
Quick Briefing – Dog Fouling

1.0 Background

1.1 The parish council receiving complaints from residents about the increasing incidences of dog mess being left on the playing fields at East Road. This seems to be part of a growing trend, but it is not clear if there is more mess or if more people are making reports.

1.2 This article was published in The Guardian last week and gives some useful background. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/30/excremental-growth-uk-sniffs-a-pandemic-puppy-poo-problem?>

2.0 Legal Position

2.1 Failure to clean up after your dog fouls is a breach of the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 (s59) and in Cornwall is punishable by a fixed penalty (minimum £100, maximum £1000). *This relies on there being sufficient evidence to make a successful claim against the dog owner.*

3.0 Options

3.1 Direct Reporting: Cornwall Council encourage residents to report incidents directly to them via their website. <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/animal-welfare/dog-welfare-and-enforcement-service/dog-fouling/report-dog-fouling/>

3.2 Residents patrols. Cornwall Council set up a scheme asking residents to volunteer and become Community Ambassadors in October 2020. These Ambassadors were asked to audit and monitor incidences of dog fouling and be a champion to encourage other residents to be responsible for clearing up their own dogs' mess and reporting incidents. The scheme details are in Appendix 1. *The parish council advertised the scheme for 6 weeks but no residents volunteered.*

3.3 Parish councillors have received training that enables them to make reports of dog fouling direct to Cornwall Council. There is a simple Incident Report Card available that can be used prompt the observer to collect appropriate evidence. This system can only be used by trained councillors and staff. *There is no expectation that the councillor will make contact with the offender to record the information needed.* See Appendix 2

3.4 Dog warden. There is currently one dog warden available to patrol south-east Cornwall. In order to make a request for them to attend the parish, they will need evidence of time, place and frequency that the fouling is taking place. *This would need to be collected by councillors or residents.*

3.5 Warning notices: CC has supplied us with small (10cm x 18cm) notices that we can fix to lamp-posts and gates. See Appendix 2. Some parishes use notices designed by local children to supplement the official warnings. *This is the low cost approach that may have an immediate effect.*

3.6 Green Dog Walkers: a community based scheme that is simpler than the Cornwall Council one. See Appendix 2. *If there is sufficient interest in our local dog-walking community, this scheme (or a simplified version) might be a way of engaging with responsible dog owners and help collect evidence (3.4 above)*

3.7 Provision of extra waste bins: we have recently purchased a dog waste bin to (£197 ex). There is an additional and ongoing cost to empty the bin of £273 per annum (weekly collection). *Do these new bins need to be emptied on a weekly basis? Dog waste can be deposited in any litter bin so new bins might also attract ordinary waste as well and still need to be emptied weekly.*

3.8 Provision for plastic bags and dispenser: council may provide a dispenser and bags for collection of dog waste that encourages dog owners to dispose of mess safely. (£91.56 ex). *There are alternatives available to use instead of plastic.*

https://uk.glasdon.com/retriever-city-tm-sack-dispenser?gclid=Cj0KCKQiA6t6ABhDMARIsAONIYwIjMsWbgfKr-dPwh2wPIP-sTIQybswv9eBGYzZrrs3cwy3c3NJJsR0aAotKEALw_wcB

4.0 Summary

4.1 The parish council has limited powers to manage this situation, and councillors (even with appropriate training) are advised against making personal and direct interventions when they see a dog fouling.

4.2 The parish council can install additional warning/encouraging notices, and publicise the issue through the church magazine, social media etc.

4.3 For action to be taken by the Cornwall Council dog-warden, evidence needs to be collected. This may be best carried by involving the wider community of dog owners and people using those areas most affected (playing fields at East Road)

4.4 There are ways of working with volunteers to monitor incidences of dog fouling and making a community response. However, whilst we have had a handful of complaints about dog mess, no one has so far volunteered to lead a response to the problem.

4.5 The parish council can purchase additional dog waste bins and/or supply waste bags to encourage dog owners to pick up. There would be an ongoing cost as well as an original cost of purchase.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Councillors may wish to agree a phased approach to the problem by taking a low cost/no cost approach of new signage and warnings, and raising awareness among our own dog-owning community and residents.

5.2 Dependent on the response to raising awareness, councillors may then consider the purchase of additional bins and disposal bags.

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