



## **LISS PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Keeping Hens on Allotments Policy**

Any person keeping hens on a LPC allotment must be an allotment tenant and is bound by the conditions of the allotment tenancy, all relevant laws in force, and the terms and conditions contained within this policy. Plot holders must request written permission to become a keeper of hens by contacting the Clerk (see application form at Annex 1). Hens shall be kept on no more than 20% of plots at any one allotment site at a time to avoid problems with pests and disease.

The hen keeper accepts that:

- They must incur all costs and expenses for the keeping of hens on their plot
- Hens kept on plots must not be kept for any business or profit.
- The plot must be mainly used for growing purposes.
- A minimum of 3 (for socialisation purposes) and maximum of 6 hens should be kept per plot (due to concerns about vermin and DEFRA advice).
- Hens must be purchased from a reputable source that vaccinates them to stop infections.
- Cockerels, and other animals are not permitted at any time.
- The structure to house hens shall not be used for any other purpose.
- All hens are subject to strict welfare codes enforced by the RSPCA and DEFRA and covered by the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- Birds are registered via the [Great Britain Poultry Register](#)

Any keeper of hens on LPC allotments must take the following appropriate and practicable steps, that can be demonstrated to an inspector on request. An inspection may be carried out at any time with reasonable notice. Should there be reasonable suspicion that hen welfare is being put at risk, or that legal requirements are not being met, then an inspection may take place without notice. Failure to keep any hens in safe and secure conditions without adequate food and/or water will result in the loss of tenancy.

#### **Provision of a suitable secure environment**

Hens are not permitted to roam free on the allotment site. There must not be any direct contact with birds kept on neighbouring plots. The run must be securely fenced to keep the hens within the plot and protect them from predators. If wild birds are frequenting the area, active measures (e.g. bird scarers) must be taken to discourage wild birds from entering the area. The hen house and run should not exceed one quarter of the size of the plot. It must be placed entirely within the plot, not on the border or overhanging a path, or overshadow and cause disadvantage to neighbouring plots.

Hens must be visited every morning to allow them to roam freely in the run during the daytime (enabling them to have access to a minimum of 8 hours of daylight) and visited every evening to secure them in safe and suitable housing.

Hens must not be kept in a standard timber garden shed. The hen house must be warm, dry and well ventilated. The floor should be covered with dry material (e.g. wood shavings or straw, but not waste material such as sawdust or mulched chipboard which contains synthetic chemicals), which must be topped up or replaced when needed.

Hens must be given sufficient space to move freely without interference from other birds to enable their natural patterns of behaviour, e.g. scratch the ground, peck for food and dust bathe. The minimum internal floor space per bird is 4 square foot, and minimum external floor space 2 square foot.

Housing must be kept in good repair to protect hens from wind and rain and from predators such as rats and foxes. Protection from draughts in cold conditions and shade from direct sunlight is required. The hens should be able to access the shelter at all times, except for when the huts are being cleaned and disinfected, etc.

Nest boxes, roosting areas and perches must be properly and securely located inside the hen house. Perches provided for hens must not be wide or narrow, and wire mesh floors must not be used, due to the strain caused to feet.

The space under the hen house can easily be infested with rats. To avoid this, the hen house must be raised on legs to give an open space of at least 30 cm (1 ft) underneath. Alternatively portable arks may be used, provided that they are moved around regularly.

Runs must be moved every couple of months on to fresh grass if possible to avoid 'fowl sick' or muddy conditions that could lead to ill health or discomfort. If land becomes 'fowl sick' it cannot be used by poultry for at least 2 years.

### **A suitable diet and clean fresh water**

Food and water containers should be kept clean in good condition and left undercover to discourage the landing of wild birds, avoiding contamination. Clean, fresh water must be available at all times and changed daily.

Hen feed should be stored in vermin proof containers, and be properly balanced for the type of hens kept. The plot holder should use specific food dispensers and ensure any stray feed is cleared up as quickly as possible to discourage vermin. Any infestations of rodent activity must be reported to the Clerk.

Hens should be visited at least twice a day to ensure that they have enough to eat, to make sure that drinking water doesn't freeze during winter, and to check for signs of ill health.

### **Health**

A notice should be clearly displayed on the hen house to advise others not to interfere with the birds. The plot holder should ensure their hands, clothes and footwear are clean both before and after contact with their birds.

The hen house, nest boxes, runs and exercise area should be regularly cleaned and disinfected (avoiding the use of strong synthetic chemicals) to remove parasites etc. from crooks and crevices. Only clean, fresh, good quality bedding materials should be used. Litter and nesting material should be checked regularly and replaced as necessary so that it does not become wet, acidic or infested with mites and other harmful pests. All litter, etc. needs to be disposed of in secure containers.

Parasites, lice and red mites can be frequent problems, and the hens should be checked regularly for infestations. Regular worming will also be needed, especially if the hens are not moved about onto fresh grass but are kept in the same run for more than a month at a time.

Any sick or injured hen must be removed immediately, and the correct and appropriate treatment provided. The plot holder must keep records on the health and welfare of all hens. The records should include the following:

- Date of introduction of new birds
- Date, purpose and outcome of vet visit
- Details of treatments applied
- Mortality – date and cause

Any national disease prevention and/or control programmes must be adhered to - government guidance around avian influenza must be followed. From 1 October 2024 in England, measures require all bird keepers, no matter the flock size, to register their birds with the Great Britain Poultry Register. Permissions to keep hens may not be granted or may be revoked based on information provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in the event of a bird flu epidemic or other threatening disease.

### **Emergencies**

All inflammable materials, i.e. straw, waste litter and empty bags, must be stored well away from the hen house and run. A means of controlling any small fire should be available (i.e. a bucket of water or dry sand).

Anyone who keeps hens on their allotment must make sure they can be contacted at any time. A notice should be displayed on the hen house with the emergency contact details of the plot owner and details of an alternative contact for the birds in case of emergency.

Any urgent action taken will be taken in the best interests of the welfare of the birds, and immediate rectification may be required. If necessary, the birds will be moved to a place of safe keeping until the keeper/emergency contact can be reached.

### **Improvement Notice**

If a LPC representative is concerned about the welfare of any hens kept on an allotment plot, the tenant will be contacted and requested to take the appropriate steps to improve the welfare of the bird(s) in question. The tenant must allow the hens to be inspected at any time by a LPC animal welfare representative.

Where it is thought necessary, and is in the interest of any bird kept, notice will be served accordingly to order improvements to the accommodation or overall management of a site. In certain circumstances immediate rectification may be required.

The rules of this policy must be strictly adhered to by all keepers of hens. Failure to do so will result in the permission to keep hens being revoked and the hens requiring to be removed by the plot holder. If the tenant refuses to remove the hens the allotment tenancy agreement will be terminated. LPC reserves the right not to allow, or to withdraw, its agreement for the keeping of hens on any plot where it is reasonable to do so.

## **End of tenancy**

When a plot holder ends their tenancy, the hen house and run must be removed to reduce the risk of any disease being passed on. If the structure/run is not removed by the tenant, LPC will charge the cost of removing them from the deposit, or from the tenant directly.

***Further information and advice on keeping birds can be found online at:***

[Bird flu \(avian influenza\): latest situation in England - GOV.UK](#)

[Register as a keeper of less than 50 poultry or other captive birds - GOV.UK](#)

[British Hen Welfare Trust](#)

[Keeping Chickens As Pets | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](#)

*This policy was approved by the Charities Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025. It will be reviewed annually.*



### LPC Application form to keep hens on allotments

Name..... No. of hens (min 3/max 6).....

Allotment site.....Plot number.....

Email address..... Phone no.....

Contact in case of absence..... Phone no.....

*I have read and agree to comply with the terms of the conditions and guidelines as stated in the LPC Keeping Hens on Allotments Policy, and understand there is a legal requirement not to create a nuisance or health risk, and to ensure that good animal welfare is being practiced.*

*I understand that failure to comply with the LPC Keeping Hens on Allotments Policy will result in permission to keep birds being revoked and the birds having to be removed, and could result in the loss of the allotment tenancy.*

Signature.....Date.....  
.....

#### Office use

LPC hereby accepts the above signatory as a tenant who has been granted permission to keep hens upon the allotment plot as set out above.

Signature .....

Date.....

**Please return to Liss Parish Council, Council Rooms, Village Hall, Hill Brow Road, Liss, Hampshire GU33 7LA or [clerk@lissparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@lissparishcouncil.gov.uk)**

*Permission to site a hen house and to keep hens at the allotment starts when the plot holder receives a countersigned copy of this form.*

*LPC reserves the right not to allow or to withdraw its agreement for the keeping of hens on any plot where it is reasonable to do so*