



Policy for keeping Rabbits on Allotments

Adopted 25th January 2012

Animal Welfare Act

All rabbits must be kept in accordance with the following Animal Welfare Act 2006:

- *provide a suitable environment for the rabbits*
- *provide a suitable diet and fresh water*
- *allow the rabbits to exhibit normal behaviour*
- *provide companion rabbits as they are social animals*
- *protect them from pain, injury, suffering and disease*

Rabbits must be provided with a grassed enclosure surrounded by fencing sunk at least 50cm into the ground and designed to keep out predators and prevent the rabbits from burrowing out. In order to maintain healthy teeth and claws the rabbits must have daily access to the enclosure and must be provided with a gnawing block. Within this enclosure, the rabbits require a large weatherproof and predator-proof home. This must be raised off the ground, out of direct sunlight and protected against strong winds. Within the home, each rabbit requires a separate, covered sleeping area and a clean layer of wood shavings and plenty of hay or shredded paper for bedding. The home must be cleaned every day and the bedding replaced weekly. During the winter months additional protection is required against the cold; this may be insulating material wrapped around the home or a shed around the shed.

Rabbits must be provided with a mixed diet of grass, rabbit pellets, apples, carrots, dandelions, other vegetables, a good quantity of hay and a constant supply of fresh, clean drinking water in a drip feed bottle with metal spout. Food must be stored in airtight containers in a vermin proof location.

There may be no more than one rabbit per square metre of outdoor space and no more than three per square metre of the shelter. A register of rabbits must be maintained on site by the plot holder, giving full medical history. The council may seek veterinary advice regarding any animals that appear to be suffering or neglected.