Planning, Design and Access Statement



Manor Farm
Bradford Road
Holt

December 2023

DAVID glasson PLANNING

CONTENTS

		Page
1.0	**INTRODUCTION**	**1**
2.0	**SITE CONTEXT**	**2**
3.0	**FARM BACKGROUND**	**3**
4.0	**PLANNING POLICY**	**5**
5.0	**DESIGN CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES**	**8**
6.0	**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**	**9**
7.0	**ACCESS**	**11**
8.0	**CONCLUSION**	**12**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *David Glasson Planning Limited (DGP)*, have been instructed by Mr and Mrs Tucker (the "Applicants"), to submit a planning application for the use of land for an enclosed dog walking/exercise area to include a timber shelter and car parking at Manor Farm, Bradford Road, Holt BA14 6PL

1.2 DGP have prepared a planning, design and access statement (PDAS) to accompany the planning application.

1.3 This statement sets out the background and justification for the proposed development and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Accompanying plans (prepared by *Southpoint*)

2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 Manor Farm is a 40 hectare (approx. 100 acres) mixed farm on the western edge of Holt which has been in the same family for three generations.

2.2 Holt is an expanding village with a population of 1757 and 736 households (Source: Holt Neighbourhood Plan: 2016) with major housing developments underway at the Tannery and completed in the nearby area at Kingston Farm.

2.3 Access is gained via two entrances off the main approach road to the village – Bradford Road (B3107)

2.4 The farmstead comprises a mixture of agricultural, commercial and residential uses.

2.5 The surrounding area is characterised by a cluster of modern and traditional farm buildings, steel-framed buildings being in pre-eminence, the backdrop of the adjoining village of Holt and farmland which falls gently to the south to the River Avon.

2.6 The farmstead is within the designated West Wiltshire Green Belt and part is within the Holt Conservation Area. NB. The application site is within the Green Belt but outside the Conservation Area.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Applicants propose enclosing part of a large field adjoining the farm group on its western side for an enclosed dog walking/exercise area.

3.2 The harsh realities of modern-day farming means many British farmers are having to find supplementary income sources outside the sphere of the traditional working farm and according to National Farmers' Union figures, around 65% of all farm businesses in England also run other enterprises (Source: NFU Levelling up rural Britain: 2021). With increasing energy costs, lower food prices and the exodus of the UK from the European Union, the trend of farm diversification will continue to be a feature of the British farm and quite probably a mainstay with the move away from basic payments on the horizon. The face of farming is destined for radical change with reforms placing environmental outcomes at the heart of future support aimed at reversing biodiversity decline, meeting carbon budgets and hitting clean air targets.

3.3 In the past, farmhouse B&B and farm shops were a typical form of farm diversification to complement farming activities but the increasing volatility in the industry as well as climate change means a greater reliance on more commercially orientated activities if farms are to stay productive, progressive and profitable.

3.4 In a rural situation like Wiltshire, spending from farm-based business can be expected to have a multiplier effect for local pubs, village shops and garages, tourist attractions and leisure pursuits, domestic help/cleaning and ongoing landscaping work and maintenance. At a time when many rural areas are facing a range of deep-seated problems such as unaffordable housing, poor broadband and limited public transport, new economic activity can play an important role supporting local business and the wider rural economy.

3.5 In common with many other farms, the Applicants are having to diversify against the backdrop of challenging economic conditions and the transition from direct payment subsidies to a post-Brexit subsidy regime founded on the principle of 'public money for public goods' whereby farmers and land managers will be paid for delivering primarily environmental benefits.

3.6 The proposed dog walking/exercise business will make a vital contribution to the farm at a scale which will complement the existing agricultural enterprise rather than dominate the agricultural activities of the farm.

3.7 The additional revenue stream from the proposed use, alongside traditional farming activities, will support the future longevity of the farm so securing its business base for future generations but it also offers tangible spin-offs for the surrounding rural community.

3.8 Its edge of village location as well as its close proximity to Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge means the farm is well placed for local dog owners. According to a 2021/22 survey dogs are the most commonly owned house pet among UK households with the share of households reporting dog ownership at 34% (Source: *Statista*). During the past year pet ownership increased by 18% when compared to 2019/20 (Source: *Statista*) which is most likely explained by the coronavirus pandemic and the amount of time people spent at home/working from home. While empirical evidence is limited, according to HABRI (*Human Animal Bond Research Institute*) 74% of pet owners say that owning a pet has improved their mental health with studies showing that animal-human interaction increasing oxytocin levels in the brain resulting in a sense of calm, comfort and focus. It is widely acknowledged that dog ownership increases physical activity and provides companionship but can for many people reduce anxiety, boost self-confidence and add structure and purpose to their day in having to feed, exercise and care for a pet.

3.9 The need for daily dog walking and exercise is paramount. Many dog owners value the safety, security and freedom of an enclosed space away from footpaths and other public spaces and especially those with young and temperamental dogs where they can be released off lead. A dedicated area is also likely to be popular with the growing trend of dog sitters/walkers and dog sharing

3.10 It is anticipated that new jobs would be created; from website designers to the general upkeep of the exercise area. In addition to this, the ongoing expenditure possibly spent by dog owners in the surrounding area on local services and amenities. The social and economic benefits will go well beyond the farm gate to the wider community.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) ("NPPF") contains the following:

The NPPF sets out the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through three overarching objectives:

a) An economic objective;
b) A social objective; and
c) An environmental objective

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:
a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and …

Promoting healthy and safe communities

92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Open Space and recreation

98. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

Proposals affecting the Green Belt

150. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds);

4.2 The Wiltshire Core Strategy ("WCS") adopted 2015 contains the following policy:

Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy

This policy identifies how sustainable construction and low-carbon energy will be integral to all new development in Wiltshire to reduce it's contribution to climate change through improved design and construction methods.

Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life

This policy explains the approach that will be taken to support rural communities.

Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

This policy requires that all development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Core Policy 51: Landscape

This policy seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character.

4.3 The Holt Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) adopted in 2015 sets out a vision for the village which includes a thriving local economy offering employment opportunities for residents and sustaining a strong sense of community supported by local resources and facilities.

The following Environment, Energy and Green Spaces objective is relevant:

Green Spaces Objective GS.1

Protect and improve rural footpaths and improve access to farmland and rural walks.

In regard to Community Amenities the Parish Council has agreed that part of any monies arising from the Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus from new developments should be devoted to improvements to the environment and leisure facilities of the village.

Vision

A village with a strong sense of community supported by good local resources and facilities which should be protected and improved by the creation of additional facilities such as cycleways, and leisure and sporting opportunities for older children.

5. DESIGN CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

5.1 The overall vision for the design of the development is to provide a discrete enclosure adjoining the farm group with strictly minimal physical works to ensure it is sensitive to its pastoral setting and does not impinge on the openness of the Green Belt. The design rationale is firmly based on minimising any structures to those which are essential to allow the proposed use to operate satisfactorily, and, which respect its agricultural setting.

5.2 The proposed scheme has been guided by the immediate and wider context and is a meaningful and sustainable design response.

5.3 The landscaping and biodiversity measures will integrate with a woodland management scheme due to be implemented at the farm.



View from access – field to be enclosed to right of drive

6. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Description of works

The walking/exercise area will extend to just below 1 hectare (2.47 acres) and will be enclosed by a 1.8 metre high green PVC coated galvanised fence with a pedestrian entrance gate accessed by a numerical keypad.

A car parking area with spaces for 3 cars (including an electrical vehicle charging point) will be provided on a stabilised gravel permeable hard-standing off the westerly access drive to the farm.

A small timber shelter will offer cover during inclement weather.

A water point will be provided for owners for cleaning/dog drinking.

The existing roadside hedgerow will be retained and new mixed native planting will be laid alongside the public footpath.

6.2 Operation and management

The proposed use will be a secure enclosure which dog owners/walkers can hire on an exclusive basis to exercise or train their dog(s) off lead.

It is anticipated that most dog owners will be arriving by car but there is a good network of public footpaths in the locality allowing access on foot.

Dog owners will be required to collect all dog waste and a bin will be provided.

Arrangements will be made with an approved waste disposal company to attend on a weekly basis.

The enclosure and bookings will be managed by the Applicant's daughter.

The enclosure will be inspected daily to check for any damage/repairs and to clear any waste/rubbish.

6.3 **Booking**

Dog owners will have the opportunity to pre-book their slot via a website and online booking system and subject to agreement to terms and conditions. Following a booking, the dog owner will be sent a gate code by email/text which will allow access to the enclosure.

Only one booking per hour will be permitted.

A maximum of 8 dogs will be permitted in the enclosure at any one time.

Each session will start on the hour and last 50 minutes allowing a 10 minute changeover before the next dog owner arrives.

6.4 **Opening hours (amended)**

The enclosure will operate during daylight hours, as follows:

1st March – 30th September (06.00 – 22.00)

1st October – 28/29th February (07.00 – 17.00)

6.5 **Biodiversity**

There are existing bat and bird boxes around the farm and 3 or so extra ones will be added.

The enclosure will continue to be mowed as happens at present.

7. ACCESS

7.1 The existing vehicular/pedestrian access (pictured below) from Bradford Road will be maintained. This access was previously approved for commercial use.



7.2 The entrance on Bradford Road affords excellent visibility in both directions.

7.3 Parking will be limited and discretely accommodated behind the hedgerow offering screening from roadside views. Traffic generation will be light and there is adequate space for turning manoeuvres which will be away from other farm/commercial movements.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The Applicants core aim is to continue their agricultural enterprise but it is vital for the future survival of the business they investigate forms of diversification and the supplementary income it offers to maintain and manage the holding. The proposed dog walking/exercise area is small-scale and represents a small area in relation to the overall holding but will nonetheless help sustain the farm in the long term so ensuring it has a sound financial footing and can survive the uncertainties of the agricultural economy.

8.2 With the rising popularity of dog ownership/sitting over the coronavirus pandemic and acknowledged benefits for physical health and mental-well-being, the Applicants are well-placed to offer a safe and secure environment for dog owners and walkers in Holt and the surrounding area, especially those having dogs with behavioural issues,

8.3 The proposed site is well related to the farm group and is away from residential properties such that any barking should not be intrusive and will be mitigated by the intervening distance and ambient road traffic noise. Furthermore, the enclosure will not operate during unsociable hours.

8.4 The field will retain its agricultural character and appearance and the small shelter and car parking will be discretely sited against the roadside hedge. The small-scale usage by single dog owners at a time will not result in any adverse amenity or highway effects.

8.5 The proposed enclosure will be in line with Green Belt policy in being a form of outdoor recreation and the necessary supporting infrastructure is of such minimal visual impact as to not impinge on the openness of the Green Belt.

8.6 The close proximity of the enclosure to the village will improve access to farmland/rural walks in line with the HNP, in so doing should strengthen the sense of community in creating a leisure and recreation opportunity.

8.7 The NPPF urges a positive approach to diversification projects in rural areas such as this proposal and recognises the importance of opportunities for sport and physical activity for the health and well-being of communities. There will be social benefits beyond the farm-gate, in particular allowing more lively dogs to exercise away from the public, as well as spin-off economic benefits for local services and businesses thereby contributing to the wider rural economy.