

Highdown Paddocks Dog Walking Fields

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

1. 'Eastlands' is a 30-acre agricultural holding (Rural Land Register S.B.I. 108999277) which in 2014 diversified into an equestrian business. With the impending loss of government support through the 'Single Payment Scheme' for permanent pasture, D.E.F.R.A are recommending further diversification, to make up for the shortfall in income. One of the schemes they are recommending is secure dog walking paddocks. We feel this is a perfect proposal for us, given our existing operation, location and that we have numerous paddocks already established for use by horses. The proposed secure dog walking paddock would occupy just over 2 acres (0.97 hectares).
2. We have conducted extensive market research and the 2 existing dog walking fields which are in a 5-mile radius of 'Eastlands' are fully booked from 6am to 9pm up to 3 months in advance. Given the number of new homes being built within that same 5-mile radius, demand will out strip supply many times over and we feel this proposal will not only support our existing business but also offer a much-needed facility in this area.
3. On site, very little will change. Our existing opening hours are 6am to 9pm. The dog walking paddocks will operate in the summer between 7am and 8pm and in the winter between 7am and 6pm, which is standard hours for the industry. The 2 proposed paddocks are already in place. The existing access drive is already in place and is 5 metres wide allowing cars to pass each other in opposite directions. We estimate there will be 8-10 vehicle movements a day. Each paddock would have a secure parking area, enabling customers to enter and release their dog within the secure boundaries of each paddock. Both paddocks are currently fenced with post and rail fencing, which will be replaced by deer fencing to make the paddocks secure for dogs. Fagus hedges will be planted on the outside of the deer fences. There is mains water already in both paddocks. Existing machinery, labour and expertise are already in place and are currently servicing the whole property.
4. The proposed changes to the paddocks are very limited. Shelter for dog walkers would be provided in each paddock by a small (10ft x 10ft) equestrian field shelter, which would be in keeping with the equestrian use of the remainder of our holding. In

the parking areas and access to them, we propose to use the same aggregate that all existing roadways and tracks are constructed with so as to match the existing. The existing permanent grassland would remain but be enhanced by the additional planting of hedges and trees, to match the existing planting. This planting is a priority for us, not only to exceed the requirements for 'biodiversity net gain' but also to enhance the existing planting. Back in 2014, when planning permission was granted for the equestrian business we were required, as a condition of planning permission to undertake a planting scheme. We exceeded the requirement 10-fold and planted over 250,000 trees, hedging plants and shrubs which we are now reaping the visual and environmental benefits as the planting matures.

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7 January 2026