



Dog Walking by professional dog walkers at Ashridge Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), July 2017

Why do professional dog walkers have to pay a licence fee?

Anyone using our land for commercial purposes of any kind needs our consent. This includes, for example, people taking photos for commercial use or running club activities.

Why have you set the limit at 4 dogs per walker?

We've looked at other schemes operating in some London boroughs and the Royal Parks, as well as our own experience out on the estate. We feel that 4 is the maximum number that can safely be walked at any one time. However, this scheme is only just being rolled out, so we are prepared to keep this under review if it proves to be unnecessary.

Why have you set the fee at £250 per year?

We looked at other licensing schemes and at the charges dog walkers advertise on their websites. We felt this was a fair sum that reflects the value to walkers of being able to use Ashridge for their business. It works out to less than £5 a week. Our research shows that dog walkers in this area are charging around £10 per dog, per walk. So, a walker doing just 4 walks a day on 5 days a week, for example, would be charging around £200 per week.

If I walk fewer than 4 dogs at a time, will it cost less?

We want the scheme to be simple and consistent, so the fee has been set for walkers walking **up to four** dogs at a time.

Can you have a discount if you're a National Trust member?

The National Trust is a charity that relies on its members for support and on the gift aid contributions from membership fees. In order to comply with HMRC rules, we are unable to offer monetary discounts to our members on commercial activities, such as dog walking licences, riding permits and purchases from our shops.

Why are you doing this now?

We want people to use and enjoy Ashridge but need to balance this with caring for the countryside and covering the rising costs of maintenance and conservation. Ashridge is a huge estate and it costs us over half a million pounds a year to look after it. Hundreds of thousands of visits each year create pressure on both the landscapes that we care for and our resources. Other groups, such as horse riders, members of the model aircraft club and our vendors, all pay fees. We believe that

professional dog walkers, who make use of Ashridge as part of their commercial enterprise, will acknowledge the fairness of making a contribution to the upkeep of the estate.

What do we get in exchange for signing up?

You will get an armband that clearly identifies you as a licensed dog walker. We will also set up a page on our website to give details of all licensed dog walkers. Licensed dog walkers will be able to advertise the fact that they are properly licensed by us on their advertising materials. Dog walkers are advised to check their local authority licences and insurance, as walking dogs on land where they don't have the consent of the land owner may breach their licence conditions and/or invalidate their insurance.

How will you enforce against dog walkers who aren't licensed?

We're a small team and we want to work with our visitors and users. We will make approaches to unlicensed dog walkers and urge them to become licensed. We'll stress the benefits of being correctly licensed. We'll also advise them to check the terms of their insurance and local authority licences to make sure that they are not contravening the terms of either by failing to obtain the correct licence to use Ashridge for this purpose.

What's the penalty for failing to obtain a licence?

Unlicensed professional dog walkers can be prosecuted under National Trust Byelaws 1995. This is a criminal offence that carries a fine and will lead to a criminal record for those convicted.

How can I obtain a licence?

You can get a licence for professional dog walking at Ashridge by contacting the Estate Office on 01442 841800. We will need to see evidence of your local authority dog walking licence (if applicable) and your public liability insurance cover.