



Winsham Parish Council

Bee Policy

Background

Winsham Parish Council acknowledges that bees form an important part of a diverse and healthy countryside. It therefore wishes to encourage their use within the parish, and also on parish land.

- Honey bees are insects that have been on Earth for about 100 million years, well before any humans.
- Bees thrived without the help of man and still do in some parts of the world. At the beginning of the 20th century disease caused the demise of the native strain of black bee in England.
- Since 1992, when the varroa mite entered southern England from the Continent, bees in the UK have become more dependent on man. The varroa infestation has moved northwards and colonies in hives can only survive if they are treated to combat varroa. Wild honey bee colonies die out, but bumble bees are not affected.
- The main function of honey bees is as pollinators. They are of immense value to agriculture, horticulture and gardeners and are responsible for the pollination of crops estimated to have a value of £7 billion per year.

Policy Terms

No bee hives/boxes to be placed on plots in the allotment gardens, or any other parish land, without the express written permission of Winsham Parish Council. Verbal agreements will not apply.

All applications to be in writing to the Clerk of the Parish Council and will be considered on an individual basis at the earliest convenient parish council meeting. Each application can be subject to individual conditions.

There will be a consultation of allotment holders, other local residents and organisations who might be affected by proximity to the hives (but only if they are within 20 metres of the hive site).

This consultation will occur before any hives or bees are allowed on a site. If the Parish Council receives any objections, the matter will be investigated by the council and determine whether it is necessary for the hive not to be introduced, an alternative location found on the site or for it to be removed.

Tenants must accept full responsibility in writing for the hive/box and, in the case of a hive, either the tenant or the beekeeper must be a member of the local Beekeeping Association in this instance, South West Division of Somerset Beekeepers of the British Beekeeping Association (BBKA) ensuring that by membership they have valid insurance and evidence they are suitably qualified or have a mentor. In the case of a box, should a swarm occur, the

tenant is responsible for ensuring that the bees are removed by a suitably qualified bee keeper at the tenant's expense.

A person keeping bees on parish land must also provide a risk assessment, preferably with their application.

A person keeping bees must ensure that the bees are encouraged to rise more than 6 feet before leaving the plot using screening, which could be natural hedging, wooden fencing or fine plastic/wire mesh. This will help ensure that the flight path (of low flying bees) minimises contact with people and consequent alarm.

A person keeping bees on parish land must satisfy the Parish Council that they have made adequate arrangements to ensure that any problems caused by their bees in their absence will be resolved.

The tenant/beekeeper is to remove the hive/box immediately if requested to do so by Winsham Parish Council and, if circumstances dictate, without notice and with no recourse or refund of any fees.

Reviewed and adopted by Winsham Parish Council on: 6th March 2024 – Minute No. 0380

Signed: Chairman