



EVANS & CRAWLEY

Stephen J Crawley FRICS
James W S Crawley MSc

Development Control

**Bridge House Water Meadow Chesham
Buckinghamshire HP5 1LF**

Telephone 01494 775666 Facsimile 01494 778575
Email: ec@evanscrawley.co.uk

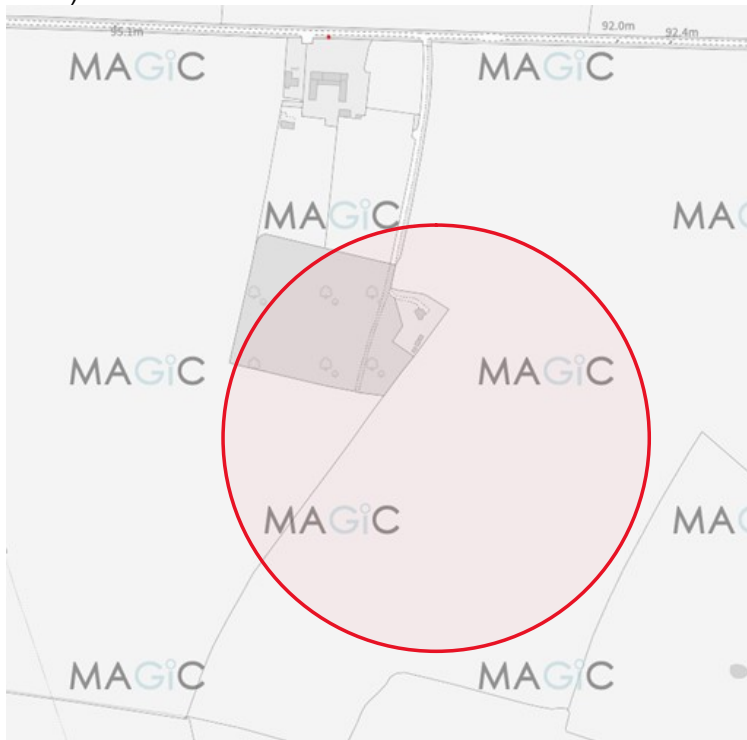
30 October 2023

DESIGN & ACCESS, PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

**Decoy Cottage
Sawgate Lane
Stapleford
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
LE14 2XF**

1. General & process

This combined planning statement & design and access statement has been prepared to explain the rationale and background behind the submission of this planning application at the above site. The application is for planning permission for the change of use of the land surrounding the cottage from residential & agricultural to 'Doggy Day Care' with an associated dog paddock, car parking and an additional set of kennels (sui generis use class).



Map view of the proposed site

CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYORS



Aerial view of track, woodland, cottage and paddock that forms the application site

The cottage has been in the long term ownership of the Stapleford Estate and until September of this year, had a long term residential tenant who used the grounds for occasional short term boarding kennels (low key boarding) and day care for dogs. See appendix A, a letter from the previous tenant, outlining the informal goings on at the property over the last nine years. This type of use is appropriate in a rural setting and has not proved problematic in the past – no complaints have previously been made to Environmental Health.

Note that the site is secluded, set in woods (which act as a natural screening) and the nearest residential premises is 200 metres away and the majority of the activity will be further away to the south and within the woodland that will further deaden any sound (it is an effective sound barrier and the nature of the noise is not out of character in this rural location). It would therefore seem that this historic use of the site has not been problematic in the past and the scale & carry is therefore appropriate for the site.

Currently the site consists of the residential cottage, an area of residential curtilage (garden) that contains the existing kennels, a shed and a hardstanding where additional kennels were once housed. The site has adequate parking and turning for the occupiers are those infrequent movements of persons collecting & dropping off their dogs. The gravel parking area will be extended slightly as indicated on the plans.

There is existing woodland to the west and south of the site and additional fencing will be erected to this area (see plans). Beyond these woods to the south is an area of grass land which is currently not used for agricultural purposes. A total 0.28ha section of this grass land will be surrounded by fencing (see specification below) as a safe exercise area. This will be split into a 0.20ha and a 0.08ha size paddocks.

A partnership with a local dog walking concern has been established, Katy McGarvey, a local individual. Currently the business is located in Burton Lazars and is primarily dog walking, some day care and some home visits to pets during the day or occasionally overnight. The current business owner currently has about 30 local clients – see personal statement in appendix C (below). Letters of support and personal references have been sent by her existing clients and form appendix B (below). The business will scale up slightly what was already being undertaken on the site but will primarily be doggy day care but with the option of an overnight stays (upto 8). The business will be 80% doggy day care and 20% overnight kennels.

An Animal licensing application for the activities on the site has been applied for and proof of same will be forwarded to the planning department once this is to hand.

The proposals therefore involve the change of use of the residential garden curtilage, area of woodland and agricultural paddock, installation of additional fencing and a further kennels building. The site already has a water supply, electricity and foul drainage hence more than adequate to supply the change of use

The field to the south forms part of the Stapleford farm estate, being a 1174 hectare arable farm. The field is currently under-utilised and hence this proposal forms part of the Stapleford Farms proposal to diversify their farming practises (see the business plan below). The site is located within the open countryside, approximately 200 metres from the only nearby residential property. The management of the doggy day care is covered within the business plan. The proposal will provide a service to dog owners on a site which has historically catered for same hence will not harm the open countryside. Note that the is also remote from public footpaths or rights of way.

The site is surrounded by a mature hedges and trees that are to be retained. None of the proposed new fencing is visible from the road and the existing fencing around the garden curtilage of the cottage is to be utilised in situ. The site does not contain any TPO trees and is not within the nearby Stapleford Conservation Area.

Dog day care facilities have become increasingly popular with people seeking to have their dogs looked after during work hours and not left home alone for long periods of time. Dogs require a lot of exercise and these types of facilities are essential to a dogs wellbeing, providing them with stimulated environments that allow them to exercise and play within a safe and secure area, dispelling their energy. This takes pressure off their owners especially after a working day. It also provides constant supervision for the dog in the event of an emergency then appropriate action can be taken. The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in a boom in pet ownership (according to the RSPCA) and along with more people returning to conventional working from outside the home, there has been a significant increase of doggy day care facilities across the country. Such facilities help adjust dogs to the change in routine and allow owners additional freedoms.

2. Use

Change of use from grassland & residential gardens to doggy day care, paddock for walking and kennels. The cottage is to retain its residential use and the company director will be living on site in the cottage.

3. Amount & layout

The footprint of field to be fenced is 0.20 hectares and the wooded area 0.08ha. The existing garden curtilage around the cottage is 0.1 hectares. The cottage cannot be seen from the road nor the adjacent residential dwelling. No gates are proposed adjacent to the existing entrance track from the road however a gate will be installed (see plans) on the entrance to the main site for security and to prevent the dogs escaping. There is already fencing around the cottage area and garden.

Opening Times: The facility would be open to facilitate drop offs around normal working hours. For example: 07:30 – 18:30. Some flexibility of openings hours would be beneficial, in order to accommodate the demands of customers working hours, providing enough time for them to drop off and collect their dog around their commute to their office.

The dogs will spend the majority of their time in the paddocks with other dogs, however the kennels will be used throughout the day to manage the movement of dogs. For example, some dogs may need to be fed whilst on site, so they will need to be separated for this. The kennels will also be used for infrequent overnight stays on an adhoc basis.

4. Landscaping & appearance

The site is surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows that are to be retained. The following should be noted.

- a) Car parking – the proposed expanded gravel car parking area is to be finished in matching gravel.
- b) Existing – the existing hedges & fencing that form the boundaries with the adjacent fields will be retained
- c) Fencing – the existing boundary fencing around Decoy Cottage comprise post & wire fences. These are to be retained
- d) Grass field & woodland – 1800 high post & wire fences to be installed (see photo below). These will be installed on the inside face of the high boundary hedges hence not be visible.
- e) Gates - new 1800 high metal 7 bar gates with mesh are to be provided (see below) as indicated on the plans, these will provide the access to the fenced paddocks.
- f) Drainage – no drainage is proposed. The hardstanding is free draining hence will not have an adverse impact on flooding
- g) Bins – a dog waste bin & a general waste bin will be provided (see business plan)
- h) Grass to paddock – the existing grass will be periodically cut by the estate.
- i) Kennel – the new kennel block will be the same size & appearance as the existing – see plans and photos



Example of the proposed 1800 high post and wire mesh fence to be installed



Style of metal gate to be installed. Mesh will be affixed to same to prevent the dogs escaping.

6. Access

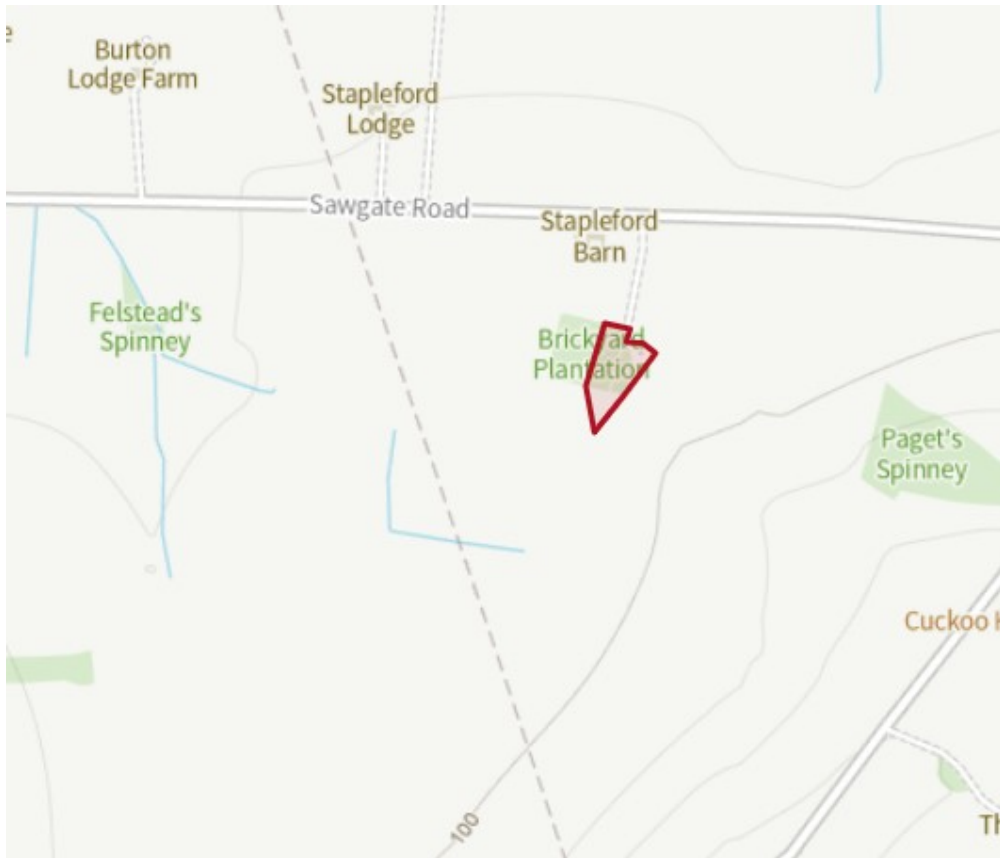
The site already has an established hardcore access from Sawgate Lane (see photo below). The visibility splays are more than sufficient and there is 800 metre sight line looking east and over 1km looking west on this straight section of road. There are no gates near the road access hence cars can pull off safely from the road. The speed limit along this section of road is noted to be 60mph. The gravel track to the site is 3 metres wide and we will install passing places along the track as indicated on the drawings.

See the business plan for numbers of car movements associated with the proposals

7. Contamination and flooding

Contamination – the site is not thought to be contaminated, it being historically used for residential use and arable farming (paddock to the south). No deep excavation is proposed hence there is no risk of ground contamination within the site.

Flooding - the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Seas) none of the site is within the flood risk zones. The area to be surfaced for car parking is a porous hence there will not be an increased risk of flooding from the proposals. See a copy of the flood map below



8. Planning statement

It is considered that the proposal is acceptable for the following reasons:

The proposed design and layout accords with the principles of development established within the Local Plan policy and ensures appropriate consideration is given to the site's location.

The proposal will not harm the amenities of adjoining residents which are located 200 metres away.

The proposed development accords with the relevant standards and policies as set out in the development plan and is a means of diversifying farming and an under utilised wood and field

Relevant Planning History –

There is no relevant planning history associated with this application

It is noted that various similar proposals for doggy day care have been granted over the recent years in the open countryside as part of small entrepreneurial schemes and wider projects to diversify farming.

Policy Context

NPPF (February 2019)

The NPPF sets out the governments national planning policy. It requires councils to take a positive approach to planning that reflects a presumption in favour of sustainable development and finding solutions that secure development that improves economic, social and environmental conditions. The NPPF 2019 sets out the most up-to-date policy on land use and buildings in the open countryside

The use of the land does not impact on openness. In the examples of planning applications mentioned above, it has been accepted that such doggy day care and exercise does not harm the openness of the countryside

Applications for doggy day care have been objected to on amenity grounds, chiefly noise and disturbance from dogs, but also additional car movements.

In terms of noise, the site is approximately 200 metres from the nearest residential dwelling and dog barking in the countryside is the norm. At this sort of distance, the dogs will not have an adverse impact of the residential dwellings (see noise mitigation plan).

In terms of car movements, the pick up and drop off times will see a slight increase in car movements but given the location, this will not see a significant or detrimental increase in the number of cars using the adjacent lanes.

The site is also secluded, surrounded by an existing high hedge hence the new fencing will not be visible from the road or adjoining areas. It should be noted that there a no adjacent footpaths.

Given the location of the site, the proposed use and the distance from the one residential dwelling, the amount noise increase is not going to be significant impact considering the IEMA Noise Impact Effects.

The Melton Local Plan has a presumption in favour of sustainable development (policy SS1) and to enhance employment growth in rural areas (policy EC2)

“In order to support the rural economy, the Council will allow for;

A. New employment land to be provided in rural settlements and/or;

B. Rural employment proposals which create or secure jobs;

The following types of rural employment development are acceptable;

- 1. The re-use of existing farm buildings and well designed new buildings for employment;*
- 2. Schemes for farm diversification involving small scale business and commercial development that help to support the viability and retention of farm holding;*
- 3. Small-scale tourism proposals, including visitor accommodation, such as glamping, camping and bed and breakfast;*

4. *The expansion of an existing rural business, dependant upon the nature of the activities involved, the character of the site and its accessibility;*
5. *Small scale employment development to meet local needs; and*
6. *The use of the land for agricultural, forestry and equestrian activity. Subject to the proposal;*
7. *Being of an appropriate scale for its location;*
8. *Having sufficient accessible off road parking provided on site or in the nearby vicinity to cater for the use proposed."*

In conclusion, the significant benefits of creating a sustainable small business that will provide employment must outweigh any sustainability issues that relate to the use of the cars. It is incumbent on a local planning authority to support, not stifle such a proposal

9. Conclusion

The site does not create amenity issues for local residents. The site is a significant distance from all dwellings, noise is controlled through the management of the site and the existing mature hedging & trees around the field will counter any noise. The application seeks to continue to historic use of the site, which has not proved a problem in the past.

Doggy day care has become increasingly popular in recent years as seen by various recent submissions to Melton Borough Council. The provision of safe, secure areas for dogs is becoming increasingly popular and the proposals seek to satisfy this local need for such a facility.

The design & access statement and the business development plan provide further information for the proposals, together with support for the scheme. The site appears to be an ideal location for the proposed use. The use has been demonstrated as one that is appropriate in rural areas, although the site is readily accessible from built up areas and the adjacent hotel.

The development may reasonable be seen as representing an appropriate rural enterprise. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal may be seen as a leisure development that is appropriate within a rural setting. The proposals also preserve the unique and open rural characteristics of the area. We therefore consider that the development would be entirely consistent with the NPPF and Local Plan Policies.

By the nature of the proposal, the history of the site and the location of the site (it being remote), the proposed use will not give rise to issues of noise disturbance that would constitute grounds to withhold planning permission. Noise will be minimal and will be managed positively through teaching and training.

10. Business Plan

The applicant has established a business plan for the proposal and this forms part of this application. It has been submitted under separate cover but should be read in conjunction with the plans and this document

11. Appendix A – letter from the previous tenants of Decoy Cottage

From: MelindaBrown <melinda756@btinternet.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 7:29 PM
To: Jess Allan <jess@staplefordfarms.co.uk>
Subject: Stapleford Doggy Daycare

Development Control

I write in support of the proposed Doggy Day Care facility at Decoy Cottage, Stapleford.

I rented and occupied Decoy Cottage & the surrounding gardens from the Stapleford Estate on an AST lease for nearly 9 years up until August this year. We had our own dogs (8 spaniels, including 6 breeding bitches) and these lived in the kennels that are still on site. I had a license to breed and had several litters at the property over the years. I also used to look after friends dogs at the premises non commercially. This involved the owners dropping the dogs off at the property during the day, this was around 6-8 dogs. On occasions the dogs would stay with us in kennels for a prolonged period if the owners were on holiday etc.

I also had 6 daschunds over the years which lived in the house.

The site is a large, remote and secluded and I can confirm that we did not have any complaints from the neighbours or Environmental Health

Yours sincerely.

Melinda Brown

12. Appendix B – letters of support and references for Katy McGarvey

From: lesley lowe <lesley_lowe@hotmail.co.uk>
Date: 23 October 2023 at 15:14:07 BST
To: katymcg03@outlook.com
Subject: Dog care reference , let me know if you want me to include anything else

I have known Katy for the past 12 months, since I starting using Katy's Dog Walking Service. She has always been friendly, professional, very polite and has great communication skills .

Katy has always been very reliable, observant and caring towards my Cockapoo Hazel. Hazel adores Katy and does not hesitate to go with her. Knowing how happy and well cared for she is, has given me peace of mind and allowed me to return to the workplace.

Her knowledge of dogs, expertise in handling and genuine love of them is very apparent.

I highly recommend Katy and wish her success with her new dog business.

*Lesley Lowe
Melton Mowbray*

00oo00

CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYORS

From: Auriel Mepham <scicoach@me.com>

Date: 22 April 2023 at 11:17:35 BST

Subject: House / dog sitting reference.

Hi;

We have two older dogs who've never been in kennels so when we found Katy not long after we moved to this area we were over the moon (as were the dogs).

We've used Katy's services several times now for house / dog sitting and walking whilst we been on holiday and also for day visits and walks when we've been out all day.

The dogs absolutely love Katy and almost look disappointed when we return home.

The house is always left neat and tidy too.

I would high recommend Katy to anyone looking for a reliable dog / house sitter and dog walker.

Please let me know if you've any questions.

Best regards

Auriel and Jim Mepham

00oo00

*Julia & Christopher Joseph
2 Cross Lane
Burton Lazars
Melton Mowbray
LE14 2UH*

22nd October 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Reference for Katy McGarvey

Katy and her family have lived along Cross Lane in Burton for 7 years and we have known her and her family from walking her own two lovely dogs Archie and Isla. Katy herself is a lovely, bright, warm and friendly girl and an avid dog lover.

More recently she had a change of career and advertised as a dog walker, Move Those Paws and as we needed a dog walker ourselves for our two spaniels, we got in touch.

From the first meet and greet when she arrived with her homemade healthy dog treats they were hooked on her friendly caring nature too. Katy has a good understanding of dogs, their behaviour and welfare. She is patient, confident and capable. Therefore recently we have used her services as a house/dog sitter too. She kept us informed about the dogs whilst we were away, especially useful as it was the heat wave and even bought her own fan from home to keep them cool. Katy is also the perfect house guest and we will engage her services again.

We can't speak highly enough of the way she has looked after the dogs and would not hesitate to recommend her. Katy's career and job training as a groomer at Pets at Home is another advantage too and has provided an opportunity for her to build on her natural skills ability and understanding with dogs. The dogs themselves I am sure would have written a much better reference than ourselves!!

If you require any other additional information please feel free to contact me on 07785327127 or by email on christopherjulianjoseph@gmail.com

Kind regards

*Julia & Christopher
Saffi & Basil*

00oo00

Katy McGarvey – Reference

To Whom it May Concern,

With reference to Katy McGarvey applying for her dog licence, we have known Katy for 2 years, firstly in her previous role in a local pet store. We relied heavily on her knowledge and expertise for our 3-month-old puppy. Katy demonstrated her experience and knowledge through the advice we received.

Recently we have used Katy to look after our dog whilst we were away for the weekend. Katy visited our house prior to the date of our holiday to find out what our dog's routine was, his likes and dislikes and most importantly to spend some time with him, whilst we were there. We showed her around the house and made arrangements for times to arrive and times we would return.

Katy was reliable and arrived promptly as agreed, as we had already left. Katy sent us a message to say she had arrived, and we received regular updates and photos of their activities during our weekend away. I found this to be very reassuring, particularly as it was the first time, we had left the dog with anyone.

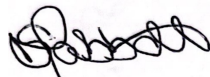
Katy inspires confidence with animals and is trustworthy. I had no qualms about her staying in our house. On our return the house was spotless, and the dog looked happy and content.

I have recommended Katy to my Mum who has an elderly dog that doesn't like change, Katy demonstrated the same qualities as mentioned above and the dog has built up a relationship with her.

I would not hesitate to recommend Katy to anyone and have complete trust in her abilities with animals and her trustworthiness.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Kind regards



*Sarah Mabbott
07967446034*

00oo00

*Holly Farm House
5 Cross Lane
Melton Mowbray*

CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYORS

23rd October 2023

To whom it may concern

Re: Personal reference for Katy McGarvey

I have known Katy in a personal capacity for a number of years and have been employing her in the capacity of dog walker/dog sitting since January this year.

She came highly recommended to me by other dog owners in the village, and she has proven herself to be reliable and trustworthy in all of my dealings with her to date. Katy clearly has an aptitude for this work – she handles animals confidently, and my two dogs respond well to her and have developed a real affinity with her. She is also supporting me in puppy socialisation.

I have already recommended Katy to some of my friends in terms of dog walking and dog day care/sitting and have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending Katy more widely.

I am happy to be contacted directly in respect of this reference should you require any additional information.

Kind Regards

Joyce Hazard

00o00

To whom it may concern

Katy McGarvey was recommended, by a friend, as someone to care for our 6 cats whilst we were away for an overseas wedding in August, this year.

Not only did Katy excel at looking after our unruly mob she had to deal with working out how the little darlings were escaping from the newly erected catio, in the rain! Truly above and beyond, communicating regularly to ensure we knew all the mini Houdinis were safe and returning for food. Videos and photos to support dialogue were welcomed though not expected and it was lovely to have a rapport with Katy so I felt reassured despite the change in plans that a broken catio presented. Katy remained calm and reassured that all would be well, which it was.

Katy explained her experience with animals when she came to meet the cats and understand where food and other items were, prior to the period of care and I immediately felt happy that she was trustworthy and capable and felt reassured that all the idiosyncrasies of the clowder would be coped with and catered for with enthusiasm. Likewise I felt Katy had integrity and our house would be in safe hands whilst hundreds of miles away.

I hope that we have not scared Katy off looking after our moggies in the future as she is the first person I would call if we need a pet-sitter. Equally, I would have no hesitation to recommend Katy to others in the area if they need someone to look after their very precious pets.

It has been an absolute pleasure to meet Katy and use her services for our felines and hopefully she will continue to run her pet services so that we can take relaxed holidays, secure in the knowledge that Katy will care for our pets and deal with any eventuality.

Christine Riley
83 Sandy Lane
Melton Mowbray
Leics LE13 0AN
07903584273

00oo00

Louise Tarry
2 Galsworthy Crescent
Melton Mowbray
LE13 1TD
07960617128

Letter of Recommendation: Katy McGarvey

This letter is to give my recommendation of the professional and caring service of Katy.

When Katy first met my fur babies (Mango & Star) it was obvious she loves dogs and they loved her. Immediately I knew she was the perfect choice as a dog walker.

Katy has been walking mango & star since September this year, following a personal tragedy. She has come into my life when I needed her the most.

The thought of someone else walking our beloved fur babies was inconceivable, but in a short space of time Katy has integrated into my & the girls life. I have no hesitation in giving her access to my home & I trust her implicitly.

Katy sends me photos of the fun they are having together on their walks, and such a difficult time I honestly could not cope without her.

She is honest, trustworthy, reliable & flexible, even covering weekends. I know she genuinely loves the dogs & they love their 'Auntie Katy' too.

I therefore cannot recommend Katy highly enough & the gold star service she provides. She is one in a million.

Yours Sincerely

 L. TERRY

000000

Mr & Mrs White
34 Brentingby Close
Melton Monobray
LE13 1ES

07828 168110

23rd October 2023

To Whom It May Concern

Reference for Katy McGarvey

Katy has been walking our spaniel Amber for the last 12 months and we would highly recommend her to other dog owners. Katy is always on time and has a very good rapport with our dog. Katy has also been a house/dog sitter when we have been on holiday. We cannot recommend her highly enough. Amber is so excited when Katy comes to walk her and absolutely adores her. We would highly recommend her to anyone looking for a kind & reliable dog carer.

Heather White

000000

13. Appendix C – personal statement

My name is Katy McGarvey, I'm 20 years old and I've lived in Melton Mowbray all my life. For as long as I can remember I have had a love for animals, dogs in particular. I was educated in Melton Mowbray where I achieved 9 GCSEs ranging from A-C including Maths, English and Science. I progressed to college where I studied Psychology, Law and History, achieving A*BB. I am proud of the qualifications I attained during the pandemic where I had to adapt to a whole new way of learning. I made the decision not to go to university and launched an online business selling clothes, also working as a bar supervisor at Stapleford Park Hotel. As job satisfaction has always been a priority, I made the decision to launch on a business venture of my own. At the commencement of my business, I was also employed at pets at home training as a dog groomer.*

My current business has expanded, and I cater for approximately 30 clients, and I am responsible for entering residential homes, regularly staying overnight. While training at pets at home I completed a canine first aid course and a dog behavioural course achieving 100% in both areas.

I also recently purchased my own van with transportation crates which has enabled me to accommodate multiple customers.

I'm highly organised, caring and efficient with a variety of animal related caretaking experience, complimented with excellent interpersonal skills, problem solving and administrative support talents. I have a strong work ethic and strive to achieve the best in all areas, and I am always eager to learn new skills to advance my career.

I believe my business has flourished due to the fact that I have a reputation for reliability, flexibility and dedication. I provide a high standard of customer service and pride myself on good punctuality.

I have a very positive attitude, I am energetic and enjoy a challenge, having recently climbed Ben Nevis.

I am confident that I possess the skills and enthusiasm to take the business forward and I am really excited to be given the opportunity to promote and develop an environment that will provide an excellent service for customers and their dogs.

Katy McGarvey, October 2023

14. Photographs



The existing track to the cottage. Photo taken on Sawgate Road



Taken from the access to the site looking east along Sawgate Road



Site access and view looking west



Existing gardens



Existing kennels and hardstanding where further kennels once stood until recently.



The grass field to the south of the site – currently under utilised.



Grass field to the south of the site – this will form the dog walking paddock



Existing view of the cottage

END

CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYORS