

May 24 2013

**Bee Mail newsletter** - *please forward to a friend or neighbour. If they are not on the internet please print off a copy for them.*



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Thank you for contacting me about the future of our bees - and my sincere apologies for not replying considerably earlier. I wanted to assure you that ensuring the future of our bees is important to me.

I well remember as a child a nest of wild honey bees in the roof space above my bedroom at our home in Clumber Park.



There was a swarm at least once a year and a local bee keeper would come with little more than a smoke puffer and portable hive to take the swarm away if it had settled in an accessible place in the garden.

My father then kept a couple of hives though by this time I had left home. Last summer I persuaded my partner, Neil to allow a friend of ours to keep a hive in his garden - and on the basis summer eventually arrives, we are keen to make it a permanent arrangement.



I know how important bees are accounting for 80% of insect plant pollination. Without bees many crops would not fruit or would have to be pollinated by hand - we simply would not be able to produce as much food throughout the world without a large healthy bee population. Colony collapse disorder (CCD) has had a devastating effect on many honey bees and last years wet summer did not help restore the fortunes of many hives.

I was sorry I was not able to attend the “Bees Teas” organised by Friends of the Earth last

week. I attended and spoke in a debate on mental health and then I went to a conference on drug and alcohol addiction so unfortunately I couldn't fit in the "Bees Teas".

As you may have heard the EU today announced that from December, there will be a two year ban on three pesticides believed to be particularly harmful to bees.

The insecticides - imidacloprid, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam are used to treat seeds, are applied to the soil or sprayed on plants and cereals attractive to bees.

The banning of neonicotinoids is controversial because the experts do not agree on the evidence or the science - this is why the EU has decided on a two year ban.



The Government is committed to safeguarding our bee population.

There is "The Healthy Bees Plan" providing training on pest and disease threats.

Defra (Dept of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) has a National Bee Unit providing inspection, diagnostic and training services to beekeepers.

Farmers and landowners are helped to grow and maintain plants which benefit bees.

Defra has provided £2.5 million to fund 9 projects on Insect Pollination. 2 projects specifically focus on honey bees, and 6 will benefit both honey bees and bumblebees.

My apologies again for not replying earlier to your email and I hope this bee mail newsletter assures you that I am committed to protecting and strengthening our invaluable bee population.

Thank you again for contacting me,

With best wishes,

Anna

Have a good Bank Holiday break

Anna Soubry MP  
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