

Gwalia Fields



OVERTON, WREXHAM, LL13 0LG

Change of use of land to dog walking field

1025-02-DOC-01

Design & Access Statement





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Introduction

This Statement document has been prepared by Diogel Architecture on behalf of the client, Mr Dennis Nicholls, and it has been produced in support of their application to change the use of the existing fields at Gwalia Fields in Wrexham.

This supporting document is to be read in conjunction with the prepared drawings which accompany the application.

It is intended as a positive and helpful tool for the council and interested third parties alike, it demonstrates in succinct terms the extent of consideration that has been invested in the scheme design and layout and its evolution in regard to opportunities and constraints presented by the site and wider area.

The document outlines the proposal to create a new dog walking field to support the local residents and introduce employment in the area, requiring limited impact to the existing fields and allowing for visitors to be comfortable at the new space.

Use

The proposal will provide sessions broken down into 30 minute windows for local members of the public to walk and exercise their dogs in an enclosed and fenced field.

This will provide a level of diversification for the existing farm.

The site is 2.5 acres of agricultural land located south of the B5069, situated on a country road linking the B5069 to Pentre Coed and A528 (Grange Road).

The land will be securely enclosed with a 1.8m high post and wire fence, which could lawfully be erected under permitted development. The fence will enable people to walk with their dogs off lead without the worry of them running away.

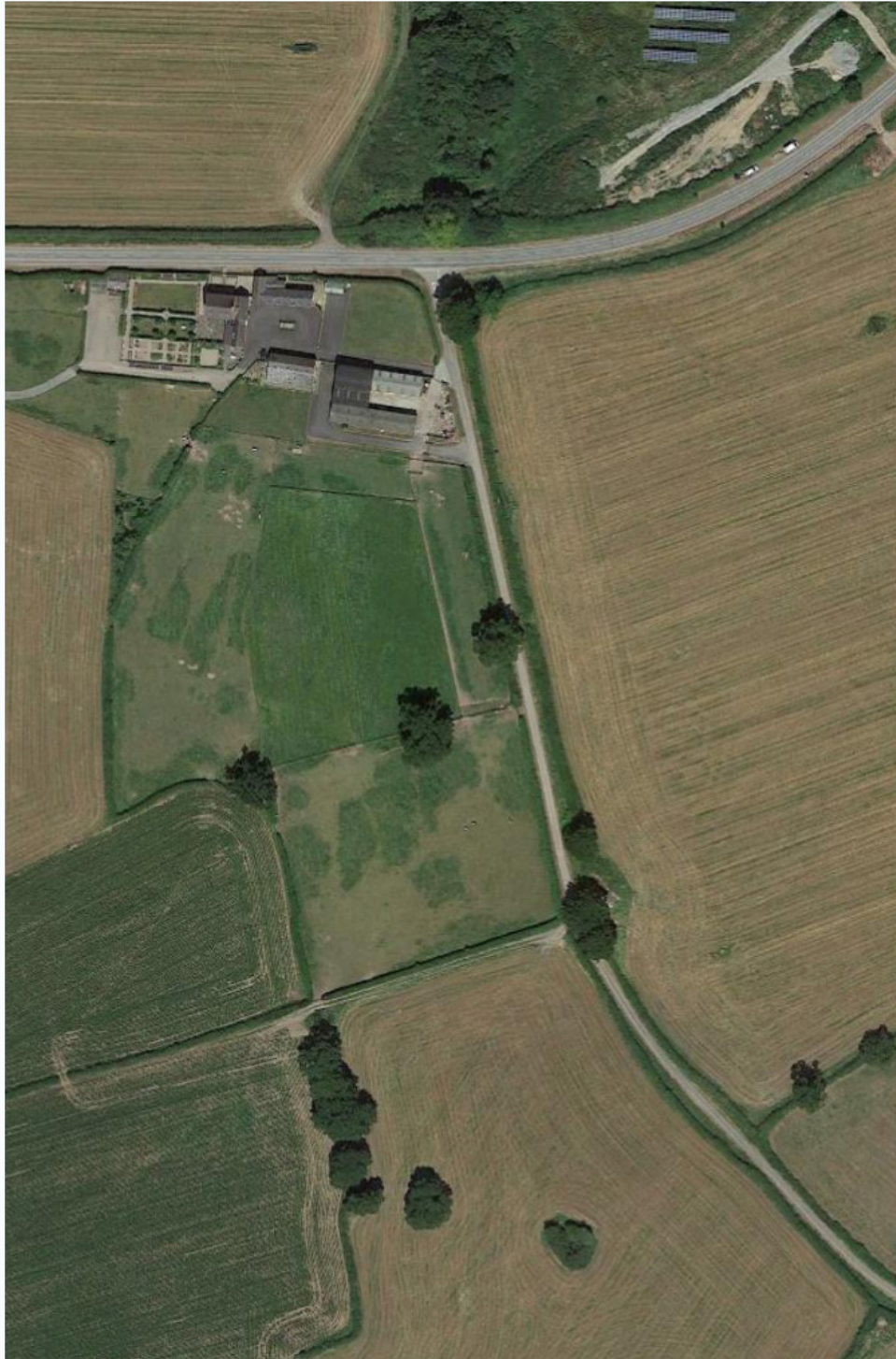
This service will particularly appeal to those owners who have dogs which may be nervous / antisocial, have poor recall, a disability or may be an area for initial puppy training away from other dogs.

A dog walking field set in the rural countryside which is easily accessible will be a valuable addition to the dog walking community in and around Overton.

The proposal will involve customers booking 30 minute sessions (with the option of booking for longer sessions) using 'Booksy', an online booking system for them to use the dog walking field. Only customers who have made a prior booking will be able to use the field with the possibility to provide reoccurring bookings to dog trainers & walkers.

The booking system will restrict customers so that only customers with a maximum of 6 dogs may use the facility at any one time. The use will therefore be extremely limited and remain at a very low density.

The grass will continue to be maintained and tractor access will be ensured to enable for haying in the future and to cut the grass during to allow for walking.



Amount

There will be no permanent development on this site as a consequence of this change of use, other than the introduction of agricultural fencing, and a small temporary shelter.

The visual agricultural appearance of the site will remain unchanged.

The parking will only be frequented by those with access to the site and no hard standing will be introduced. Instead the grass will be protected by rubber grass matting.

The parking will be sufficient for 3 No. cars and to allow for a maximum of 3 dogs per session with the field.

There will be no agility training taking place on the site requiring equipment being fixed in place and therefore no build required.

The use of the site solely relates to dog walkers exercising, for the physical health and mental well-being of dogs and their owners and to enjoy the local countryside.

The shelter will be open fronted and will be no more than 2.5 m x 2.5 m x 2.5 m and the material is expected to be timber.

Layout & Access

The main entrance will be 180 m from the B5069 down the track road with both tractor and vehicular access. There is more than sufficient visibility to allow for access; 170m to the B5069 and 80m in the opposite.

The black grass grid will be situated immediately at this access as shown opposite.

Dog waste bins will be placed by this access, within the perimeter of the fence and will be emptied twice weekly by the applicants. The waste will then be collected by a licensed waste contractor.

Furthermore, the site will be inspected at regular intervals to ensure the site remains clean and clear.

On the opposite side of the site, adjacent to the track road, will be where the shelter will be placed to allow for full vigilance of dogs off lead in adverse weather conditions.

Finally, for when the weather permits a temporary picnic bench to allow visitors to sit while their dogs are off lead will be in place as a non-permanent item.





Scale, Landscaping & Appearance

The site currently has a perimeter fence that defines the boundary of the field. The intention is to replace this existing fence with one of no more than 1.8m for the protection of the dogs being walked.

The shelter is expected to be no higher than 2.5m, non-permanent structure, and will be largely hidden by the new proposed fence.

Surroundings to the site is agricultural only and the proposal provides no impact to any surrounding buildings or uses.

The picnic table is expected to be timber in construction and will be expected to be 2.5m x 2.5m x 1m providing no impact on the site.

The grass grid will be hidden largely by the grass and only viewed in the oblique. This will provide an unintrusive method of parking any vehicles while not damaging the existing field.

A dog bin will be provided adjacent to the field entrance to allow for ease of removal and therefore the field will be protected from potential damage waste.

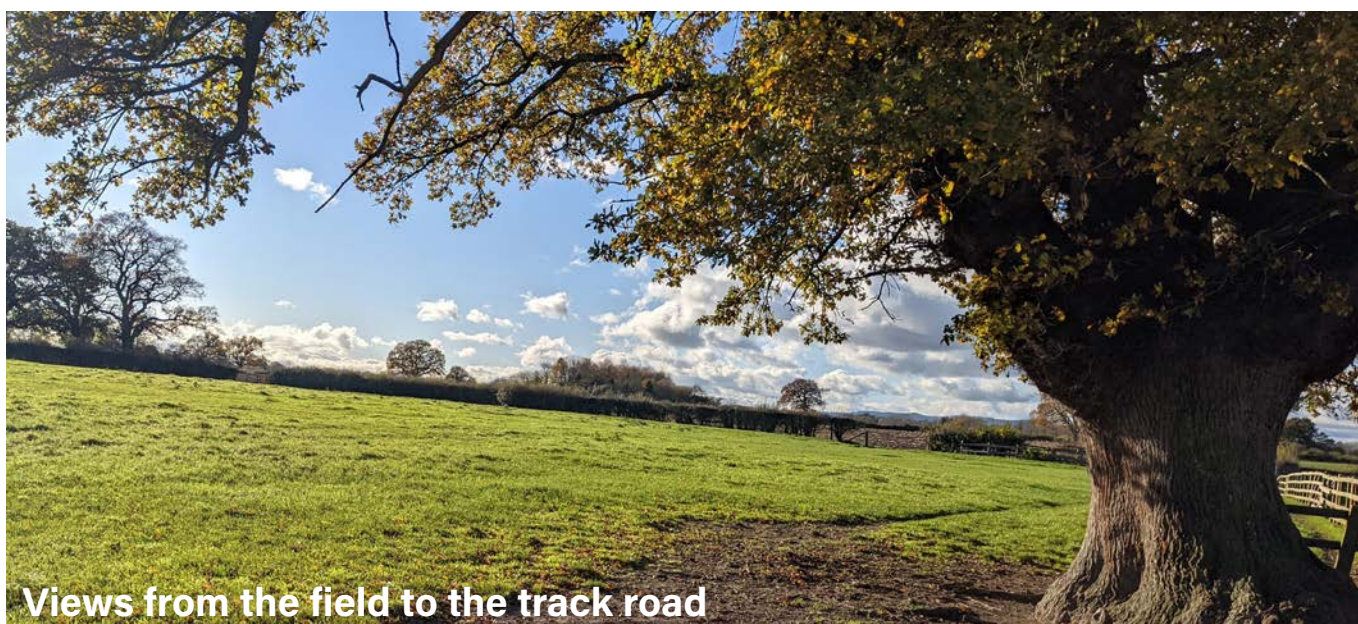
The images on the opposite page provide an understanding of the existing field and demonstrate little change to the existing condition.



Existing boundary fence to have additional increase of less than 0.8m



Existing field entry to have additional fence added for parking



Views from the field to the track road

Additional Notes

The management and operation of the online booking system, mowing of grass, management of fencing and car park maintenance will provide employment for the equivalent of 1 part time employee, equivalent to a 0.5 full time employee.

With volatile arable commodity prices, UK droughts and unpredictable weather patterns; the farm business is pursuing ways to maintain its viability and seeks to diversify income streams away from direct agricultural produce.

This can be achieved through the provision of a community service for dog exercising as well as the promotion of the health and well-being exercise for local residents and the community.

The applicant has identified a demand for this use through social media interest generated on local Facebook pages and the request for more exclusive and private facilities in light of social distancing and Covid-19.

The requirements for dog owners and their dogs to exercise safely outdoors, the increase in dog ownership and the rise in the frequency of walking are also contributing factors for the demand for this kind of community facility.

The income from this diversification stream will support the farm to withstand the economic fluctuations within the farming industry and enable it to continue its viable operations.

There is also a huge benefit to mental health and physical well-being, with this service offering people and dogs the space to get fresh air and exercise in a setting in which people can isolate away from others.

This proposal meets criteria as set out under paragraph 83 of the NPPF, in that it is a sustainable growth of the existing farm business and is subtly enhancing the land rather than adding to it unnecessarily.

It also is a sustainable source for rural leisure developments, focusing on the need for safe, outdoor exercise areas for dog owners and walkers, while simultaneously respecting the character of the surrounding countryside.

This farm diversification project will also develop local community facilities by offering this open green space for local residents and members of the public to utilise the safe and secure setting for their dog walking.

No development is occurring in the form of built structures, and the fencing and land use appearance is unchanged to what could be achieved agriculturally under permitted development.

The proposal is in line with the Wrexham UDP Policy E5 & E6, as there is no building structure to provide this employment opportunity in the rural area.

Finally, it is worth noting again that this will also support other dog walking enterprises thus supporting the rural economy.





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