



Brixham Town Council

Policy for Keeping Hens on Allotments

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Reviewed	July 2024
Next Review Date	
Written by	Ross Green, Deputy Town Clerk

1. Introduction

1.1 Allotment tenants may keep hens on allotments, but not cockerels, as under the Allotments Act 1950. This is on the condition that they are not *'kept in such a place or in such a manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance'*.

2. Registration and Inspection

2.1 Tenants are required to make an application to Brixham Town Council (the council) to keep hens on their allotment plot. Details of the number of hens and the size and location of the hen house and outdoor run must be given. The tenant must provide full contact details for someone that will care for your hens in your absence.

2.2 Tenants are responsible for their hens' welfare and must ensure they do not cause a nuisance. Please see clause 10c of your allotment garden tenancy agreement.

2.3 The granting of permission is dependent on the council's conditions being met and guidelines followed.

2.4 Representatives of the council have the right to inspect the hens at any time. If the council has cause to investigate complaints of maltreatment any costs incurred will be passed to the tenant for payment.

2.5 The tenants' allotment garden tenancy agreement will be terminated in the instance of failure to adhere to these guidelines and thus in breaching their tenancy agreement.

3. Animal Husbandry

3.1 Housing - General

3.1.1 Housing is important in ensuring the welfare of hens and should allow expression of natural behaviours.

3.1.2 Both the hen house and outdoor run must be regularly maintained to a good, tidy standard and free from obvious faults that may cause injury.

3.1.3 The structures must be sited a minimum of three metres from adjacent boundaries abutting residential properties to minimise potential nuisance.

3.2 Housing – Hen House

3.2.1 A fully enclosed shelter providing a minimum size of two square feet (0.2 m²) per hen is required. The optimum permitted size will be 4ft x 3ft. The maximum permitted size of building structure on an allotment is 8ft x 6ft and only one structure is permitted per allotment plot.

3.2.2 The fully enclosed shelter must provide the following:

- Protection from predators
- Clean, dry bedding material to absorb moisture and odour (e.g. wood shavings or straw).
- Warmth during colder months or shade during the summer. As a general guide, the aim should be to achieve a temperature range of 10 degrees C – 20 degrees C.
- Be draught free but have adequate ventilation
- Perches for sleeping – approximately 305 cm wide with rounded corners to enable the hens to grip
- Nest boxes for laying eggs

3.3 Outdoor run

3.3.1 Fully enclosed caged run that provides a minimum size of four square feet (0.4m²) per hen, providing the hens with plenty of space to dig, dust themselves and flap their wings. The optimum size is 6ft x 8ft.

3.3.2 There should be an additional means of overhead shelter e.g. shrubs to provide hens from protection from direct sunlight, strong wind and driving rain.

3.3.3 The structure must be allowed periods of rest to allow the ground to recover.

3.3.4 The total area of the hen house and run should not exceed more than 10% of the total allotment plot area although the maximum permitted size will be 10ft x 12ft.

3.4 Food and Water

3.4.1 Hens should have continual and plentiful access to cool, clean and fresh water, feed appropriate to the age and species of the hen and in sufficient quantities as well as insoluble grit to aid digestion.

3.4.2 Food stuffs must be stored so they are kept clean, tidy and properly protected from rodents and other pests.

3.5 Health and Welfare

3.5.1 The allotment tenant is responsible for ensuring that their hens are free from distress, pain, injury and disease.

3.6 Prevention and/or Veterinary Treatment

3.6.1 Hens must be vaccinated prior to arrival or at six weeks old.

3.6.2 Hens will need regular worming (twice a year) and clipping of claws, nails to maintain them in a good healthy condition.

3.6.3 Hens must be checked regularly for lice and the houses treated for Red Mite.

3.6.4 Any serious health or long-standing or contagious problems must be reported to the council immediately as well as details on the treatment being received and notification when the problem has cleared.

3.7 Sanitation

3.7.1 The hen house and run should be cleaned a minimum of once a week or more frequently as necessary.

3.7.2 Tenants are responsible for the removal of all arisings from the site. Soiled bedding must not be composted anywhere on the allotment site. Any deceased hens should be immediately removed from the allotment site.

4. Livestock Numbers

4.1 Poultry need companionship and should be kept in groups of two or more

4.2 The maximum number of hens permitted per allotment tenant will be six

5. Nuisance to Neighbours and Cleanliness

5.1 Provided the above guidelines on housing, food and water and health are followed, hens should not become a nuisance to others.

6. Breeding and Profit

6.1 Allotment tenants are not permitted to breed hens on the allotment site nor profit from the sale of produce.

7. Withdrawal of Consent

7.1 The Council may withdraw permission, giving 14 days' notice to remove hens if:

- The allotment holder contravenes any condition set out above
- The allotment holder contravenes any condition of the allotment tenancy agreement
- Substantiated information, regarding unsatisfactory consequences of the keeping hens is received that requires a review of the arrangements

Any costs resulting from the withdrawal of consent shall be borne by the allotment holder.