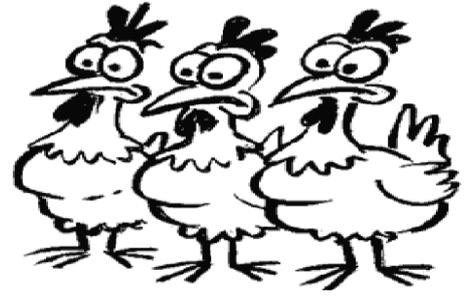


# Fulford Parish Council Allotments

## Guidelines for Poultry Keeping



Under UK law you may keep hens (but not cockerels) on your allotment garden.

All other livestock requires the permission of the Parish Council. We request that tenants notify the council if they intend to keep hens, and follow the guidelines below. There is a legal requirement to not cause a nuisance, or create a health risk, and ensure that good animal welfare is being practiced.

No more than one third of the plot may be used for poultry at any one time; the rest should be cultivated.

No more than 6 hens shall be kept on an allotment plot. On half plots only 3 hens shall be kept. To avoid problems with pests and diseases, poultry shall be kept on no more than 20% of the plots in the allotment site at any time.

**All poultry kept on Fulford Parish Allotments must be housed and cared for in accordance with the guidelines in this leaflet. If any livestock appears to be neglected or mistreated, animal health officers will be asked to investigate.**

### **Water**

Hens need constant access to clean water in their house. Drinkers should be cleaned regularly and stale or dirty water replaced. Hens must still be able to access water in icy weather. Ice should not be removed using chemicals.

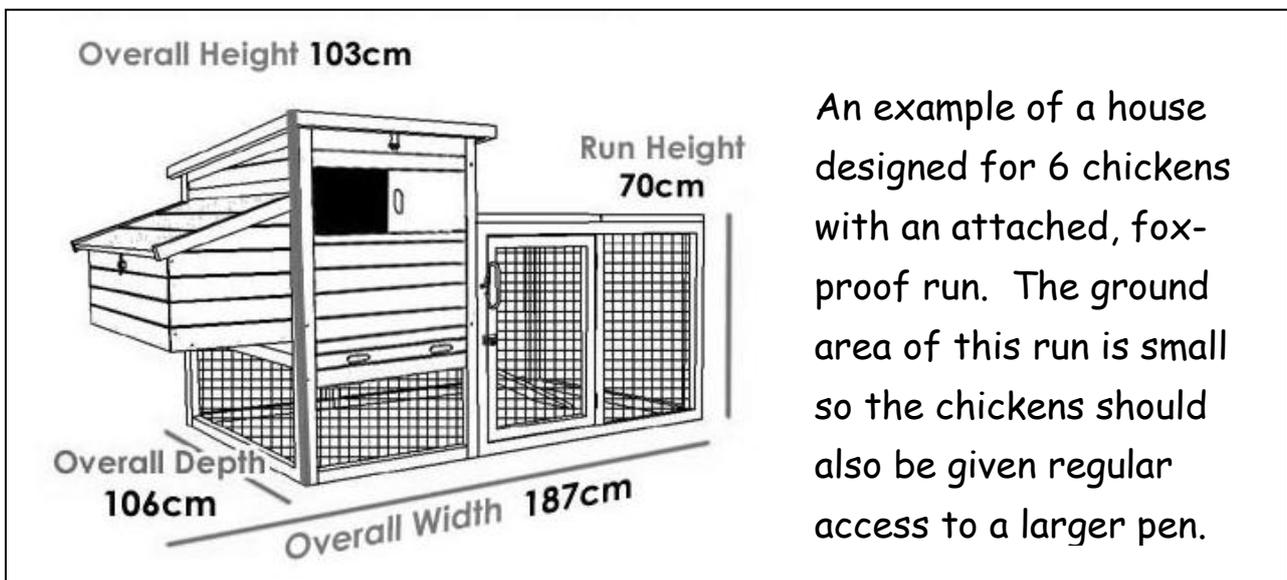
### **Food**

Hens like to scratch the ground 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. Hens also need insoluble grit to help digestion.

## Housing

Hens must not run free and poultry houses need to be warm, dry and well ventilated. The floor should be covered with dry material (e.g. wood shavings or straw, but not waste material such as sawdust or mulched chipboard which contain synthetic chemicals), which must be topped-up or replaced when needed.

The space under poultry houses can easily become infested with rats. To avoid this, poultry houses must be raised on legs to give an open space of at least 30 cm. / 1 ft. underneath. Alternatively, portable arks may be used, moved around regularly. Hens must not be kept in a standard, timber garden shed.



Ready made poultry houses can be expensive. It is easy to find plans for building your own in books from the library or from the internet. By RSPCA guidelines, housing for 6 hens should have a floor area of at least 2.4 square metres. For a few hens, a small, A-frame ark is easier to build than a house on legs.



An example of a moveable ark for 3 hens. The closed portion of the ark includes a perch & nest box. The ark should be moved every week so that the hens have fresh ground to scratch on.

Housing must be kept in good repair to protect birds from wind and rain and from predators such as rats and foxes. It is essential that they are adequately secured into the ground to prevent them being moved by the wind. In very hot weather adequate shade must be provided. Perches provided for hens must not be too wide or narrow, to prevent birds straining their feet. Wire mesh floors must not be used, due to the strain caused to the feet.

Housing must be regularly cleaned and disinfected as necessary, avoiding the use of strong synthetic chemicals. Litter and nesting material must be checked regularly and replaced as necessary, so that it does not become wet, acidic or infested with mites and other harmful pests.

### **Poultry Pens and Runs**

Hens must be given sufficient space to move freely and to follow their normal patterns of behaviour. An example of this would be providing with enough space to scratch the ground, peck for food and dust bathe.

The poultry run should be rotated to prevent a build-up of pests and to avoid the fouling of the soil. Earth runs should be dug over and limed periodically. Grass runs should be rested and limed periodically. This stops the build-up of pests and diseases. If land becomes 'fowl-sick' it cannot be used by poultry for at least two years. Livestock must not be kept in continuously muddy conditions which can cause ill-health or discomfort.

### **Pests and Predators**

Plentiful food attracts rats and mice to poultry runs. Grain and other foodstuffs must be stored in rodent proof containers and the amount stored on the allotment shall be only sufficient for immediate needs. If you think there are rats in your allotment garden please contact the Allotments Officer who will arrange for City of York Pest Control to put down bait.

### **Emergencies**

In an emergency, action will be taken in the best interests of the welfare of livestock. In the case of fire or vandalism birds will, if necessary, be removed to a place of safe keeping until you, or one of

your emergency contacts can be contacted. Please inform the Allotments Officer of any change in contact details. Phone (01904) 633151.

### **Animal Health and Welfare**

If you are concerned about the condition or treatment of any livestock on an allotment site, please contact one of the following:

Fulford Parish Allotments Officer (see below)

City of York Animal Health Service  
(01904) 551550

York RSPCA on (01904) 654949  
or the RSPCA National Cruelty Line on 0300 1234 999

### **Avian Flu**

City of York Animal Health Service maintains records of all allotment tenants who keep poultry or pigeons on their plot, so that they can be contacted quickly in case of a local outbreak of Avian Flu (commonly known as Bird Flu).

Avian Flu is a notifiable disease and if you find more than three dead birds in the same location, you should contact the Department of the Environment Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who will arrange for the carcasses to be tested for disease. The helpline number is 08459 335577 (6.00 am-10.00 pm daily).

### **Queries and Questions**

For any other queries relating to livestock on your allotment garden please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Phone: (01904) 633151

E-mail: [clerk@fulfordpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@fulfordpc.org.uk)