

Parliamentary bees are buzzing

The Scottish Parliament's bee population has grown to more than half a million bees.

In 2014 The Scottish Parliament became the first legislature in the UK to keep bees.

There are now 11 beehives onsite and estimates suggest there are in excess of half a million bees in the grounds of the Scottish Parliament during summer, reducing to a third of that figure through winter.

The bees typically forage for pollen and nectar at a distance of up to 2 miles, but with Holyrood Park on their doorstep, they do not have to fly very far.

On a daily basis, one hive's combined flight distance for all the flying bees will amount to the distance to fly from the Earth to the Moon.

The bees fly at an average speed of 17mph when flying towards plants and 12mph coming back fully laden with their goods.

The bees and beehives are managed on the Parliament's behalf by a family run, local business. The Smith hive, a hive suitable for Scottish weather conditions, is used at the Scottish Parliament.

The beeswax (which is a by-product of beekeeping) is used to fill the Great Seal of Scotland and seal acts of the Scottish Parliament.

As the world's most important pollinator of food crops, it is estimated that one third of the food that we consume each day relies on pollination, mainly by bees, but also from other insects, birds, and bats.

Victoria Barby, Sustainable Development Performance Manager at The Scottish Parliament, said: "As a Parliament we strive to ensure our grounds, and the way they are managed and used, has a positive impact in tackling the related biodiversity and climate emergencies.

"At a time of dwindling bee numbers, it is great to see our treasured bee population continue to thrive and play their critical role as super pollinators.

"Exploring and encouraging the biodiversity around the Parliament is just one aspect of our climate work, and as an organisation we are committed to reaching net zero by 2038."



