PRESS RELEASE

Female Beekeeper Turns Back on Corporate Career
To Make A Buzz in Apiculture in Norfolk

A journey that started out as a search for a more mindful lifestyle ended with Stacy Cronly-Dillon turning her back on the corporate ladder to become one of the UK's most successful professional female beekeepers.

Five years ago, Stacy had a successful marketing career as a Brand Manager for an FMCG company in Essex. But the industry that had once offered glamourous photo shoots and invites to exciting events had started to take its toll on Stacy's health. The stress that was slowly building was no longer being supressed with regular yoga sessions.

In search of calm, Stacy started beekeeping as a hobby and quickly became obsessed with the world of bees. As time progressed, so did her desire to spend more of her days with the bees, in nature, contributing to the environment around her, and caring for her own well-being.

What started as a slow-paced hobby, soon became Stacy's passion and a side-line business, with Stacy setting up Sunnyfields Apiaries in Essex in 2018.

But craving a countryside lifestyle, and looking for more space for the bees and additional hives, Stacy and her partner Mark decided to up sticks and leave the hustle and bustle of Essex behind; moving themselves and their bee business to the Norfolk countryside in 2021.

Stacy says: “My life in Bungay now couldn’t be more different to how it was five years ago. Like many people, I was working long hours and didn’t realise just how much my stressful career was affecting me. I was probably heading for burnout.

“It was only once I connected with the bees that I understood I needed a more sustainable, slow-paced existence for my own physical and mental health and that there was an alternative to the relentless corporate slog that I had been used to.

“And the more time I spent with the bees, the more I felt the drive to do my bit to protect them and to contribute to the reversal of their declining numbers for the future of the environment.”

Three years after her first interaction with the bees, Stacy had given up her successful career and relocated to Bungay on the Norfolk Suffolk border (close to the River Waveney) with her husband Mark.

It’s from here that Stacy has become a full-time beekeeper, expanding the number of hives to became guardian of 25 colonies of honeybees. Each of her hives houses up to 45,000 bees. She has also launched a series of award-winning courses and beekeeping experiences for those curious about nature, bees and honey.

No longer commuting to the office, each morning as the sun rises, so does Stacy. It’s a routine that is dictated by the seasons and the weather; she lets the chickens out, feeds the cats, and walks the dogs before visiting the hives. When the temperature warms, the bees become more active, as it cools they stay within their hives.

But it’s not all about the lifestyle for Stacy. Stacy’s passion and goal is to spread the word about the vital role the 270 species of bees in the UK play in pollination and to demonstrate how everyone can support honeybees in their own little corner of the world.

Focusing on education, Stacy runs beekeeping experiences at Sunnyfields Apiary so that people can get a bees-eye view of the world. Aimed at total beginners and those thinking

about setting up a hive at home, Stacy shares her knowledge and guides visitors through what the bees are doing and the work that each of them is carrying out.

Stacy explains; “Each bee has its own role to play depending on its maturity, some fly to and from the hive gathering food and water, others nurse new bees in the making, whilst others dedicate their days to looking after the queen.

“During the two-hour experience, I remove frames from the hive, enabling people to see up close the repetitive patterns of hexagonal honeycomb and striped bees. Guests are mesmerised as they observe the bees communicating with one another through their gentle hum.

“My aim is to make the beekeeping experience special and unforgettable,” Stacy explains. “I want visitors to learn about the important difference the bees make by getting up-close and personal with them. We stimulate all of the senses; from the scent of wood and wax to the buzz of the bees themselves, and the session ends with a taste of the diverse range of honeys all produced locally.”

Sunnyfields’ beekeeping experiences are all about connecting with nature. From the moment you approach Sunnyfields Apiary, the roads narrow, houses become fewer, and shoulders start to relax. On arrival, guests park next to a 99-acre ancient woodland, and life instantly slows down.

For those dreaming of starting beekeeping as a hobby, Stacy runs introductory courses, giving an overview of the life of a bee, the beekeeper’s involvement in running the hive, and the next steps in getting started.

Stacy admits that educating people is a step in the right direction and, although there has been an increase in awareness of the fragility of the natural world after the pandemic, still more needs to be done to protect the environment and the role bees have in that.

With climate change and environmental considerations high on the political agenda and with businesses looking for tangible ways to support the environment, Stacy is keen to work with and educate the corporate community about the value of bees too.

Stacy adds; “Many businesses are recruiting Sustainability Managers whose job it is to ensure that Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Social Governance goals are met. Over the past decade, businesses have become increasingly conscious of the environmental impact they are having. And we can help them.

“Brands and businesses are looking for ways to prove to their customers and employees that they are environmentally considerate and making a positive difference. But for some organisations this is easier said than done, particularly when their products are not tangible.”

To support small eco-centric businesses who are looking for help to contribute to those metrics, Stacy has developed a Corporate Hive Sponsorship programme. The programme provides home for a colony of honey bees, helps other bees too with wildlife habitats and aids pollinator friendly planting.

The programme also includes an employee engagement scheme which includes the chance for staff to visit their bees to gain a better understanding of the difference pollinators make to the local environment.

Stacy says that engaging directly with sponsored hive employees is fulfilling for both parties. “When a team visits their sponsored hive there is a realisation of the direct impact that is being made. Being able to support businesses with their environmental ambitions is hugely rewarding. I’ve worked with corporations that are either mandated to carry out some form of conservation work with bees, or see something in the bees that translates directly back into the work they are doing - a honey bee is incredibly good at teamwork!”

There is no doubt that a visit to Sunnyfields will have a positive impact for both individuals and business alike, leaving guests with an irresistible urge to return home, invest in wildlife

habitats, plant pollinator friendly flowers and create watering stations where nature and bees can thrive.

And for Stacy? Well, needless to say, life couldn't be further from the corporate world she left behind and she is more than buzzing about that.

For more information about Stacy Cronly-Dillon and Sunnyfields Apiary visit: www.sunnyfieldshoney.com

To arrange an interview with Stacy in person, or to request hi-resolution professional photography of the bee experiences and Stacy, head beekeeper at work, please contact:

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