

## Letter from Anne Rowberry BBKA Chair

As you are probably aware, there is a move to bring bees into the UK via Northern Ireland. This is to circumvent the law that prohibits Package Bees, Nuclei and Colonies entering the UK and is a result of a loophole allowing direct entry into Northern Ireland from the European Union. These bees would have a health certificate issued in the area of the EU from which they originated but would have no other serious inspections in Northern Ireland or when they enter the rest of the UK.

They are coming from southern Italy near the site where the outbreak of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) originated. Although officially there is not a threat of SHB in the area, there is little compensation if beekeepers report an outbreak that would result in colonies being destroyed and restrictions put officially on the movement of bees in the area.

The SHB is in Italy and in the area where these bees are being bred. If they get into the UK they will spread rapidly.

The BBKA with Bee Disease Insurance, organised cooperation between Northern Ireland beekeepers, Welsh and Scottish beekeepers. Joint letters were sent to Ministers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The BBKA (or rather me, as it must be set up by an individual) has organised a Parliamentary Petition. The petition is now live so please publicise as widely as possible. Please share the link <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/577603>

### **Stop the importation of honey bees into GB from the EU via Northern Ireland**

The UK Government should ensure that people cannot circumvent restrictions on the movement of bees from the EU to GB by moving them via NI. Unrestricted movement of bees could allow Small Hive Beetle to arrive and devastate British beekeeping.

The potential effect of allowing this avoidance of the import laws and the threat it carries to our bees is clearly not part of a legitimate trade and as such breaches the law. Historically, the imports of bees into Northern Ireland were small and therefore there is not a strong inspection service available. They would be challenged to inspect high numbers of Package bees before the bees are repackaged and shipped on to other parts of Great Britain as Package bees or Nuclei. More details can be found in the accompanying document and on the BBKA website and in the April edition of the BBKA News.

The BBKA is asking you to take a stand:

- Please sign the Petition and ask for support from friends, family and neighbours in signing the petition;

· Publicise the petition with your local press, radio and TV, MP, Councillors, magazines and any other contacts you may have such as gardening, sports, golf, and tennis clubs or anywhere we can get our concern heard.

We can make a difference but we need your support. Please sign the petition and confirm your email address in the link you will be sent.

Thank you for reading this letter and for your support.

Anne Rowberry, BBKA Chair