

Webster Honey introduce more beehives #SavetheBees

During the current Covid-19 crisis, the environment – and bees – are winners as reduced pollution and warm spring weather boost numbers of hives surviving.

Fife-based Webster Honey is taking advantage of the many weeks of warm, settled spring weather to dramatically increase its beehive placement across Scotland, with some 120 new hives set to be positioned in many new parts of the country.

To be used for a mix of beekeeping workshops in schools and nurseries, including workshops at Webster Honey's own beekeeping school at Scotlandwell, the hives will also be used for sponsorship opportunities with businesses, and for general honey production of Webster Honey's own label honey. There are over 200 colonies of bees, and the new hives are temporarily housed at the Scotlandwell School, but will soon travel to their new homes.



Webster Honey beekeeper, Meik Molitor, explained that assembling so many bees and hives in the one place had been a logistical challenge. He said: "One hundred and twenty packages of bees, which have arrived in stages over several

days, is a huge undertaking to manage, involving materials and equipment from several European countries.

“The hive frames have come from Eastern Europe, the wax sheets from England, together with hive parts from Denmark. The bees themselves are from Italy, and I am a German beekeeper looking after them all!

“I am delighted though that they are finally here, and we will be kept busy in the coming weeks taking them to their new homes, although some will remain here at the school

“Bees are doing well during the lockdown – that’s one silver lining for us.

“Everyone is at home doing their gardens and planting flowers, fewer parks and grounds are getting cut, so it’s great for bees to forage, and the air quality is much improved due to lack of traffic.

“We have had a strong sunny start to the season which has created perfect conditions. Usually you get a warm spell in March, which sets everything off well, but then comes frost again and everything is confused! We didn’t have that this year. Everything started to bloom when the bees first came out of hibernation.”

The past few weeks has seen Meik busy checking on various hives that are situated across the Central Belt, including one on the roof of Little Monkeys Nursery in Cramond, Edinburgh. It has survived the winter well, with the bees flourishing. Meik even took out a large honeycomb on his last visit.

School and nursery children will be able to visit Webster Honey’s Bee School in Kinross for a learning session, or Meik can take an Observational Hive to their premises. Many schools and Nurseries, such as Little Monkeys in Cramond, have now opted to have their own hives which they can look after for a year, with Meik coming in to carry out checks, and to conduct

age appropriate lesson plans for the children.

Meik said: "Obviously, we can't do any school or nursery engagement at the moment until the schools reopen, which is a real shame.

"As soon as it is safe to do so we will be back teaching children about bees. They absolutely love the courses, and last term we successfully widened out the areas of Scotland we are covering."

Businesses sponsoring Webster Honey Hives, can, under their sponsorship deals, send representatives from their businesses to complete day courses as a staff incentive, or reward.

Meik concluded: "This is another important area we hope to grow in the coming months.

"As we come out of lockdown, hopefully a greater awareness of environmental issues will be the one huge positive that comes out of this situation.

"There was a huge interest in beekeeping before, with a desire to preserve their crucial role in food production, and this may well be boosted even more. More and more people want to keep bees, whether for recreational or small business purposes. It can be a hugely rewarding pastime, and there is also a real demand for locally produced, artisan honey."

For further details please check out www.websterhoney.com.

Information is also available on the school & nursery programmes for the new term August 2020 (dependent on Covid-19 regulations), and on business sponsorship, by emailing buzz@websterhoney.co.uk.

