

## **Request for 4<sup>th</sup> Lenzie Guides to hold Regular Outdoor Meetings at [name] Farm**

### **The Farm**

The Farm is owned by Alison, assistant leader with 4<sup>th</sup> Lenzie Guides. The property consists of a house, annexe, garden, byre, piggery, stables, paddocks and a 4-acre field. The surrounding land and access lane is owned by Caledonian Estates. Access is via a single-track lane, maintained by owners. The farm and the surrounding fields are the only property accessed via the lane. Guides are dropped off in a layby with direct access to the lane. We then walk up the lane together (see risk assessment for further details). The Farm is a small holding, not a working farm. It is a private residence with 3 horses, 1 cat and 1 dog on site, there is no other livestock, and the surrounding land is used for arable farming/crops.

### **Background**

Meetings started at the Farm in September 2020, in response to Covid restrictions. All guidance was adhered to. At this point, the District Commissioner for Lenzie agreed that meetings were taking place on adjacent land, and not in a garden. This was later confirmed by Girlguiding staff in the volunteer support department, the definition of an outbuilding was also confirmed by Girlguiding staff. As Covid restriction eased, the Guides chose to continue with outdoor meetings at the Farm.

### **Homes and Gardens**

Due to conflicting information, we sought clarification from Girlguiding, volunteer support. This was followed by contact with NFU Scotland who were able to offer guidance and insurance, based on designated land, separate from the house and garden. From the conversations noted above, our understanding is that our request relates to adjacent land, and not a home or garden.

### **Public Liability Insurance**

Following detailed discussions with Girlguiding Insurance department, NFU Scotland and the underwriters, a quote for public liability insurance has been secured (see Appendix 11). The policy holder will be the farm owners. NFU asked detailed questions about the property and Girlguiding activities and accessed maps and photographs. The conclusion of NFU was that this was a low-risk entity.

### **Toilet facilities**

Toilet facilities will consist of a chemical toilet and a portable sink for hand washing with running water within an enclosed area of the piggery. The toilet will

be maintained and emptied by the property owners. This arrangement has been discussed with the Environmental Health Officer at East Dunbartonshire Council. The Environmental Health Officer asked a number of questions and stated that our toilet requirements were comparable to a portaloos at an event. The Environmental Health Officer also provided clear guidance on hand washing that has been incorporated into our risk assessment (warm running water, liquid soap, paper towels, followed by use of hand sanitiser as additional precaution). When considering how best to provide suitable toilet facilities on site, we visited local forest school facilities and contacted the Education and Skills Policy Advisor at Scottish Forestry. Scottish Forestry directed us to an extremely useful online article to support our decision making: <https://creativestartlearning.co.uk/early-years-outdoors/where-to-go-when-you-need-to-go/>

### **Accessibility**

We have read the Girlguiding Equality and Diversity Policy. Our 2 main areas of concern are socioeconomic barriers and members with additional support needs. Currently, all Guides are dropped off by car. Several parents have existing car share arrangements, and we have measures in place to support parents who do not drive. The drop off point is located close to a bus stop. We have shared information with all parents regarding the Young Scot National Entitlement Card which provides access to free bus travel. One of our leaders has 20 years experience working as an allied health professional with children and young people with additional support needs. We would feel confident in developing an adjustment plan and making all reasonable adjustments, should a need be identified. We know we can contact our district commissioners for help and advice as required and are aware of the Accessible Guiding Grant. There are 4 Guide units in Lenzie, the leadership teams work together to identify which unit is best placed to meet specific support needs of members (both Guides and volunteers).

### **Views of Guides and parents**

As part of the decision-making process regarding future outdoor meetings, we consulted with the Guides and their parents. Every Guide said she would like outdoor meetings to continue. All parents reported that their daughter was happy and enjoying outdoor meetings. Three parents mentioned logistical challenges of getting to the farm but acknowledged solutions were available. Below are some of the comments we received from parents.

*"the farm environment has been such an amazing experience for them...I am in full support of staying at the farm"*

*"it's so much fun and creating such wonderful happy memories for them all"*

*"the ability to get outside is so important, the change in their enthusiasm from the hall to the farm was very noticeable"*

*"she loves the open space of the farm"*

*"it has given them a reason to cross the door, get fresh air and mix with young people their own age"*

### **Girlguiding policy documents**

We have used the following documents, accessed via the Girlguiding website to support our decision making:

- [Girlguiding Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Girlguiding Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Girlguiding Countryside Classification](#)
- [Being Prepared – planning for guiding activities](#)

### **Taking Children Outdoors in Scotland – Guidance documents**

We have found the following documents and websites useful when considering how to safely plan, organise and facilitate outdoor unit meetings:

- Out to Play – practical guidance for creating outdoor play experiences in early learning and childcare (Scottish Government, February 2020)
- Going Out There – Scottish framework for safe practice in off-site visits (Scottish Government, January 2021, Version 3)
- Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland website [www.owlscotland.org](http://www.owlscotland.org)
- Scotland's National Outdoor Play and Learning Position Statement – Inspiring Scotland [www.inspiringscotland.org.uk](http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk)
- East Dunbartonshire Play Area Audit and Action Plan (March 2020), specifically section 3.5 – Opportunities for Natural Play

- Preventing Accidents to Children on Farms (HSE, June 2013)
- Access to Farms ([visitmyfarm.org](http://visitmyfarm.org))

### **Outdoor Meetings Risk Benefit Assessment**

*“Play and learning outdoors is life-enhancing; it promotes mental, social and emotional wellbeing by helping to reduce stress, increase self-esteem and confidence, develop emotional resilience, and build children and young people’s confidence in their own capabilities and ability to manage risks and deal with uncertainty.”* From Scotland’s National Outdoor Play and Learning Position Statement, Inspiring Scotland, 2018

*“In organised outdoor learning it is common for there to be a residual level of risk that is judged to be tolerable and in balance with the benefits that will accrue... Engagement with actual risk is vital if learners are to develop the skills to deal with the succession of risks they will meet in their own lives.”* From Managing Risk in Outdoor Learning, Education Scotland National Improvement Hub, updated February 2021

Guides and leaders gain enormous benefits from outdoor meetings, the programme is more varied, the girls are more engaged and there are many more opportunities for girls to find resources and create their own, engaging activities. We feel we have a comprehensive risk assessment in place and where risk remains, it is sensible and proportionate to the benefits gained from meeting outdoors.

Leadership Team, 4<sup>th</sup> Lenzie Guides