

Cumbria Asian Hornet Team Volunteers - Newsletter

January 2024

Happy New Year All and I hope you weathered the festive season intact.

Firstly, I have decided to start the ball rolling this year with a newsletter, as you see. There was a hope for a meeting this month, however, even trying to get an acceptable Zoom meeting date became untenable. So the decision has been to send out this newsletter and follow up with a meeting in February. I would be very grateful for your suggestions for a good date and time that suits most, for an initial Zoom meeting and then we can go forward from there. [My email is here.](#)

Forum Day Summary

As many of you will know, there was a positive forum day at Brigsteer, near Kendal, held in October at which some up-to-date information was presented and followed by a slit-group discussion session about what problems face the volunteers and how we might proceed. The common conclusion was that the threat was very real and a coordinated course of action was required. There were clear challenges to face, not least the coordination of all activity, whether it was to be restricted to each of county's BKA or a centralised body was to be formed. Most felt that to face such a boundaryless threat a more central coordination was required. This meant that the following issues were to be resolved:

- Organisational Structure and Communication
- Standardised Educational Team
- Resources and Logistics Solution
- Financial Entity
- Legal and Data Understanding

Cumbria Asian Hornet Team – Independent Body

Given that in order to even have a face to face meeting is a cost, notwithstanding the generosity of most BKAs, there would have to be a body set up in order to manage the money in an accountable manner before most other action. This can take many forms, for example a non-registered, non-profit body can establish a constitution, ratify it with a minimum of five committee members and open a bank account. Once this is established we can move forward with everything else in an accountable manner.

Education

The top priority with Cumbria in the containment and eventual management of the invasion of *Vespa velutina* is to educate as many organisations as possible, to the threat, consequences of apathy, the process of reporting, and bodies responsible for management. This will be far more effective if standardised and delivered by a pre-briefed team of volunteers. Identifying target groups is endless, from emergency services, orchard groups, farming organisations, youth organisations to local government. The PowerPoint and poster material would make up the majority of the tools for volunteers and we should expect a cost in respect of mileage for some having to cover extensive areas.

Other Roles

There will be a need in the coming months for what I like to refer as 'observers'. The NBU has no intention of releasing the role of track & trace externally in the coming year and we can get slightly ahead of ourselves getting too involved in training for this role currently. There will undoubtedly be a need to train volunteers for this task, however assigning volunteers to have open bait stations in as wide a spread as possible would definitely be a process we should prioritise. Knowing when and where the hornets arrive in the area as soon as it happens is critical. These bait stations could be just regular beekeepers' apiaries, however the geography of the county suggests that there will be a need to fill gaps in the more remote areas, so that we can ensure the best chance of catching the arrival of the hornet. The important factors of every bait station is that they are regularly monitored, are no-fatal

Cumbria Asian Hornet Team Volunteers - Newsletter

and allow bio-catch to go free. An ideal station would be an open bait pot or tub with an observer present or a wildlife camera set up. With regular monitoring we can inform a track and trace team in good time to catch the potential nest site early. I must stress there will NOT be any need for volunteers to be getting involved in nest destruction any time soon.

Volunteers and Skillsets

So with the above in mind there is clearly a need to get the best out of our team of volunteers using their specific skills and experience. There are undoubtedly a requirements for volunteers that have financial and administrative skills as well as legal knowledge, in respect of data management and land trespass issues. There will be a need for volunteers to deliver presentations to groups and events. There will be volunteers that can help keep a clear centralised picture of where and who are monitoring observation stations, as well as assigning volunteers to cover certain areas. Then someone who can promulgate information to all the volunteers so that everyone is clearly appraised of what is happening and where. This is not an exhaustive list of roles, however it is a start. In respect of this I would be very grateful if as many of you as possible, in the coming weeks can [email me](#) about which roles you feel most suited for and then we can begin to get some structure to the team.

Important Upcoming Events

In the coming weeks there are a couple of events that would be most useful for our education and updates:

Andrew Durham has kindly agreed to present a '*Special Briefing for Beekeepers - Update for 2024*', on Tuesday 16th January at 7.00pm via Zoom.

Andrew gave us two very informative presentations earlier in the year and this briefing will cover:

- The situation as at the end of 2023
 - The effect of beekeeping
 - The prospect for 2024 and beyond
 - A report on the first year in operation of the new French National Plan for fighting the hornet.
- Andrew will take your questions at the end of the briefing.

This talk is open to all AHT members are encouraged attend. Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84767178392?pwd=NT1mSPDmsDEuJ06dlOF5EN0X7asjHq.1>

The *Asian Hornet Conference* will be held Saturday 17th February BBKA are just finalising the speakers and more information will be sent out soon.

In Summary

Once again may I extend my heartfelt thanks to every one of you who have selflessly stepped up to the task and realised that we cannot be caught asleep at the wheel on this issue. Your help is massively appreciated. Getting this organisation set up right at the beginning will reap huge benefits to our endeavour and save us a lot of heartache later. Thank you and I'll catch up with you all soon I hope.

Andy Brown BBKA Cumbria AHT Coordinator

Contact Details:

Email: shepherdyeat@hotmail.com

Mobile: 07551 445658 and [WhatsApp](#)

Information : <https://www.kendalbeekeepers.com/asian-hornet>

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/listing/category/asian-hornet-vespa-velutina>