

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

RULES FOR THE KEEPING POULTRY

Interpretation:

Throughout these Rules "The Council" means Axminster Town Council.

Guidelines for keeping poultry at the Axminster allotment sites

Minimum requirements checklist. Current as from 01.04.2008

- a. Coop floor area minimum size = 5sq foot. All runs to be fixed.
- b. Minimum run area = 30 square foot.
- c. On site food storage will be in lidded metal containers in a secure construction.
- d. House and run to be secure from escapees and predation. This includes above the area.
- e. House to contain a minimum of one nesting area per 3 birds.
- f. House to have a minimum wall thickness of 12mm/half inch and be suitably constructed to permit easy access for cleaning.
- g. Suitable feed and water dishes to be present and cleaned daily.
- h. Bedding to be of a suitable material and kept in a clean condition.
- i. Poultry waste to be cleared and either placed in compost bin, dug in or removed in a timely manner. (Advisory: compost bin is recommended as the waste is high in ammonia and potash so makes a good activator).
- j. Area to have a suitable shaded and sheltered zone for inclement or hot weather.
- k. As the water supply at all allotment sites is liable turned off between 1st Nov & 31st March and in the summer months if there is a drought, poultry keepers should bring a supply of fresh water to the allotment site for their birds at these times.

Things to consider before keeping poultry.

- i) Rescue Birds-it is not recommended that ex-battery hens are placed on the allotment immediately from the rescue. The plots are too exposed given the condition of the birds previously used to a battery regime.
- ii) Chicks - keeping poultry from chicks is a good way of encouraging "tame" birds, however, please ensure birds are sexed. Should birds turn out to be male, and this can happen, the birds will have to be removed from the site.
- iii) Vaccinations/sickness - Poultry can suffer from a range of ailments, some notifiable on this to DEFRA. We can only recommend reading as much as possible on this topic.
- iv) The ultimate responsibility for the birds lies with the tenant, the council shall accept no responsibility for loss or damage to the animals or enclosure.

Keeping poultry can be a major commitment in terms of time. The birds need to be let out in the morning, fed and put away again at night, all year round. Similarly the house and run need to be cleaned periodically and maintained.

Holidays are only possible if you can find an appropriate carer to "hen-sit" for you. Then there are your neighbours to consider, whilst a rooster is the main noise producer hens also "sing" to announce the laying of an egg!

It is advisable to read as much info as you can before considering whether keeping poultry is for you. There is a wealth of information both in print and on the web, there is no one "right way", there are many!.

No dogs or livestock may be kept on any site with the exception of those specified under the Allotment Act 1950 (rabbits and hens).

The Council's nominated Poultry Welfare Officer will monitor the following rules and guidelines :

Hens: These will be subject to the following provisions.

- i. No rooster or cockerel shall be kept on the allotment site.
- ii. A maximum limit of 5 bantams or 3 full size hens per square metre of run can be kept. This may be reduced subject to point (iii).
- iii. Permission shall be sought from the amenities committee, in writing, who will review the request at the following committee meeting. Applicants shall receive a copy of the guidelines for keeping poultry on the allotment site and they shall notify the committee when the preparations are complete so that a site inspection can be arranged. No poultry are to be brought onto the site until the committee has approved the arrangements in writing. They shall consider housing,

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- space, security, welfare of the birds, and any possible disruption to neighbours plots. This may lead to a limit less than the maximum or requested number or even outright refusal. The committee shall state reasons for such an action. See minimum requirements checklist.
- iv. The tenants are responsible for the welfare of the poultry at all times. They may appoint an agent who, in the tenants absence, is likewise responsible. Both the tenants and the agents telephone numbers must be lodged with the Town Clerk so that any welfare concerns can be dealt with immediately.
 - v. Should the situation arise that the welfare of the birds is causing concern, and the tenant or agent is unavailable, the RSPCA will be called. Should they consider that the birds are being mistreated then the tenant shall automatically lose the right to keep poultry on the site.
 - vi. If at any time the committee feels that the conditions in section (iii) are not being adhered to, then the committee may serve notice on the tenant of 28 days to remedy the situation. After this period the committee may request that the birds are removed from the allotments site.
 - vii. The overall condition of the plot will be taken into consideration with regard to all rules at the time of the inspection.
 - viii. Whilst these rules and guidelines are to set out the conditions under which poultry may be kept at the allotment site, the Committee and Council accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to the birds or enclosure whatsoever or any loss/damage said birds may cause.
 - ix. The guidelines may be reviewed and amended at any time, poultry keepers will be notified of any changes and shall be given 28 days to comply.
 - x. At the termination of the tenancy any structure relating to the keeping of poultry must be removed from the plot at the tenant's expense and the plot turned over ready for cultivation by an incoming tenant.

RULES FOR THE KEEPING OF BEES

No tenant may keep bees on any allotment site without having passed the B.B.K.A. Basic Beekeeping Exam and having current membership of the local Beekeepers' Association.