



It's a great year to go green



Rufus Bellamy, BH&HPA national adviser on conservation and environmental management provides encouragement to aim for Gold

The David Bellamy Conservation Award Scheme (DBCAS) is one of the longest running green tourism awards in the UK. It started in 1996, after the world-renowned conservationist David Bellamy addressed delegates at BH&HPA's 1996 Conference and challenged the industry to be part of the environmental solution and not part of the problem.

Since then, the Scheme has grown and presented over 9,000 awards to parks, all of which have taken part to show what they are doing to help the British countryside and the wider environment.

This year, the Scheme will see a couple of exciting new developments. First, it has a new Twitter account - @BellamyParks - to help spread the word about the Scheme and about what parks involved in the Scheme are doing. It's hoped that 2015 will see many parks and their guests tweeting about all the wildlife that they've seen while on holiday.

The second development is a link-up with the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA)¹. The 'Bee Friendly Park Project' offers an opportunity for all parks participating in the

DBCAS to take a 'Bee Pledge' to do their bit to help Britain's bee population.

This idea grew out of a recent Journal article which highlighted all of the amazing work already being done by parks to conserve bees². A number have made space for beehives and have found that looking after bees is not only a wonderful hobby, but adds an exciting new element to the holiday experience of their guests.

Parks which participate in the Bee Friendly Park Project will be encouraged to provide the food plants that bees need. By doing this they'll earn the right to display a sign telling the world that they are a 'Bee Friendly' park (and get a certificate to prove it). Parks that take part will also be encouraged to get everyone interested in bee conservation, to create nesting sites for bees and, if they can, to set up a hive or two.

Not only will participants be doing their bit in a vitally important piece of conservation work, but they will also be promoted by the BBKA to its 24,300 members.



The bee friendly park project

Bees are a vital part of the British countryside. Not only are they beautiful and fascinating creatures, they are one of the most important pollinators of crops and other plants. That's why the recent dramatic decline in many of Britain's bee species is such bad news. To help, DBCAS has teamed up with the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA)¹ to run the Bee Friendly Park Project. **The project aims to get as many parks as possible working to conserve Britain's bees.**

The project is open to all parks that participate in the DBCAS. Sign up and a park will be able to display a Bee Pledge logo that shows it is committed to bee conservation. If members take part, they'll be asked to plant the forage crops that bees need to survive. This is a vital piece of work that will really help Britain's dwindling bee population.

It is important to ensure there is something for bees to feed on from February/March through to September/October. This should involve the following type of planting:

- Q **winter/spring:** planting spring and summer flowering bulbs
- Q **spring/summer:** planting flowering trees and shrubs
- Q **summer/autumn:** sowing pollen- and nectar-rich wildflower seed mixtures
- Q **autumn/winter:** creating an herbaceous border filled with long flowering plants.

BH&HPA members will probably be doing much of this work as part of their normal programme of park management. However, once the bee pledge has been taken, everything that is being done will be with an eye to providing nectar and pollen for as long a period of time as is possible.

The work will be reviewed by the DBCAS Assessors and the BBKA. If enough has been done, members will get a certificate to confirm their park is **Bee Friendly**.

Once members have got going with their bee-friendly planting, there are many opportunities to become even more Bee Friendly. To help move forward, the project will provide help and advice on how to spread the word about bee

With grateful thanks to
Andy Walker of Tree Tops Caravan Park
for providing Bee photographs

conservation. Information and support to help set up a hive on their park will also be available.

This project is a great way to do something really valuable for Britain's wildlife. It also offers a way to prove a park's commitment to conservation and **all 'Bee Friendly' parks will be publicised by the BBKA to its 24,300 members.**

For those worried about safety - bees are generally docile animals and hives need to be placed in quiet areas away from people, so the danger of stings is minimal.

Why take part

- Q taking the Bee Pledge to become bee friendly offers an exciting way to do something really important for Britain's wildlife
- Q it will add to the work that is already being done for the DBCAS and will help achieve conservation goals
- Q it will help make parks an even more beautiful place for people to stay and enhance the holiday experience
- Q members will be able to display the Bee Pledge and Bee Friendly certificate - a great way to let everyone know what is being done for wildlife
- Q parks will have an interesting story to tell - this will help generate PR and social media/website content
- Q if members get a hive/s on their park, they'll be able to make their own honey (a great addition to the produce which can be sold to the people staying on the park)
- Q it costs nothing to sign up!

How to sign up

To take part in the 2015 Award Scheme, contact BH&HPA for an application form: email enquiries@bhHPA.org.uk or telephone 01452 526911.

For more information about the project, and to sign up, please get in touch with Rufus Bellamy on beefriendlyparks@aol.com. Please follow us on Twitter @BellamyParks - we'll pick up news of what parks are doing and spread the word. O

¹ BBKA website: www.bbka.org.uk

² BH&HPA Journal article - 'Help bees to keep buzzing': <http://tinyurl.com/n494033>