

Longcroft Allotment Association

Policy for keeping bees on allotment sites.

Bees are an important asset to allotmenters. Recently the bee population of the UK has come under pressure, and bee numbers and colonies continue to fluctuate and the Association welcomes the work currently being undertaken to improve the situation. There are over 200 bee species in the UK. This policy addresses only the keeping of honeybees on our Association allotment sites. It balances our wish to promote beneficial and responsible bee keeping with the need for allotment holders to have the full enjoyment of their plots.

Tenant beekeepers must provide competent care and management together with the knowledge and skills to ensure the wellbeing of their bees. Bee keeping is time consuming and requires physical strength and regular attendance. If you are unsure about whether bee keeping is really for you then it is important to attend the various introductory courses and apiary visits your local Bee Keeping Division provides prior to buying the equipment and obtaining your bees.

The Policy

1. Tenants require the permission of the Association's committee to keep bees on their allotment plot. This must be obtained prior to any beekeeping activity starting, including placing hives on site. The Committee will consider any request reasonably in the light of the overall management of the site including the number of hives currently on the site, the proposed location and other matters of livestock husbandry.

2. Tenants beekeepers are responsible for the welfare and stock management of their bees and must ensure they do not cause a nuisance to others. They are expected to do so by following the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) guidelines and best practice.
3. Tenant beekeepers must be a member of the British Bee Keeping Association and have the Association's full insurance cover. Membership of the local Hertfordshire Division is strongly recommended (Welwyn Bee Keepers Association).
4. Tenant beekeepers must have already attended the HBKA's Beginners course and continue to demonstrate up to date training, knowledge and application of bee keeping best practice.
5. Hives must be placed in such a way that the bees and their flight paths do not create a nuisance for others. It may therefore be that the hive is best situated on another part of the site rather than on a plot. This must be agreed with the Committee in advance. Contact numbers for the beekeeper and for reporting a swarm should be clearly visible near the hive, together with an emergency medical number.
6. Tenant beekeepers will be required to inspect bees on at least a weekly basis during the swarming season (typically April to August). To avoid inconvenience to others, this should be undertaken at a time when there are few others on site.
7. Beekeepers should be aware that other allotment holders may have concerns about bees on the site and be willing to give advice to mitigate these concerns through good practice and courtesy.

8. Other site tenants should ensure any chemical applications are made with due consideration of the bees as bees are very vulnerable to the effects of pesticides. They should also respect that bees are livestock and that only the beekeeper should undertake their management.
9. Honeybees are susceptible to a number of diseases, some of which are notifiable to DEFRA. Regional Bee Inspectors and their assistants have the statutory right to inspect and access hives and issue a variety of restriction notices including those that require colonies to be burnt and buried in situ. Both the tenant and the Association will ensure their full cooperation with the Inspectors.
10. The Committee retains the right to inspect the bees at any time, to require the beekeeper to amend their management regime, relocate the hive or remove it from the site at any time.
11. The allotment tenancy may be terminated if the beekeeper fails to conform to this policy.

Anne Freimanis
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