

BURNING NEST CIC

Assistance Dog Policy

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Board Summary

This policy establishes how Burning Nest accommodates trained assistance dogs. It is modelled on the Boomtown Fair / Nimbus Access Card approach and aligns with the Attitude is Everything charter.

Key provisions:

1. Trained assistance dogs are welcome at Burning Nest, subject to a pre-approval process. ESAs (Emotional Support Animals) and pets are not permitted.
2. We never ask about the specifics of a disability. We ask what a dog is trained to do, not why it's needed.
3. Evidence required: either formal accreditation (ADUK/ADI) or a demonstration of training covering tasks performed, sound tolerance, and people tolerance.
4. Approved dogs can access almost all areas of the event that their handler can access. The only restrictions (2026) are sauna/sweat lodge (heat) and food preparation zones (hygiene).
5. Assistance dogs are welcome in theme camps. The board will provide guidance to theme camp leads on reasonable adjustments.
6. Sound camps: handlers are urged to consider their dog's welfare given noise levels and crowds.
7. Insurance is not required from the handler. Handlers will be required to sign a Handler Commitment Form covering lead control, welfare, waste, and contingency planning. Significant and/or repeated non compliance with this could lead to removal from site.

This policy requires legal sign-off before publication. The Handler Commitment Form (Appendix A) should be published alongside this policy.

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1. Plain Language Summary (Website Copy)

NOTE: This section is intended for the public-facing website. The full policy framework follows in Section 2.

Assistance Dogs at Burning Nest

We want everyone to be able to enjoy Burning Nest. We know that for some people, a trained assistance dog is an essential part of how they navigate the world, and we're committed to making that work on our site. As a burn, we want our shared event to be run in line with the Burning Man Principles, and as an organisation, we need to meet our obligations under the Equality Act (2010). This policy is how we do both.

One thing upfront: we will never ask you about the specifics of your disability. We may ask what your dog is trained to do and how it supports you, but your medical details are yours and we don't need them.

Our event takes place on working farmland with livestock, loud music, fire, art, and all the beautiful chaos that makes a burn a burn. This means careful planning is needed to keep your dog safe and comfortable, protect the livestock, and look after all attendees, including those who may have allergies or find dogs distressing.

Here's how it works:

The basics

- **Trained assistance dogs are welcome**, subject to an application process. We use the same Nimbus Access Card scheme as Boomtown and other major UK festivals.
- **Emotional support animals and pets are not permitted.** This isn't a choice we've made lightly, it's driven by the working farmland, the livestock, and the law (the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 2025 carries unlimited fines).
- You'll need to apply in advance — at least four weeks' notice (reduced to 10 days for 2026) — so we can coordinate with core teams, the landowner, and allocate your camping.
- **No dog will be admitted at the gate without a valid Assistance Dog Ticket.**

What we'll ask you for

Either:

- **A Nimbus Access Card** with the Assistance Dog symbol (free to apply at <https://www.accesscard.online> — allow a few weeks for processing, so start early),

or

- **Evidence of training** this can be accredited or self-trained, which we'll ask you to demonstrate in-person or on video

and

- **Some information about your dog** — breed, age, and general health

Alongside:

- **A signed Handler Commitment Form** — this is a short agreement between you and Burning Nest that covers lead control, waste, welfare, and what happens if your dog isn't coping.

On site

- **Your dog must be on a lead (max 1.5m) at all times** and stay calm and under control. This protects your dog, the livestock, and other attendees.
- **Your dog can go almost everywhere you go.** The only two exceptions (for 2026) are the sauna/sweat lodge (extreme heat is dangerous for dogs) and food preparation areas / camp kitchens (hygiene). Everywhere else: sound camps, workshops, communal spaces, fire shows, the adult spaces, your dog is welcome.
- **Sound camps: your call, but think about your dog.** Your dog is welcome in the loud stages, but we'd urge you to consider their welfare with regards to noise and dense crowds. Dogs hear at much lower thresholds than humans, and sustained bass exposure can cause real distress. If your dog is showing signs of stress, move to a quieter spot.
- **Soft furnishings spaces:** we would request that within soft furnishing spaces that your dog sits or lies on a blanket. This is to best prevent potential reactions from those with allergies. Such spaces would include sex-positive spaces, Welfare Enough, as well as potentially other theme camps/art pieces depending on their set up.
- **We recommend a visible harness or marker** for your dog. This reduces questions from other burners and helps everyone understand your dog is working. This isn't a requirement, just a suggestion that tends to make life easier.
- **Toileting:** Please avoid areas where people regularly sit or gather. Carry waste bags and clean up immediately at all times.
- **We recommend nominating a Dog PAL:** Someone who knows your dog, can take responsibility for them if you're unavailable, and is familiar with their needs.

Theme camps

- **Theme camps will need to enable inclusion of your assistance dog,** to meet our inclusion principles and legal requirements. The board will provide advice to camp leads on how to make reasonable adjustments if needed.

Looking after everyone

- **We'll let all attendees know in advance** that an assistance dog will be at the event, so people with allergies or dog-related anxiety can prepare.
- **We'll work with you on camping** to make sure you're positioned sensibly. Away from livestock, away from the biggest sound systems, and somewhere your dog can be comfortable.

Although it is entirely the responsibility of the dog handler, the board discourages excessive inebriation whilst responsible for an animal

Questions?

If you have a trained assistance dog and want to bring it to Burning Nest, please get in touch at board@burningnest.co.uk We'd rather have the conversation early as it maximises our chances of being able to meet everybody's needs.

2. Policy & Process

The following sections set out the formal policy framework. Section 1 provides a plain language version suitable for the website.

2.1 Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how Burning Nest accommodates attendees who rely on trained assistance dogs, while maintaining the safety and welfare of all attendees, the assistance dog, and the livestock on our farmland site. It applies to all Burning Nest events.

Burning Nest recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including accommodating trained assistance dogs. This policy is modelled on the approach used by comparable UK festivals including Boomtown Fair, Glastonbury, and Download.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Assistance Dog

A dog trained to perform specific tasks to assist a person with a disability. This includes dogs trained by ADI, IGDF, or ADUK member organisations. Dogs trained outside these organisations may also qualify.

2.2.2 The Handler

The human being who wishes to bring an assistant dog to Burning Nest.

2.2.3 Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

An animal that provides comfort through its presence but is not trained to perform specific disability-related tasks. ESAs are not defined in the Equality Act 2010 and are **not permitted** at Burning Nest. This also reflects the constraints of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025, which applies to all dogs on our farmland site.

2.2.4 Pets

Pets of any kind are **not permitted** at Burning Nest. This is linked to our responsibilities as holders of a public event licence, contracts, insurance, and arises from the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025.

2.3 Competing Access Needs

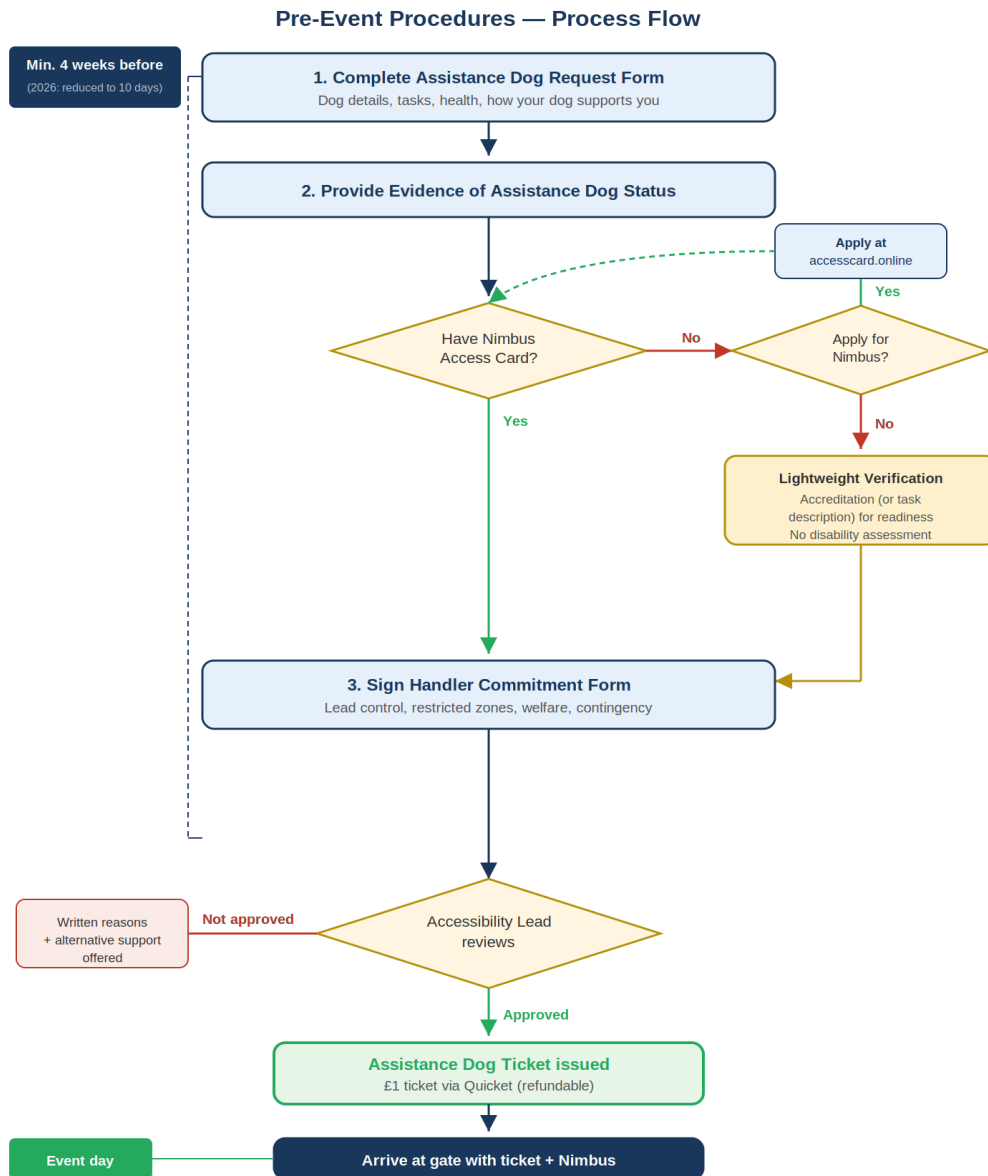
Burning Nest has a responsibility to balance the needs of all attendees. This includes attendees with severe dog allergies and attendees for whom the presence of a dog may cause distress for a variety of valid reasons.

Where an assistance dog is approved, Burning Nest will:

- Notify all attendees in advance that an assistance dog will be present.
- Make clear that any dog seen at Nest is a working assistance dog, not a pet, and must not be approached without the handler's express permission.
- Make clear that the handler is not required to justify the dog's presence in any way.
- If the handler is subjected to repeated requests for justification of their assistance dog's presence then they are encouraged to report this to a Ranger / Site Lead.
- Position the handler's camping away from any identified attendee with a severe dog allergy.
- Rely on the lead and behavioural requirements to reduce unexpected interactions.
- Potentially negotiate further agreements/strategies between relevant attendees based on individual circumstances.

The Equality Act 2010 requires a balancing exercise, not the elimination of all inconvenience.

2.4 Application Procedure



2.4.1 Application Process

1. Complete the [Assistant Dog Request Form](#), providing information to support your dog's legal status as an assistance animal.
2. **Provide evidence of your dog's training:** either a Nimbus Access Card with the Assistance Dog symbol, accredited certification, or demonstration of self-training.
3. Sign and return the **Handler Commitment Form**.

Once approved, you'll receive instructions on how to obtain your Assistance Dog Ticket. This is purchased through Quicket at a cost of £1 — and comes with a £1 discount code off your main ticket.

No dog will be admitted at the gate without a valid Assistance Dog Ticket.

2.4.2 Assistance Dog Request Form

The attendee must complete the Burning Nest Assistance Dog Request Form by 4 weeks before the event. The form requires:

- Nimbus Access Card number (or training evidence if using the lightweight route).
- A description of how the dog supports the attendee and the tasks it performs.
- Dog details: name, breed, age, general health

2.4.3 Nimbus Access Card

The attendee can obtain a valid Nimbus Access Card with the Assistance Dog symbol. Apply at <https://www.accesscard.online>. Processing can take several weeks; early application is strongly recommended.

2.4.4 Applicants Without a Nimbus Card

For applicants who cannot obtain a Nimbus card (e.g. overseas attendees, or where processing time is not feasible), we offer a lightweight alternative. Applicants can demonstrate their dog's readiness through:

- Formal accreditation (ADUK/ADI member organisation ID or equivalent), OR
- Evidence of training: description or demonstration of specific tasks the dog performs, tolerance of loud/sudden noises, tolerance of unpredictable people and crowds, and any other relevant training.
- There is no specified format for this evidence. For example, video, written evidence or trainer certificate are all admissible

This is deliberately less onerous than the full Nimbus process. We're not assessing disability, we're confirming the dog is trained and ready for this environment.

2.4.5 Approval and Assistance Dog Ticket

The Accessibility Lead (for 2026, the board) will review each application. If approved, the attendee will be granted access to purchase an Assistance Dog Ticket (£1 through Quicket). This ticket grants the dog right of access to the site, just as a human ticket grants the attendee right of access. The price is set at £1 to ensure it forms a valid contract under UK law.

If not approved, the attendee will be informed in writing with justification within 10 days of application. .

2.5 Handler Commitment Form & Code of Conduct

The handler must sign the Handler Commitment Form (Appendix A), agreeing to the following:

2.5.1 Lead and Control

- The assistance dog should be on a lead of no more than 1.5 metres at all times. If the handler cannot hold the lead, the lead should be tethered to a secure attachment nearby.
- The assistance dog remains calm, non-reactive, and under close control.
- The assistance dog will not bark persistently, lunge at, or approach other attendees uninvited.

2.5.2 Access and Restricted Zones

The dog is welcome in almost all areas of the event. The only restrictions for 2026 are:

| Zone | Reason |
|------------------------|---|
| Sauna / sweat lodge | Animal Welfare Act 2006: extreme enclosed heat. Risk of heatstroke. |
| Food preparation zones | Hygiene. |

Sound camps: Dogs are welcome but handlers are strongly urged to consider their dog's welfare. Dogs hear at significantly lower thresholds than humans; sustained exposure to bass-heavy sound systems can cause distress and hearing damage. If your dog shows signs of stress (panting, trembling, cowering, attempting to flee), move to a quieter area immediately.

Theme camps: Theme camps need to enable inclusion of assistance dogs (aside from specific listed exceptions eg food prep, saunas). This is a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010. We ask that the handler ensures that the dog sits or lies on a dog blanket in soft furnishing spaces. The board will provide advice to camp leads on any further reasonable adjustments. Theme Camps may ask for a dog to be removed from a space if it is being disruptive, reactive or not under control (in breach of the Handler Commitment). In this instance, please speak to a camp lead or the Rangers.

Visibility: We recommend (but do not require) that handlers use a visible harness, vest, or marker on their dog. This reminds the community that the dog is working.

2.5.3 Waste Management

- Carry waste bags at all times and clean up immediately.
- Avoid areas where people regularly sit or gather.
- The handler agrees to be responsible for all waste generated by the dog and to store said waste safely during the event, as well as removing it from Site at the end of the event.

2.5.4 Welfare and Wellbeing

- The handler is responsible for the dog's feeding, watering, and welfare throughout the event.
- The handler will not take the dog into the sauna or food prep zones.

- If the dog shows overt signs of acute distress, or could be harmed due to crowds, the handler will remove it from the situation immediately.

2.5.5 Interaction with Other Attendees

- The handler acknowledges that some attendees may have allergies, phobias, or other reasons that mean they do not wish to encounter a dog. The handler will manage interactions considerately and create distance if requested.
- The dog must not approach other attendees or their belongings uninvited.

2.5.6 Contingency and Emergency

- Handler takes full responsibility for their dog's access to emergency veterinary care (Nest does not have a duty or working vet)

2.7 Right to Require Removal

Burning Nest reserves the right to require a dog to leave site if:

- The dog's behaviour poses a risk to livestock, attendees, or safety.
- The handler has breached the Handler Commitment Form.

This right arises from obligations under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

In the regrettable event the dog needs to leave Site, the handler must also leave Site.

2.8 Liability

Individual handler insurance is not required.

By attending with an approved assistance dog, the handler accepts responsibility for the dog's behaviour under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025, the Animal Welfare Act 2006, and all other applicable legislation.

2.9 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, taking into account incidents, feedback, legislative changes, and evolving industry practice. Version 0.9 is published for community feedback ahead of the 2026 event.

Appendix A: Handler Commitment Form

This form must be completed and signed as part of the pre-approval process.

Handler Details

Name: _____

Telephone Number (for contact on Site only): _____

Nimbus Access Card Number: _____

Dog Name: _____

Dog Breed: _____

Accrediting Organisation (or "owner-trained"): _____

Dates of Attendance: _____

Name of Dog PAL _____

Telephone Number of Dog PAL _____

Emergency Contact (not at event): _____

Emergency Contact Phone: _____

I confirm and agree to the following:

1. My dog is a trained assistance dog that performs specific tasks related to my disability.
2. I have carefully considered whether my dog can safely handle the Burning Nest environment (loud music, fire, art, pyrotechnics, crowds, livestock, variable weather) for the duration of my attendance.
3. I will keep my dog on a lead of no more than 1.5 metres at all times.
4. My dog will remain calm, non-reactive, and under close control.
5. I will not take my dog into the sauna/sweat lodge or food preparation zones.
6. I agree to my dog sitting or lying on a dog blanket in areas such as sex positive spaces or on soft furnishings and will bring a blanket with me for this purpose.
7. I will carry waste bags at all times, clean up immediately, and avoid my dog toileting in areas where people regularly sit.
8. I am responsible for my dog's feeding, watering, and welfare throughout the event.
9. If my dog shows signs of distress or becomes disruptive, I will remove it from the immediate interaction as soon as possible.
10. I will manage interactions with other attendees considerately, recognising that some may have allergies, phobias, or conditions that make the presence of a dog distressing.
11. I accept responsibility for my dog's behaviour under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025, the Animal Welfare Act 2006, and all other applicable legislation.

My plan for leaving site with the dog if required:

My plan for veterinary access:

I understand that farmland can carry a higher risk of leptospirosis and that it is recommended that I research this if my dog's vaccines are not up to date.

I understand that ticks have been present on site in previous years, particularly in the longer grassland, and that it is strongly recommended that my dog's flea and tick treatment is up to date.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____