

# Just Walking the Dog

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- gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- networks thousands of interested people

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### *Research:*

to encourage co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to countryside recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.

### *Liaison:*

to promote information exchange relating to countryside recreation, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.

### *Good Practice:*

to spread information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of countryside recreation.

The Countryside Recreation Network is committed to exchanging and spreading information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation.

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# THE NEEDS OF DOG WALKERS AND THE PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

*by Lou Leather,  
Chairman, Pet Advisory Committee.*

## Introduction

By way of explanation, the Pet Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed in 1974 with a brief to introduce Dog Wardens and to espouse Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO). Committee membership includes: Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, British Veterinary Association, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, British Small Animal Veterinary Association, National Canine Defence League, Cat Protection, Local Government Association, Pet Food Manufacturers' Association, Blue Cross, Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Society for Companion Animal Studies, National Office of Animal Health, and various Lords, Ladies and MPs as Vice Presidents.

## Pet Management

Pet management is a suitable term to reflect both the needs of dog walkers and promotion of RPO. Pet management is about balancing the interests of many people in the community. Because there are so many divergent interests to be balanced, pet management is always going to be a challenging pursuit (see figure 1).

Knowing this difficulty, we must ask a question or two:-

- What principles should underlie our community pet policies?
- How can pet policies be implemented in the most effective way?
- How do we deal with registration, fouling, biting, barking, strays, public health, and controls?
- Who will pay for harmony between pets and the community?

With this diversity, it is inevitable that tracks will be followed, opportunities seized, arguments made and that progress will trickle through.

Figure 1: Balancing Interests

|   |   |                                     |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <u>Animal Welfare</u>                                   |   |                                     |
| Animal Rights   | V | Human Rights                        |
| Neutering   | V | Breeding                            |
| Microchip registration                                  | V | Gradual Identification              |
| Euthanase ferals  | V | Retain all cats                     |
| <u>Public Administration</u>                            |   |                                     |
| More law  | V | Self Regulation                     |
| Enforce law   | V | Draconian excess                    |
| <u>Health</u>   |   |                                     |
| Pets good for health<br>(blood pressure, heart attacks) | V | Bad for health<br>(bites, diseases) |
| Noisy dogs  | V | Quiet Neighbourhood                 |
| Exercise  | V | Fouling nuisance                    |
| <u>Finance</u>  |   |                                     |
| Licence fee   | V | Dog tax                             |
| Community funding                                       | V | Individual funding                  |
| <u>Standards</u>  |   |                                     |
| Responsible pet<br>ownership                            | V | My right to own                     |

Source: Dogs and Cats in the Urban Environment (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) 1997, Murray and Penridge

In the past, animal control has been mistakenly seen as an activity that deprives pet owners of their rights. In fact, effective controls increase the opportunity for people to have pets. The reduction of community problems helps to reduce the pro and anti extremes.

Pros and antis are always prepared to highlight the disadvantages of the opposition and head ultimately towards polarised, hardened views, which may be too narrow for the general good.

A comparative example is traffic. An insoluble problem if ever there was one. There is an ever changing infrastructure to build roads, tax cars, de-lead fuels, seek clean exhausts, control speed limits, make the test more difficult, educate the public, build DLV, issue new registration plates twice a year, sell personalised number plates etc. What we see is progress to try and answer the continuing problems thrown up by the immense increase in public wealth and expectation. The freedom and gains provided by the car will mean we are able to deal with massive extremes because of the personal benefit. Cars in London travel at a lower speed than the horse and cart – but they are air-conditioned, ghetto-blasted comfort zones, which we will defend vigorously.

This should lead us to believe that we need laws, we need public education, we need enforcement, and we need to work together to find workable solutions that protect the interests of affected parties. Pets are allegorically comparable. They do good, provide unquestioning love, give massive public service (guide dogs, hearing dogs for the deaf, pets as therapy, drug dogs, rescue dogs, police dogs)... but, of course, they also pose problems.

### Enforcement

Enforcement officers frequently face strong reaction and community hostility. Dog owners see some enforcement officers as dictatorial and unreasoning. If we do not obtain **agreement**, then we tumble into worsening situations. Local authorities faced with inadequate controls will sometimes use whatever is available to help deal with the nuisances. Dog bans are an outcome which make the gap in co-operation become even larger. This is the reverse of the plan to reduce community problems.

This process must be acknowledged at an early date, so that acceptance of the need to work in harmony is paramount. There is no “standstill” solution. Without harmony, legislation and controls will continue to increase. The problems of pets are not reduced to one area of work, one organisation, one council or even one country. It is a world-wide problem. Thousands of people will be seeking solutions to these problems around the globe at this very minute. It is therefore essential to be prepared to accept new ideas, new plans and a fresh approach, to circumvent the need to copy the latest known solution. Above all: think for yourself.

## People Management

Pet management is as much about people management as anything else. Whatever you decide to do, there is likely to be about 80% compliance. This will depend on your planning and pre-introductory education and guidance. Work out a plan, talk to people, tell them when you are going to introduce it, and tell them what you intend to do about it if they do not comply.

Hand out leaflets, detail areas. Think of colour coding, e.g.

*Green:* dogs can roam freely

*Yellow:* dogs on lead

*Red:* dogs not allowed

*Blue:* facilities for benefit of dogs, e.g. toilets

What dog walkers do not want is to arrive somewhere to find all the rules have changed since they were last there. People dislike change and need encouragement and explanation to keep them on your side. There are many agencies involved in pet management. These include: Councils, Pet Health Council, Pet Advisory Committee (PAC), Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC), Animal Charities, Behaviourists, Breeders, Obedience Clubs, Central Government, Pet Food Manufacturers Association (PFMA), Pet Shops, Animal trainers, National Trust. It is important to talk to each other in formulating good policy.

Talking with your local council may provide you with useful information regarding some of your proposals. They have to have dog wardens, park rangers and the like to deal with large areas of recreational land, and even if they have not implemented anything, they may be going through the same process that you are and will be happy to discuss solutions.

If they have done nothing, your input may stimulate them. If they are active, they may prove co-operative in helping with information, talking about leaflet design, use of signs, manufacturers' names, and possibly may consider authorising someone to enforce such laws as the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

**Be positive.** Introduce co-operative trial schemes such as breed days, training days, exercise days, behaviour days, and utilise this opportunity to seek owner's advice.

## Progressing Change

Pet management may be compromised by the 8 Ps:

- Power plays
- Philosophy clashes
- Political nonsense
- Pressure of work
- Personality conflict
- Progress denial
- Plain ignorance
- Public

When you talk to other organisations to assist in progress, this may introduce these negatives, but it should largely be an aid in helping to lessen the impact of smaller diversions.

For example, people and pets are heavy users of parks. Research has indicated area requirements for urban populations and suggested space provision accordingly.

- Say 50,000 people, means 5,000 dogs (10% ownership)
- 50% of dog owners use park or open space to exercise dogs
- On average they exercise for 30-50 minutes per day
- 80% live within 10 minutes walk of home
- 3 acres should be minimum provision of space to cope with 84 dogs a day from a population of 2,000
- 75 acres is needed for 50,000 population

(Source: Institute of Parks and Recreation Administration and JACOPIS Advice to Local Authorities, circa 1980.)

Question your own users of facilities. Parks and leisure managers should know this type of information and should think about park planning and park maintenance to best cater for the theoretical and practical use of their land.

In France, provision is made for dog fouling areas, which may be sighted in town squares or on sidewalks. Areas may be set aside where it is expected that cleaning will occur. In Paris, motorcyclists patrol the streets. In Switzerland, Hong Kong and other countries, small marked areas are set aside to encourage dog use. It is essential that hygiene is paramount in such an area, and cleansing routines should be set up and adhered to. It may be more cost effective to encourage use of a specified area than to struggle over many acres to attempt cleansing.



Dogs are trainable and should be encouraged to go at home. Where this is not followed, the next encouragement should be to go at this place. Dogs frequently defecate within a limited distance of leaving their vehicle. Channelled access points together with toilet facilities may prove a useful adjunct for those too lazy or irresponsible to pick up after their pet. It is always important to remember that 20% of people will not comply immediately.

### Use of Pets

The association between people and pets is a use relationship involving the satisfaction of many different kinds of needs including narcissistic, exhibitionist, ego boosting, nurturance, protection, companionship and attachment requirements. "Use" is the key word. People keep pets because they benefit from so doing. Some owners are not responsible or reasonable; pets are not always valued companions. Some owners are not caring or considerate towards their pets or their neighbours.

It is here that laws are necessary and enforcement becomes the key to success. Enforcement includes the use of information and education, but there remains a final need to take sanction against hard-core "refusniks". The use of sanctions against those who deserve them, sends a clear message to those who are wavering to comply.

The trouble with too much legislation, long lists of "do's and don'ts", multiple signing and a wide range of penalties, is that, for some people, this will be counter-productive. It is therefore always useful to work in harmony wherever possible with the pet owner. You might think of utilising the Country Code or Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) messages on specific parts of the site e.g. "You are approaching a wildlife area" (see figures 2 and 3).

One National Trust property I visited had children issued with a sheet of paper on which they scored points for noting certain features. This might be useable with regard to RPO. You may wish to appoint "Wardens" from those attending your events who might operate in a similar manner to a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

There is never 100% compliance, beyond birth and death; never enough resources to fully enforce; and never enough legislation to cover all ills anyway. We need to aim to have people 'do the right thing'; encourage a sense of community; and incubate a belief that accommodating the needs of their neighbours is what leads to a happier

life. To do this, we need education and encouragement. New schemes should be tried. Explanations of social good should encourage responsibility of the individual. Try providing a pond that dogs can jump in to.

Figure 2: Country Codes

#### The Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Fasten all gates
- Keep your dogs under close control
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise

#### Country Code for Dogs

- Take your dog to training classes to learn elementary obedience
- Keep your dog on a lead until confident he is under control, and at all times where there are farm animals
- Never allow your dog to chase anything – it is a habit which is hard to break
- Never allow your dog out on his own – make sure you know where he is at all times
- Keep your dog off cultivated fields
- Know what to do in case of an accident happening to your dog in a place where veterinary attention is not immediately available
- Study the Country Code yourself and train your dog in countryside awareness

Figure 3: Twelve Steps to Good Pet Care

- Train your dog in elementary obedience so that he is under control at all times
- Feed your dog or cat at regular times and do not give titbits between meals
- Feed your dog or cat from their own dishes, which must be kept apart from those of the human family and washed up separately
- Keep your dog on a lead anywhere near a road, or where there are farm animals
- Do not allow your dog to foul buildings, pavements, lawns and gardens or open spaces, especially where children play
- Do not allow your dog to be noisy and disturb your neighbours
- Provide your dog or cat with their own bed. Do not let them sleep on yours
- Never take your dog into a food shop
- Keep your dog clean and regularly groomed. Your cat will also need grooming, particularly if he is a long-haired variety
- If you do not wish your dog to have puppies, or your cat to have kittens, you should obtain advice from your veterinary surgeon
- Make proper arrangements for the care of your pet when you are going on holiday
- Register your pet as a patient and yourself as a client with a veterinary surgeon of your choice. Do not wait for an emergency

## Responsibilities

All rights should be counterbalanced with responsibilities.

People should decide for themselves what is a fair way to operate, so that peer group pressure becomes acceptable. Sociologists have indicated that "over control" causes people to lose a sense of right or wrong and decisions become based on what they can get away with.

Therefore in order to achieve compliance with our standards, we must seek (1) attitude change and (2) behaviour change.

1. Attitudinal changes are long lasting but hard to achieve.  
Changing an attitude does not always change behaviour.  
Attitudes changed through direct experience are usually stronger.

For example, if your child is bitten by a neighbour's dog, you are likely to feel strongly about this issue. If you read of such an event in the paper, the impact on you is not so strong.

Two factors increase the likelihood that a new attitude will be translated into a change of behaviour. They are – repeated expression and direct experience.

2. Behavioural change measures are either (a) antecedent (stop behaviour happening in the first place) or (b) consequent (try and alter it by action after the event, to stop it occurring in the future).

(a) Antecedent measures

1. Information

When a dog bites someone, the owner is equally shocked. He has been unaware that his pet might be dangerous. ("Dog barks...owner embarrassed, does not know how to stop it.")

Information should always feature high on your list. It's no good saying "Responsible Pet Ownership" on its own. All dog owners think they act responsibly. It is necessary to "Golden Rule" things by providing this information, encouraging compliance and rewarding success. Help provide training, obedience, agility information – and possibly courses in co-operation with other organisations. This is something "for" the dog and helps balance the "you are breaking the law" message.

Criteria for RPO messages will vary between principles (plan for your pet, budget for it, undertake correct animal husbandry, exercise, groom, diet, etc) (Source: Hindle "Designing Community Education Programmes") and checklists (de-flea, de-worm, vaccinate, training, wear collar, neuter, do not bark or foul, do not bite people, or attack livestock) (Source: Jennens and Raine "Your Dog's Behaviour and the Law").

There is no perfect RPO standard. You may need to take a basis and vary to your own needs where specific problems require control.

2. Enhancing pet/owner bond

Introducing things like agility courses will help accentuate the positive relationship; as will "pet-picnics" for owners and dogs when RPO information may be discussed. This may be a method to collect information on how things

may be acceptably improved. "Good" owners may assist the progress and help exert peer group pressure.

### 3. Prompts

Reminders to trigger appropriate behaviour ("Keep dog on lead", etc.). Effective prompts have certain characteristics (Geller et al 1982: Preserving the environment: new strategies for behaviour change):

- Administer close to action
- State desired response
- Response should be convenient
- Use polite, non-demanding language

For example, where dog owners leave cars: "Dogs are welcome. Please respect the comfort of other park users. Leash and scoop laws apply". Be polite, positive, personal and effective.

### 4. Design

Make it easier for people to act responsibly: provide bins; good signage; provide toilets; design flow of dogs into park; keep area clean.

### 5. Community involvement

Ask members of the public to help maintain the standards you have agreed with them (as per Neighbourhood Watch).

### 6. Goals

Obtain commitments from people to change behaviour. Provide cards for people to tick off on a daily basis (Exercise the dog; clean up; keep on leash near livestock). **Targeting** (breed owners), **tone and value** ("help everyone enjoy our park" rather than "don't be an irresponsible owner").

### 7. Lifting community norms – Raising Standards

Clean areas are more likely to stay clean. Visible evidence of compliance raises the standard. **Beware:** evidence of non-compliance encourages similar activities. At the end of behavioural change, there has to be law.

## (b) Consequent Measures

### 1. Rewards and other incentives

Research suggests these are only effective while they are maintained. Can include direct subsidies, waiving of fees, gifts, prizes and awards, e.g. if owner is seen behaving responsibly, issue a certificate or "goodie bag" (worming tablets/shampoo trial packs). Send photo of certificate award to press.

### 2. Penalties

Fines are appropriate when someone is deliberately flouting the law.

## Good law

Pet legislation sets down administrative arrangements, states the community norms and gives the authorities the right to enforce those norms.

## Summary

So what does the dog walker who is a responsible pet owner wish to see?

- Fairness, equality, and a chance to enjoy the company of his pet while both are exercising.
- Positive, friendly advice, to which he has contributed, on what is expected of him and his pet.
- An acceptance of his right to pet ownership and the responsibility to behave in conformity to the community norm.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF DOGS

*by Katherine A. Hearn,  
Adviser on Nature Conservation, The National Trust.*

## Introduction

The environmental impacts of dogs are:

1. Disturbance to wildlife (birds, mammals)
2. Soil enrichment and vegetation change
3. Stock worrying and disruption of grazing regimes
4. Water turbidity in ponds

1 and 3 are impacts that should cause concern.

2 and 4 are localised and not as such a serious issue.

However, it is necessary to consider that the impacts are small-scale in comparison with other threats to the environment. Evidence of the impacts is covered below.

## Disturbance of Birds

- (a) Birds are disturbed by people and dogs.

Birds can be 50 times more abundant in undisturbed refuges.

- (b) Birds are more sensitive to people with dogs than to people without dogs.

Disturbance by dogs is likely to be greater than by people.

- (c) Dogs out of control disturb 7 times more red grouse than dogs under control.

- (d) Disturbance has a variety of effects on birds. Examples of disturbance of birds are provided in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Effects of Recreational Disturbance on Birds

- Breeding success is reduced by disturbance

Average reduction in 28 studies = 40%

Due to:

- birds do not prospect and territories are not established
  - nest abandonment - eggs or chicks chilled
  - chicks not fed by parent
  - predation of eggs or young
- Winter use of a site is reduced by disturbance
  - Birds may be prevented from feeding, e.g. 12% of the time
  - Birds may have to fly an extra hour/day
  - Abundance of birds can be reduced by disturbance, in many studies by 50%, in some cases by 50-fold

Many studies show great reductions in breeding success, wintering numbers and total numbers, *but what effect does this have on the overall population?* The answer to this is not usually known.

(e) Different bird species differ in their susceptibility to recreational disturbance:

- Nightjars are more abundant on undisturbed heaths than sites with high levels of disturbance.
- Woodlarks are more abundant in areas without footpaths.



- The distribution of woodlarks in West Sussex on 3 nearby heathland sites with equivalent habitat quality varies with site access, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Distribution of Woodlands in 3 Heathlands in West Sussex

|   | Site with access<br>and car park | Site with access<br>but no car park | Site with no<br>public access |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| No. of territories<br>per km <sup>2</sup> | 3.3                              | 9.1                                 | 25                            |

- More woodlark pairs breed and raise young on the undisturbed sites.
- Common sandpipers in Peak District are absent from areas regularly used for recreation.
- Dogs disturb red grouse, a species resistant to disturbance, especially incubating hens and young birds, but also they cause large-scale movements of pack birds.
- Disturbance has been shown to cause:
  - 85% reduction in breeding pairs of waterfowl;
  - 40% higher nest desertion rate in Canada goose;
  - 50% reduction in hatching success of eggs;
  - 35% increased mortality due to predation of flushed hens and exposed eggs;
  - 7-fold increase in flight energy needs in brent goose;
  - 12% decrease in feeding time in brent goose.
- Regarding visitor numbers, "one passive intrusion per week" can cause change in behaviour for susceptible species. 200 people/ha/yr have been shown to have an effect on whinchat and lesser whitethroat in a Dutch study. On the other hand, 1000-5000 visitors/ha/yr were needed to affect turtle dove and garden warbler.

- (f) Many UK species are susceptible to disturbance – probably more than are resilient? (especially among the more notable species, e.g. Red Data Book spp).  
See figure 3.

Figure 3: Birds and Their Susceptibility to Disturbance

| Susceptible Species |                  | Not known –<br>conflicting evidence<br>from different studies | Thought to be<br>resilient or fairly so |
|---------------------|------------------|---|---|
| Goldeneye           | Lapwing          | Mallard   | Mute Swan                               |
| Great Crested Grebe | Tufted Duck      | Wheatear  | Magpie+                                 |
| Curlew              | Coot             | Green Woodpecker  | Kittiwake                               |
| Peregrine*          | Fulmar           | Woodcock  | Guillemot+                              |
| Golden Plover       | Canada Goose     | Oystercatcher   | Razorbill+                              |
| Sandwich Tern       | Eider            | Merlin*   | Black Guillemot                         |
| Roseate Tern        | Kestrel          | Dunlin  | Meadow pipit+                           |
| Arctic Tern*        | Herring Gull     | Lesser Whitethroat  | Wren                                    |
| Little Tern*        | Sand Martin      | Whinchat  | Starling                                |
| Chough              | Heron            | Dartford Warbler*   | Stonechat                               |
| Crane               | Common Sandpiper | Woodlark*   | Wood Pigeon                             |
| Marsh Harrier*      | Cormorant        |   | Blackcap                                |
| Savi's Warbler      | Turtle Dove      |   | Chaffinch                               |
| Bewicks Swan        | Garden Warbler   |   | Red Grouse                              |
| Whooper Swan        | Willow Warbler   |   | Ring Ouzel+                             |
| Barnacle Goose      | Song Thrush      |   | Twite+                                  |
| Brent Goose         | Chiff Chaff      |   | Short-eared Owl+                        |
| Pink-Footed Goose   | Barn Owl*        |   | Snipe                                   |
| Greylag Goose       | Grey Plover      |   | Dotterel*                               |
| White-Fronted Goose | Avocet*          |   |   |
| Shelduck            | Knot             |   |   |
| Wigeon              | Bar-Tailed       |   |   |
| Gadwall             | Godwit           |   |   |
| Teal                | Redshank         |   |   |
| Honey Buzzard*      | Ringed Plover    |   |   |
| Red Kite            | Bittern*         |   |   |
| Nightjar            | Black Grouse     |   |   |
| Stone Curlew*       |                  |   |   |

Sources: Various

+ = only one study, so categorisation provisional

\* = Schedule 1 species in Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to knowingly and avoidably disturb these species while they are building a nest or are on or near a nest, or to disturb the young.

(g) Disturbance distances can be > 1000km.

An average disturbance distance for Strangford Lough wildfowl and waders is 250m. Disturbance distances for individual species are as follows:

|            |                                       |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1000-2000m | lapwing; black-tailed godwit          |
| 1000m      | curlew                                |
| 700m       | goldeneye                             |
| 500m       | pink-footed goose; brent goose        |
| 275-400m   | tufted duck; pochard                  |
| 200m       | golden plover                         |
| 50-100m    | buzzard; kestrel                      |
| <50m       | turtle dove; garden warbler; blackcap |
| negligible | red grouse.                           |

(h) Birds can habituate to regular and predictable activity, but not to irregular and unpredictable events. Habituation does not take place to dogs.

(i) Consistent disturbance is probably more damaging than intermittent disturbance, but there is conflicting evidence.

(j) Disturbance will be of most nature conservation concern in:

- a) habitats with susceptible species, and
- b) habitats without cover.

Figure 4 shows the variation in the susceptibility of habitats to damage from recreation.

#### Soil Enrichment and Vegetation Change

- 6.8 million dogs deposit 1000 tonnes faeces/day.
- Dog faeces cause eutrophication:
  - increase in soil phosphate;
  - increase in soil ammonium nitrogen; and
  - increase in pH.
- Infertile soils are essential for maintenance of most habitats of nature conservation value

Figure 4: Habitats Most Susceptible To Damage From Recreation

| Habitat                         | Features damaged   | Activity most damaging                            |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Upland heaths                   | Birds (breeding)<br>Whole habitat from fire  | Walking and dogs                                  |
| Saltmarsh & flats               | Birds (wintering)  | Walking and dogs<br>Wildfowling                   |
| Lakes & rivers                  | Birds (breeding & wintering)<br>Fish & invertebrates<br>Natural channel – form of rivers | Water sports<br>Fishing<br>Walking and dogs       |
| Lowland heaths & coastal heaths | Birds (breeding)<br>Whole habitat from fire<br>Disruption of grazing                     | Walking and dogs<br>Horse riding<br>Cycling       |
| Montane heath                   | Vegetation   | Walking<br>Running                                |
| Shingle, sand, etc.             | Birds (breeding)<br>Natural erosion process  | Walking and dogs<br>Vehicles<br>Paths for walkers |
| Cliffs – sea & inland           | Birds (breeding)<br>Crevice & cliff vegetation   | Rock climbing                                     |
| Mire, carr                      | High water tables, hence vegetation damaged<br>Birds (breeding)                          | Paths for walkers                                 |
| Wood pasture & parkland         | Invertebrates, lichens & bats in mature timber & dead wood                               | Walking, car parking, picnicing (safety)          |
| Limestone grasslands            | Whole habitat if grazing disrupted   | Dogs  |
| Caves                           | Cave formations<br>Bats  | Caving & Potholing                                |

- Infertility is correlated with species richness, and with abundance of stress-tolerant species.

For example, dog-induced eutrophication in one study was shown to be linked with:

(a) Decrease in stress-tolerant species

heather  
sheep's fescue  
bristle bent  
many small herbs

(b) Increase in competitive nutrient demanding species

Yorkshire fog  
cock's foot  
rye grass  
gorse

## Stock and Dogs

10,000 stock per year in England and Wales are lost due to dog worrying.

Approximately 185 different plant communities are found on National Trust land. Grazing is essential in maintaining the characteristic features of 107 (58%) of these. Grazing is necessary in the maintenance of 52 out of 113 species of Red Data Book plant on NT land (46%). Dogs disrupt grazing regimes, and may cause them to be withdrawn. The percentage of NT sites where grazing is affected by dogs is not known, but is probably at least 30%.

Effects can be to:

- remove grazing altogether, or prevent its re-introduction;
- oblige the NT to purchase its own stock and run its own grazing;
- reduce the options for different stock types (e.g. no sheep), with increase in use of dog proof stock, older individuals of native-breed ponies, some cattle, some breeds of sheep cope better than others (e.g. mules, Southdown, Hampshire Down, Clun Forest, Soay, Swaledale.);
- reduce the possibility of summer grazing ("no grazing in the summer holidays");
- reduce the options for small grazing compartments; and

- alter the patterns of grazing within a unit.

### Management Implications

The following management measures could be considered to deal with the dog-walking issue on properties:

- Set up sanctuaries.
- Allow dogs on leads only (short leads).
- Limit visitor numbers?
- Zoning – in terms of time and space.
- Screening within the area.
- Keep people to paths; don't "spread the load".
- Ensure distance between paths.
- Control car park siting, number and capacity.
- Specify grazing details:
  - stock type
  - grazing period
  - size of grazing unit
  - cover for hiding
- Fence off water bodies.
- Provide dog bins.

## WORKSHOPS

Four workshop sessions based on case studies were used to look at the issues relating to the management of dog walking in four different areas and situations. Each workshop was run by an individual with knowledge of the management issues within one of the specific areas and they gave a 15 minute introduction presenting their experiences. The remaining 30 minutes of the workshop were used as a forum to share management experiences amongst the workshop group and to draw some conclusions on the way forward. The workshops were as follows:

**a) Moorland and Open Countryside**

*by Steve Trotter, High Peak Estate, Property Manager, National Trust*

**b) Urban Fringe**

*by Carole Todd, Environmental Action Unit, Rochdale MBC*

**c) Woodlands**

*by Paddy Harrop, Policy and Support Officer, Forest Enterprise*

**d) West Sussex Dog Forum**

*by Glynn Jones, West Sussex Downs Property Manager, National Trust*

# MOORLAND AND OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WORKSHOP

*by Gordon Miller, Peak District National Park, and  
Stephen Trotter, National Trust, High Peak Estate.*

## Introduction

The two most contentious issues on the moorlands of the Peak District are probably dogs and mountain bikes. The latter is a more recent phenomena whereas dogs were identified as a potential problem when they were enshrined in the first by-laws for access land in 1954. Initially, the need was for dogs to be '*under proper control and be effectively restrained from causing annoyance to persons and from worrying or disturbing any animal*'. However, a dog trained in an urban environment and unused to livestock can often revert to an undisciplined mode when confronted with, for example, a sheep. This made it difficult to enforce the by-law, as in many cases the dog could be walking to heel when passed by a ranger and then run amok later. There are problems also in defining '*under close control*'. During the discussions leading to the amendment of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Minister stated that it would be 'left to the common-sense of the courts.'

## Effects on Livestock and the Farmer

Conflicts with farmers include:

- Sheep disturbance – often owners are unaware of any effects their dogs may have on sheep (and there is contradictory evidence about the effects).
- Sheep are especially sensitive between tupping and midsummer (stress/increased rate of aborted lambs).
- Worrying is a problem from time-to-time.
- Annoyance and psychological stress of observing 'uncontrolled dogs' is a major factor for farmers.

There has been an increase in dog-related injuries to sheep, with an estimated 6000 sheep killed per annum by dogs. This has resulted in demands from farmers and other landowners for the by-law on access land to more effectively constrain dogs, by insistence that dogs are '*on a lead and effectively restrained from behaviour giving grounds for annoyance*'.



In the Bowland Fells in Lancashire, dogs are, with the exception of Wolf Fell, not allowed on to the moors under any circumstances.

### Effects on Wildlife

Livestock has, in the past, been the principle reason for the pressure to have dogs more effectively constrained by a lead. There has been evidence offered in recent years that dogs when free to roam are more likely to disturb ground-nesting birds as a result of their instinct to 'follow their noses'. There has, for example, been research by Dr. Derek Yalden of Manchester University on the effects of dog disturbance on Golden Plover and Dunlin in the Peak District and scientific research elsewhere, e.g. Penny Anderson Associates. These findings are disputed by Adam Watson of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and by Roger Sidaway (Consultant Ecologist formerly with the Countryside Commission) – they contend that there is no overall disturbance by dogs.

### Enforcement

The decision to insist on dogs being on a lead would, on paper, seem to be the simple answer to the problem. However, there are problems associated with enforcement.

1. A ranger has great difficulty in convincing an owner to comply with the need to put their dog on a lead when there is no livestock for miles, e.g. in winter when stock are withdrawn from the moors, or when it is not nesting time.
2. Once an owner has agreed to comply with the by-law there is every chance that they will let the dog off the lead when the ranger is out of sight.
3. The dog is often considered to be the most important member of the family and it is seen as an affront to even suggest that the dog might commit such a foul deed as to chase sheep or disturb birds. This makes it particularly difficult to elicit details from the owner. Proof of identity can present problems in remote areas as can the need to follow offenders to their car.
4. You may take a dog off a lead along a right of way unless specifically stated otherwise (e.g. highway authority order). Where rights of way cross moorland (e.g. the Pennine Way), this can present problems for enforcement.

5. The worst offenders often do not even have a lead with them – do rangers carry a supply of leads?
6. Prosecution is not taken in most cases as it can be very time-consuming; but if people are shown to be regular offenders then it may be considered.

## Alternatives

What are the alternatives to a blanket 'dogs must be on their leads' by-law?

1. The applications of by-laws only when sheep are on the moors – say April to September. This is likely to gain more support from the general public.
2. Closed Sanctuary Areas to protect ground-nesting birds. This would need effective signing or fencing, which are expensive. Evidence on the Peak Park Big Moor Estate and on the Chatsworth Estate (voluntary agreement) would indicate general adherence by the public. Success depends on effective signing, publicity/education and ranger cover. Most problems relate to a hardcore of users who have used the area for many years and resent the imposition of any form of restriction.
3. Non-promotion of sensitive areas together with the highlighting of alternatives. Research has shown in the past that probably 90% of moorland users use regular *desire lines* and do not venture into the more remote areas in between, thus leaving large areas relatively undisturbed. Improvements to desire line paths may reduce the percentage use of the more remote areas.

## Publicity and Education

In practice, most visitors to access areas do not read the by-laws posted at each point of entry onto the moor. Lambing Time notices have been used in the spring in certain areas, such as at access points to reinforce the need for extra care with dogs during this sensitive time. More recently, the signs have also mentioned Nesting Time. Although there has not been any research into the effectiveness of these signs, the indications are that they do increase public awareness.

Occasionally the agencies involved with the moorland, e.g. National Park Authority, National Trust, Moorland Owners, have joined together in a major campaign to raise

awareness. An example of this was the 'Take the Lead' campaign where high profile posters were used, supported by leaflets explaining the reasons for effective control of dogs at certain times of the year. Continuing one to one contact with dog owners through ranger/warden services is seen as part of the general education of countryside users.

In the papers relating to the *Right to Roam*, the Government have indicated that dogs will have to be on a lead in the open country. In practice, this may mean a combination of those devices outlined above and will almost certainly require a major educational programme and rangers or other field staff to implement it.

### Issues Arising from Discussion

Discussion in the workshop session covered the following:

- Participants' own dog-related problems and experiences.
- Is this a real or perceived problem?
- How can campaigns be made more effective?
- Are alternatives to "dogs MUST be on a lead" policies (e.g. zoning, seasonal implementation of by-laws, etc.) realistic?

The main points arising from the discussion were:

1. It was considered that it depends on what you mean by a problem - is it dog worrying sheep; disturbance of stock/birds; or landowners' views/concerns? It was suggested that landowners' perceptions of the problem may be greater than the reality and it is therefore important to work closely with them. It may often be a case of poor management in response to perceived problems that do not actually exist.
2. In the Lake District National Park, they have a running tally of dog kills which shows that problems do exist with disturbance of stock. There is evidence of the ability to train mountain rescue dogs to roam free and not worry sheep, so this could be used as a management approach.
3. It was questioned as to whether dogs need the opportunity to roam free. The public expect or want to allow their dogs to run free (in the countryside rather than in urban parks). To enable this the following suggestions were made:

- agreement with landowners for the establishment and promotion of designated areas where dogs are allowed to roam free;
  - use of incentives to encourage agreement of landowners; and
  - establishment of local access forums which could be used as an opportunity to negotiate with landowners.
4. There was general consensus that current by-laws are virtually unworkable as applied at present. Problems exist with enforcement and a lack of resources. It is impossible to keep an eye on dogs/owners all of the time. Prosecutions are generally too expensive and not always successful. It was suggested that year-round by-laws that do not apply in winter should be made seasonal.
  5. It was perceived that there are management problems. There is often an over-reaction by land managers, which results in more conflict. One example is the banning of dogs on guided walks, when in reality very few paths go through stock areas. Alternatively, guided walks could be used as a way of promoting responsible dog ownership.
  6. It was suggested that the non-promotion of sensitive sites and areas could be one method of keeping dogs away from these areas.
  7. In some areas, such as Exmoor, local dogs have been found to be a greater problem than visitors' dogs, with cases of persistent offenders.

# URBAN FRINGE WORKSHOP

*by Carole Todd,*

*Environmental Action Unit, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.*

## **Introduction**

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council covers an area of 62 square miles. Geographically, the area covers the junction of the Pennines and the Lancashire Plain. The population is currently 207,600, occupying 79,000 properties.

The Environmental Action Unit (EAU) was created in 1995, originally comprising the EAU Manager and two Technical Officers. The Unit developed as a result of the number of complaints received regarding litter, dog fouling, graffiti and fly tipping. The Unit now comprises the EAU Manager, three Technical Officers (one funded by the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)), a Building Regeneration Officer and a Clean and Green Co-ordinator. The Unit also has an Environmental Specialist Team and two 'hit teams'. The total number of staff currently within the EAU is fourteen. Clean-up operations, payment for works in default of legal notices and sponsorship have successfully generated funding for the EAU.

## **Type of Campaign and Educational Initiatives**

Dog fouling is a very emotive subject, and therefore requires a very high profile and varied campaign. Many residents of the Borough perceived that the Council was doing very little about the problem. A survey of residents showed that:

- Residents wanted 'cleaning-up' measures to be implemented, rather than the banning of dogs.
- 90% agreed that restrictions were required.
- 60% wanted dog bins.
- 96% were aware of the risk of toxocara.
- 22% used poop scoops.

The following initiatives have been undertaken to raise awareness of the problems associated with dog fouling and 'latchkey' dogs in the Borough:

### 1. Advertising Campaign

In 1996, we contacted an advertising agency to create and implement a billboard and poster campaign in association with local schools. The posters were created using the theme 'Don't turn a blind eye to dog fouling'. This incorporated:

- 8 billboard signs across the Borough
- 20 J.C. Decaux bus shelters – end panels
- Freephone number for residents to report instances of dog fouling and to request further information – this received an average of 25 calls a week
- Posters
- School and Press Packs
- 15 local radio reports
- Free poop scoop bags
- Free anti-fouling signs
- School presentations

### 2. Chip & Snip Scheme

Funded by SRB and in conjunction with the RSPCA, we instigated a dog control scheme on the Langley Estate in Middleton. Although the estate represents only 5% of the housing stock of the Borough, it yielded 30% of the Borough's stray dogs. It was obvious that action needed to be taken to combat the problem. When the dogs are collected they are assessed and given an overall health check by the RSPCA. The dogs are neutered, kept overnight and returned the following day. The RSPCA have subsidised the cost of neutering dogs. SRB funding and a contribution from Rochdale Council reduced the cost for residents to nil. Due to the success of the scheme on the estate, it has been extended to other areas in the Borough. To date, 346 dogs have been neutered and micro-chipped since 1997.

### 3. Dog Warden

SRB has also funded a part-time dog warden specifically for Langley, due to the problem of stray dogs. A charge of £25 per dog will be introduced for the return of a stray. Presently the dogs are taken to the local police station and collected after a payment of £3. This does not persuade owners to look after their pets. Therefore, the warden will now take the dog to the nearest re-homing centre, some 7 miles away. In most cases the owners do not collect their dogs and from an animal welfare perspective, this situation is unsatisfactory. The animals that

are not claimed are re-homed to families who will look after them responsibly. Owners willing to pay the charge and collect their dogs are now taking their responsibilities more seriously and thinking twice about letting their dogs stray again.

#### **4. Dog Registration Scheme**

Since the introduction of control measures, problems of stray dogs have reduced dramatically. To promote responsible dog ownership and reinforce the control measures in place, a dog registration scheme has been introduced this year.

In order to ensure the highest rates of participation, we targeted the local primary schools during our education programme. Local children were encouraged to apply for a 'Dog Passport'. As an incentive, those who registered were provided with an information pack together with a membership card, collar, numbered tag and lead.

The children were asked to provide a photograph and full description of the dog, including details of temperament, vaccinations, whether neutered, illnesses etc. The dogs receive "birthday and christmas cards" together with information sheets from the RSPCA and local veterinary surgeries.

Some areas of the estate are only accessible on foot and although the Dog Warden can respond to complaints immediately, sometimes on reaching the location the dog has disappeared. There have been several incidents of stray dogs biting children or intimidating residents, and a number of road traffic accidents have been caused by 'latchkey' dogs. Unfortunately, if the owner of the dog is unknown it is impossible for the Warden to take any action. Registration has provided the Council with valuable information. The Warden has a book of photographs in their vehicle, and the numbered tags can be clearly seen from a distance making it possible for residents to identify problem dogs after they have left the scene. Greater Manchester Police contacted us for information after one incident of a resident using a dog to intimidate his neighbours.

The scheme has proved very successful. A total of 318 dogs are registered and the scheme is now being introduced in other areas of the Borough.

## **5. Use of Machinery**

The EAU purchased the KB2 'Super Dooper Pooper Scooper' in April 1997. It is a purpose-built, all-terrain vehicle used daily to clean up badly fouled areas on demand. The high profile launch of the vehicle helped to raise awareness of dog fouling as an environmental issue.

### **Areas Covered by the Strategy**

The anti-dog-fouling campaign is a Borough-wide initiative.

The education programme includes school visits by two officers from the EAU. It is a rolling programme, targeting all schools in the Borough. The Dog Registration and Passport Scheme has also been introduced throughout the Borough.

The Chip & Snip Scheme started on Langley housing estate, following continued problems with stray and latchkey dogs. This scheme is supported by the promotion of free poop scoop bags and signs to encourage responsible dog ownership. Due to the success of the scheme it was introduced into other areas where similar dog control problems were experienced. The aim of the Chip & Snip Scheme is to reduce the number of stray dogs in the Borough, with the knock-on effect of reducing the number of instances of dog fouling.

### **Timescale of the Process**

Many of the anti-dog fouling initiatives were introduced by the EAU during 1997. Many of the initiatives had high profile launches, both regionally and nationally, and the demand for these schemes has remained high. For example, the KB2 Pooper Scooper responded to 386 clean-up requests in its first 18 months. It is now in operation almost every day, dependent on public demand. The work of the KB2 will be on going.

Education in schools and community groups is also on going.

It is hoped that the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 will be implemented throughout the Borough during the year 2000. The high profile introduction of the legislation will be promoted as part of the Clean and Green Campaign, including the use of free poop scoop bags and other measures.



## Support of Council Members

Support of the EAU and the Clean and Green Campaign from Council leaders and elected members has been strong throughout the history of the Unit. The leadership has proven its support of the EAU by establishing a permanent post for the Clean and Green Co-ordinator, to drive the campaign forward.

## Consultation and Involvement of the Community

The dog fouling education programme focuses on many different schools, community groups and residents' associations. The Unit listens to the needs of the individual groups and either applies current initiatives to the problem or considers alternative schemes. The Unit is committed to involving the local community in such initiatives through the Tidy Britain Group 'People and Places' Programme and through Best Value practices. Regional Environmental Working Parties throughout the Borough are also regularly consulted regarding on-going and new initiatives.

## Success of Initiative

Anti-fouling initiatives that have been introduced, (e.g. the provision of free poop scoop bags and "No Fouling" signs for residents' gateposts), have been very popular with residents of the Borough and are regularly in demand. Other aspects of the campaign have been successful:

- 318 dogs have been registered and have Dog Passports.
- 346 dogs have been neutered and micro-chipped.
- The number of complaints about stray dogs has reduced by 38% and dog fouling by 19%.

## Future Actions

The provision of free poop scoop bags will continue. The Unit has recently ordered an improved bag design, made from recycled plastic. These will be distributed from most council buildings, making the bags easily obtainable for dog owners across the Borough.

It is hoped that the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 will be implemented across the Borough during the year 2000. This would provide another mechanism for the



# WOODLANDS WORKSHOP

*by Paddy Harrop,  
Forestry Enterprise.*

## Background – Forest Enterprise

Forest Enterprise is the management agency of the Forestry Commission managing over one million hectares of land in Great Britain and producing five million tonnes of timber. Over fifty million visits are made to Forestry Commission woods every year.

Recreation activities on Forestry Commission land are as follows:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Cycling          | 8%                                       |
| Dog walking      | 14% (which is 2% above national average) |
| Walking/exercise | 40%                                      |
| Relax/picnic     | 16%                                      |
| Other            | 22%                                      |

Dog walkers are major users.

The type of visitors to Forestry Commission land are divided as shown below:

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Children        | 28% |
| Young adults    | 11% |
| Other adults    | 48% |
| Senior citizens | 13% |

## Why are Woodlands Good Places to Walk Your Dog?

- Easy access – no stile fences or gates within woods
- No agricultural constraints in the form of crops or stock
- Relaxing area for dog owners to walk in with reasonably changeable landscape
- Interesting area for dogs themselves
- Less conflict as trees provide good screening and sites can absorb more users
- Lots of toilet areas
- Fewer perceived restrictions
- Provide good hiding places e.g. for search and rescue training

## What Problems are there Associated with Dogs and Woodlands?

- Screening effect of trees can cause increased lack of control of dogs and can cause conflict with other users due to surprise meetings
- Single access points can cause fouling issues
- Disturbance of wildlife/deer
- Dogs and owners can lose each other
- Work sites can be dangerous (machinery, falling trees etc.)
- Over-use problems can occur due to exclusion of dogs from other sites, forcing them on to woodland sites

It was generally felt that these problems were not exclusive to woodland sites.

A survey of Forestry Commission rangers on the incidents of problems gave the following figures:

| Problem                    | Incidents per Year |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Disturbance of deer        | 297                |
| Other wildlife disturbance | 186                |
| Nuisance                   | 169                |
| Conflicts with people      | 36                 |

## Case Study

The case of Salcey Forest was used to illustrate some of the problems. It is a medium-sized wood in Northamptonshire which has 20,000+ visitors per year. Seven out of ten visitors are with dogs. Facilities available include a car park, toilets, picnic site and waymarked trails.

There is a problem with a large number of dogs causing fouling in the car park, picnic area and on trails.

The following solutions have been tried at the site:

- Directing dog walkers to one end of the car park.
- Creation of a "dog loop" next to dog walkers' car park, specifically designed as an area for dog walking.

- A ranger was located at the site, after the new "dog loop" walk was created.

The result of these changes has been that 75% of dog walkers now use the dog car park and loop, and consequently, the waymarked trail and picnic area now much cleaner. However, the dog loop has a large amount of dog faeces on the path.

## Solutions

Discussion was given to different solutions, the pros and cons of these and how effective they might be.

### 1. By-laws

Enforcement of these was generally perceived to be difficult and their effectiveness is inadequate.

### 2. Closure of all or parts of the wood – zoning

This can segregate dogs and other users, but it is difficult to manage and may produce conflicts with woodland management. It is expensive to implement, but can be highly effective if used in the right location.

### 3. Dedicated routes/trails for dogs

This keeps problems, like faeces, in one area and tends to receive public support. However it requires good signing and regular cleaning-up, which can be expensive. It may cause conflict between dogs. Individuals can also become sign blind.

### 4. Community consultation

Establishing local groups to take responsibility can lead to the provision of funding and volunteer wardens. However the process may be very time-consuming and it may be difficult to target dog owners.

### 5. Rangers

Rangers can help to direct people and dogs and to educate. However rangers can't be in all areas all the time and there is a resource implication.

# WEST SUSSEX DOG FORUM WORKSHOP

*by Glynn Jones,  
The National Trust.*

## Introduction

Dog owners are a beleaguered section of the community that feel attacked from all sides. Progress is unlikely to be made by bullying or further marginalising them. An alternative approach was taken in West Sussex with the establishment of a local dog forum. The forum is made up of land managers, the local authorities, representatives of dog owners and other interested groups. Its objective was to co-ordinate an awareness-raising and education programme.

The four issues of concern were: fouling; livestock worrying; nature conservation impacts; and dogs not being on leads. The biggest concern was the amount of dog faeces around car parks and access points to sites. There is also often a management conflict in providing access versus protecting nature conservation.

## Initiatives of the Dog Forum

### 1. Poster Campaign

Posters were used to raise awareness. These were fresh, eye-catching and updated regularly. It is important to use only relevant signs or they will be ignored and people will become "sign-blind". The signs that were used were often witty, for example, "I'm a pregnant sheep, please do not worry me or I will abort". Cardboard sheep were also used to draw people's attention to stock grazing. In one situation an accusatory complaint letter was posted at a site which resulted in an angry response from responsible dog owners, but also in less fouling in the area. The campaign was carried out throughout the county.

### 2. Flag Days

Flag days were used to highlight the extent of dog fouling, with flags being posted by dog faeces. The amount of flags even shocked the members of the forum and was a very effective way of drawing attention to the problem. Spraying with coloured dyes can be used instead of flags.

### 3. Survey

A spoof survey of dog walkers and other users of sites was used as a means of raising awareness (see figure 1). It questioned people's attitudes towards dog-fouling issues and in doing so helped to make them aware of the problems.

Figure 1: Spoof Survey of Attitudes

Question as many visitors as possible at random, whether walking dogs or not.

Do not "lecture" dog owners, we are conducting a survey of attitudes whilst trying to raise awareness.

If you record the change of the hour in the time column, we will build up a picture of peak dog (and other) visit times.

Ask the following questions:

1. Are you in favour of "Poop Scoop" bins for this site?
2. Do you support the introduction and enforcement of "Poop Scoop" By-laws for this site?
3. What do you do with your dog's mess when visiting this site?
4. Do you regard dog fouling in the countryside as a problem? (Answer in the comments column)

As well as any useful comments and attitudes to fouling in the countryside, record the attitude of the visitor to this survey in the comments column.

A = Anti

N = Neutral

P = Pro

R = Refusal - you can include dog owners who drive away on spotting you and your publicity.

The sheet for recording comments:

Responsible Dog Ownership in the Countryside

Name of site .....

Day & Date .....

| Hour | Do you<br>favour<br>Bins? |   | Do you<br>favour By-<br>laws? |   | Do you<br>Clean<br>Up? |   | Comments | How many<br>dogs? |
|------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|----------|-------------------|
|      | Y                         | N | Y                             | N | Y                      | N |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |
|      |                           |   |                               |   |                        |   |          |                   |

4. Other Measures

Dog wardens were located at many countryside sites and more dog bins were placed at sites.

**Management Issues to be Considered**

If you are going to enforce some form of control measures at your site, you need to consider carefully where this will be - everywhere, near car parks, in woodlands etc.?

If you are going to have restricted access, then you need to provide alternatives and have a map showing the location of areas where people can walk their dogs. You could also provide "free" dog exercise areas.

You may consider having a "dog-sanctuary" area on your site, to decrease potential nature conservation impacts. To avoid dogs entering water bodies and worrying birds, it would be a good idea to make provision for a pond for dogs or provide a hosepipe.

It is important to be persistent but not to alienate dog owners. You should repeatedly talk to people - spend 12 hours a day, 7 days a week promoting awareness. It was found that many people believe that "my dog doesn't cause any problems", when in reality this may not be true.

It is important to be meaningful and objective. You should use the input of dog owners, e.g. use dog walkers as voluntary wardens. Run dog awareness days at your site to help promote responsible ownership.

Involve the local ramblers association and other organisations to encourage open debate, and use the local parish council as a point of contact.

It is important to include policies concerning the management of dogs in any land management plans - it is often an issue that is swept under the carpet and not given sufficient attention.

You may consider approaching pet food manufacturers to get them involved with promoting responsible dog ownership.



## PLENARY SESSION

The main conclusions drawn from the plenary session were as follows:

1. Response to dog-related problems is often ad hoc or a knee-jerk reaction. It is necessary to address this issue at all levels of planning (local plans, management plans, etc.), as dog walkers are prime users of many sites.
2. Consultation is important, as it is necessary to ensure that you are targeting the right people and not just dictating from above. Involving local people and users is crucial and it is important to determine their needs.
3. It should be considered whether dogs actually have a right of access to the open countryside.
4. Dog walkers need to have alternative routes/areas if they are going to be restricted from using certain areas.
5. Education and raising awareness are vital, through the promotion of responsible dog ownership and the training of dogs and their owners.
6. National registration could be a useful way of encouraging responsible dog ownership. There is currently a government project, involving the Pet Advisory Committee and the RSPCA, which is looking into this idea.
7. Many agencies wish to encourage people to get out into the countryside and dog walking could be a way of doing this.
8. There is often a distinction between walkers, and walkers with dogs. Dogs are often not allowed by organised walking groups, but these groups will organise separate walks for dogs and their owners.
9. By-laws controlling dog walking need to be logical and reasonable for them to be enforceable.
10. More research is needed into the nature of the problem and the impact that it has on the environment.

11. There is a definite need to address this issue and at the end of the day, countryside staff (land managers, countryside officers, rangers, etc.) are the only ones who can actually have some influence on the problems that exists. This shows the value of workshops and forums, which enable the exchange of ideas and experiences.

## USEFUL CONTACT ADDRESSES

1. Good Dog Campaign

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London  
WC1B 3RA  
Tel: (0171) 255 1100

2. Pet Advisory Committee

1 Deans Yard  
London  
SW1P 3NR  
Tel: (0171) 799 9811

3. Pet Health Council

4 Bedford Square  
London  
WC1B 3RA  
Tel: (0171) 631 3795  
Fax: (0171) 631 0602

4. Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

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## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Phil Baarda, Countryside Warden, East Dorset District Council

Andy Barnard, Corporation of London

Carl Baron, Chief Countryside Warden, Tameside MBC

Ann Baxter, Design & Interpretation Services, Forestry Enterprise

Andrea Beddows, Assistant Coast and Countryside Advisor, National Trust

Tony Blackledge, Countryside Ranger, Cheshire County Council

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Nikki Campbell, By-laws Enforcement Officer, Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Henry Campbell-Ricketts, Countryside Ranger, Lancashire County Council

Jean Cergnul, Countryside Ranger, Cheshire County Council

Mike Chidgey, Field Officer, National Canine Defence League

Richard Cooke, Countryside Stewardship Scheme Coordinator, Farming & Rural Conservation Agency

Chris Coppock, Countryside Officer, Milton Keynes Council

Lynn Crowe, Course Leader, Sheffield Hallam University (Chairperson of the workshop)

Bridget Dales, Recreation and Access Officer, Scottish Natural Heritage

Mark Eccles, Area Ranger, Lake District National Park Authority

Sue Gittins, Deputy Welsh Officer, Ramblers Association

Stuart Griffiths, Senior Recreation Officer, Powys County Council

Andy Hawksworth, Park Ranger, London Borough of Enfield

Murray Hayden, Coombe Country Park (Leisure Services)

Linda Holloway, Public Rights of Way Officer, London Borough of Bromley

Joanna Hughes, Network Manager, Countryside Recreation Network

Nick Jones, Principal of Environmental Services, Conwy Borough Council

Alison Kent, Area Ranger, Exmoor National Park

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Judy Merryfield, Area Management Officer, Peak District National Park Authority  
Chris Moos, Countryside Officer, The Countryside Agency  
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Sean Prendergast, Chief Ranger, Peak District National Park  
Sarah Price, National Trail Assistant, Norfolk County Council  
Steven Richards-Price, Head Ranger, Kirklees Metropolitan Council  
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Sara Tebbutt, Environmental Scientist, British Waterways  
Ruth Townsend, Area Ranger, Milton Keynes Park Trust  
Lucy Webber, Student, Birbeck College  
Pete Williams, Area Officer, Countryside Council for Wales  
Craig Williams, Information Officer, Warwickshire County Council  
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Helen Wood, Education and Recreation Ranger, Forestry Commission  
Jon Young, Recreation & Access Officer, Brecon Beacons National Park