

DC/25/0450

Change of use from agricultural to dog walking. Land off Northlands Lane Storrington

Planning Statement

This application is made in response to a request from your compliance officer notifying the Licensee of this site that a planning application was required

The site consists of two fields, one of about 4 hectares and the other 2 hectares. Between the two fields is a public footpath and a thin belt of trees. There are other areas of tree cover to the south and to the east, the latter separating the site from an industrial estate.

To the north of the smaller field is an extension of Water Lane now used only as a bridleway.

The land has been in agricultural use for many years, at one time associated with a hobby farming operation at East Wantley.

As it is a small sized holding, and is now close to housing developments to the south and east, and there is no on site supervision, opportunities for agricultural use are limited.

As such, the site has suffered from unlawful and unpermitted used by third parties of motor cycling, cycle cross and other anti social behaviour, as well as general trespass in including dog walking by local residents.

The easy access to the site from Water Lane and, from the south, Downsview Avenue, facilitates these unlawful uses.

As owner, I was approached in 2017 by the Doodley Dogs enterprise asking about using the fields for dog walking as an ancillary service to their business.

Doodley Dogs were aware that the previous agricultural tenant had given up, the last of a series of tenants, not all of whom paid rent when due or maintained the site.

The main benefit of the Doodley Dog involvement in this site is to provide a close local presence to ensure the reasonable security of the site on a day to day basis through the presence of only known and permitted users.

The use of the fields for dog walking has not required any development of any kind, either before 2017 or since 2017 and none is envisaged or planned in future. No fences, no hard standing, no earth works, no tree felling. No development at all.

As it is, the site offers a useful resource for dog owning members of the community, and takes pressure off local footpaths and public open spaces such as Sullington Warren. The site offers a space where dogs can be allowed to run free without the risk of intimidating other members of the public or their dogs or children.

The site has been designated in the Horsham Local Plan 2023-24 as a Strategic Development Site under Policy HA18, STO1, so there is no long term future of the site for agriculture.

The use of the site for dog walking is thus a useful transition of the site from agriculture to development while maintaining it as a predominately rural environment.