

Linking eR2 membership system to BeeBase

By Martin Smith, President of Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd

Members data

In order to simplify the process of renewing existing memberships and accepting new members, most associations now use eR2, which was developed originally by Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd (BDI) to handle their membership administration. This streamlines the process of collecting subscriptions and other local fees and generates returns to the county and national beekeeping associations as applicable, as well as collating the amounts collected on behalf of BDI for disease insurance.

Members data is held in a secure environment and a subset of the data is passed to the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA), Welsh Beekeepers' Association (WBKA) and BDI, as appropriate, to enable them to supply services to their members. Local association officers are able to use the system to communicate with members by working with one set of data that is up to date. Equally, county and national associations are able to communicate with local association officers using this system.

BeeBase

BeeBase is a valuable beekeeping resource maintained by the National Bee Unit (NBU). In addition to providing information to beekeepers, it maintains a voluntary register of beekeepers in England, Wales and Scotland. Most associations encourage their members to register with BeeBase. This register enables the regional and seasonal bee inspectors to know where beekeepers and their apiaries are located and allows them to make contact in the case of a disease outbreak, with a view, if necessary, to undertaking a disease inspection. The inspectors are experienced beekeepers and their visits often provide valuable training for the individual beekeeper.

Should a beekeeper have an outbreak of a notifiable disease, and have cover provided by BDI, the inspector will validate the insurance claim on their visit.

Data sharing

There is no automatic sharing of data from local associations to BeeBase. As eR2 membership has developed, some local associations have asked us if we can provide a link for those associations who wish to participate; this would allow consenting members to share their contact details with the NBU.

The link is now active for membership renewals for the 2024 season. For associations who wish their members to be given the opportunity to pass their contact details to BeeBase, each member, on renewal or initial joining, will be asked (by ticking the relevant box) if they wish their data to be transferred. **No data will be passed without the member giving their permission.**

FAQ

If I give permission, what data will be transferred?

- Name and address, email address and telephone numbers.
- Membership number and which association you belong to.

What if my local association does not want to participate in this arrangement?

You will not be presented with the question at the time of your renewal and no data will be transferred to BeeBase.

What if I do not want my contact details to be shared with BeeBase?

When asked on your membership form if you would like your contact details to be shared, do not tick the relevant box.

Do I still need to update my BeeBase records if I advise my local association that my contact details have changed?

Yes, please still update your personal details on BeeBase and pay particular attention to your apiary locations. This system is being designed to allow inspectors the best chance to contact you.

If you have already given permission for your data to be shared with BeeBase, for example at a renewal, or by applying for a new membership, then the changes will be advised via the link as soon as your local membership secretary makes them on the system. However, please continue to update details of your apiary locations directly on BeeBase.

What if I leave my local association?

If you have already given permission for data to be transferred, when your membership is lapsed your change in status will be transferred to BeeBase. **This does not mean that your record in BeeBase will be similarly lapsed.** The NBU may see that you have joined another association and link their record to your new association.

One of the sources of disease can be hives belonging to beekeepers who have passed away. As a result, the inspectors are keen to understand what has happened to these hives, particularly if they are in an area of high disease incidence. Providing the information in a timely manner that a beekeeper has died is considered to be a significant benefit of this new data transfer arrangement.

After communicating that a member has lapsed or died, no further information will be transferred to BeeBase.

Doesn't BeeBase hold information about my apiary locations?

If you give permission for your contact details to be transferred to BeeBase, and they do not have your registration already, BeeBase will generate an apiary record based on your home postcode. They will then ask you to update it.

Will my information held in BeeBase be transferred back to my local association?

No – the information transfer is one way only – from the local membership system to BeeBase. No information will be transferred back from BeeBase to your local, county or national beekeeping association.

Is my data secure in eR2?

BDI follows strict GDPR protocols and your data is held in a secure environment on servers hosted in the UK. Access to local membership data is restricted to named local association officers who must have a signed authorisation from another member of the local association committee before access is granted.

Your data is not provided to outside bodies other than those specifically noted in your local association privacy policy. These will include your county association (if applicable), BBKA or WBKA and BDI. These permissions are to enable you to receive the services that they have agreed to provide to local association members. In addition, if your association and you consent, your details will be shared with the NBU.

Is my data secure in BeeBase

Again, BeeBase is fully GDPR compliant, and your data is only available to the NBU inspectorate.

Will the National Bee Unit share my data?

The data controller for the NBU is Defra which operates under strict data protection regulations. Data is handled in accordance with a privacy policy that can be seen here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-and-plant-health-agency-privacy-notice/national-bee-unit-statutory-bee-health-programme-privacy-notice>

I am already registered with BeeBase – why should I give consent for this data transfer?

Most beekeepers are registered with BeeBase, but when you move house or change your email address, contacting the NBU is probably not high on your list of things to do. It can easily get forgotten and as a consequence the NBU lose track of you. Allowing the data transfer means that your contact details are always up to date. This is especially important in the case of a disease outbreak.

Ensuring that BeeBase removes people who are no longer keeping bees is also difficult for the NBU. If you decide to retire from beekeeping, you are unlikely to contact BeeBase to advise them of this fact. As a result, the inspectorate can attempt to contact you unnecessarily.

Martin Smith, BDI President and eR2 membership project manager commented: “The whole concept of the new system was to have one source of data that was continually up dated locally, from which local associations and their members could consent to their details being transferred if they wished. This reduces the work of the membership secretaries and ensures members get up to date information. I am pleased we have finally been able to offer this facility to your association, which will ensure that in the event of a disease outbreak the NBU are able to contact as many beekeepers in the area as quickly as possible.”

Julian Parker, Head of the National Bee Unit, commented: “With the risk of exotic pest incursions an ongoing and significant concern, accurate and complete records for beekeepers on BeeBase are key to a successful and rapid response should an incursion happen. This development is a significant step towards improving BeeBase records and helping with this.”

Christina Ruiz, National Bee Inspector, commented: “My team of inspectors rely on BeeBase for the contact details of beekeepers in their areas. It is important that we have up to date information about beekeepers’ locations and this data transfer will be of great benefit.”