

Food for thought



BEARING FRUIT Thanks to the PCF, the centre has installed 'bee cams' so people can watch all the action

New projects are hives of activity



There's a buzz about this year's PCF projects, including the Pembrokeshire Beekeepers' Centre. Lucy Allen made a bee-line to find out more

Next time you bite into an apple and enjoy its delicious flavour, you probably have a bee to thank. Surprised? Most people are, says Paul Eades, apiary manager at the Pembrokeshire Beekeepers' Association's centre at Scolton Manor in Wales.

'About 90% of apples rely on bees to pollinate them, so if there were no bees there wouldn't be many apples,' he says. 'People don't know this because we have lost touch with where our food comes from.'

'We want to educate the public and reconnect them with the countryside.'

Now the centre is doing just that – thanks, in part, to The Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF). Established in 2010 and supported by Waitrose, the fund was created by HRH The Prince of Wales with the aim of improving the sustainability of rural communities.

Thirty-five projects have now received money, including the centre, which was awarded £37,624 earlier this year. As a result, it has installed two 'bee cams' on one of its 10 hives, which transmit live feeds to a room close by, where the public can watch.

Paul says: 'People are fascinated, watching the bees.'

The PCF money will also be used to create an exhibition area for people to learn about bees, and a 'honey kitchen', where they can watch beekeepers extracting honey from hive frames and bottle it for sale.

Another project that will benefit from the PCF is Crossgates Community Primary School in rural Wales, which was awarded £8,000 to help pupils grow plants

and learn about the link between food and farming.

Headteacher Sue Meeke says: 'We had previously purchased two poly-tunnels, but we did not have the resources to erect them. Now we have had them put up and an irrigation system installed and the children have planted loads of veg, including beans and tomatoes.'

The school has also built an eco-greenhouse, which uses plastic cola and lemonade bottles instead of glass.

Sue says: 'We saw one at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and wanted to build our own. The children started collecting bottles, but we did not have the money to build it.'

'Now we have been able to put up the wooden frame, slot in the bottles, wire it all together and plant flowers.'

Sue adds: 'The children are loving it. It is wonderful to see how much they are learning and enjoying it.'

Another project to gain funding this year includes Bell View, an organisation providing transport for older people in rural Northumberland. Given £18,000 from the PCF, it has now bought a wheelchair-accessible minibus and is ferrying people around the countryside.

When the Prince set up the fund, he said: 'I want to keep our countryside a living, breathing, working place.' Two years later, these projects are just a few helping to fulfil that dream.

Visit pbka.info for more on the Pembrokeshire Beekeepers' Assoc.



Bee movie

waitrose.com/pcf

Feel the buzz – watch our video on projects that won grants from The Prince's Countryside Fund this year, including the Pembrokeshire Beekeepers' Centre.



FI GLOVER IN MY OPINION



I hummed and ha-ed this morning because I felt I should write about Andy Murray – he's all I can think about. But you don't want to hear any more analysis from a girl who once had a tennis report that went 'If Glover put as much effort into her tennis as she does into her messing around then she might make a good ball girl'. So I'm going to rant about something else – albeit a thought process sparked off by Mr Murray and the shock news that he arrived for his Wimbledon final in a friend's old VW Polo; hardly a car likely to be waived through on a VIP lane.

I don't know whether you have signed up to getaheadofthegames.com and the Twitter feed. I live in the shadow of the Olympic Park so I thought I should. I thought it might tell me interesting facts about athletes from Nigeria, or have helpful hints on how to get rid of my own lactic acid build-up through over-clapping, but in fact it's just for travel. And it's like being trapped in a depressed sat nav, in need of urgent cognitive behavioural therapy.

Roads are being closed, one way systems turned on their heads, speed bumps are being removed, bus lanes closed, the whole of the A12 has been designated for the sole use of Boris on his bike*, if you are going to Greenwich for the equestrian events you can only go on horseback*, and Weymouth is going to be shut*.

'Olympic travel misery, too? We'll be in tears... oh Andy!'

Now, of course traffic is important because we don't want to be like the Atlanta Games when some athletes missed their events because their buses got delayed. But you know what we just don't need after this summer of weather misery? People telling us that we now get travel misery too. Every one of us will be in tears by September.

I'm not naively criticising the need for a travel plan, but I do wonder about the way we're being told. On my trip into work, I pass a sign on the bus stop telling me it won't be there, one at the Tube station saying it will be so packed I should consider going to work at a different time (tricky on the radio), and one in the lift at the BBC saying have I considered going to work for Tele Swede because it'll be easier to get to Stockholm than to central London*.

Surely what we need is one of those old-fashioned information films. We need half an hour, in the company of someone we love, trust and are now prepared to listen to – with a giant map, a good sense of direction, stamina. Someone who can kindly explain how to get from A to B without having a breakdown. Someone empathetic, someone who so nearly made it, someone who cries too...

Oh Andy! I lied. I am still thinking about him.

*some exaggeration has occurred in these sentences.



ROYAL MATTER
The Prince of Wales established the PCF in 2010

