



Horley Town Council

Allotment Policy (Beekeeping Requests)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to prospective beekeepers who wish to place beehive(s) on Horley Town Council allotment sites at Church Road and Langshott. It sets out the process that must be followed and the actions to be undertaken prior to formal approval being given by the Town Council and each application must be considered case-by-case.

2. Stage 1 - Initial Consideration

- 2.1 Any person wishing to keep bees on an allotment garden at Horley Town Council sites should first contact the Council Officer who will furnish the applicant with a copy of this policy, application form and supplementary information. Only applications from existing allotment tenancy holders will be considered.
- 2.2 In order that the initial request for positioning a beehive(s) may be progressed, the suitability of the allotment site shall be determined by the Council Officer in consultation with the allotment site steward. Any person wishing to keep bees must agree to abide by any rules stipulated and must satisfy the Town Council of their competence, training, knowledge and experience in this practice.

3. Stage 2 - Consultation & Management Requirements

Consultation Process:

- 3.1 All allotment tenancy holders on the site must be consulted on their views concerning any application to keep bees at an allotment site. This will be conducted by the Council Officer who will ask all plot holders to fill in a questionnaire (template appended) and an application will only be considered by the Town Council if the majority of respondents are in support of the proposal.
- 3.2 The Town Council may, at its discretion, consult neighbouring properties directly affected, in order to satisfy themselves that those properties have no objections to the siting of beehive(s) on the allotment site. Provided that the majority of consultees have no objections, an application may then be considered and will be subject to formal Town Council approval with the full requirements having been met by the applicant.

Management Requirements:

- 3.3 That Small Holdings and Allotment Act 1908, s.22 states that allotment tenancy holders cannot trade on an allotment site for profit as the prime purpose for plot cultivation.
- 3.4 The Council requires that a person wanting to keep bees on an allotment site must be a member of a local Beekeeping Association, affiliated with the British Beekeepers' Association (BKKA). Such membership of a Beekeeping Association provides members with third party/public liability insurance through their affiliation with BKKA and evidence of this must be provided annually. The BKKA also offers support and advice for beekeepers.
- 3.5 Beekeepers must further produce evidence of a recognised qualification with their application, such as, the BKKA Basic Assessment and be satisfactorily competent. The beekeeper will be required to register all beehive(s) with the National Bee Unit's 'Beebase' (part of Defra) www.nationalbbeunit.com Additionally, if the beekeeper suspects honey bees have Notifiable Brood Diseases such as AFB/EFB, they should immediately report it to National Bee Unit to arrange for an inspector to assess the honey bees by contacting the National Bee Unit. The hives must be registered and available for inspection by the Regional Bee Inspector.
- 3.6 The prospective beekeeper must ensure that they have insurance cover and provide documentary evidence with their application. The level of cover requirement is £10million public liability and **beekeepers must provide evidence of this on an annual basis.**
- 3.7 The prospective beekeeper must further satisfy the Council Officer that they have made adequate arrangements to ensure that any problems caused by their bees during their absence will be dealt with, ie. a nominated person that is experienced to act on their behalf, as and when required. Up- to-date contact details of the primary and secondary qualified/insured beekeeper must be made available on the allotment site notice board and registered with the Council Officer and site steward as information to disseminate in the case of emergencies. The Council Officer shall check that the conditions for keeping beehive(s) are being met and shall raise any issues with the beekeeper along with onward reporting to the Town Council.

4. Stage 3 - Decision

- 4.1 If the full requirements of Stage 1 and Stage 2 have been met, then the application may be considered, subject to the Town Council being furnished with all required documentation as mentioned above and the decision made **by Members** shall be communicated by the Council Officer to the applicant as soon as possible.
- 4.2 In the event of an application being declined, the decision of the Town Council shall be final.
- 4.3 In the event of the application being approved, the Town Council shall accept no responsibility whatsoever in connection with the siting of beehive(s) or for any loss or damage as a result. The applicant shall further indemnify the Town Council in the event of any loss or damage to its property on the allotment site once the beehive(s) have been placed.

5. Stage 4 - Operational Requirements (subject to approval)

- 5.1 **Siting of Beehive(s):**

- Beehive(s) must be carefully placed to be away from pathways and trafficked areas at the allotment site.
- No more than 2 beehives may be grouped together.
- Beehive(s) must not be placed in positions from which flight paths impinge on other allotment users or pathways.
- Beehive(s) must be sited in a remote area of the allotment garden, away from other plot holders.
- The number of colonies in any area must be limited.
- Bees must be encouraged to rise in excess of 2 metres before leaving the hive to ensure that the flight path is not directly over other plots which may be achieved with the use of a fine mesh screen of a gauge of less than 10mm.
- The beehive(s) must be screened for two reasons, so not to draw attention to them and to create a barrier to ensure the bees fly upward and quickly to their normal flight height.

5.2 Handling of Bees:

- The beekeeper must ensure that the strain of bees used is gentle, for example, by using a queen from a docile strain.
- Bees must not be handled when other people are gardening in the immediate vicinity.
- The strength of colonies must not be allowed to increase to swarming strength in an unmanaged way.
- The handling of beehive(s) must be done at times when the bees are very active, thus leaving fewer in the beehive.
- The beekeeper must guarantee regular visits to the beehive(s) as safety and security measures; and during the months of April to July, must guarantee visits are no less than once a week; or shall provide a suitably qualified substitute if required.
- The beekeeper must always ensure there is someone else on site in case of emergency when handling bees.
- A source of water must be easily accessible by the bees and put in place before the beehive(s) are established to avoid any congregating around taps or any open water.
- When opening the beehive(s), every care must be taken to ensure that it is not a busy time with other people present and that the weather conditions are favourable (not raining, windy or thundery).
- Signage notification, ie. a "**Beekeeper at work**" sign must be installed in a prominent place while the beekeeper is at work.
- All swarm precautions must be taken; and it must be further noted that swarms do happen sometimes and may also come from other sources.
- **Weatherproof signage with phone numbers to use in case of emergencies must be clearly displayed on a notice board placed in a prominent position.**
- Unused equipment must not be left around to avoid the spread of disease.
- If beekeepers wish to show any interested parties the beehive(s), then additional sets of protective clothing must be made available and all other conditions in the handling of bees (as mentioned above) shall apply.
- Consideration may be given by the beekeepers in arranging an initial session/briefing for fellow allotment tenancy holders to learn about bees, how they plan to operate; and advice on what to do in case of emergencies along with other relevant information.

6. Termination of Agreement

- 6.1 Any approved application shall be subject to a 12-month probationary period, after which time, the Town Council may terminate the agreement at its discretion.
- 6.2 The Town Council reserves the right to terminate the agreement sooner than the probationary period of 12-months should any of the conditional requirements be breached.
- 6.3 In the event of the beekeeper deciding to cease the keeping of honey bees at the allotment site, then it shall be their sole responsibility to remove the beehive(s) and all associated equipment and materials.
- 6.4 In the event of the beekeeper rescinding their allotment tenancy with Horley Town Council, then this agreement with automatically cease and the requirements of 6.3 will apply.

7. Complaint Process

- 7.1 Permission for placing beehive(s) at the allotment sites shall only be considered on receipt of a formal application by the Town Council and will be subject to all the above-mentioned terms and conditions being met. The decision of the Town Council shall be final.
- 7.2 Any subsequent complaints received from tenancy allotment holders or members of the public must be directed to the Council Officer in the first instance and it shall be escalated for investigation, as deemed appropriate.
- 7.3 In the case where, several complaints are received, then the Town Council reserves the right to re-evaluate the appropriateness for the siting of beehives and rescind its permission with reasonable notice.
- 7.4 Any complaints shall be directed in the first instance to:

Chief Executive Officer
Horley Town Council
92 Albert Road, Horley RH6 7HZ
Tel: 01293 784765; Email: info@horleysurrey-tc.gov.uk

This Allotment Policy (Beekeeping Requests) was adopted by Horley Town Council on 5 September 2023 and shall be kept under regular review.

Supplementary Documentation

Appendix 1

Bee Keeping Request at Horley Allotment Sites

Application Form Template

Appendix 2

Bee Keeping Request at Horley Allotment Sites

Allotment Tenancy Holder Questionnaire



Horley Town Council

Allotment Policy (Beekeeping Requests)

Application Form

Application Details

Allotment site *

Your plot number *

Proposed location of beehive(S) *

Allotment Tenancy Consultation

Allotment Tenancy Holders applying to keep beehive(s) on an allotment site must notify neighbouring tenants of their request to keep bees both verbally and with a prominently displayed notice on their plot. Such notices should be displayed for a minimum period of 28 days between April and September and 56 days between November and March, indicating that a request to keep bees has been submitted to Horley Town Council.

Date signage was displayed on site *

Date consultation period ends *

E.g. 28 or 56 days after displaying signage.

Personal Details

Allotment tenant applying for permission to keep bees.

Title *

First name *

Surname *

Contact details

Email address *

Mobile number *

Landline number

Public liability insurance

Name of insurer *

Policy number *

Policy expiry date *

Your Address

Flat

House *

Street *

Town *

County *

Postcode *

Emergency contact details

This is an alternative beekeeper who can be contacted for stand-by arrangements in an emergency.

Title *

First name *

Surname *

Contact details

Email address *

Mobile number *

Landline number

Public liability insurance

Held by your emergency alternative beekeeper.

Name of insurer *

Policy number *

Policy expiry date *

Declaration

I confirm that this application and the supporting information for keeping beehive(s) at a Horley Town Council allotment site is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that failure to meet all requirements as set out in the Allotment Policy (Bee Keeping Requests), may result in any permission granted to be terminated with immediate effect.

In the event of my application being declined, I understand that the Council's decision shall be final.

In the event of my application being accepted, I agree to abide by the conditions as stated for keeping honey bees and to adhere to all the good practice guidelines from

BBKA. I confirm that I have agreed the location of the apiary and displayed the notice for the stated period. I accept that a probationary period of 12 months shall apply. I understand that the Town Council reserves the right to rescind its permission for keeping beehive(s) with reasonable notice, in the event of a complaint being upheld or for any other reason deemed appropriate for making such a decision. I confirmed that this application is made by myself and on behalf of joint tenants (if applicable).

Signed:

Dated:

Appendix 2
Bee Keeping Request at Horley Allotment Sites
Application Form Template

Bee Keeping Request at Horley Allotment Sites

Allotment Tenancy Holder Questionnaire

Dear Allotment Tenancy Holder

Allotment Site: *(Insert name of allotment site)*

A request has been received to site beehive(s) on the above allotment site. The Town Council have agreed in principle that this site could be suitable for such activities. However, before any final approval is granted, it is a requirement that a consultation with all plot holders is undertaken in order to seek your views on the proposal.

Proposal: *(State what you want to do)*

Location plan: *(attach a plan as to where on the site you wish to locate the hives)*

The benefits of Beekeeping:

- This is a very old and traditional hobby.
- Bees produce honey, wax, and collect pollen.
- They provide a valuable pollinating resource for gardeners and wild plants.
- They support local food production and this adds to increasing the quality and flavour.
- Educationally, bees are social insects and, because of the way in which they can be managed in modern hives, their lifestyles can be easily studied. This gives them value in the classroom, and can encourage responsible attitudes to other creatures and the environment generally.
- In an urban environment, bees can be very productive as they are able to forage from a wide range of plants in gardens, parks etc., over a wide "flowering" period. There is an added advantage also, in that they keep to their own natural cycle, largely unaffected by humans - this independence, even in highly managed and controlled urban environment, can be quite inspirational.

Other considerations:

- Allotment tenancy holders who are allergic to bee stings could be susceptible to harm and require medical attention in the event of such occurrence.
- Other factors can annoy bees. They do not like thundery weather. Bees are sensitive to smell because this is how they find their food, so if other plot holders wear aftershave, hairspray or perfume and smell like flower beds, the bees may be attracted to them and become bothersome.

Do you support the proposal to keep beehive(s) on the allotment site?

Yes **No** *(Please circle)*

Please provide any comments you wish to make:

Name: _____ **Plot Number:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

*Thank-you for your co-operation.
Horley Town Council.*