

## **Beekeeping organisations and their relevance to WGBKA members**

Many Wisborough Green BKA members are unaware of the other beekeeping organisations they are a member of or contribute to, so I will explain it and the relevance of some of the national beekeeping organisations. Beekeeping organisation varies throughout the country, with different BKAs having different arrangements. I will explain the situation relevant to WGBKA members, which is effectively an inverted pyramid. There are several classes of WGBKA membership, the information is circulated annually with the membership renewal form. The classes depend on the circumstances of the beekeeper and are fully explained. I will explain the arrangements for Full Members only, as the others may change. Full Members, also called “BBKA Registered Members”, are beekeepers who are adult lead beekeepers in a household, whose main BKA is WGBKA. I will explain from the top down.

**The British Beekeepers Association** (BBKA) is at the top and is an association of associations, that are called Area Association Members (AAM). BBKA has other membership categories, including Individual and Specialist Members that don't bother us here. The BBKA is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), currently with 12 trustees who are elected from the total membership of beekeepers. The office is in Warwickshire. They organise things at the highest level and deal with the Government and the various agencies like the National Bee Unit (NBU) and Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) on behalf of their members. Information and benefits of BBKA can be found here [British Beekeepers Association \(bbka.org.uk\)](http://bbka.org.uk). It is under a blanket policy through BBKA that WGBKA members enjoy Public and Product Liability insurance cover (see BBKA website for details).

Our local BBKA AAM is **West Sussex BKA** (WSBKA), to which WGBKA is one of four divisions, the others being Worthing, Central Sussex and Chichester. Although called Divisions, they aren't formal members of WSBKA, which is rather confusing, but has historical reasons going back a long time. It is the individual beekeepers who are the WSBKA members. They are represented by the BKA, club or group they belong to, in our case Wisborough Green BKA. Each division provides two delegates to WSBKA [Welcome to the West Sussex Beekeepers' Association website](#) who form their committee, together with President, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. WSBKA is a halfway house between WGBKA and BBKA. They organize county events that are difficult for Divisions to organize on their own such as the Annual Convention and the Auction. They also have an Examination Secretary who deals with BBKA exams and assessments on behalf of all divisions. Unless it is a simple matter, BBKA won't deal directly with the divisions, only through WSBKA. All organisations, BBKA, WSBKA and WGBKA, are independent of each other. The only stipulation is the constitution must not conflict with that of the organisation above them. BBKA can't influence or direct WSBKA, who can't influence or direct the Divisions. No organisation has a claim to the assets of any other organisation.

As a condition of membership, all full beekeeping members of WGBKA must be members of WSBKA and BBKA. There is no opt-out. A capitation fee for both is included with the WGBKA subscription. In theory, it is democratic because representation can be made to BBKA through WSBKA.

So, that's it. It might seem complicated, but in short, by being a member of WGBKA you are also a member of WSBKA and BBKA.

### **Other national beekeeping organisations.**

**Bee Diseases Insurance** (BDI) [Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd](#) was formed in 1936 to compensate beekeepers for losses caused by notifiable diseases. It is an independent company that is run by beekeepers for the benefit of beekeepers. WGBKA is a BDI member, one of the conditions being that all full members pay at least the minimum subscription, which includes cover for 3 colonies. More colonies can be covered, the rates are detailed in the WGBKA membership renewal and BDI website.

The following long-established organisations are all **BBKA Specialist Members** that WGBKA has no allegiance to, although some members have individually.

**National Honey Show (NHS)** [National Honey Show](#). An annual 3-day event that is more than just a honey show. There is an extensive lecture and workshop programme and a substantial trade presence. Usually held within driving distance of our members and well worth attending.

**Central Association of Bee-Keepers** (CABK) [The Central Association of Bee-Keepers – Bringing Science to the Bee-Keeper \(cabk.org.uk\)](#). Their slogan “Bringing Science to the Bee-Keeper” says it all, but it is science that is relevant to ordinary beekeepers.

**Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association** (BIBBA) [Home - BIBBA](#) is an organisation for enthusiasts of our native bee *Apis mellifera mellifera* (*Amm*) and near-native, which are also termed locally adapted bees. They oppose the importation of bees and queens and support sustainable bees and beekeeping. In recent years it has become one of the leaders in educating beekeepers of all abilities.

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