The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association Newsletter

June – August 2026

Charitable Incorporated Organisation - 1183025

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Committee Member: Gillian Leung

Note From The Editor

Hello and a very warm welcome to all our new members.

It might feel as though it hasn't been three months since our last wonderful newsletter and you'd be absolutely right. We're shifting the schedule so we can focus more naturally on what's happening throughout the year. Newsletters will now run June–August, September–November, December–February, and March–May, giving us a better rhythm for sharing updates, learning, and seasonal themes.

I hope your colonies are thriving and that you're managing to enjoy this stretch of heat. Personally, I've discovered that wearing a bee suit in summer means I no longer need to invest in a sauna!

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition. Please do keep sharing your photos, ideas, and contributions for future issues, they really help.

Gemma

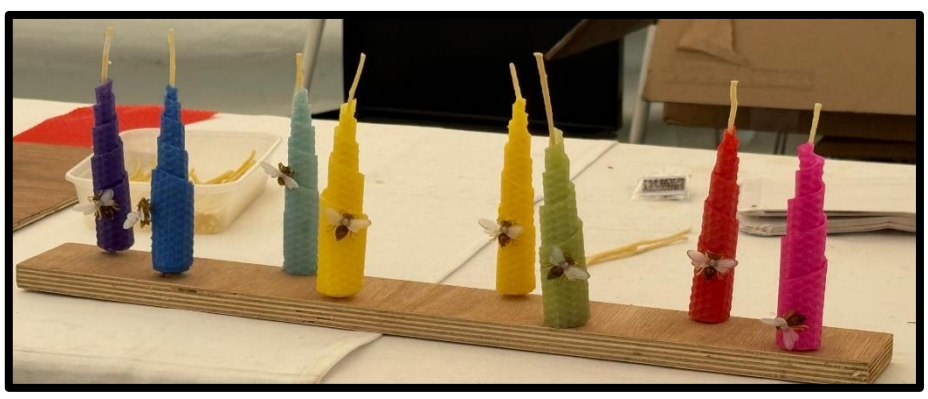
Notes From The Chairman

A short note this month from a very busy Jeremy...

Greetings,

I would like to re-emphasise what Richard, our Secretary, said about the Bee Safari in the latest email. It is a super opportunity to see how other people keep bees - everyone does it a bit differently - and having the Bee Inspectors - the professionals - there is a great help. Despite having been a beekeeper since 1985, in every Safari I always learn something and am pleased to have spent the day well.

Regards, *Jeremy*



The Suffolk Show 2026

In our next edition, we'll be bringing you a Suffolk Show special, featuring reflections from some of the wonderful winners along with the key stats from two fantastic days at the show. It truly was a celebration of beekeeping at its best.

In this newsletter, please enjoy a selection of photos from the brilliant Bee Tent and our cup winners, which you'll find on page 2 and 3.

And of course, a huge thank you to the Show Committee and all the wonderful volunteers whose hard work, enthusiasm, and good humour made the event such a success.

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter

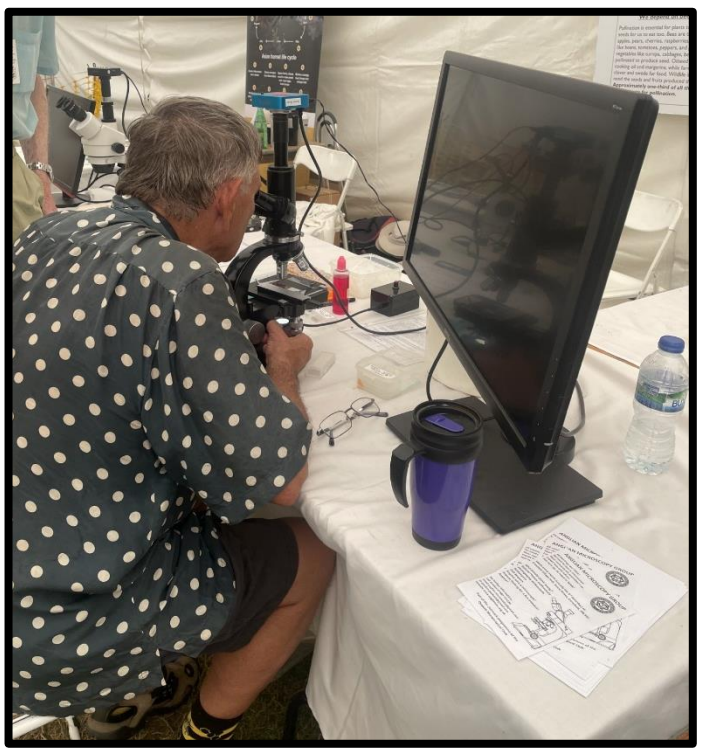
April – June
2026

Suffolk Show Cup Winners

Suffolk BKA Awards - Our Cups	2026
The 1st President Cup will be awarded to the best exhibit in the Show. The winner will also receive the BBKA National Honey Show Blue Ribbon Award; this award entitles the winner to make a free entry in an Open Class in the National Honey Show.	**Sam Taylor**
The Silver County Cup will be awarded to the Entrant gaining most points in Classes 42 - 46 Section I, Confectionery.	**Richard Allen**
The Silver Salver will be awarded to the member, having five or less hives, at the time of the Show, gaining the most points in the Show.	**Mark Dua**
The President's Silver Challenge Cup will be awarded to the member gaining most points in Classes 1-17 Sections A, B, C Honey & Wax.	**Zac Blackmore**
The Headlands Senior Cup will be awarded to the Entrant gaining most points in Classes 18 – 21 Section D, Wines.	**Mark Dua**
The Sproughton Cup will be awarded to the Entrant gaining most points in Classes 11 – 13, Section B Comb Honey.	**Zac Blackmore**
The Wax Cup will be awarded to the member gaining most points in Classes 14-17 & 33, Section C Wax.	**Brett Bayliss**
The "Mayor's" Silver Challenge Cup will be awarded to the member gaining most points in the Show.	**Zac Blackmore**
The Headlands Junior Cup will be awarded to the best exhibit in Classes 40 & 41, Section H Children.	**Andrii Bundzylo**
The Basil Staff Cup will be awarded to the member gaining most points in the novices' section Classes 36 – 39, Section G Novice Members.	**Alice Ralli**
The FW Drake Cup will be awarded to the member gaining most points in Classes 27-30, Section F Members Only.	**Zac Blackmore**
The "David Little" Trophy will be awarded to the member of Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers Association, gaining the most points in the Show.	**Brett Bayliss**
The "Ogilvie" Cup will be awarded to the 'New Entrant' gaining the most points in the show.	**Alice Ralli**
The Maureen Cobb Award will awarded for the best photograph in show	**Brett Bayliss**
The Barrie Powell Memorial Salver will awarded for the best jars of dark honey (Open class)	**Kt Brewster**

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

Suffolk Show Photos



The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

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Teaching Apiary Swarm: Great Timing

The bees in Hive 8 chose impeccable timing for their big moment. During one of our Sunday afternoon teaching sessions, they decided to swarm, politely waiting until the audience was assembled, and then settled neatly on one of the chairs.

Introduction to Beekeeping Course

Another fantastic Introduction to Beekeeping Course took place in Dallinghoo, welcoming 23 enthusiastic new beekeepers.
We received some truly lovely feedback, including one participant who shared, "Yesterday was excellent… all round, a great course."
If you know someone who's been thinking about taking the leap into beekeeping, please do spread the word for next year's course.

Photo showing how to make frames, courtesy of Christian Hobart

Weedkiller Report Daily Telegraph 24/03/2026

Weedkiller drives evolution of 'superbugs'

Weedkillers may be driving the emergence of dangerous "superbugs" capable of resisting antibiotics, according to research.

Scientists have found that glyphosate – the world's most commonly used herbicide – can encourage the growth and spread of bacteria that are also resistant to medical treatments, raising fresh concerns about the unintended health consequences of modern farming.

The study, published in *Frontiers in Microbiology*, suggests exposure to glyphosate triggers natural selection among germs, allowing tougher, drug-resistant bacteria to thrive while more vulnerable strains are wiped out.

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

A Rookie's Review: My First BBKA Spring Convention

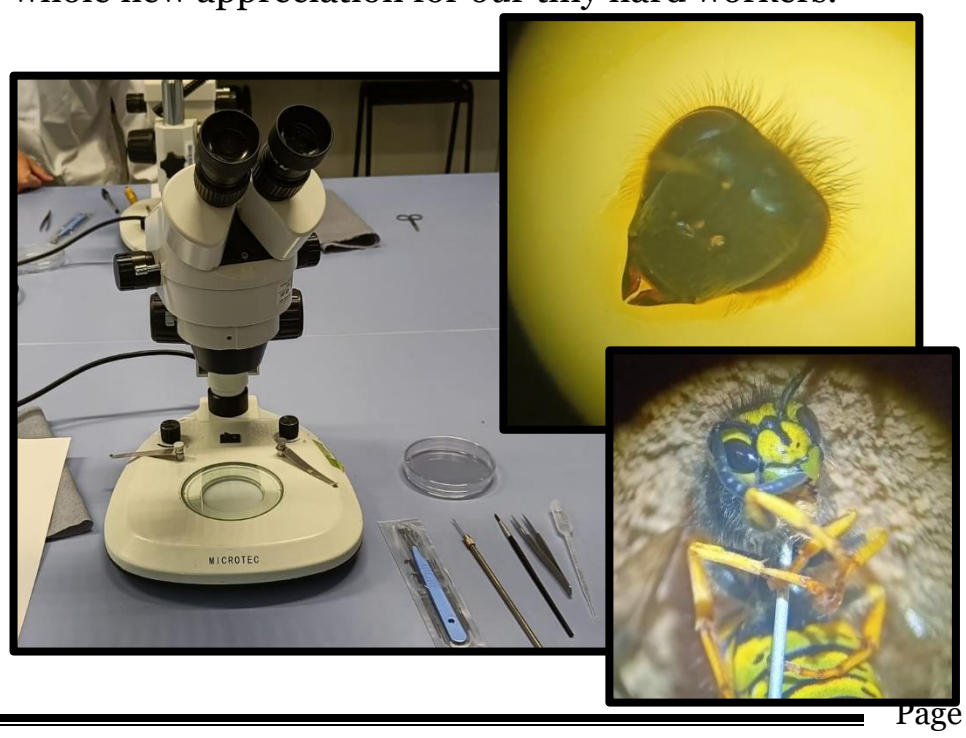
By a Relatively New Beekeeper, Liz Robertson.

If you had told me a year ago that I would spend a weekend utterly fascinated by a magnified view of a honeybee's digestive tract, I might have questioned my life choices. Yet, there I was at the Harper Adams campus for my very first BBKA Spring Convention, completely under the hive's spell. As a relatively new beekeeper, taking the leap to attend the convention can feel a bit daunting. Will it be too advanced? Will I fit in? I am delighted to report that the answer is a resounding yes.

The Harper Adams campus proved to be the perfect setting - compact, easy to navigate, and wonderfully welcoming. And let's talk about the catering! Navigating a packed schedule of lectures requires serious fuel, and the campus delivered with legendary, hearty big breakfasts to kickstart the day and excellent evening meals where the bee chat continued long after the lecturers stepped down from the podium.

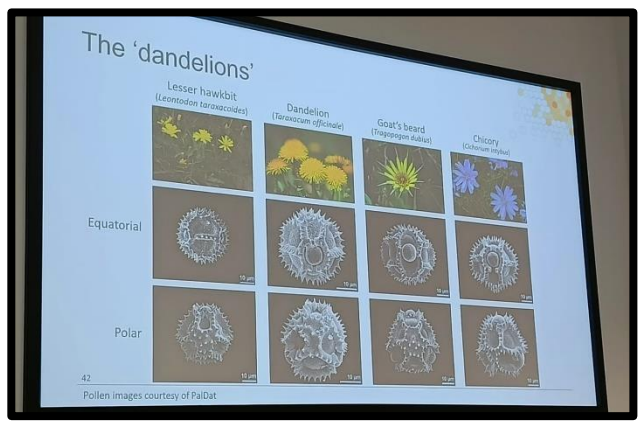
For me, the weekend was a brilliant blend of theory and messy reality. Wanting to sharpen my basic skills, I leaned into the BBKA training sessions. The lectures on bee diseases were a particular highlight - incredibly informative and packed with practical advice that gave me a massive confidence boost for managing my own colonies this season.

Then came the laboratory sessions. Armed with a microscope and a bit of nervous anticipation, we actually dissected bees. There is something profoundly humbling, and, yes, a little bit gross, about looking down a lens and seeing a tiny bee head staring straight back at you before carefully dissecting out the gut to see how it all functions. It was absolutely fascinating and gave me a whole new appreciation for our tiny hard workers.



Of course, no convention trip is complete without a pilgrimage to the trade halls. To say it was massive is an understatement. It catered to every single beekeeping need imaginable, and several I didn't even know I had! I walked away as the incredibly proud owner of a new frame holder, which has already proven to be an absolute game-changer during my hive inspections.

But the absolute icing on the cake was the bargain hunting. Beekeepers love a good deal, and I managed to score 50 frames and 50 sheets of foundation for half price thanks to a fantastic show special offer. Carrying that lot back was a workout, but my wallet was singing.



I left the convention with a full notebook, a lighter wallet, a boot full of flat-pack cedar, and a massive smile. It was an incredible weekend, and I will definitely be booking again next year. In the meantime, my appetite has been thoroughly whetted for the autumn calendar, I am already planning my trip to just attend and marvel at the Honey Show this October. If you've never been to the Spring Convention, take it from a rookie: book the ticket. Your bees will thank you for it!

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

Beekeeper Improvement Course: Power Of Slowing Down

By David Parrott

The beekeeper improvement course turned out to be a really positive experience. It wasn't heavy or overly technical, just a few days of proper beekeeping with knowledgeable people who made it easy to settle in. I learned more than I expected simply by being around others with a wealth of experience who didn't make a fuss about it.

Much of the learning came from slowing down and paying close attention to what was in front of us. We spent time going through brood frames for signs of disease, discussing what we saw, and comparing it with what we'd expect. It made me realise how much can be missed when working alone or rushing through your own hives.

The disease spotting aspect was particularly helpful, with calm and clear explanations that really stuck. Queen rearing, which I'd always thought of as fiddly or specialist, was broken down into simple steps and sensible timings. There was no drama or mystique, just good practice. This gave me the confidence to try things in my own apiary without overthinking them.

The practical sessions were the highlight. Working through manipulations with someone watching sounded stressful at first, but it wasn't. Instead, it helped me become more deliberate and tidy in how I handle the bees: better smoker use, steadier movements, and more thoughtful actions.

Everything felt much smoother when I wasn't rushing.

Overall, the course gently nudged my beekeeping up a level in a very natural way. There was no pressure or grand speeches, just good habits, engaging conversations, and a few lightbulb moments. I left feeling more confident, more observant, and generally more settled in my work with the bees.

Why Bumblebee Nests Rarely Need Removing

From: http://www.buzzaboutbees.net/bee-nest-removal-bumblebee.html

Bumblebee nest removal is often seen as urgent, but in most cases it simply isn't necessary. Bumblebees choose all sorts of places to nest, old mouse holes, grass tussocks, bird boxes, even the odd plant pot or gap under a shed. These spots may feel inconvenient to us, but the colonies themselves are small, gentle, and short-lived.

Bumblebees are exceptionally docile, and stings are rare. Given how severely bumblebee populations have declined, with some species already lost, leaving a nest undisturbed is one of the simplest ways we can help.

A bumblebee colony lasts only a single season. By late autumn the nest is naturally abandoned, and only the newly emerged queens survive to hibernate and start next year's generation. Disturbing a nest too early can prevent these queens from developing, effectively wiping out an entire future lineage.

With fewer than half of colonies succeeding in producing queens, every nest truly counts.

If a nest is in a tricky spot, the best first step is to consider whether it can be left until October or November, when the colony will naturally finish. Bumblebees provide vital pollination, so giving them time benefits gardens, crops, and the wider ecosystem.

Only when absolutely unavoidable should removal be attempted, and even then it is delicate work. A replacement nest box must be prepared, the colony lifted carefully at night, and ideally moved at least two miles away to prevent workers returning to the original site. Even with care, success is not guaranteed. Beekeepers are not obliged to remove bumblebee nests, and wildlife organisations may or may not be able to help. Pest control should be approached with caution, as methods vary widely.

For most households, patience is the best solution. A few weeks of coexistence can make a meaningful difference to local bee populations. And for those curious rather than concerned, taking part in a bumblebee nest survey is a far more rewarding alternative to removal.

Buzzzz Buzzz....

If you find a bumblebee nest, please leave it alone. We bumblebees are not aggressive, and our nests only last a season.

We need your help, so please pass it on!
Thank you. xx

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

Meet Some of Our Committee Members…

Richard Allen

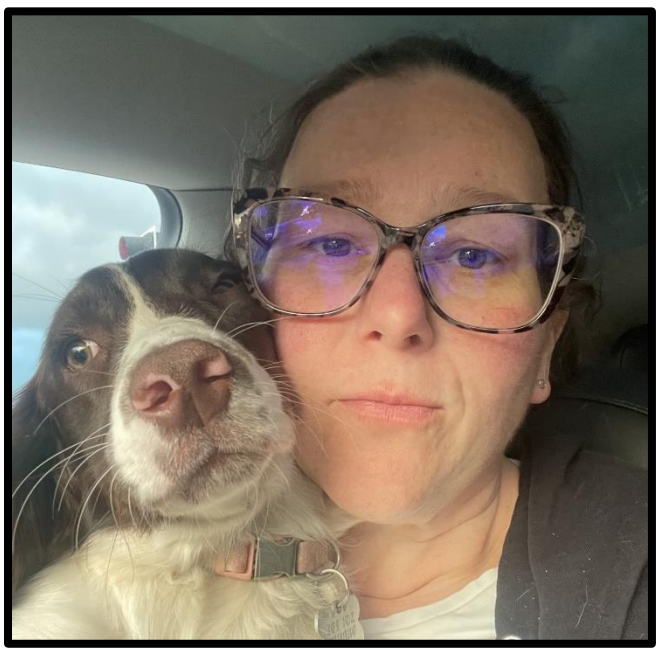
Role in Committee: Secretary

How long have you been beekeeping?: 15 years

Your beekeeping story: At middle school in Bedfordshire we had a mini small holding at the side of the playing field growing vegetables and keeping chickens and bees, I helped with the bees and was fascinated. Then exams, university, work etc. got in the way for many years but it was always at the back of my mind and when I had the time and somewhere to keep them I did the beginners course, bought a nuc of bees and built from there! I'm not naturally social but I plucked up the courage to walk in to an association evening meeting and as they were friendly I went back and somehow ended up eventually getting drafted in to acting as secretary, having recently retired I'm hoping to start making a better fist of it!

Your top beekeeping tip: Be prepared – they always need splitting, another super, new frames etc. before you think they will, my first nuc swarmed 3 weeks after being moved in to a full hive which I was thinking wouldn't happen until year two!

Gemma Parrott



Role in Committee: Newsletter Editor

How long have you been beekeeping?: 20 mths

Your beekeeping story: My husband and I, David, have always been interested in the idea of beekeeping, but lived in the centre of Colchester with a small garden. When we moved to the Suffolk country in August 2024 we realised the time was right. We visited the Suffolk Show in 2024 and spoke to the very knowledgeable volunteers in the bee tent. They told us about the teaching apirary and when we knew the move was happening we started visiting on a Sunday – fell in love with beekeeping and now we help there and pass on our knowledge.

Your top beekeeping tip:

1. PATIENCE! Things do not happen when you think they are going to!
2. Ask for support but remember everyone gives different answers and you have to decide which way is best for you.
3. Do the basic qualification – you will learn lots!

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

European Foulbrood (EFB): A Rising Concern in Ipswich

By Gemma Parrott, adapted from www.nationalbeeunit.com/

Beekeepers across the Ipswich area have sadly seen an increase in confirmed cases of European Foulbrood (EFB) this season. EFB is a notifiable brood disease, and early recognition is essential to protect both your own colonies and those of neighbouring beekeepers.

EFB affects unsealed larvae, which become infected when nurse bees feed them contaminated brood food. According to the National Bee Unit, early signs can be subtle, so regular, careful brood inspections are vital. Key indicators include:

- Uneven brood patterns - scattered, patchy brood with empty cells where larvae have died.
- Twisted or melted looking larvae, larvae lying unnaturally in the cell, often yellowing or losing shape.
- Off-colour or granular appearance, infected larvae may look dry, rubbery, or grainy rather than pearly white.
- Sour or unpleasant smell, not always present, but a warning sign when combined with other symptoms.

If you suspect EFB in any of your colonies, report it immediately to your local Bee Inspector. They are trained to diagnose the disease and will advise on the correct legal steps. Early reporting helps prevent wider spread and protects the health of our regional bee population.

All beekeepers should also ensure their apiaries are registered with BeeBase, the National Bee Unit's disease monitoring system. Registration is free and essential. It allows inspectors to contact you quickly if an outbreak occurs nearby, and it ensures you receive any BeeBase alerts relevant to your area. If you follow the instructions carefully and inspect your colonies as advised.

With EFB cases rising locally, vigilance is crucial. Regular brood checks, good hygiene, and prompt reporting all make a meaningful difference. By working together and staying informed, we can help limit receive an alert, the spread and protect the health of bees across Ipswich and beyond.

A frame of brood with symptoms of European Foulbrood including slumped, discoloured larvae and pepper-pot brood pattern © Crown copyright, Megan Seymour (APHA)

Brood showing symptoms of European Foulbrood (Melissococcus plutonius) infection (EFB), with larvae at various stages of decay © Crown copyright

Advance stage of EFB infection in comb with "melted", discoloured, slumped larvae © Crown copyright

The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter
April – June 2026

Queen Status: Virgin or Mated?

Adapted from Bee Haven Facebook group

Understanding whether a newly found queen is mated is one of the most useful skills a beekeeper can develop. While experience sharpens the eye, there are several reliable signs you can look for during inspections.

Physical appearance: A mated queen typically has a noticeably longer, broader abdomen that extends well past her wings. She appears fuller and more substantial. A virgin queen, by contrast, is slimmer, shorter, and more delicate, sometimes resembling an oversized worker at first glance.

Behaviour on the comb: Mated queens move slowly and purposefully, often surrounded by a retinue of workers who face her, feed her, and groom her. Virgin queens are usually fast, flighty, and nervous, darting across the comb with little worker attention.

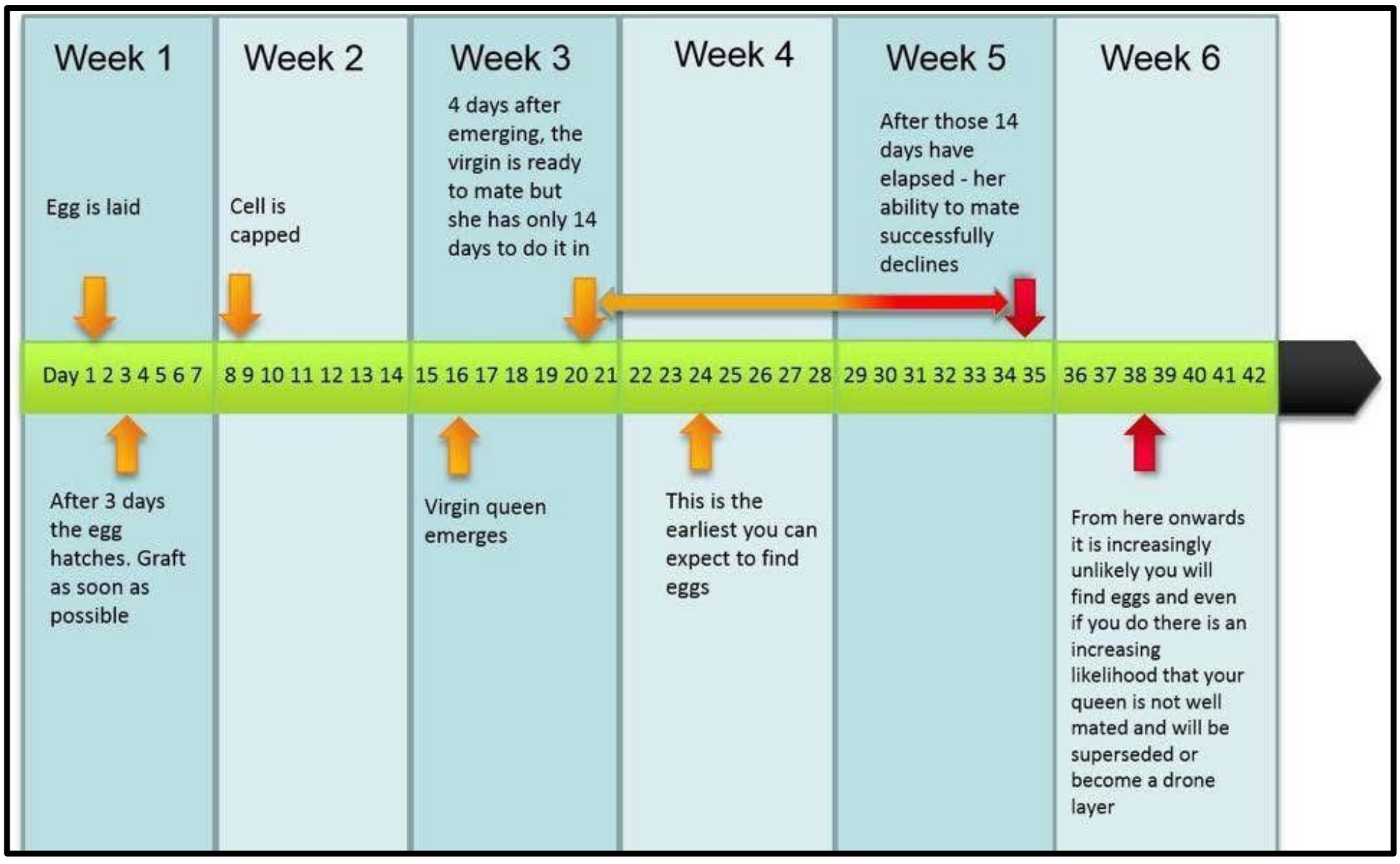
Eggs: the clearest indicator
The most definitive sign of successful mating is the presence of single eggs, neatly placed at the bottom of cells and a consistent laying pattern
If no eggs appear after a couple of weeks, the queen may still be maturing, may have been delayed by poor weather, or may have failed to mate or return from her flight.

A typical timeline:

- Emergence from queen cell
- Several days of maturation
- Orientation flights
- Mating flights around day 5–7, weather permitting
- Laying usually begins 1–2 weeks after emergence

Weather plays a major role. Wind, rain, cold spells, or prolonged unsettled conditions can delay or disrupt mating flights, so patience is sometimes required.

Virgin Queen Timeline Guide



The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
Newsletter

April – June 2026

Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise specified, Ipswich & East Suffolk BKA winter talks are held in Scout Hall, Kesgrave - IP5 1JF - 7:30 pm.

Members of the six Associations which form the Suffolk Beekeepers' Association are welcome to attend any or all these meetings/events.

If you do not belong to that particular local association, please introduce yourself to that BKA secretary.

Please note that these are subject to change – we will email / What's App any changes where possible before.

Visit the website for all current events – iesbka.com/iesbka

Date	Meeting / Event	Details
Wed 3rd June	Ask a Beekeeper Zoom – 7.30pm	Join Sal on Zoom with any questions and general beekeeping chat. Details on website.
Sun 7th June	Teaching Apiary - Wherstead Park IP9 2BJ	The Teaching Apiary **runs weekly** on a Sunday 2 – 4pm
Sat 13th June	Bee Safari – 9am	Email jon.tuppen@btinternet.com to reserve your place as limited spaces
Wed 1st July	Ask a Beekeeper Zoom – 7.30pm	Join Sal on Zoom with any questions and general beekeeping chat. Details on website.
Wed 5th Aug	Ask a Beekeeper Zoom – 7.30pm	Join Sal on Zoom with any questions and general beekeeping chat. Details on website.
Sun 9th Aug	Family BBQ – 3pm	Email gemmaparrott@hotmail.com to book your places.
Wed 2nd Sept	I&ES Monthly Meeting	Auction of surplus equipment
Thurs 17th Sept	Felixstowe Group Monthly Meeting – all welcome	Kirton Recreation Pavillion. 7.30pm **runs every 3rd Thursday** of the month.
Wed 7th Oct	I&ES Monthly Meeting	Roger Patterson (on Zoom) Honey bees in the wild.
Thurs 22nd – Sat 24th Oct	National Honey Show	Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, UK

Local Suppliers

Box House Beekeeping Supplies

In East Bergholt, Suffolk - for the local supply of hives, frames and foundation, tools and other equipment for keeping bees

Open by arrangement - please email or telephone Paul White to discuss your requirements.

01206 299658 or 07768 634038
www.box-bees.co.uk; email: sales@box-bees.co.uk

Richard Martin Beekeeping Supplies

A large range of stock including hives in the flat, WBC, National and Commercial; frames and foundation, honey jars, buckets, tools, bee suits, veils, and gloves. Agent for Thorne's of Wragby

Little College Farm, Creeting St Mary IP6 8PX

Opening hours: 1 April - 30 September 4pm - 7pm Mon - Sat.

At other times, please call on **01449 720491.**