

MALVERN & UPTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION SWARM CO-ORDINATION PROCEDURE

Introduction

Swarms of honey bees are common during the spring and early summer and many are reported to the association and to the BBKA via their website. We wish to provide support to the local community which looks to the association for expert advice and if necessary, assistance in removing swarms from their property or vicinity. Members of the association also benefit because they are then able to receive good, local swarms at a reasonable cost.

This procedure summarises the process of receiving enquiries from the community, allocating a Swarm Collector to collect the swarm, and the onward transport of a swarm to a member who has requested one.

Summary of process

A Swarm Co-ordinator will be appointed annually by the committee. The Swarm Co-ordinator will be the point of contact for the BBKA and the local community when a swarm is reported. The Swarm Co-ordinator will manage the process of collection of a swarm by a Swarm Collector and allocation of the swarm to a member who has requested one, using the Swarm Register to record requests and swarm allocation.

Role of MUBKA Swarm Co-ordinator

- Maintain swarm register of members who wish to and are ready to receive swarms. Receive and record cheques for the appropriate value, forwarding to the treasurer for encashment on fulfilment of the swarm request or returning to the member if a swarm cannot be provided during the current season.
- Maintain list of appropriately experienced beekeepers (Swarm Collectors) that are prepared to attend site and are able safely to collect a swarm. Provide details to the Swarm Collectors of members on the swarm register local to their area.
- Be the point of contact via phone, email and website for members of the local community who have discovered a swarm which needs to be collected. Obtain details of the swarm, its location, access, height etc and pass this information to the nearest available Swarm Collector.
- Maintain records of swarm movement.
- Advise membership secretary of membership upgrade requirements when a swarm is provided to an Associate Member.
- Liaise with BBKA and other branches regarding the collection of swarms.

A number of volunteer Swarm Collectors will be agreed by the committee and their contact details held by the Swarm Co-ordinator. It is hoped that they will be able to cover the whole of the Branch area but they will also hold details of other experienced beekeepers local to them who may be able to assist with swarm collection.

Role of Swarm Collector

- Collect swarm or assist in the collection of a swarm by the member who is to receive the swarm.
- Assist the member to hive the swarm if required, or store the swarm overnight if necessary.
- Provide general advice to the member regarding the need for disease treatment and feeding.
- Confirm details of the member to the Swarm Co-ordinator, if the request did not originate with the Swarm Co-ordinator. Confirm date of transfer of the swarm.
- If applicable advise new beekeeper of the need to upgrade to full membership and provided details to membership secretary via the Swarm Co-ordinator.

A branch member (Associate or Full) may request a swarm by completing a Swarm Request form (Appendix 1) and sending it to the Swarm Co-ordinator with a cheque for £20. On provision of a swarm, £10 will be paid to the Swarm Collector and £10 will be retained by the Branch. Associate members requesting swarms will also be asked for any membership upgrade fee which would be required on becoming a keeper of bees. If the swarm request cannot be fulfilled during the season in which it is made, the cheque will be returned to the member and a new request must be made the following year, if it is still required.

A suitably experienced member may use this procedure and the Swarm Register to source a swarm, and collect the swarm themselves at a reduced charge of £10 which will be retained by the branch. A Swarm Request form should be completed in order to manage the process.

Swarm Register

- To be placed on the Swarm Register the member applying must:
 - have an apiary and hive ready to hive a swarm at short notice.
 - have appropriate protective equipment and other beekeeping equipment (smoker, hive tool etc)
 - be an associate or full member of MUBKA
 - complete a swarm request form (Appendix 1) for each swarm required and commit to the above requirements.
 - send a cheque for the appropriate fee.
- Swarms will be provided on a first come first served basis but if a member is not contactable the Swarm Co-ordinator will move to the next name on the list. If the member cannot be contacted for three successive swarms, the Swarm Co-ordinator may move them to the bottom of the list.
- If a member requests more than one swarm then on receipt of their first swarm, their name will move to the bottom of the list.
- If a swarm is collected but no swarm requests currently exist unfulfilled on the register, the Swarm Co-ordinator will make enquiries within the branch committee and membership to establish a willing recipient for the swarm.