



## Bee Keeping Policy

Date of adoption	Policy & Resources Committee 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 Minute number: 24/09(117b)
Reviewed	
Next Review Date	As required.

## **PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT**

Newton Abbot Town Council recognises that bees can play an important role on an allotment site and within the wider environment. The purpose of this document is to ensure the safety and welfare of allotment users, neighbouring residents and bees.

The policy provides guidance and outlines a beekeeper's responsibilities and liabilities in accordance with keeping bees on any allotment site. This policy should be read in conjunction with [LO15 'Allotment Beekeeping'](#) produced by the British Beekeepers Association.

Beekeepers must be an allotment holder and hold a tenancy agreement with the Council. Allotment tenants are not permitted to profit from the sale of produce on the allotment sites including honey-based products.

## **STAGE 1 – INITIAL CONSIDERATION**

An allotment tenant must submit an initial request for the positioning of a beehive, the suitability of the allotment plot will be determined and agreed by the Council.

Allotment tenants wishing to keep bees must abide by the rules stipulated and must satisfy the Council of their competence as a beekeeper or will undertake appropriate training prior to the siting of any hives.

## **STAGE 2 - RISK ASSESSMENT**

A person keeping bees on an allotment must satisfy the Council that they have made adequate arrangements to ensure that any problems caused by their bees in their absence will be resolved, for example a nominated person must be available in the beekeeper's absence. Up to date contact details of a primary and secondary qualified and insured beekeeper should be made available on the allotment site notice board in case of emergencies.

A risk assessment covering the following points must be provided along with the initial request to keep bees:

- That any risks are identified
- There are actions identified to control any risks identified
- Measures are in place to prevent bees swarming

The tenant is responsible for ensuring the conditions are met on which bees are permitted on allotments.

The beekeeper must:

- Hold a current insurance policy which provides specifically for beekeeping risks and includes public liability insurance cover for a minimum of ten million pounds (£10,000,000). Proof of adequate insurance cover at renewal will be required each year. The Council will retain a copy of the insurance certificate on file.
- Be a member of a Beekeeping Association ([British Beekeepers Association](#)) which may include such insurance cover. Evidence of this membership must be provided on an annual basis and a copy will be kept on file.
- Obtain the BBKA Basic Bee Assessment within 12 months of permission being granted.
- Register ownership and location of the colonies on BeeBase, the website of the Animal & Plant Health Agency's National Bee Unit. Hives must be available for inspection by the NBU/APHA Regional Inspector or a representative of the Council.
- Carry out regular inspections, at least fortnightly during the main beekeeping period from 1 April to 30 September each year, and keep detailed written records of such inspections. These must include examination for the presence of any of the notifiable diseases (American Foul Brood or European Foul Brood) or notifiable pests (Small Hive Beetle or Tropilaeleps).
- Records should also include monitoring of the levels of Varroa mite infestation and the measures taken to reduce these. If these methods include the use of commercial treatments invoices for these and records of their use must be kept for a minimum of five years.

### **STAGE 3 – FORMAL APPROVAL**

Once the requirements of Stage 1 and 2 have been met, the Council will confirm in writing with the allotment holder permission has been granted to place bee hives in the agreed location.

Beekeepers must sign an annual agreement with the Council to abide by the terms of this policy, please see page 6.

Prior to bringing any bee hives onto the allotment site, all required documentation such as insurance details, confirmation of membership to the BBK Association and evidence of required qualifications shall be given to the council for their records.

## **STAGE 4 - OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Bee hives must be carefully placed to be away from footpaths and direct thoroughfares.
- A maximum of **6** hives on an allotment.
- Must keep all hives in a good state of repair, to take good care of the bees and their welfare, to take the necessary precautions to prevent swarms, and deal with them promptly if and when they occur.
- Will bear all costs of running, moving and maintaining the hives etc. and to erect warning notices where necessary.
- Do not place hives in positions from which flight paths impinge on other allotment users or pathways.
- Arrange for hives to be sited in a remote area of the allotment(s) away from other plot holders.
- Reserves the right to ask the Beekeeper to remove the bees, hives, any structures and any rubbish that may have accumulated at any time if they feel that this agreement is not being honored.
- Must keep spare equipment for the management of swarming bees.

### **Limit the number of colonies in any area.**

Ensure that bees are encouraged to rise in excess of 2 meters before leaving the hive to ensure that the flight path is not directly over other plots. This can be achieved by the use of a fine mesh screen of a gauge of less than 10mm. In some locations, it could be appropriate to use hedging or wooden fencing.

The bees should be screened for two reasons, so not to draw attention to them and to create a barrier to ensure the bees fly upward quickly to their normal flight height.

### **Handling of bees**

The beekeeper should as far as they are able ensure that the strain of bees used is gentle, for example by using a queen from a docile strain.

All swarm precautions must be taken. It must be noted that swarms do happen sometimes and may also come from other sources.

Do not handle bees when other people are gardening in the immediate vicinity.

Do not allow the strength of colonies to increase to swarming strength in an unmanaged way.

Handling bees should be done at times when the bees are very active, thus leaving fewer in the hive.

Always ensure there is someone else on site in case of emergency when handling bees.

A source of water should be easily accessible to the bees and be in place before the bees are established. Otherwise, bees may congregate around taps or any open water.

When opening hives every care should be taken to ensure that it is not a busy time (i.e. busy weekend afternoons), and that the weather conditions are favorable (not raining, windy or thundery).

Signage notification, a “Beekeeper at work” sign placed prominently while the beekeeper is working and for around half an hour afterwards.

Phone numbers in case of emergencies must be clearly displayed on the allotment in a prominent position.

Unused equipment should not be left around as it could spread disease.

### **Complaint process**

Initially, any complaints from allotment holders or members of the public should be directed to the Council for consideration. If the Town Clerk or designated officer is unable to deal with the complaint, then it should be referred to the Community & Heritage Committee.

Should the Council receive several complaints it will be necessary for a re-evaluation of the appropriateness of the siting of bee hives. The Council may withdraw permission by issue of 14 days’ notice for the removal of the hives.

### **Withdrawal of Consent**

The Council may withdraw permission, giving 14 days’ notice to remove hives if:

- The beekeeper contravenes any condition set out above.
- The beekeeper contravenes any condition of the allotment tenancy agreement.
- Substantiated information regarding unsatisfactory consequences of the beekeeping activity is received that requires a review of the arrangements.

Any costs resulting from withdrawal of consent shall be borne by the beekeeper/allotment tenant.



# APPLICATION FORM FOR SITING OF BEES ON AN ALLOTMENT SITE

Please ensure you have read the Beekeeping Policy and leaflet LO15 from the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) prior to making this application.

## PERSONAL DETAILS

Name of Applicant (Beekeeper)	
Allotment Site	
Plot Number	
Home address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Bee Keeping Association of which you are a member and hold valid Public Liability Insurance	
I confirm that I consent to my details being held by Newton Abbot Town Council for the purposes of Bee Keeping and that I have read and will abide by the Bee Keeping Policy.	
Signed: _____ Dated: _____	

## ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EVENT OF THE BEE KEEPER BEING ABSENT

Name of relief Beekeeper	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email address	
Bee Keeping Association of which you are a member and hold valid Public Liability Insurance	
I confirm that I consent to my details being held by Newton Abbot Town Council for the purposes of being the relief Bee-Keeper in the event of the applicant being unavailable or away.	
Signed: _____ Dated: _____	

### Checklist:

- I have read the Bee Keeping Policy and LO15 Leaflet from the BBKA
- I have completed and attached a Risk Assessment
- I have attached a copy of the Public Liability Insurance for the Bee Keeping and Relief Bee-Keeper.

### Internal Use Only:

Date Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_

RA  PLBK  PLRBK

Date considered by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome: \_



# ANNUAL BEE KEEPING AGREEMENT

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name of Applicant (Beekeeper)	
Allotment Site	
Plot Number	
Number of Hives (maximum 6)	
Agreement Commencement date	
Bee Keeping Association of which you are a member and hold valid Public Liability Insurance	
<p>I hereby agree to abide by the terms and conditions as laid out in the Council's Bee Keeping Policy in relation to the keeping of bees on an allotment site. I understand the Council may withdraw permission, giving 14 days' notice to remove hives if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The beekeeper contravenes any condition of the Bee Keeping Policy/Agreement.</li><li>• The beekeeper contravenes any condition of the allotment tenancy agreement.</li><li>• Substantiated information regarding unsatisfactory consequences of the beekeeping activity is received that requires a review of the arrangements.</li></ul> <p>Any costs resulting from withdrawal of consent shall be borne by the beekeeper/allotment tenant</p> <p>Signed: _____ Dated: _____</p>	
ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EVENT OF THE BEEKEEPER BEING ABSENT	
Name of relief Beekeeper	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email address	
Bee Keeping Association of which you are a member and hold valid Public Liability Insurance	
<p>I confirm that I consent to my details being held by Newton Abbot Town Council for the purposes of being the relief Bee-Keeper in the event of the Keeper being unavailable or away.</p> <p>Signed: _____ Dated: _____</p>	
<b>Internal Office Use Only:</b> Date _____ Authorised on behalf of Newton Abbot Town Council by _____	