

Whitby Firm Receives £180k Grant to Help Tackle Antibiotic Resistance

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Whitby based company [Natures Laboratory](#) has just received a major funding award worth over 180K from Innovate UK to develop new ways in which [propolis](#) – a natural antibiotic produced by bees – can be used to help meet the worldwide crisis in antibiotic resistance.

WHO (World Health Organisation) put antibiotic resistance in its top ten global public health threats. The harsh reality is that the drugs don't work anymore. We are now facing infections where no antibiotics can help.

Propolis is made from resins which the bees collect from trees and plants. They take the resins back to the hive, process them through their enzymatic system and then combine them with wax. They use propolis (which comes from the Greek meaning 'Defender of the City') to seal up the hive against infection making the beehive one of the most sterile environments known to man.

Research since the end of WW2 has shown that propolis has antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal and anti-tumoral properties. For the beehive, propolis is its immune defence mechanism and according to Natures Laboratory's CEO James Fearnley it does just the same for us humans.

"Natures Laboratory has been researching the role of propolis as a medicine for over 30 years. I feel that our work has for years been like a candle burning in the bright sunlight - nobody recognised its light. But as the problem of [antibiotic resistance](#) has grown bigger and darker we are beginning to be seen as a real and potential help for what has seemed like an increasingly dangerous, global and insoluble problem."

"We have known about the anti-microbial activity of propolis since the 1940's and our own research in 1998 at University of Oxford confirmed this. During the last 30 years we have, with our university research colleagues in this country and round the world, published over 30 scientific reports about propolis and have made some remarkable discoveries."

"Our most dramatic discovery came just over a year ago during the COVID lockdown in work we are funding at Leeds Beckett University. We discovered that if you combine propolis with antibiotics that have effectively stopped working (like penicillium) they start working again. Exactly why and how this works we are still working on but obviously the potential benefits of combining [antibiotics and propolis](#) are enormous."

"This new Innovate UK Award will help us to build on this work. The Award will fund a two-year project working with Department of Pharmacological Engineering Science at the University of Bradford. We will explore how we can use cutting edge science to develop products locally that can make a real and lasting contribution to a global problem. This is a fantastic opportunity and a validation of 30 years of research work."

The Award comes at a fantastic time for us having just launched the 4th International Conference of the [IPRG](#) (International Propolis Research Group) which I started in 2016 and which last year presented 39 scientific papers on the properties of propolis and attracted over 400 participants from every corner of the world."

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About James Fearnley

James founded Nature's Laboratory in 2002 which includes:

Media:



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- **The Herbal Apothecary** which now produces the largest of [herbal medicines](#) in the UK
- **Sweet Cecily's** an exciting range of [natural skincare products](#) and 'make your own' skincare kits
- **Jack Barber & Company** - helping with IT support and web technology
- **BeeVital** which is now a world leading authority on the medicinal properties of [propolis](#), a natural antibiotic produced by honeybees

James has been researching propolis for over 30 years working with universities round the world, publishing two books:

- [Propolis: Natural Healing from the Hive](#)
- [Propolis and Oral Health](#)

James has travelled the world collecting propolis samples from every continent to analyse back home in Nature's Laboratory's research lab in Whitby North Yorkshire. He has contributed to over 30 peer review journals exploring the many ways that propolis can help with human health.

BeeVital produce the largest range of propolis products in the UK backed up by decades of research and quality managed within their own laboratories.

- James founded **ARC** - [Apiceutical Research Centre](#) in 2010 which has built a collaborative international community of researchers looking at how propolis works for both the honeybee and for man. ARC staged the first conference on 'Propolis: Future Medicine?' in 2011 at University of Glasgow
- James founded **IPRG** - [International Propolis Research Group](#) in 2016 which now runs international conferences every two years and provides a platform for information and research collaboration via its own unique communications platform, called [Hivechat](#)
- He was the co-founder in 2021 of the **GBMG** - [Global Bee Medicine Group](#)
- **The BeeArc Project** is planned to open in 2025 and will contain a threefold exploration of ways in which the honeybee can inspire our social, economic and cultural life through a combined Discovery Centre, Research Centre and Sustainable Village
- James founded [The Dispensary](#), a pioneering community health project in Whitby opened by Professor David Bellamy in 2012, along with Futurehealth Store, an online shop for [ethically sourced products](#)

Company Contact: