



Pitstone Allotment Association

Chicken Keeping Minimum Requirements and Agreement

These minimum requirements have been drawn up with a clear focus on Animal welfare and the fact that the hens will mostly be on their own during the day. A plot holder engaging in the keeping of hens on the Pitstone Allotment site commits to a duty of care to the hens and is responsible for their wellbeing.

In addition to the PAA guidelines the plot holder will have obtained a copy of the Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Domestic Fowls from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DFRA).

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/welfare/on-farm/poultry-welfare/>

If plot holders choose to keep hens on their plot they must check on them twice daily, provide competent care and management and have the knowledge and skills to ensure the well being of the hens. In addition plot holders are expected to keep the hens under proper control to avoid disturbance to other plot holders.

Accommodation

This needs to provide proper shelter from the elements and, an appropriate means of exercise by the provision of a wire fenced run. A means of access to the shelter must be available to the poultry at all times, except when cleaning and disinfection is being carried out. The accommodation will require cleansing and disinfecting and all litter etc, needs to be disposed of in secure containers or an appropriate place, well within the boundaries of the plot, and where it is not required on the plot, it must be taken off site by the tenant. Nest boxes, roosting areas and perches must be properly located and all exercise runs escape and predator proof. A coop may be no higher than 4ft. A run can be constructed to a maximum of head height.

Feeding and watering

Water must be available at all times and all equipment kept clean and in good order. Feed should be kept in vermin proof containers. Any diet must be properly balanced for the breed and given sufficient amounts to ensure the proper well being of the hens. The risk of drinking water freezing during cold weather must be considered.

Number of Hens and Permitted use of Plot Space

You may only use a maximum of half of your allocated plot size for chickens (e.g. if you have a quarter plot, you may only use a maximum of half; if you have two quarters plots, you may give one of these over to chickens completely).

A maximum of four hens per half quarter plot is allowed. Chickens are a social animal and need companionships and must be kept in small groups, minimum size group is two. All chickens must be able to stand, turn around and stretch their wings and have sufficient space to perch or sit down without interference from each other. They also need space to make dust baths for themselves, which helps them to clean their plumage of mites.

Cockerels

No cockerels may be kept on site

Health and Welfare

As stated above all birds must be inspected twice daily. The plot holder must allow the Site Manager or other PAA committee member to inspect the poultry at any time. Please be aware that the average life of a hen can be eight years and that the active egg laying period is generally only for two to three years, with production of eggs reducing in the third year. The plot holder should therefore consider what they intend to do with the hens once the hens are no longer productive.

The hens must be checked regularly for lice and the hen house treated for Red Mite. Any sick or injured birds must be removed immediately and treatment provided, the cause of any disease or injury identified and remedial action taken. Any national disease prevention and/or control programmes must be adhered to. Dead birds must be disposed of in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003. It is not permitted for the burial or burning of hens on site.

Land on which birds are kept may become “fowl sick”. Muddy conditions lead to ill health and discomfort. It is therefore important that the outdoor run is moved from time to time if the floor of the run is not replaced regularly.

Nuisance to Neighbours and Cleanliness

Provided the hens are kept healthy and in clean conditions and food stuffs are stored such that they are kept clean, tidy and properly protected from rodents and other pests the keeping of hens should not become a nuisance to others. Plot holders have a duty as part of their Allotment Tenancy not to cause a nuisance to others. In the keeping of hens on an allotment, the plot holder should take all reasonable measures to minimise potential nuisances. The plot holder will be responsible for any damage to other plots should they escape. **On no account are hens to be abandoned by the plot holder.** Any costs involved in this event would be sought from the plot holder concerned.

**Pitstone Allotment Association
February 2013**

pitstoneallotmentassociation@hotmail.co.uk

PITSTONE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION
AGREEMENT TO KEEP HENS (not cockerels)

Name of Plot Holder: _____

Plot number(s): _____

Emergency contact details: _____

Second contact: _____

**Area of hen accommodation
required:** _____

Number of hens to be kept: _____

Registered Veterinary contact: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

I agree to abide by the conditions as stated in this document.

Signed : _____ **plot holder**

Date: _____

Signed : _____ **on behalf of the PAA
Committee**

Date: _____

**PAA/Henkeeping 2013
(Revision)**