

## LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL: DOG FOULING

Following the last meeting here are some brief notes of actions the Parish Council might wish to consider. The matter should be included on the agenda of the next Parish Councils Liaison Group in order to agree a concerted approach across the Abingtons.

One important consideration may be that where dog walkers have permissive access i.e. with the landowner's permission if the landowner finds the problem is becoming too monstrous access could be withdrawn.

### 1. BACKGROUND

#### a. General guidance

Dog mess is an eyesore and a health hazard. Dog owners have a legal duty to clean up every time their dog messes in a public place. Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their guide dogs.

There is exemption for dog owners on some kinds of public land in England and Wales, including:

- Land used for agriculture or woodlands
- Rural common land
- Land that is predominantly marshland, moor or heath
- Highways with a speed limit of 50mph or more

Most local councils require dog owners to carry a poop scoop and disposable bag whenever they take their dogs out to a public place. Some councils offer free scoops.

There should be an adequate supply of bins marked as dog bins to dispose of dog bags. Normal litter bins can be used but the recommendation is for double wrapping.

#### b. Statutory duties i.e. whose job is it anyway?

Local councils must keep public areas like parks, playgrounds and pavements clear of dog mess.

#### **Extract from South Norfolk Council website**

*The whole of South Norfolk is covered by a [Dog Control Order](#).*

*This makes it an offence to allow a dog, which you are responsible for, to foul in a public place and not clear it up immediately.*

*Offenders can be issued with a fixed penalty notice of £80, reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days, or if taken to court, a fine up to £1,000.*

*If you see someone allowing their dog to foul and not clear it up, please contact us with the owner's details and where it happened so we can investigate it. We will also clean it up.*

#### **Extract from South Cambs website**

*Under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 it is generally an offence for anyone in charge of a dog to allow it to foul unless they clear it up. If there is a persistent problem with dog fouling in your area we have a number of options.*

- *We can investigate, issue warnings, fixed penalty notices or even prosecute persons in charge who fail to clear up after their dog, providing you know who that person is, have witnessed the incident and are prepared to give a statement and possibly go to court*
- *We can assess whether there are adequate facilities for the disposal of dog mess in the vicinity*
- *We can arrange for ad-hoc clearances of heavily fouled areas*

### c. Fines and criminal offences

The system of controlling dog fouling under public spaces protection orders was introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

In England and Wales, local authorities can introduce Public Space Protection Orders, making it an offence not to clean up dog mess in certain areas. PSPOs can be made where activities carried on in a public place have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. This can include

- fouling of land by dogs and the removal of dog faeces ,
- keeping dogs on leads
- exclusion of dogs from land
- the number of dogs which a person may take onto any land

(From my reading - I think parish councils cannot make PSPOs)

Under those orders, a person who doesn't clean up after their dog may face an on-the-spot fine of up to £80. These fines are known as fixed penalty notices. If a person refuses to pay they can be taken to the local Magistrates Court for the dog fouling offence and fined up to £1,000.

see [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## 2. INITIATIVES ELSEWHERE

### Improving the behaviour of dog owners

In some areas there are bag dispensers close to poo bins. This requires people to be motivated enough to walk to a poo bin to collect a bag and then walk back again.

Hildersham has South Cambridgeshire District Council *clean up after your dog* notices screwed to fence posts in strategic locations.



**Drawing attention to the problem.** Some local councils have tried, apparently with good effect, spraying poo with brightly coloured paint.

**Posters.** We have been using the Keep Britain Tidy poo fairy posters. They're probably becoming too familiar and they say "*any bin will do*" which is not appropriate in some parts of the village. Parish councillors have seen some good examples of attractive posters designed by local children in other parts of the country. LAPC suggested the school might like to have a design competition but this was not taken up. Worth trying again?

**Directly addressing dog owners** if their dogs are seen fouling. Most dog walkers have a surplus supply bags with them. Offering a bag to a handler can be effective.

**Getting the message over - again and again.** People who walk dogs should understand their statutory obligations. Daventry has fined dog handlers who are found to be unequipped i.e. no poo bags. Messaging also needs to emphasise the health risk.

**DNA testing** is in use in some areas. It has been raised as a possibility before. It requires the cooperation of dog owners.

## **Eight radical solutions to the problem of dog mess see**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22853270>

### **Next steps**

- Great Abington and Little Abington Parish Councils need to agree an approach. This will probably include several of the approaches outlined above. With the exception of the DNA testing scheme costs are unlikely to be high.
- Establish a contact at SCDC, find out what SCDC is doing with a view to working collaboratively.
- How best to engage the local community? -It is a concern to many how can they be involved?

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