# Chairmans report

**2026 – a challenging year!**

2026 brought new challenges as a well as some successes. Our programme of meetings at Wombleton had mixed attendance, despite our secretary securing some wonderful speakers, so we need to discuss what you want from these going forward. As ever, we heard about some very different approaches to beekeeping which can give valuable food for thought, but the meetings take a lot of work and cost us, so if a different format, timing or approach would be preferred we need to know! Apiary visits were well attended, and it appears that the idea of each one having a topic or theme was well-received and meant more people came to each one. Huge thanks to all those who offered their apiaries and provided wonderful cake! If you are unsure about being a host, please do talk to those who have as it may allay your fears.

Happily, there was no significant rise in outbreaks of European foulbrood in our area, although there are still hotspots of concern and apiary hygiene and biosecurity and caution around swarm collection must remain top priorities. Biosecurity is at the heart of good apiary hygiene practices, and we should observe many of these in our everyday beekeeping, not just when disease threatens. Equally happily there were no verified reports of YLAH in our area, but the threat remains very close and changes in DEFRA's response protocol may mean nests are missed. If you have not yet got a trap (or have but forgot to use it!), please do speak to the committee – our best defence is good monitoring coverage.

The beekeeping season seemed to have been quite mixed with beekeepers telling me of strange behaviour, poor queen mating but strong honey harvests for many. The exceptionally hot summer weather seemed to have had an impact on some colonies with poor build up possibly related to low nectar flow, and this year does not seem to have been as 'swarmy' as last year. The heather was affected by drought, heather beetle and with moorland fires restricting access.

We attended both Ryedale and Farndale shows – many thanks to Julie, Tim, Simon, Stephen, Karen, Rachel, Rhona and John Sutherland and all those who supported these, they offer important information, are well received, and great publicity for the association and beekeeping in general. Many thanks too to Stephen for organising the observation hive at these events, it is a valuable addition and a real draw! They also help us to publicise the training course. We were not able to run the 'Let's learn Moor' school sessions which engage children with beekeeping this year due to lack of volunteers, which was a shame and links back to what is it that people want the association to do and what will you help with? We also had a stall at Helmsley Apple Day – thank you to Julie, Tim, Simon and Rachel for staffing that, and to Finn for his assistance with that link up.

We are happy to try things out, but it is important that you as members tell the committee what you want, or better still join the committee to have your say! All these events require people and it is a fairly small group who do this, so please do consider adding to that happy band!

I now want to do some 'Thankyou's'.

**Apiary Visits**

**Thank you to everyone who hosted an apiary visit, and to those who helped them, it is much appreciated.**

**Beginners course**

This year saw the first iteration of the beginners course being presented, run and administered by the committee following the 'retirement' after many sterling years, of Rhona and John. It was successful, with good take up and a positive response to the team format. The feedback was helpful and there are things we will improve for next year, but I am happy to say take up for 2027 is already good so he course will definitely run at Sinnington again. The course is the major source of income for RBKA, but more importantly helps to ensure that beekeepers are equipped to manage their colonies well and safely. **Thank you to everyone who helped deliver it.**

**Further learning:** YBKA and BBKA advocate continuous learning throughout your beekeeping life. Whilst this modular approach may not be for everyone, Simon is our Education officer and he is living proof of the efficacy of the BBKA modules and exams. He heartily recommends the assessments and the modules and says he has learned much by working through them.

**Bulk purchases**

Bulk purchases in 2026 were better supported than last year, so members have had the chance to benefit from supplies which are very competitively priced so I would recommend you bear them in mind and look out for these throughout the year. **Thank you to Tim, Julie and Stephen for arranging these**.

**Committee**

Other than myself as Chair, the RBKA committee is made up as follows:

Julie – Secretary; Tim – Treasurer; Simon – education; Stephen; Karen

All officers are due to step down this year, but some have offered to stay on for ONE MORE YEAR ONLY while new members and officers are found. This was the topic of the survey sent out to you, which we will discuss shortly, but the association can only run if there are people to run it.

**I would like to thank all the committee members for their hard work and contribution to the smooth running and success of RBKA.**

**I am stepping down as chair as I have served my time and have other things I need to focus on in the coming year. It has been a privilege to serve the association and thank you for having me.**

Finally I hope you all have a good Christmas, remember annual subs are now due and wish you all success for your beekeeping in 2027.

Louise Hampson

Chair RBKA

November 2026