



Guidelines for Running

We run in the beautiful Ashridge Estate and wish to continue to do so. Please respect other users of the Estate, a smile and a thank you go a long way.



Canicross is cross country running with your dog. You wear a belt and are connected to your dog via a bungee line to absorb any snatch, the dog wears a special pulling harness. Cross Country running is on typically on uneven, wet, muddy, rooty, slippery ground. Ashridge has a real mix of paths and you will often come back wet and muddy. Trail shoes with good grip are recommended for Canicross; fell type shoes typically have the levels of grip required. Shoes are always a hot topic.

On hot topics, when the weather gets warmer we may well meet up and just go for a walk. Dogs are more sensitive than us to both heat and humidity so we will not run if there is a risk of the dogs overheating.

You will also warm up running (and more so cross country) so it's best not to start the run in a down alpine jacket as you'll soon be carrying it.

Dogs

Your dog should ideally be around a year old before they start Canicross, however we recognise that this will vary from dog to dog, as they all mature at different speeds. For the younger dogs it takes a while to build up to the longer runs. Most competitions stipulate a canine minimum age of 1 year for most runs and 18 months for the longer 10k and above. We like to encourage people to start running and having fun with their dogs but the dog's welfare comes first. We therefore may well suggest you let your dog mature further before starting.

Don't feed your dog right before or right after intense exercise. This may predispose the dog's stomach to bloat or twist, especially for large breed or deep-chested dogs. A general rule of thumb is to not feed dogs at least hour before or after exercising, ideally at least 2-3 hours before.

If your dog has any issues let us know before, it is better to let everyone know how a dog reacts to others rather than having a situation.

Ashridge has guidance on Dogs and ours being attached are recognised as being under control. Ashridge has a 'stick and flick' policy, but if your dog does his business near the monument area where people picnic please pick it up. There are no dog bins at Ashridge, so be prepared to take your 'present' home.

The commands used to control your dog are entirely your choice, just be consistent. Even if you are following, using the commands when you turn helps the dog understand for when they are out front. You will hear a variety of terms being called, but just use whatever is comfortable and works for you and your dog.

You

On the runs, it is about fun, enjoying others company and the Estate, the runs are not races.

Prior to the run

At the meet keep your dog under close control, be aware that the dogs will get excited and often quite vocal. Sometimes walking them around will help settle them. Be aware that other users of Ashridge may well not appreciate the noise and enthusiasm of the dogs. Please have you dog ready to move off when the run starts, we will try to give notice it's about to happen.

On Runs

The paths are used by families, cyclists, walkers, runners and riders. If we meet oncoming forest users please bring your dog alongside you (to heel) - this is to allow safe passing.

When catching up other forest users, ask politely to pass - most forest users will let us past if asked politely. Make sure to bring your dog under close control (heel) when actually passing.

If we meet a horse whilst running, we need to give them space and pull over as to not spook the horse. If we catch up with a horse liaise with the rider to find a safe place to pass.

If you are going to overtake let the person in front know and respect their response, overtaking downhill can cause people to lose their balance so please avoid causing this.

We regroup often during runs, especially on direction changes. When regrouping, bring your dog under close control and allow each dog its own space. With some regroups, it may not be practical to wait in a group so the run leader may ask you to walk while the regroup occurs. Please wait for the run leader to indicate that it's okay to continue before running.

If you or your dog have any difficulties on a run let the run leader know, we will adjust / abort runs to safeguard the health of dogs and humans alike.

Post Runs

Allow your dog to have a drink but not too much. It is good to have a portable shower to wash mud off the dog though a sponge would work and then dry your dog. Take time now to check the dog for any injuries such as cut pads which may not have shown on the run. If run has been hard then walking your dog around will help to cool it down and then they can have a bit more water.

We use Facebook to advise on run start location, time and type of run. Please accept the invite if you plan to attend as it gives the run leader detail on who is attending. If you wish to be notified by email please let us know.

Please see the list of start locations on our website for directions.