

# **BIRSTALL PARISH COUNCIL**

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## **INFORMATION GUIDE/RULES & REGULATIONS FOR KEEPING CHICKENS ON ALLOTMENTS**



Keeping a few chickens on your allotment plot is becoming more and more popular especially in the current climate. However, the decision should not be taken lightly as chickens need looking after 365 days per year. For this reason we've put together some basic information on what you will have to consider:

### **What livestock can we keep?**

The Parish Council have agreed that tenants are allowed to keep a **MAXIMUM** of 4 x chickens and/or 4 x rabbits

**NO COCKERELS – a cockerel is not required for your hens to lay eggs.**

**You must not proceed with purchasing any livestock or installing any type of housing/shelter until:**

1. You have applied in writing stating the number of hens/rabbits you wish to keep
2. Forwarded a drawing of the intended chicken coop and run complete with dimensions
3. Received written confirmation from the Parish Council
4. No livestock may be housed until an inspection of the coop and enclosure has been made by a representative of the Parish Council
5. Signed and dated the supplied agreement for keeping hens/rabbits
6. Paid your £100.00 returnable deposit (*this is to cover any costs to the Parish Council of removal at the end of your tenancy*)



## **Where can I keep them?**

Chickens will happily roam out in the cold, but they don't like rain. You will need to provide a house or shelter suitable for the number of chickens you are keeping.

Ideally your hens should be allowed some outdoor space because hens love to scratch about to find seeds, insects, slugs and the like. Unfortunately, they also like to eat anything green and, in doing so, they'll uproot small plants and create dust baths.

- At least 250 centimetres squared floor area for each bird
- A perch for them to stand on whilst they sleep
- An exercise space, or 'run'
- A nesting box filled with wood shavings for the hens to lay eggs
- The coop should be thoroughly cleaned every week and fresh bedding put out
- The coop and run should be secure to prevent the animals from roaming and to keep predators out
- Use wire mesh fencing all the way around, underneath and above the coop, fix wooden boards to the base of the fence
- Check the coop regularly to make sure it is secure
- Shut the chickens into their coop at night

**The area used for livestock must be no more than 25% of your allotment plot.**

## **Keeping chickens safe from predators!**

Most people who keep chickens have some experience of predators – usually foxes – getting into the coop. Foxes can climb over or dig under fences, and squeeze through very small spaces.

Some tips to keep your chickens safe are:

- Use wire mesh fencing all the way around, underneath and above the coop
- Fix wooden boards to the base of the fence
- Check the coop regularly to make sure it is secure
- Shut the chickens into their coop at night

## **Feeding and watering chickens**

You can buy ready-made food that has everything chickens need to keep them healthy. It is illegal to feed chickens with waste food from your kitchen, including vegetable scraps.

For more details on the laws on feeding chickens and other farm animals visit the Defra website – [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

Grit is also an important part of a chicken's diet. The tiny stones help them break down and digest their food. Keep a supply of grit available and the chickens will help themselves to however much they need.

Chickens need a constant supply of clean drinking water. Try to choose a container that the chickens can't step in or knock over.

