**ALLOTMENTS AT HILL RISE**

**GUIDE FOR BEEKEEPING ON ALLOTMENT PLOTS**

**PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT**.

St Ives Town Council recognises that bees can be an important part of the allotment site, if well managed. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to prospective beekeepers who wish to place bees on Hill Rise and The Meadow allotment sites and the rules that must be adhered to. It sets out the process to follow and the actions that have to be taken prior to formal approval being given by the Amenities Committee.

**STAGE 1 - INITIAL CONSIDERATION**.

Any person wishing to keep bees on allotments on either Hill Rise or The Meadow allotment sites should first speak to the Town Clerk who will issue them with a copy of this document for initial consideration and guidance.

This document should be read in conjunction with the document LO15 'Allotment Beekeeping' Dec 2011 produced by the British Beekeepers Association.

In order that the initial request for the positioning of a bee hive can be progressed, the suitability of the allotment plot has to be determined and agreed by both the Ground Maintenance Supervisor and the Town Clerk in the first instance, before the process can continue.

Any person wishing to keep bees must undertake to abide by any rules stipulated and must satisfy the Town Clerk of their competence or that they have arranged adequate supervision, or will undertake appropriate training.

**STAGE 2 – CONSULTATION AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Once the site suitability has been determined in principle, it will be necessary to satisfy the requirements detailed in stage 2 in order that the proposals can be formally approved by the Amenities Committee.

**CONSULTING PROCESS**.

All plot holders on the site must be consulted as to their views on siting a hive on the plot. Due to the number of plot holders that need to be consulted this will take place by email and notices on the site notice board. A sample of the wording that will be used is included at the end of this document. If no response is received it will be considered that they are in agreement with the proposal. At least 75% of plot holders should be in agreement and records should be kept of any replies received/concerns raised.

Provided the majority of consultees have no objections, hives can be placed on the plot subject to the requirements within the Bee Keeping Policy being met. However, if any major concerns have been raised it must be considered as to how these will be addressed.

The allotments legislation is specific in that plot holders cannot trade on an allotment site for profit. (Small Holdings and Allotment Act 1908 Section 22), as the prime use is for an allotment holder to provide food for their immediate family. However, it makes provision for limited sale of surplus produce – provided that the allotment is mainly cultivated for consumption by the plot holder and their family there is no legal constraint on selling surplus produce, and any proceeds should be reinvested in running and developing the site.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

A risk assessment covering the following points must be provided along with the initial request to keep bees.

* Make sure all eventualities are covered.
* That any risks are identified
* There are actions identified to control any risks identified.
* Measures are in place to prevent bees swarming.

A person keeping bees on an allotment must satisfy the Town Clerk that they have made adequate arrangements to ensure that any problems caused by their bees in their absence will be resolved, for example a nominated person that can step in in the beekeeper's absence. Up to date contact details of a primary and secondary qualified and insured beekeeper should be made available on the Allotment plot in case of emergencies.

The Ground Maintenance Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring the conditions are met on which bees are permitted on allotments.

The Amenities Committee requires that a person wanting to keep bees on an allotment will:-

* be a member of the local Beekeeping Association. Membership of a Beekeeping Association provides members with third party / public liability insurance through their affiliation to the British Beekeepers' Association. The BBKA also offers support and advice for beekeepers. Evidence of this membership must be provided on an annual basis and a copy will be kept on file.
* have a recognised qualification such as the BBKA Basic Assessment and be reasonably competent.
* ensure the hives are registered and available for inspection by the Regional Bee Inspector.
* have insurance cover. It should be considered that all allotment sites have restricted public access and unforeseen incidents can happen. It is recommended that the level of cover is £10 million public liability, and that beekeepers must provide evidence of such on an annual basis and a copy will be kept on file.

**STAGE 3 – FORMAL APPROVAL**

Once the requirements of Stage 1 and 2 have been met, the Town Clerk will confirm in writing that the plot holder/beekeeper has been granted permission to place bee hives on site.

The beekeepers, if not already, should become a plot holder and receive a tenancy agreement.

Prior to bringing any bee hives onto the Allotment site, all required documentation such as insurance details, confirmation of membership to the BBK Association and evidence of required qualifications shall be given to the Town Clerk for their records.

**CONSULTATION EMAIL AND POSTER WORDING**

Dear Plot Holder

A request has been received to site bee hives on the plot number [---] of the [Hill Rise/Meadow] allotment site. The Amenities Committee has agreed in principle that this site could be suitable for such activities. However, before any final approval is granted it is a requirement that consultation with all plot holders is undertaken in order to seek your views on the proposal.

Should you have any concerns or require any additional information regarding the proposed location of these hives please respond by [date]. Should no response be received from you it will be assumed you are in agreement and happy for approval to be granted.

The benefits of Bee keeping:

* This is a very old and traditional hobby.
* Bees produce honey, wax, and collect pollen.
* They provide a valuable pollinating resource for gardeners and wild plants.
* They support local food production and this adds to increasing the quality and flavour.
* Educationally: bees are social insects and, because of the way in which they can be managed in modern hives, their lifestyles can be easily studied. This gives them value in the classroom, and can encourage responsible attitudes to other creatures and the environment generally.
* In an urban environment, bees can be very productive as they are able to forage from a wide range of plants in gardens, parks etc., over a wide "flowering" period. There is an added advantage also, in that they keep to their own natural cycle, largely unaffected by humans - this independence, even in highly managed and controlled urban environment, can be quite inspirational.