



Brixham Town Council

Bee Keeping Policy

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Next Review Date	
Written by	Ross Green, Deputy Town Clerk

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

Brixham Town Council (the council) recognises that bees can play an important part of the allotment site, if well managed. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to prospective beekeepers who wish to place bee hives on the council's allotment sites. It sets out the process to follow and the actions that have to be taken prior to formal approval being given by council officers.

STAGE 1 – INITIAL CONSIDERATION

This document should be read in conjunction with the document LO15 'Allotment Beekeeping' produced by the British Beekeepers Association via the link below:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=2c573b2e-8657-4ac3-bb96-835dd8eb7f2f>

In order that the initial request for the positioning of a bee hive can be progressed, the suitability of the allotment plot has to be determined and agreed by the council in the first instance, before the process can continue.

Any person wishing to keep bees must abide by any rules stipulated and must satisfy council officers of their competence or that they have arranged adequate supervision, or will undertake appropriate training.

Allotment tenants are not permitted to profit from the sale of produce on the allotment sites including honey based products.

STAGE 2 – CONSULTATION AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

CONSULTATION PROCESS

All allotment holders on the site must be consulted as to their views on siting a hive on the site. Due to the number of allotment holders that need to be consulted this will take place by email and notices on the allotment notice board.

If any major concerns have been raised it must be considered as to how these will be addressed.

RISK ASSESSMENT

A person keeping bees on an allotment must satisfy council officers 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 bee keeper'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:

- Make sure all eventualities are covered
- That any risks are identified
- There are actions identified to control any risks identified
- Measures are in place to prevent bees swarming

Council officers will be responsible for ensuring the conditions are met on which bees are permitted on allotments.

The council requires that a person wanting to keep bees on an allotment will:-

- 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.
- Be a member of a Beekeeping Association (BBKA) 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.
- Have a recognised qualification such as the BBKA Basic Assessment and be reasonably competent.
- Hives must be registered and available for inspection by the Regional Bee Inspector.

STAGE 3 – FORMAL APPROVAL

Once the requirements of Stage 1 and 2 have been met, the council will confirm in writing that the allotment holder/beekeeper has been granted permission to place bee hives on site.

To qualify, beekeepers, must be an allotment holder and hold a tenancy agreement with the council.

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

Siting of bee hives.

- Bee hives must be carefully placed to be away from footpaths and direct thoroughfares.
- No more than 3 hives should be grouped together.
- 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.

Limit the number of colonies in any area.

Ensure that bees are encouraged to rise in excess of 2 metres 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 favourable (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 after will ensure that no one walks too near unless they want to.

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.

If beekeepers are happy to show any interested parties the hives then additional sets of protective clothing should be made available.

Education

Consideration should be given to arranging an initial session/briefing for fellow allotment holders to learn and be educated about the bees, how the beekeepers are planning to operate and advice on what to do in case of an emergency.

Once established, there could be further opportunities to extend the education process with the neighbouring schools, either by way of talks, site visits and honey tasting etc subject to the necessary precautions and completed risk assessment.

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 is unable to deal with the complaint then it should be referred to the Community and Environment Committee.

Should the council receive several complaints it will be necessary for a re-evaluation of the appropriateness of the siting of bee hives on the particular site. 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.

CONSULTATION EMAIL AND POSTER WORDING

Dear Plot Holder

Allotment Site: (insert name of Allotment site)

A request has been received to site a small number of bee hives on the allotment site [plot]. The council has agreed in principle that this site could be suitable for such activities. However, before any final approval is granted it is a requirement that consultation with all plot holders is undertaken in order to seek your views on the proposal.

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 their study value in the classroom which 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.

Should you have any concerns or require any additional information regarding the proposed location of these hives please respond by [date].