

Leigh Town Council Policy for Keeping Bees on Allotment Sites

This policy follows the best practice guidelines from National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) & the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA).

Leigh Town Council **RESOLVED** at an Environment & Leisure Committee Meeting 21st February 2017 Minute 68 that bee hives are only to be sited on the designated wildlife areas under the control of the Allotment Societies and not individual plots.

Representatives appointed by Leigh Town Council members have the right to arrange an inspection of the site if they have cause to investigate complaints of poor management or neglect of the hives/apiary site. Any costs for official inspections or as a result from mis-management or neglect causing swarms or the need to destroy colonies for removal will be for the Associations to settle.

1. CONDITIONS

- A beekeeper must be a member of the relevant Allotment Society where the hive(s) they are responsible for is(are) situated or be the allocated beekeeper for the Allotment Societies hives.
- Telephone numbers of all beekeepers should be prominently displayed on the Allotment Society notice boards and by the designated hive site and beekeepers are to make a First Aid kit available.
- Beekeepers must be a member of Southend Division of the Essex Beekeepers who are affiliated to the BBKA, membership of which provides public and product liability insurance. Proof of membership and insurance must be produced each year to the appropriate Allotment Society committee.
- Beekeepers must have a recognised qualification with the BBKA, undertaking at least a Beekeeping for Beginners course or higher and/or warrant that they have at least one year's experience of keeping bees with an experienced mentor to assist and support them. A copy of the qualification certificate must be supplied to the Allotment society and the Council. Further, the beekeeper warrants that they will exercise the appropriate skill and care in managing their colonies
- No hive shall be kept on the designated wildlife area without the prior consent of Leigh Town Council and the appropriate Allotment Society.

2. MANAGEMENT

- The beekeeper may have no more than one permanent hive, plus one temporary hive, for the purposes of swarm control, if needed, throughout the calendar year.
- A source of easily accessible water must always be provided for the bees and be in place before the bees are established. This source must be maintained and not allowed to run dry.
- An individual keeping bees on a designated wildlife area must ensure that for any period of (prolonged) absence, adequate arrangements are in place prior to absence to ensure their colonies are still managed and any problems swiftly dealt with. Contact numbers of alternative nominated persons are to be provided to the Allotment representatives and Leigh Town Council.
- There are effective methods of swarm control and the beekeeper should practise these, carrying out a regular inspection at least once a week during the swarming season.
- The hives must be registered with BeeBase and open to inspection by the Regional Bee Inspector.
- The beekeeper should, as far as they are able, ensure that the colony of bees has a docile temperament when considered against an average colony of bees. Should the colony display overt aggressive tendencies such as excessive stinging, excessive defensiveness or 'following', the beekeeper must take suitable remedial action to calm the colony (which may include re-queening or ultimately destruction).

- Every effort should be made to inspect colonies at quieter times, when there are less people in the immediate vicinity of the colony/ies, however, the beekeeper shall always be mindful not to cause inconvenience to others who are working in the immediate vicinity and if necessary advise those persons around that inspections will be taking place and for roughly how long.
- Signs (as many as are reasonably needed) “Beekeeper at work” should be placed prominently while the beekeeper is working, and for around half an hour after, to ensure that no one accidentally walks too near.
- Ensure that bees are encouraged to rise at least 6 feet before leaving the plot by the use of screening, which could be natural hedging, wooden fencing or fine plastic/wire mesh screening. The screening also serves to avoid drawing the attention of potential vandals to the hives.

Failure to abide by the conditions of this agreement may result in the removal of the hive(s) from the allotment site.