

Thursday, 14 March 2019

## Asian Hornet Coordinator appointed

A beekeeper with 17 years' experience has been appointed as the 2019 Asian Hornet Coordinator.

Alastair Christie (54), who has served on the Jersey Bee Keepers' Association's management committee and was the managing director of Lavender Farm for 17 years, has been tasked with investigating ways to protect the public, the island's biodiversity and honey bee populations from the impact of the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*.

His appointment comes as part of an Asian Hornet strategy that includes an Asian Hornet Management Plan 2019, which has been published today.

Mr Christie has seen first-hand the damage that Asian Hornets can do to bees, and has experience of hornet tracking as well as verifying hornet reports.

"It's a unique role that suits me: I'm hands-on, I like the outdoors and I've been a beekeeper for many years," Mr Christie said. "I have a keen interest in Jersey's diverse and rich ecology, and I'm looking forward to playing my part in protecting it from this invasive species.

"The Asian Hornet has the ability to change the face of beekeeping and the ecology of Jersey. It is worth doing our bit to fight this pest, and it's important that our response is co-ordinated and draws on the expertise across the island."

Mr Christie will work with various groups and departments, including the Jersey Bee Keepers' Association, the Jersey Asian Hornet Group, and Environment Department scientific staff to bring about a coordinated response to the hostile species.

The Minister for the Environment, Deputy John Young, last year secured Government contingency funding for the Asian Hornet strategy, which is one element of a larger piece of work addressing all invasive species including plants and insects.

"Mr Christie's appointment as part of the Asian Hornet strategy highlights the important issue of this invasive species," he said. "We need to recognise and continue to resource this growing work stream properly if we want to take the protection of our environment seriously.

"As a local beekeeper and land manager, Mr Christie has the qualities needed to deliver this important role alongside Government of Jersey officers and the Jersey Asian Hornet Group, who we are indebted to for their continued voluntary commitment."

The Asian Hornet reached the Channel Islands in 2016 after accidental introduction to France in 2004. The steep rise in nest findings in Jersey from 2016 to 2018 indicates a rapid rate of establishment, and 2019 will likely see a further increase in numbers. A total of 55 nests were located and destroyed last year, and the National Bee Unit will be sending two teams of six UK Bee Inspectors to Jersey in August.

An Asian Hornet Management Plan 2019, which will be published this week, outlines ways in which Mr Christie will work with bee keeping groups and local experts to eradicate and slow the spread of the Asian Hornet, as well as establish long-term management methods of the species.

The plan content and implementation dates have been agreed by the Jersey Bee Keepers' Association, the Jersey Asian Hornet Group and Environment Department scientific staff.

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### **Notes to Editors**

1. Alastair Christie is available for interview on Friday morning.
2. The Asian Hornet Management Plan is on gov.je  
<https://www.gov.je/Government/Pages/StatesReports.aspx?ReportID=4365>
3. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or [pressoffice@gov.je](mailto:pressoffice@gov.je)