Supporting Planning Statement

Including Pollution Assessment required by Policy 30
& Flood Risk Statement

24th March 2021

Site: Land to the rear of Northgate Farm, Northgate, West Pinchbeck, PE11 3TB

Proposal: Change of use from agricultural land to dog walking field

GD PLANNING

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This planning statement supports the application for the change of use of agricultural land to a dog walking field on land to the rear of Northgate Farm, Northgate, West Pinchbeck. The planning application is made by Mrs Sally Grant-Rolls, a qualified dog trainer who following extensive research has found a need for a safe and secure area for dogs to exercise off lead.

1.2 The applicant has substantial experience and expertise in canine training and behaviour and wishes to use the land for limited small training classes as an ancillary use to the dog walking field which will be the main use.

2.0 The Site

2.1 The application site is part of an agricultural field located to the north of Northgate Farm. It comprises 1.61 hectares and currently forms part of an agricultural field.

2.2 The site is generally level and agricultural land surrounds the site to the north, east and west. Directly to the south is a farmyard with associated agricultural buildings. To the south of the farm yard is a dwelling. There are other dwellings, farmyards and glasshouses fronting onto Northgate within the vicinity of the site, but located some distance from the application site.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 This application is for the change of use of part of an agricultural field to a secure dog walking area. This application has come about due to research into the demand for such a facility in the local area. A survey was carried out by the applicant which supports the provision of such a facility, the results of which are provided in Appendix A. The survey identified that of the 190 dog owners surveyed, 183 would use a secure off lead dog walking facility. The majority of respondents said they would use such a facility once or twice a week.

3.2 The applicant is a dog trainer with significant training and experience in canine behaviour and recognises the need for a safe space for dog owners to exercise their dogs, where they can build on off lead skills. The applicant not only has a first class degree in psychology focusing on the scientific basis for learning motivation and behaviour but has also completed canine specific education. The applicant has completed the Life Skills for Puppies course at the University of Lincoln, is an Agility1st Instructor and has gained a 97% score in her theory examination for the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). As soon as the covid situation eases and she is able she will be booking to do the practical assessment also. Other courses completed include Canine First Aid, Scentwork, Gundog, Trick Training, Institute of Modern Dog Training (IMDT) and Agility workshops with world class trainers.

3.3 In addition to the educational training, the applicant set up her dog walking and training business, Cherished Paws in September 2015. Through this business the applicant has gained significant experience in training and managing multiple dogs, as well as many different breed types.

3.4 The site is approximately 210 metres from Northgate, where pockets of ribbon development are located and is surrounded by productive agricultural land on all sides apart from the farmyard directly to the south of the site. The site is approximately 3.5km from Pinchbeck and 5km from Spalding as the crow flies.

3.5 The site benefits from an established access onto Northgate with hard surfaced parking and turning area adjacent to the proposed dog walking area. There is good visibility in both directions from the access point.

3.6 Physical changes to the site include the provision of a 6 foot high fence to ensure the site is secure for off lead dog walking. The type of fencing proposed is a stock fence with wooden posts.

3.7 The farm is owned and run by the applicant's father and the project is part of a family farm diversification project. The number of dog walking fields has increased rapidly over the past five years with 450 facilities listed on the independent website Dog Walking Fields (www.dogwalkingfields.com). The role of dog walking fields in the diversification of farms is identified as a successful option in Farmers Weekly[1], identifying the benefits to the farm, as well as to dog owners and the opening up of safe and secure countryside locations for recreation and exercise.

3.8 Two storage areas for enrichment and training equipment are identified on the Block Plan, one in an existing shed in the farm yard and the other between the drier structures attached to the agricultural shed, adjacent to the secondary parking area. It is considered that this amount of storage is more than sufficient.

[1] So you want to… get paid for having dogs on your land? - Farmers Weekly (fwi.co.uk)

Proposed Operation

3.9 The applicant is experienced in canine behaviour and positive based training methods and wishes to provide a safe and secure space for owners and their canine companions to benefit from and enjoy. The applicant is also considerate to the amenity of the nearby residential properties and has therefore indicated limitations for the operational use of the site to ensure there are no significant impacts in this regard.

3.10 For the significant majority of time, the space will be used by a dog owner for walking their dog(s) off lead. Each person will book an hour slot with the applicant in which time they will have exclusive use of the field for exercising their dog(s). A limit of 6 dogs during each booked session will be enforced. It is also anticipated that potentially two dog owners may want to exercise their dogs together during the same session. This would be accepted, providing there is no more than 6 dogs in total and no more than 2 dog owners at any one time.

3.11 All dog owners booking a session will be made aware by the applicant that noise management is a requirement of all users of the space and that excessive noise will not be tolerated. If any issues do arise, a warning will be given initially followed by a ban of using the site if it continues. Records of those using the space and at what time and date will be kept by the applicant to ensure that this policy can be enforced. This management policy is a key part of the proposal.

3.12 The proposed hours of operation are 7am – 7pm throughout the week and weekend. This will alter with the seasons, as no lighting is proposed and therefore in the winter months the closing time will be much earlier than 7pm.

3.13 Due to the limitations on the number of people and number of dogs allowed, the separation from residential properties and the active monitoring by the applicant, it is considered this approach will ensure significantly limited impacts on residential amenity.

3.14 Dog waste bins will be provided within the field and the waste regularly removed by an appropriate external company.

3.15 As an experienced dog trainer, the applicant wishes to use the space for a limited number of dog training sessions per week. This would be very much an ancillary use to the dog walking element of the proposal, equating to only 5 hours a week. All classes will be led by a qualified instructor and again limited to 6 dogs in total at any one time.

3.16 During training classes, the dogs will be monitored throughout by the on site instructor with regards to noise management. During training sessions, dogs are very much engaged in their tasks, so much less likely to bark. In addition, settling techniques will be taught throughout the training sessions to assist dog owners in managing their dogs behaviour.

4.0 Policy Considerations and Supporting Information

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the principles of sustainable development that local plans must be prepared in line with. The NPPF is also a material consideration in the decision-making process. The NPPF identifies the policies which contribute to sustainable development across the country, noting the economic, social and environmental objectives. The NPPF states that planning legislation is in place to ensure that planning decisions are 'made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

4.2 Paragraph 83d of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of acceptable local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, in order to support a prosperous rural economy.

4.3 The local development plan for Northgate is covered by the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) adopted in March 2019.

4.4 In Policy 1 which sets out the spatial strategy for the area, Northgate is identified under other service centres and settlements, as an area of development restraint. The site itself is not located within the settlement boundary of Northgate shown on Inset Map No 59 of the SELLP. The proposed site therefore needs to be assessed as being within the countryside. Policy 1 D states:

'The rest of the Local Plan area outside the defined settlement boundaries of the Sub-Regional Centres, Main Service Centres, Minor Service Centre and Other Service Centres and Settlements is designated as Countryside.

In the Countryside development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the are in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.'

4.5 Paragraphs 3.2.15 and 3.2.16 of the plan recognise that some land uses require a Countryside location because of recreational need or a functional requirement. The proposal is such a use that requires a Countryside location, in order to provide the recreational space required for the type of use being proposed along with ensuring sufficient separation to residential properties to limit any potential impacts.

4.6 Policy 2 of the SELLP looks at guiding Development Management decisions. The key considerations that have been addressed in formulating this proposal in respect of Policy 2 are, access and vehicle generation levels and the impact upon neighbouring land uses by reason or noise, odour, disturbance or visual intrusion. Policy 3 relating to design also covers residential amenity as a key issue to be assessed.

4.7 Policy 30 relates to pollution and also considers the amenity of areas in relation to air quality, noise, light, land quality and surface and groundwater quality. Policy 30 requires all planning applications (except for development within the curtilage of a dwelling house) to include an assessment of the impact on the proposed development from poor air quality from identified sources; impact on air quality from the proposed development; and impact on amenity from

existing uses.

4.8 The proposed operation set out above in section 3 of this report, has been given significant consideration in meeting the requirements of Policies 2, 3 and 30, with particular respect to the amenities of others. Restricting the number of people and dogs along with the operating hours mean that the potential for noise issues are significantly reduced. This is alongside the location of the site which has been chosen for its established safe access, existing on site parking and separation from other residential properties.

4.9 The closest neighbouring property to the south, is buffered by the existence of the farmyard and agricultural buildings located in the intervening space.

4.10 A ten minute buffer between bookings will be maintained to ensure there is no overlap between users. It is important to note that this type of facility, being a secure space, provides the dogs with a positive environment in which to exercise off lead. This means they are able to run, sniff and explore the space and will be far less likely to bark due to the type of freedom they are being provided with.

4.11 Key to the proposal is the booking system which not only limits the use of the space but also ensures that the space can be actively monitored to ensure that the impacts are not significant.

4.12 Policy 32 relates to community, health and well-being. Whilst this policy looks more at providing facilities to support expanding communities, it highlights the importance of providing appropriate open spaces that enable people to be active, in order to benefit both physical and mental health.

4.13 The proposed use provides a secure and safe space for people to exercise with their dogs. The need for this type of space to ensure that owners are able to properly train their dogs, for instance in relation to recall as an example is key. The importance of recreational open space has only been highlighted over the past 12 months during the pandemic. The survey carried out by the applicant, clearly supports the local demand for such a space.

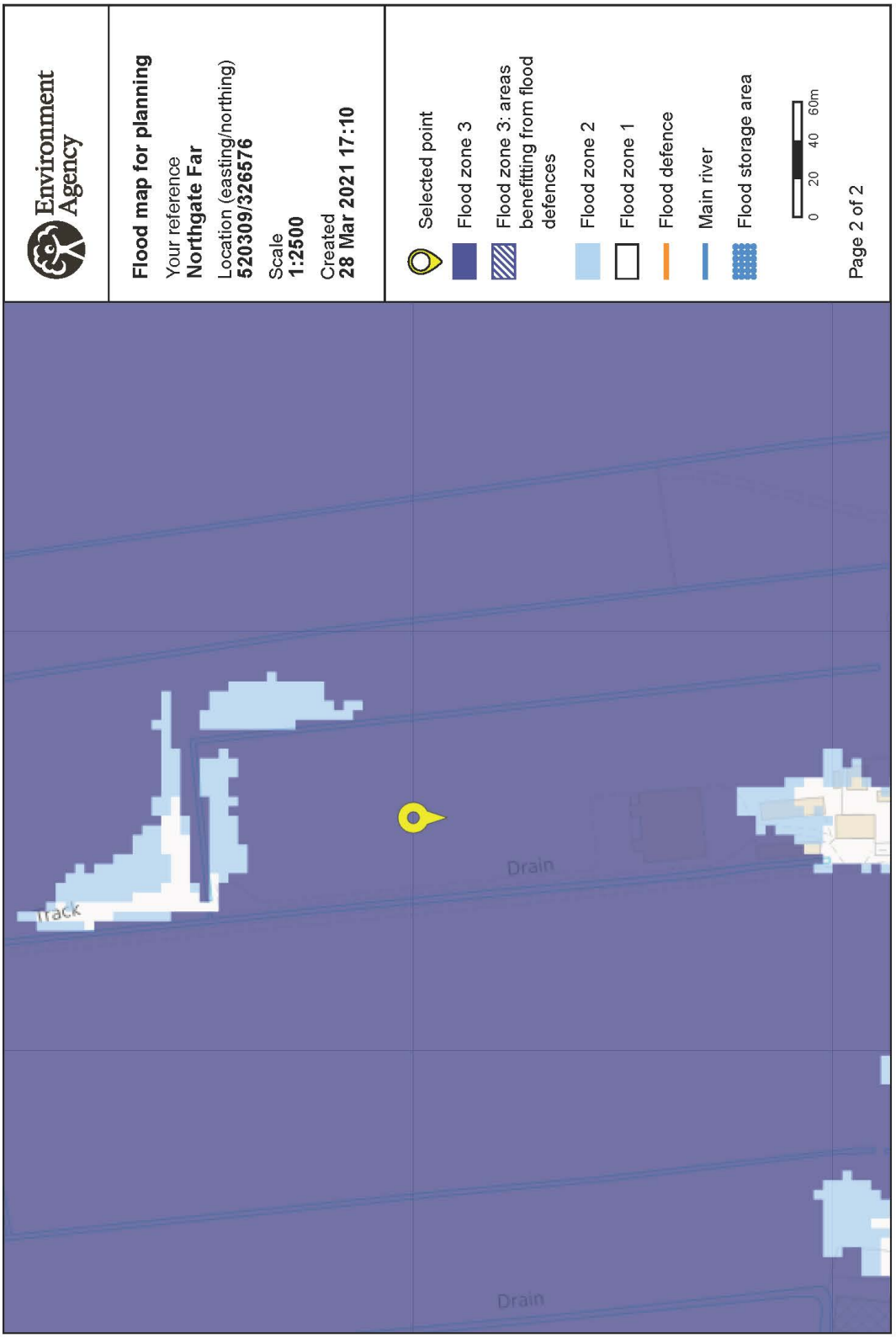
Flood Risk

4.14 Initially the Environment Agency confirmed that a Flood Risk Assessment was required, however in the pre-application advice provided by the Planning Officer it was confirmed that a Flood Risk Assessment was not required. It feels sensible however to provide some information in this statement about flood risk considerations.

4.15 A brief site specific flood risk assessment has been carried out with reference to the Checklist in Paragraph 068 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (Reference ID: 7-068-20140306, last revised on the 16th November 2016).

4.16 The current use of the land is agricultural land, used for arable production. The proposed use is a dog walking field whereby individuals' book to use the field in hour long slots to exercise their dogs. The number of dogs at any one time will be limited to 6. Training sessions are also proposed by the applicant who is an experienced and qualified dog trainer. Again training sessions will be limited to six dogs at any one time and limited to a maximum of 5 hours per week.

4.17 The application site is mainly located within Flood Zone 3, as identified on the flood map retrieved from the Environment Agency Website on the 28th March 2021, provided below.



© Environment Agency copyright and / or database rights 2018. All rights reserved. © Crown Copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey licence number 100024198.

4.18 The application seeks a change of use of agricultural land to dog walking field. The only physical change to the field sees the provision of a secure stock fence boundary treatment with access gates around the field area. No buildings or other hardstanding areas are proposed. Parking is proposed on existing hardstanding areas. A block plan is provided with the planning application which identifies the proposal. It should be noted the applicant's father who owns the farm, has never known the land to flood.

4.19 With regard to flood risk vulnerability classification set out in Table 2 (Paragraph: 066 Reference ID: 7-066-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014) the proposed use is considered to be 'outdoor sports and recreation' which is water-compatible development. The lifetime of development in terms of flood risk and coastal change is considered to be 50-100 years. It is considered that once established the proposed use will become a locally available recreation facility which will benefit the local area in the long term.

4.20 As the application is for a change of use (and not to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site), a sequential test does not need to be applied in this case, as confirmed in Paragraph 033 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (Reference ID: 7-033-20140306).

4.21 The site is within a defended floodplain, as defined in Appendix 1 of the Environment Agency's 'Policy and Practice for the Protection of Floodplains' and is considered to be passive until such time as a flood greater than that for which the defences were designed occurs. The likelihood of flooding due to overtopping or failure of a flood defence embankments is considered to be small.

4.22 The site and surrounding land drains to the Gosberton Pumping Station which discharges into the South Forty Foot which ultimately flows into the tidal River Witham.

4.23 The South Holland District Council Updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has considered the effect or breach or overtopping to the River Glen defences and is considered to be very low. The River Glen flood defences consist of an earth embankment with road on crest and it is estimated that the floodwaters would not affect the development site, as there is 600mm freeboard above the 1 in 100 year flood level inclusive of climate change.

4.24 Safe and dry access to and from the site will be available into Northgate Farm yard which is under the same ownership where land is in Flood Zone 1.

4.25 The site is currently an agricultural field and will remain a grass field as a result of the proposed change of use. There will be no change to the existing drainage of surface water and therefore no increase to the risk of flooding of the site or to others off site as a result of the proposal.

4.26 The proposed change of use to a dog walking field will be managed by the applicant. Bookings will be taken for the use of the field. One or two adults maximum will be on site and up to 6 dogs during each booked session. A buffer of ten minutes will be in place between sessions to ensure there is a gap between users on the site.

4.27 When training sessions take place for up to 5 hours a week, there will be potentially 7 adults on site, including the instructor, 6 human participants with 6 dogs in total.

4.28 Flooding events are predictable as these will be caused by extreme weather conditions created by deep atmospheric low pressure causing heavy prolonged rainfall. The applicant will register with the Environment Agency website to be alerted of any flood warnings at the application site. If severe weather conditions are being experienced that may impact on river levels, then the applicant will contact any users of the site that are booked in and cancel sessions, while a severe flood warning is in place.

4.29 Contact details for each user of the dog walking field will be recorded at time of booking so that the applicant can contact users easily as and when required.

4.30 As the sequential test is not a requirement, neither is the exception test, in this case.

4.31 The proposed use sees no built form impacting on the site, and visitors will be on site for brief periods of an hour at a time.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of part of an agricultural field to dog walking field with ancillary use of dog training for a limited period throughout the week.

5.2 The applicant has significant experience, education and training in canine behaviour and training and is able to provide effective and positive management of the site. The operation of the site will be proactively monitored.

5.3 The proposed use is an appropriate type of use for the Countryside location and provides an important safe and secure recreational space for dog owners. The proposed operation of the site has been developed to ensure impacts on amenities are significantly limited.

5.4 Physical changes to the site are limited to the provision of stock fencing around the perimeter, which on its own, would not require planning permission.

Appendix A: Survey Results

Survey Analysis

Based on 190 responses

(+21 not accessible)

Myself and my dog have anxiety so it would be amaizing

Great for socialising our dog

We used dog parks in New Zealand all the time, especially great for training puppies

My cockapoo really needs socialising, especially with covid. He is such a friendly dog and would definitely benefit from being able to play with other dogs off the lead

I have used before and do often
As long as safety and security measures are in place particularly when accessing and leaving field and taking over from.previous users

Would be beneficial to have agility or other sort of facilities as well as an open field to give some enrichment to the dogs

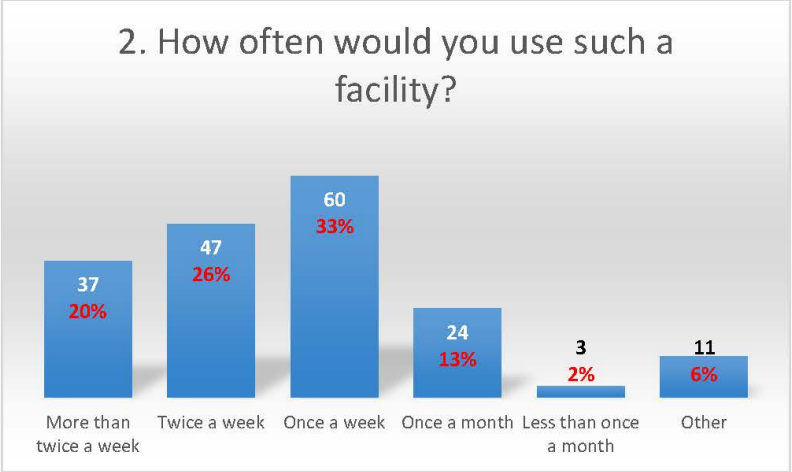
Really needed!

Would love one

Depending on other dogs. Would be fearful if other dogs there off lead might attack my dog

So need this
If only our dogs were in the area.

Yes definitely! My dogs recall isn't that good and she loves to run and burn off some steam!



Every other week

Not sure as depends on work rota

Twice a month

Would depend on where it is and cost.ideally at least once a week

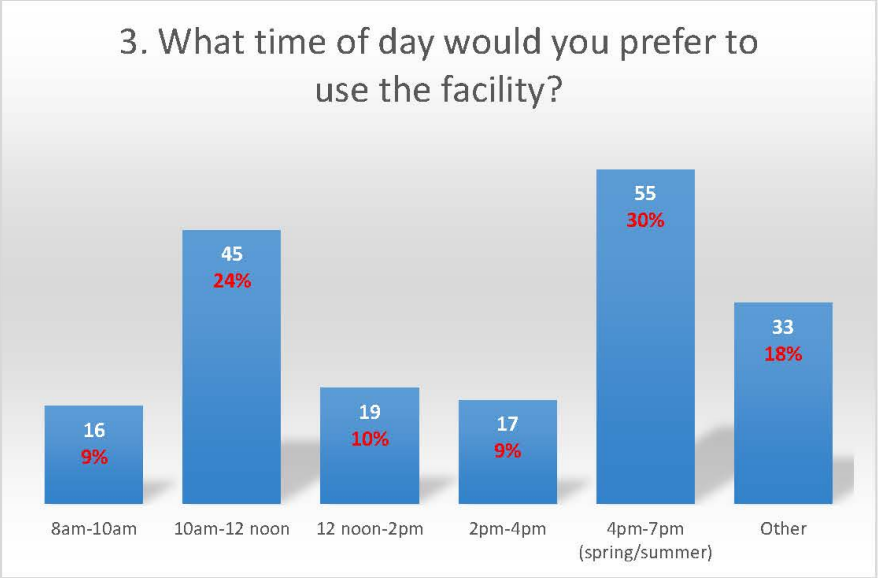
Dependant on cost probably more often

It depends where it is. Once a week if close, once a month if further away.

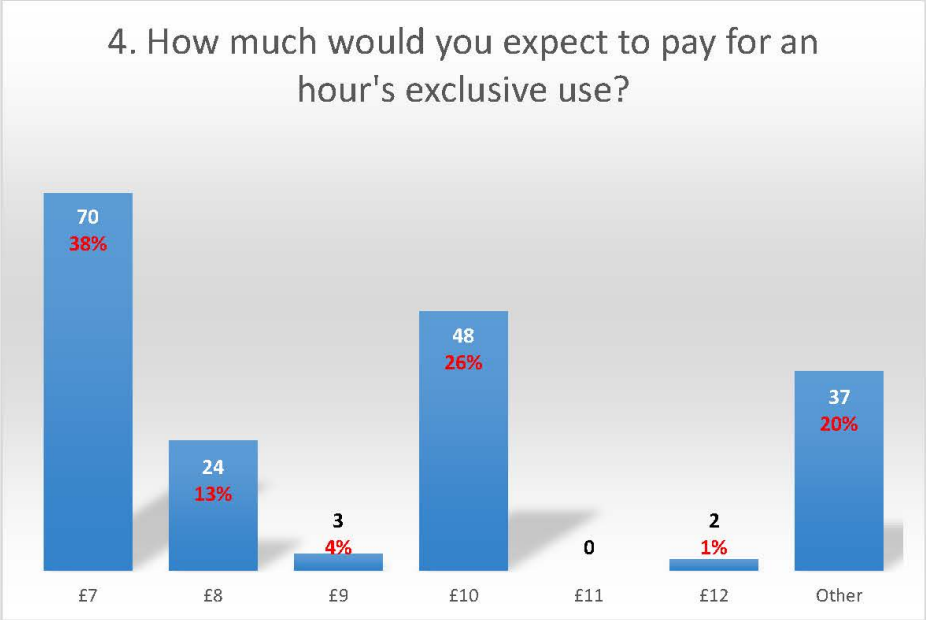
Depends on price.

More depends on price

Depends on weather



Any time 12
Depends on shift 5
In the morning, evening in summer 3
Weekends 2
Any time after work until dark
Different times on different days
Times vary depending on day
Between 9am and 8pm
Up to 9pm if light



£5 15

£10 or under 2

Wouldn't need exclusive 2

Donations 2

£2 2

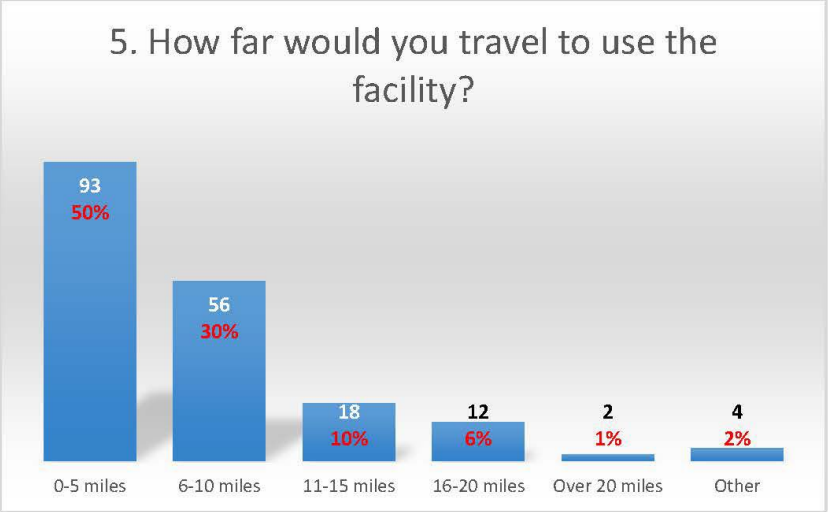
Nothing 5

Between £8 and £10 2

£4 2

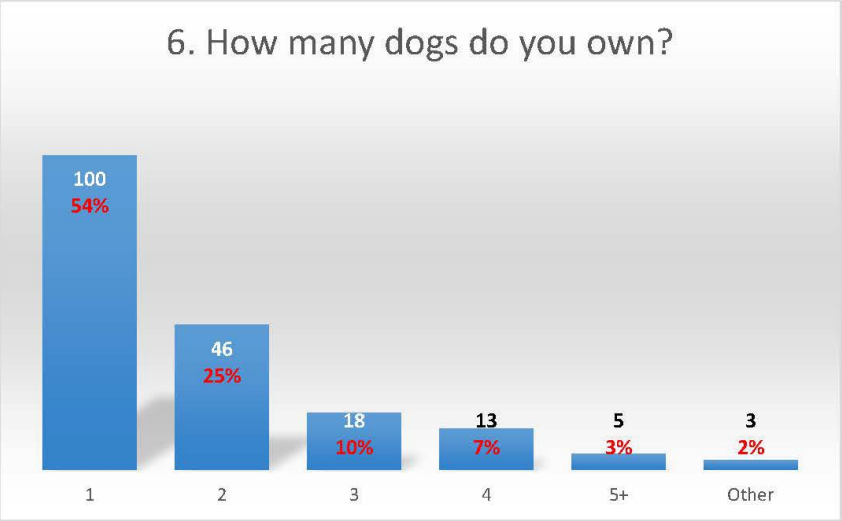
£2.50

£4 for half an hour



I'm in Sleaford but willing to travel for secure walk

0-10



None, looking for a rescue

7 large, 2 small

7. If you are happy to, please give your approximate location (nearest village/town)

		%
Spalding	54	32
Donington	15	9
Gosberton	13	8
Holbeach	11	7
Pinchbeck	10	6
Boston	6	4
Surfleet	6	4
Moulton	6	4
Weston	5	3
Kirton	4	2
Quadring	3	2
Sutterton	3	2
Whaplode	3	2
Gosberton Risegate	2	1
Bourne	2	1
West Pinchbeck	2	1
Swineshead	2	1
Fleet	2	1
Gedney	1	1
Pode Hole	1	1
Hubberts Bridge	1	1
Shepeau Stow	1	1
Cowbit	1	1
Stickney	1	1
Westhorpe	1	1
Heckington	1	1
Lincoln	1	1
Frampton	1	1
Peterborough	1	1
Deeping St Nicholas	1	1
Fishtoft	1	1
Moulton Chapel	1	1
Moulton Eaugate	1	1
Wyberton	1	1
Sleaford	1	1
Billingborough	1	1
Coningsby	1	1
	168	

8) Any further comments, please add them here

(only from the first 2 surveys= 80 respondents)

There is one in Pinchbeck but no overly large and only offer half hour slots which isn't enough for two German Shepard's to burn off energy with having a lockdown baby hard to walk them due to there strength with a pushchair otherwise I'm up and out at 530:6am before my partner goes to work at 7am this would be very helpful

Currently attend a secure 2 acre site in sutterton which has agility and dog wash facilities also for donations only

Would love a facility like this where you can meet with other dog owners and let the dogs socialise, nearest at Sutterton is a little too far for us to use mid-week

Would there be access to toilets, water , seating (for less able)

I would meet up with friends so our dogs can play safely off lead.

Would we be able to bring our own toys, balls etc?

This would be fantastic to teach the new rescue pup recall.

Please include a half hour option. Especially during the colder months. Plus don't always have an hour and travelling time spare during the working week. Good luck, we definitely need one closer to Spalding.

Happy to share with others

Small dogs: large dogs: etc. Play time would also be good.

We have a rescue dog, he was slowly getting better, could walk by other dogs. Last week 2dogs ran out of a house and attempted to bite him. He's now hating every dog, nightmare. An hour beinv able to run free and be safe would be great.

Poo bins please

A facility where dogs can socialise is more needed

How about scooping the poop?

Fantastic idea.

I often use paddocks, they are really helpful for a 2 yo bouncy Staffy who gets very excited when he sees other dogs and immediately thinks they want to play, even if other dog doesn't - so he's not able go off lead anywhere but somewhere for just us work no other dogs

Much needed especially with theft being rife

Already one in sutterton but always booked up. It's hard to find socialising areas for lockdown puppies as well as secure fields for a bit of training

Willing to travel if the field is worth it

Good luck Sally 🖐

Please can you update me if this goes live, [redacted]

Its a great idea, my dog is quite social, so I think it would be good to offer moxed groups as well, the enclosed part is great for those dogs who.like to dissappear, also great for those who do not like to mix with other pooches. Great idea.

Great idea. I do hope it comes to fruition