

Street & District Allotments Association



3. Keeping hens

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Keeping hens

Rule 14 of the Association states:

“The keeping of hens for non-business purposes is permitted to a maximum of 5 hens per allotment. Cock birds are not permitted. The agreement of the Committee is required before acquiring hens – terms and conditions apply (see separate leaflet) (*i.e. this leaflet*). The correct housekeeping for all live stock must be observed. **The allotment holder is totally responsible for the welfare of their birds.**”

This leaflet lays out the MINIMUM requirements of the Association BEFORE consent will be granted. It is NOT a definitive account of best practice nor of statutory regulations pertaining to the keeping of hens; in this regard allotment holders need to fully inform themselves. There are many sources of relevant & useful information e.g.

www.keeping-chickens.me.uk

www.omlet.co.uk/guide/chickens

www.bhwt.org.uk (the British Hen Welfare Trust)

N.B. This list does not constitute a recommendation by the Association or its Committee. These sources of information are listed purely as examples of the many that are available.

S&DAA requirements BEFORE consent will be granted.

ALL of the following points MUST be addressed:

Registration with DEFRA – the allotment holder MUST register with DEFRA as a keeper of less the 50 birds (form IRA82). Evidence of your registration is required before consent will be granted. Go to:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-including-game-birds-registration-rules-and-forms>

General:

The welfare of the hens is paramount and the housing MUST allow expression of natural behaviours.

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

The structure must be sited a minimum of 3 meters from adjacent boundaries abutting residential properties to minimize potential nuisance. Only one structure is permitted per allotment plot.

It must be understood that ALL the following conditions are to be in place, demonstrated to, and approved by, the inspecting committee member BEFORE any hens are introduced. It will not be adequate to simply say what you intend to do.

The hen house must:

- Be a fully enclosed shelter providing a minimum size of 2 square feet (0.2m²) per hen, thus the minimum size of house for 5 hens will be in the region of 4ft by 3ft.
- Provide protection from predators.
- Provide clean dry bedding material to absorb moisture and odour (e.g. wood shavings or straw).
- Provide warmth during colder months or shade during summer.

- Be draught free but have adequate ventilation.
- Provide perches for sleeping, approx 3cm to 5cm wide with a rounded profile to enable the birds to grip.
- Provide nest boxes for laying eggs.

The outdoor run must meet the following specifications:

It must be a fully enclosed caged run (i.e. wire mesh on the base too) that provides at least a minimum size of 4 square feet (0.4m²) per hen, providing the hens with plenty of space to dig, dust themselves and flap their wings. A better size for 5 birds is 6ft x 8ft giving approx 10 sq ft per bird.

There must be some additional means of overhead shelter e.g. shrubs or tarpaulin to provide the hens with protection from direct sunlight, strong wind and driving rain. There must also be means to keep wild birds out at times of bird flu epidemics.

From time to time, at the request of the Association's Hen Officer, the structure should be moved to allow the ground to recover. (This has the added benefit of making the best use of the chicken manure and is a prudent measure against the risk of disease.)

Food & Water:

Hens MUST be visited at least once in each 24hr period to be fed, watered and checked daily.

Hens must have continuous and plentiful access to cool, clean and fresh water.

Their feed must be appropriate to the age and species of hen and in sufficient quantities.

They must be provided with insoluble grit or equivalent in their food to aid digestion.

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

Plot holders are also reminded of Rule 15 of the Association which is of relevance here and which states: "**Rats and vermin** are always a problem near chicken houses, please take precautions to avoid infestations. Should you have a problem with rats the Committee should be consulted. Please do not leave it until we receive a complaint from neighbouring homes."

Treatment of disease, pest or injury:

The welfare of the hens is paramount. The plot holder must familiarise themselves with the signs of disease, pest or injury that a hen may suffer, check their birds regularly for such signs and treat so affected hens as recommended by an authoritative source such as those mentioned above.

Complaints / failure to observe the required standards:

Complaints from other allotment holders or members of the public about the conditions to which the hens are being kept and/or failure to observe the required standards of care may result in permission to keep hens being reconsidered. Any and all remedial action stipulated by the committee must be carried out by the plot holder in a timely manner otherwise consent will be withdrawn and the birds must be removed from the allotments.

Plot holders should be aware that in its consideration of any complaint or concern the Committee may refer to recognised guidance of best practice outside the minimum standard laid down in this leaflet.

The committee is the ultimate authority on this matter and its judgement is final.



Contact Information

Hen Officer (Committee member responsible for chicken related matters):

Ian Crafer (Plot 41 Farm Lane)

07784 943893, iancrafer@msn.com

Officers of the Committee 2023:

Chairman: Nina Swift, (Plot 12 Strode Rd)
01458 443881 / 07564 289334

Treasurer: Richard Coles, (Plot 9 Strode Rd)
01458 448569 / 07733 128195

Secretary & Membership: Julie Hillman,
(Plots 9B & 10A Brooks Rd) 01458 446643

You will find up to date contact details for the Committee Officers & your Site Representatives on your site notice board, our website & facebook page.

Also on the website you will find a copy of our Constitution, Tenancy Agreement, Rules, H&S Risk Assessments and Minutes of Committee meetings.

www.streetallotments.co.uk
www.facebook.com/streetallotments
street.allotments@gmail.com

Please retain for future reference (issued Mar 2023)