



---

## Purpose

To outline the conditions and procedure for permission for keeping honey bees on Swillington Village Council allotment sites.

Any tenant wishing to keep honey bees must obtain the permission of the Council and are subject to the conditions detailed below. It should be noted that not every plot on every site will be in a suitable location for beekeeping and able to provide adequate screening and distance from fellow plotholders.

## Siting of Hives

- Hives will only be allowed on individual plots that are sited a suitable distance from any public road or path, or jointly used road or path within the allotment site and have been inspected and approved by an experienced beekeeper.
- In line with British Beekeepers Association guidance, hives are not permitted if an allotment site is adjacent to a school or livestock holdings.
- In line with British Beekeepers Association guidance, the hive(s) on individual plots should be so sited that only the beekeeper can approach it or them. Bees operate on instinct, individual and shared. Hives should only be approached by a trained beekeeper.
- The plot where the hives are to be situated must have simple screening, such as is used for windbreaks, of fine mesh netting, dust screening, willow, hazel or maintained hedges of a minimum 2m height to encourage the bees to fly high over neighbouring plots.
- The number of hives on the site in total will be monitored and restricted to prevent over population of any one site.
- The Council should be informed in advance if the beekeeper increases the number of hives. The total may not exceed the permitted maximum number of hives.
- If the number of hives increases due to splitting in order to control swarming, this should be a temporary arrangement if it exceeds the permitted maximum, with the number of hives reduced to the permitted maximum by at the latest the end of summer.

The first stage prior to approval is essential to identify a suitable location. This should ideally be with an open aspect and with the entrance facing south-east, and shelter from north-easterly wind.

## Consultation

Tenants applying to keep honey bees should notify neighbouring tenants of their request to keep honey bees on their plot both verbally and by 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 Swillington Village Council.

## **Consent**

The beekeeper owes a duty of care to:

- The public in the vicinity of the hives
- Other allotment gardeners working nearby
- Intruders (even if it is clear their intention was to disturb the colony)

The beekeeper must display a sign on their designated apiary area, stating honey bees are located there.

The Council should ensure that members of the public applying for or joining an allotment with hives are notified at the earliest opportunity.

## **Standby Arrangements**

The beekeeper must provide the Council Clerk with details (name, address, telephone number and mobile telephone number) of adequate standby arrangements to deal with emergencies such as swarming during any absence or unavailability of the beekeeper.

On no account should any person other than an experienced beekeeper try to take a swarm, whether the swarmed bees are placid or not.

## **Inspection**

Hives will be inspected annually by a member of the Council as part of the annual plot inspections.

## **Complaints**

The Council will investigate any complaints, in particular those with health and nuisance elements and in consequence may subsequently withdraw the permission via issue of 30 days notice for the removal of hives.

## **Insurance, Membership, Training and Registration**

The beekeeper is required to hold a current insurance policy which provides specifically for beekeeping risks and includes public liability insurance cover for a minimum of five million pounds (£5,000,000). Proof of adequate insurance cover at renewal will be required each year.

We require potential beekeepers to become members of the British Beekeepers Association. The beekeeper must annually provide the Council with copies of proof of their current membership.

You must have completed the Basic Beekeeping Course and gained the Basic Certificate.

The beekeeper is required to register all hives with the National Bee Unit's 'Beebase' (part of DEFRA). If a beekeeper suspects their honey bees have Notifiable Brood Diseases such as AFB/EFB they should report the issue immediately to Swillington Village Council and the National Bee Unit (NBU) to arrange for an inspector to assess the honey bees.

If the diseased bees are to be disposed of, advice should be taken from the NBU on appropriate disposal methods. NBU inspectors will supervise the destruction of bees and hives in the case of American Foulbrood (AFB) and if need be for European Foulbrood (EFB), and as needed in the case of important pests.

## Sale of Honey

The beekeeper will not display notices that honey is available for sale on the allotment site or plot. A modest amount of honey-related product sales may take place at Allotment fundraising/community engagement events/activities with the Council's permission.

## Withdrawal of Consent

Swillington Village Council may withdraw permission at any time by giving 30 days notice to remove hives if:

- The permit holder contravenes any of the above conditions.
- The permit holder contravenes any of the conditions within the Allotment Tenancy Agreement or any separate Swillington Village Council tenancy rules.
- Substantiated information is received that requires a review of the arrangements.
- A new allotment tenant takes a nearby plot then provides medical evidence that they are allergic to honey bee stings. However, we would expect any new tenant to be made aware of the hives before they accept the tenancy of a plot and if possible, an alternative plot offered on an alternative site that does not have beekeeping.
- Any costs resulting from withdrawal of consent shall be borne by the tenant.
- If an allotment tenancy no longer keeps tenancy of an allotment plot, then he or she will no longer be permitted to keep bees.

*Date of policy: May 2024*

*Approving committee: Full Council*

*Date of meeting: 07/05/2024*

*Policy version reference: Version 1*

*Policy effective from: 07/05/2024*

*Date for next review: As necessary*



Allotments: Bees

Appendix 1: Agreement for Keeping Honey Bees

---

I hereby accept and agree to abide by the additional Conditions of Tenancy for the keeping of honey bees.

I confirm that I have consulted with a local beekeeping association regarding the location of the hives and prepared a site plan for the plot.

I confirm that I have displayed the notice for the agreed period.

I agree to adhere to all the good practice guidelines from the British Beekeeping Association.

**Name**

**Signature**

**Date**

Allotment site & plot number bees are to be kept on	
Contact number	
Date signage was displayed on site	
Date when signage consultation period ends	
Name of insurer, policy number and policy expiry date	

EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EVIDENCE ATTACHED
Copy of beekeeping public liability insurance certificate	
BBKA membership number	
BBKA Basic Beekeeping Course certificate	
Contact details of standby alternative beekeeper to be contacted in an emergency	
Site location plan	