

Beekeeping Policy

Strategy / Guidelines Number	Version	Owner	Date published	Review date	Review Committee / Team
ENV/PO/003	1	ESM	09/12/2025	As required	Environment

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy establishes Salisbury City Council's responsibilities and approach to the management of beekeeping on Council-owned allotments.
- 1.2 It sets out the principles and requirements governing responsible beekeeping, health and safety, environmental protection, and community engagement.
- 1.3 The aim is to ensure that beekeeping contributes positively to biodiversity and sustainability, while maintaining safety and amenity for allotment tenants and the wider public.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Salisbury City Council recognises the vital role of honeybees and other pollinators in supporting biodiversity, local food production, and environmental wellbeing.
- 2.2 The Council supports responsible and well-managed beekeeping where conditions are suitable and where it does not present undue risk or nuisance.
- 2.3 Beekeeping will only be permitted on designated plots approved by Council Officers.
- 2.4 All beekeepers must demonstrate competence, appropriate insurance, and compliance with national beekeeping standards.
- 2.5 The Council will promote good practice in beekeeping through engagement with local beekeeping associations and by requiring high welfare and safety standards.
- 2.6 Permission to keep bees is a privilege and may be withdrawn if this policy is not observed.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Council has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related legislation to ensure that activities on its land do not create unreasonable risks to people or property.
- 3.2 The Council's Allotments Service is responsible for approving, monitoring, and, if necessary, withdrawing permissions for beekeeping.
- 3.3 The beekeeper must:
 - Be a current allotment tenant;
 - Hold membership of a British Beekeepers Association (BBKA)–affiliated association;
 - Hold, or be working towards, the BBKA Basic Assessment qualification. If working towards details of a mentor who holds a BBKA Basic Assessment must be provided;
 - Maintain bees in a safe, healthy, and well-managed condition; and
 - Ensure compliance with this policy and relevant legislation.

- 3.4 Beekeepers are personally responsible for the welfare of their colonies and for ensuring that suitable arrangements exist for hive management in their absence.

4. Site Selection & Hive Sitting

- 4.1 Hives may only be kept on allotments where the Council has designated specific plots for beekeeping.
- 4.2 Each site must be assessed for suitability, taking account of:
- Distance from public paths, boundaries, and communal areas;
 - Screening (minimum 2 metres high) to direct bee flight paths upwards;
 - Accessibility for inspection and management; and
 - Overall site capacity to prevent overpopulation.
- 4.3 Normally, no more than two hives and one nucleus will be permitted per plot. Temporary increases (e.g. for swarm control) must be reduced to permitted levels by the end of summer.
- 4.4 A clear sign must be displayed at the apiary stating: "Honey bees are kept here" and providing contact details for the beekeeper and their nominated emergency contact.

5. Beekeeper Competence & Conduct

- 5.1 All beekeepers must be competent and operate in accordance with BBKA best practice and the National Bee Unit's Code of Conduct.
- 5.2 The beekeeper must ensure colonies are gentle and well-behaved. If bees become aggressive or exhibit persistent "following" behaviour, the colony must be re-queened or removed.
- 5.3 The beekeeper must liaise with neighbouring tenants and time inspections to minimise disturbance.
- 5.4 All hives and equipment must be kept tidy and stored securely. Wax combs or supers must never be left exposed.

6. Risk Management & Safety

- 6.1 A standard risk assessment will be completed and signed by the beekeeper before permission is granted.
- 6.2 This will cover, as a minimum:
- Swarming and public safety;
 - Fire precautions and safe smoker use;
 - First aid and allergy awareness;
 - Disease control and pest management;
 - Emergency contacts and absence cover.
- 6.3 The beekeeper owes a duty of care to:

- Other allotment tenants;
- Members of the public; and
- Any person entering the site, whether authorised or not.

6.4 The Council reserves the right to inspect apiaries or withdraw permission where risk management standards are not met.

7. Disease Control & Hive Health

7.1 Beekeepers must register their colonies with the National Bee Unit (Beebase) and comply with the Bees Act 1980 and all associated legislation.

7.2 Colonies must be inspected regularly (at least weekly between April and July) and records maintained.

7.3 Integrated Pest Management methods must be used to control Varroa and other pests and diseases.

7.4 Any suspected notifiable disease must be reported immediately to the National Bee Unit.

8. Insurance

8.1 Beekeepers must hold valid Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million, normally provided through BBKA membership.

8.2 Proof of insurance and membership must be submitted to the Council annually when renewing the allotment tenancy.

9. Temporary Absence & Emergency Cover

9.1 The beekeeper must provide the Council with the name and contact details of a competent stand-by beekeeper who can attend in case of emergency or during absences.

9.2 The stand-by beekeeper must also hold the BBKA Basic Assessment or equivalent qualification.

9.3 The primary beekeeper remains responsible for hive welfare at all times.

10. Sale of Produce

10.1 Honey or hive products must not be advertised or sold directly from the allotment site.

10.2 Beekeepers may sell produce privately, in compliance with food safety and trading standards regulations.

11. Withdrawal of Permission

11.1 The Council may withdraw permission to keep bees, giving at least 40 days' notice, if:

- This policy or allotment rules are breached;
- Bees present a health or safety hazard;
- A verified medical allergy risk arises for a neighbouring tenant; or
- Aggressive or unmanaged colonies cause nuisance or danger.

11.2 All costs associated with hive removal will be the responsibility of the beekeeper.

12. Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every five years, or sooner if national guidance or local conditions change.

12.2 The Council will consult with local beekeeping associations and allotment representatives as part of any review process.