3 – DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

STATEMENT

Mission Statement

Providing a safe, enriching space to enjoy the freedom of the countryside whilst building confidence and safeguarding mental health through interaction with animals.

Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework, p.135 (December, 2024) is demonstrated through our Mission Statement.

We would like to open up our little farm so others can benefit from the effects of close contact with animals. Our animals are our pets; they all have names and their welfare is paramount. We have sheep and lambs, Pygmy goats, mini-Juliana pigs and chickens. Next year will be adding a therapy dog.

My background is safeguarding, family support, behaviour support and being an advocate for those with additional needs.

The plan is to open to select groups of vulnerable people on three days a week between 10:00am - 12:00pm and 12:30 – 2:30pm. These groups would include children and adults with additional needs, those not able to be in full time education (alternative provision), home educated children and the elderly.

The timeslots will only be available when booked online, they are not open to the general public. The sessions will not be structured. A responsible adult will accompany the visitors and it is envisaged that visitors will interact with the animals, maybe have some educational lessons outside including painting and drawing etc. It will be a very relaxed environment.

We have a covered outdoor area with appropriate seating which is accessible and visitors will be able to use an existing toilet. Hand washing facilities will be provided.

Risk assessments will be written for each group.

It has been proven that interaction with animals is calming and very good for mental health.

Build social skills and confidence. Provide a sense of calm and reassurance. Aids sensory integration.
https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health

Being with animals could improve both your mental and physical health.

- *Helping to reduce your stress, anxiety and blood pressure and boost your mood.*
- *Feeling calmer and more relaxed.*
- *Being more socially involved, like talking to animals, or talking to others with a shared interest.*
- *More physical activity. Through walking, play or being out in nature.*

https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/mental-wellbeing-and-physical-health/animals-and-your-mental-health-how-they-can-support-your-wellbeing-and-recovery/

The American Veterinary Medical Association (2007) defines the bond between humans and companion animals as "a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship influenced by behaviours essential to the health and wellbeing of both".

Animals make loyal companions and great confidants. Their love is unconditional and non-judgemental; they seem to understand our emotions and provide a good listening ear.

There is also increasing scientific evidence that animals/pets can benefit our physical health. Just stroking a pet, or watching a fish swim, can help us to relax, reducing our heart rate and lowering blood pressure.

Animal assisted interventions have been proving beneficial to people of all ages for decades, bringing companionship, practical support and improved mental health. They have also been shown to reduce physiological responses to stress, such as increased or variable heart rate, and low mood and anxiety.
https://psychiatry-uk.com/why-do-animals-make-us-smile/