

Project Introduction

1.1. This statement has been prepared by the applicant Mr and Mrs Johnston in relation to the full planning application for a 40x20m All-weather exercise and turnout arena for sole private use of the applicants.

1.2. The Farm was purchased by the applicants in December 2016 to rear livestock (sheep) and graze their own horses

1.3. The farm comprises of 7.26ha (17.9 acres) of pasture with both owned land and rented land

1.4. The land is used to graze a flock of pedigree North Country Cheviot sheep (50 ewes) which are reared for meat and wool. The sheep are shown at various agricultural shows throughout the year and are sold at Leek Auction, as meat boxes to local residents and at breed specific sales throughout the country

1.5. The applicants also have 1 horse and 2 ponies which have been grazing at the farm since they purchased it in 2016. These ponies are ridden by the applicants' children who are 5 and 8 years old. The ponies require restricted grazing and regular exercise due to metabolic diseases including laminitis and Cushing's. Failure to manage these conditions appropriately would result in ill health/death.

1.6. The horse is privately owned and ridden by the applicants

1.7. Mr and Mrs Johnston plan to construct an all-weather exercise and training facility to exercise and train the sheep and horses throughout the year. This area will also be used as a handling facility for routine veterinary treatments for the sheep.

1.8. The proposed plans have been discussed with Hannah Varley from Staffordshire Moorlands planning and she advised that the best location for a training and exercise area would be as close as possible and directly behind the existing stable block so it can't be viewed from Woodhouse Lane and to minimise any extension to the current site. The location can be seen viewed in the site and block plan.

2.0 Site Analysis, Location and Context

2.1. The site is within the Greenbelt zone. It lies on Woodhouse Lane Biddulph Moor

2.2. There are no Listed Buildings in the area.

2.3. The site is not a conservation area.

2.4. The access is through two already established highway approved access points and therefore additional highway access or changes will be needed

Ecology.

2.4 We do not believe an ecology survey will be needed as there are no ponds or streams located near the development site.

Flood Risk Assessment

2.5 The site is not situated in a known flood risk area which is recognised by the Environment Agency's flood risk designation mapping. There is no known significant risk of flooding from any other source.

2.6 An adequate degree of drainage for the proposed area would be achieved through introduction of new drains which will connect to the existing field drainage system and soakaways.

Topography.

2.7 The site is on a steady gradient. No topographical survey has been carried out at this point to analyse the extent of the cut and fill that will be needed in order to get the surface flat. It is predicted maybe up to 1.5m of earth will be moved around to accommodate a flat area.

2.8 Any earth removed will be used to build up the side and will not be disposed of or taken away from the site. Due to the potential requirement to cut into the slope the levelled surface will be lower than the current ground level

2.9 There are no footpaths across the site

Site Photographs

3.0 Map showing the location of the images of the proposed location of the area

Parcel details

A S Johnston

Parcel ID: SJ9058 2220

This is a summary of the land parcel information Rural Payments currently holds for this land.

Summary	
BPS eligible area (ha)	0.29
Total area (ha)	0.29

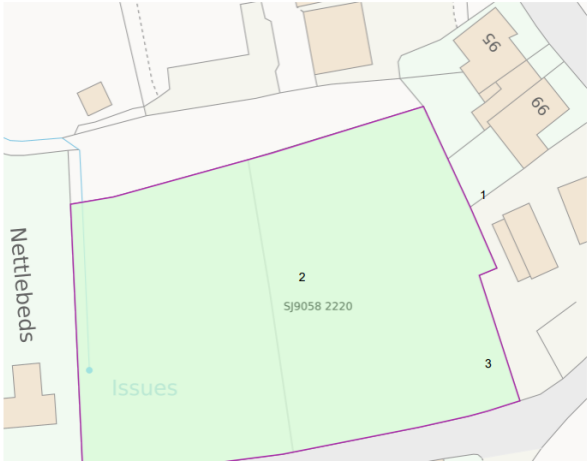


Image 1 taken from the East looking West (buildings are behind looking towards the field)



Image 2 taken from West looking East (Standing in field looking towards the buildings)



Image 3 taken from the South looking North



Summary of Proposed Development

4.1. Siting. It is proposed to locate the exercise area as close to the East of the field. This location is most practical, being close to the existing cluster of agricultural buildings. The proposed siting also helps to ensure that from a design perspective the proposal does not risk being isolated in the middle of the field and will fit within the context of the landscape.

4.2. A permeable stone surface will help to keep the surrounding area clear of mud. The permeable crushed stone is believed to be a great natural draining therefore will not be seen as harmful to the Greenbelt.

4.3. The proposed arena will measure 40m in length and 20m in width. It has been designed to fit in well within the rural surroundings to give minimal cut and fill as the field rises in level.

4.4 The location and siting has been chosen to minimise the visual impact of the change in the ground surface from any neighbouring dwellings.

Construction and Appearance.

The makeup of the proposed arena will be as follows;

5.1 Strip the earth back to clay, lay a herringbone pattern of 100mm twin wall perforated drains covered with a filter sock, trenched into the existing field drainage. Non-Woven geo textile membrane over the followed by 150mm depth of whole area, clean stone. Woven membrane over this layer, followed by sand and fibre blend.

5.2 40mm x 400mm pressure treated timber retaining boards surrounding the arena sitting on a crushed stone layer.

5.3. Treated timber post,rail and sheep netting will be used for arena boundary.

5.4. The arena will be built using a cut and fill method of levelling. This means that all the spoil will be used on the arena area and not spread on to the land keeping the area to a uniform level.

5.5. All the above materials are not seen as harmful to the Greenbelt environment. They are all natural materials, and the construction of the area would allow for it to be easily converted back to grass land if so wished.

5.6 Lighting. We do not propose any outdoor lighting in the arena or walkway to the fields. This would require a further planning application which is understood by the applicant.

5.7. Arboriculture. The arena will use the current fence lines as two of its boundaries.

There will be no removal of any trees or hedges and there are no TPOs close by.

There is are currently hedgerows on the Northern and Western site boundaries which provide screening and we are proposing to plant hedgerows on the southern and western edges of the area

Pre-Application Advice.

6.1 Pre-Application advice was sort on the 4th September 2024 from Hannah Varley and her advice has been followed in this application

Planning Statement

National Planning Policy Framework

7.1 Proposals Affecting the Green Belt

154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

(a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

(b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

7. 2 The applicants believe that the use of an arena is essential to the health and welfare of the sheep and horses as they not designed to live in 24/7 and regular exercise is essential. To enable the sheep to attend agricultural shows they need to be trained to walk in hand on a halter and this training require a secure and flat surface. The applicants' children participate in young handler classes and this area would be used a practice area. It would also be used a collection area to temporarily hold the sheep whilst administering routine veterinary treatments and for pregnancy scanning.

7.2 Horses must have careful consideration of their weight for both their health and welfare.

In order for the applicants to keep on top of weight management, they must have an all-weather arena to enable them to provide regular exercise and training. This would provide a suitable and safe area in which to exercise and keep the horse and ponies fit. One of the ponies has recently been diagnosed with equine metabolic syndrome which is life threatening if access to grazing is not severely restricted (due to the presence of sugars in the grass). This pony requires all year-round turnout in a non-grassed area to allow a good quality of life and prevent 24/7 stabling.

7.3 Horses need lots of exercise because of their size. It is also very important for their mental wellbeing too. Unfortunately, due to the local lanes / roads being exceedingly busy coupled with the very large farm vehicles, lorries and the extremely high volume of traffic on Woodhouse Lane and surrounding lanes it is not safe to hack around the lanes, especially in the winter months. The safety of the applicants and their children is paramount when exercising the horse and ponies.

Applicant statement Background

My Partner and I brought the land in December 2016. I am a lecturer in Agriculture at Harper Adams University and an Agricultural Business consultant, and my wife is a Veterinary Surgeon specializing in farm animals.

We were looking for a family home with land and buildings including lambing shed, hay barn, chicken runs and stables. This was so that we could raise livestock mainly Sheep and keep horses and ponies we could rear livestock for breeding, meat and wool and cut out livery costs.

The land has previously used for livestock and horses and has always been used for grazing and occasionally hay making.

We do not run and have never run a livery yard business. The land was bought for private use only.

We have created paddocks for grazing with stock proof fencing and water troughs

The Arena

We need an arena at the farm to provide a facility to exercise and train the sheep and horses. Horses need lots of exercise because of their size. They can't be kept in a field or a stable with no exercise. Hacking out on the roads in our area is very dangerous due to the increased volume of traffic on Woodhouse Lane. This traffic includes large farm vehicles and lorries which fill the road and are noisy. The local traffic is fast moving, and many people do not slow down or allow space for horses. We have experienced many dangerous hacks on Woodhouse Lane, especially on the blind bend outside the property due to people overtaking the horses at speed. We wear a lot of High Visibility clothing, including on our horses and use Safety cameras which have made no improvement to our safety. The children cannot ride safely on the roads, especially during the winter months.

During the Winter months the fields become very wet and poached from turning out the horses and the site becomes too muddy for safely handling the horses for us and the children. Having an all-weather turnout area would improve field quality and grass management as well as improving safety in handling the animals.

During the winter it is not possible to safely pen the sheep in the fields for handling due to the wet and slippery surfaces. This makes administering vital vaccinations by injection risky for both the sheep and the handler. A suitable enclosed handling space would make routine animal husbandry treatments safer and more efficient, thereby improving the welfare of the livestock.

The Future

An arena of the appropriate dimensions to accommodate the training of horses is essential for their welfare. Small ponies can get sickness from eating too much grass, the arena will provide a sufficient space to be rested off it. The appropriate arena for them to be exercised will help maintain a healthy weight, reducing the risk of grass sickness and laminitis.

The addition of an all-weather surface ménage will be invaluable for the horse's safety and for me as the rider/handler all year round.

Currently, this type of facility for hire is **only** available out of the local area. There is a considerable cost involved in accessing the use of an arena/ménage, including hire of the facility, horse transport hire and fuel, and equipment needed for the transportation. This means it is simply not a viable option other than very occasional use.

The provision of this facility on at our farm will mean we have a safe and manageable enclosure accessible arena to use at our convenience. There are number of properties on Woodhouse lane and the surrounding area which already have private use arenas for the reasons already listed above for horse and ponies this sets a precedent for this type of facility in the area