I do hope that you will approve the change this will result in. Certainly the budget will look considerable better and just at the moment that is quite important too.

To close, the new question is 'Have you downloaded the Asian hornet app'
<https://www.bbka.org.uk/questions-for-beekeepers>

Stay safe and look after each other.

Margaret Wilson

President, British Beekeepers' Association