



# Rusthall

## Parish Council

### **BEEKEEPING POLICY**

#### **Consent**

1. Any person wishing to keep bees on an Allotment site must first seek written agreement from Rusthall Parish Council. No bees shall be kept on any Allotment site until this agreement has been signed and permission given in writing. The Parish Council reserves the right to issue 14 days' notice for the removal of hives.

#### **Duty of care**

2. The beekeeper has a duty of care to other allotment gardeners working nearby, and to all members of the public, including those who have no lawful reason to be on the allotment. To this end, s/he must ensure that only gentle strains of bee are kept. If the bees become aggressive or exhibit excessive 'following' tendency, the beekeeper shall arrange to re-queen the colony, or remove the colony altogether until its undesirable traits have been resolved.

#### **Consultation**

3. Rusthall Parish Council will advise all plot holders that a request to keep bees has been submitted. Should an objection be made it must be effectively addressed. If the objection is on allergy or medical grounds and the Parish Council is satisfied that it is substantiated, permission may be refused to keep bees on site.

#### **Training**

4. Beekeeping requires a level of competency in maintaining hives to ensure the health and productivity of the colony. Written evidence of training from a recognised body such as the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) must be provided.

#### **Insurance / Membership**

5. The named beekeeper must be a member of a Beekeepers Association affiliated to the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) which provides third party insurance as well as up-to-date valuable advice and training opportunities. Insurance cover must be maintained throughout the duration of keeping the bees on the Allotment site which provides specifically for beekeeping risks and includes **five (5) million pounds** Public Liability Insurance cover. A copy of the insurance must be submitted annually to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council accepts no responsibility for the hives including but not limited to their damage, destruction or theft and the beekeeper shall be responsible for insuring the hives

## Hives

6. Screening around the hives must be provided to ensure that bees are encouraged to rise in excess of 2 metres before leaving the plot. Screening is to both provide protection for the bees from intrusion/vandals and to create an effective barrier ensuring the flight path of the bees does not go directly across other plots and forces them to fly quickly upwards to their natural flight height when foraging. Screening material could be natural hedging, wooden screening such as bamboo on a roll or fine plastic/wire mesh.

Bees need access to water and provision of areas of shallow water/damp margins provided where they are less likely to drown. Water can be made available in the form of bird baths and pond margins.

## Beekeeper responsibilities and handling of bees

7. Beekeepers should not put colonies of bees known to be of an aggressive temperament onto Allotment sites. If this does occur, then the beekeeper will be asked to remedy the situation.

Inspections - Hives need to be inspected weekly from Spring to Autumn in accordance with BBKA guidelines.

When carrying out inspections bee keepers must be mindful of adjoining gardeners and inform them that they will be carrying out an inspection and preferably carry out such inspections at quieter times and in calm, dry weather.

Swarming - The beekeeper must carry out such management and manipulations of the colonies as are necessary to minimise the issue of swarms. Visitors to the allotment must be made aware that bees may swarm, an essential part of reproduction, and in the event of this happening an experienced bee keeper must deal with this.

Contact Details / Standby - In the event of an emergency, such as swarming, the beekeeper must ensure that name and contact details for him/herself are displayed in the area of the hives or, if available, on a notice board where it is clearly visible to all users of the site.

If the official named beekeeper is away a standby contact competent to deal with inspection duties and any emergency related to the hives, such as potential swarming, must be available.

The contact details of the standby must be made available during the absence of the beekeeper, in the manner described above.

Full contact details for both parties must be given to the Parish Clerk prior to siting the hives.

Diseases – Beekeepers have a legal responsibility to notify the National Bee Unit (NBU) of certain pests and diseases. The beekeeper must register hives with the National Bee Unit ‘Beebase’ (part of Defra) –

*<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm> Email: [nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk) Telephone: 01904 462510*

## Withdrawal of Consent

8. The Parish Council reserves the right to issue notice for the removal of the hives if:

- The bee keeper contravenes any of the above conditions
- Substantiated information is received that requires a review of the arrangements