

When you are being chased around by a bumble bee the most annoying thing that anyone can say is “stand still, it won’t hurt you”. Yes it will! They sting. It hurts. But at least bees provide a purpose in this world, unlike their wasp cousins. Bees at least pollinate more than £1bn worth of crops in the UK each year. Of the 100 crop species that provide 90% of the food worldwide, 71 are pollinated by bees.

So when I was on the doorsteps prior to the election, running in circles around a poor unsuspecting gentleman who I was seeking a vote from, little did I know that I would spend a significant amount of time while in Parliament defending the little buzzing devils from destruction.

Last winter, a third of all honey bee colonies were lost making it the worst season since records began and double the losses of the previous year. A further 47 species of bee are now vulnerable or even endangered in the UK, which of course could have worrying outcomes for our long term ability to produce crops for the future.

Why is this happening? Well the simple truth is that the numbers of insects have declined dramatically over the past 25 years and there are fears that the use of a common type of pesticide known as neonicotinoids may be playing a significant role. Research is being undertaken to ascertain the link with a ban of the pesticide the most likely, and desired outcome.

It is clear that something drastic has to be done to protect bees for the future. They have after all been around for 30 million years and are the only insect that produces food eaten by man. Plus they are a great tool for getting unwanted canvassing politicians off your driveway.