

## **Wheathampstead Parish Council Allotments Committee**

### **Rules for Allotment Poultry Keeping**

#### **Request for Poultry Keeping**

Any plot holder seeking to keep poultry must put their request in writing to the parish council, making clear the size of the pen in metres, size of the house in metres and the number of poultry sought. Home and mobile telephone numbers must also be provided.

The following rules apply to the keeping of chickens, turkeys, and pheasants. Ducks, geese, rabbits, goats and pigs are **not** permitted to be kept on any allotment site, unless exceptional agreement has been given in writing by the Parish Council.

#### **Poultry Numbers**

Point-of-lay hens are expected to lay up to five eggs per week. Allotments are intended to produce food for the plot holder and their family. Plot holders who intend to keep more than five point of lay hens (25 eggs per week) will need to explain to the Parish Council why additional hens are needed. Some consideration will be given for ex-battery hens. No cockerels are permitted on any allotment plot.

The number of turkeys allowable at any one time will be limited to no more than two.

#### **Size of Hen Houses and Pens**

Poultry pens, including a hen house may take up no more than the **one quarter of a full size plot** or **half of a half size plot**.

The following spaces are the minimum allowed per bird for poultry on Parish Council allotments:

<b>Type</b>	<b>Outdoor Space</b>	<b>Indoor Space</b>
Medium Hens	1 sq/m	0.5 sq/m
Turkeys	2 sq/m	1 sq/m
Pheasants	2 sq/m	1 sq/m

There should be plenty of space outdoors and inside poultry houses for chickens to move around, exercise, stretch their wings, perch and carry out other normal behavior. There should be sufficient shade in the outside area to protect all birds during hot weather. Chickens like to forage, dust bathe and preen their feathers, and so a material such as wood shavings should be supplied to allow hens to do this. Concrete floors for pens and electric fencing surrounding pens are not permitted.

#### **Water**

Chickens need access to clean water in their house at all times. Drinkers should be cleaned regularly and stale or dirty water replaced. Suspended drinkers should be used to ensure that water is not kicked over. Chickens must still be able to access water in icy weather (ice should not be removed using chemicals).

## **Food**

Chickens like to scratch the ground to search for seeds, roots and insects. Additional feed, suitable for their age and breed, should also be provided within their house to give them a balanced diet. Food dispensers should be cleaned regularly. Chickens also need insoluble grit to help digestion.

## **Housing**

Poultry houses should warm, dry and draft free. The floor should be covered with dry material (e.g. wood shavings or straw), which must be topped-up or replaced when needed. Soiled material must be regularly cleaned out. There should be enough perching space for all the chickens to comfortably roost at the same time and enough space between perches to let them get up and down without injury. Perch height should be adjusted to suit the size of the birds.

The entrance to the house should be big enough to allow chickens to pass through without difficulty and without having to crouch down. Providing more than one entrance can help to avoid bullying and encourage all chickens to go in and out.

Hens need quiet nest boxes where they can perform laying behaviours where they feel safe. The boxes should be draught-free and lined with clean, dry, comfortable nesting material, such as straw or wood shavings. The house should be cleaned frequently and disinfected to remove any parasites.

## **Fencing**

Fences should be well-maintained and provide protection against predators. The design should ensure that the birds cannot escape or become trapped or injured. Electric fencing can only be used in exceptional circumstances and with the express written permission of Wheathampstead Parish Council.

## **Health**

Healthy birds are 'bright-eyed', alert and interested. Signs of poor health including excessive feather loss, signs of pecking or bullying, parasites or other signs of poor health (hunched posture, erect feathers head tucked under the wing, reluctance to move and hiding in corners). Concerns about the poor health of chickens will be taken up with the plot holder and may result in chickens being removed. Repeated concerns about flock health may result in permission to keep poultry being withdrawn by the Parish Council.