



Sustaining Dunbar

Travel Advice Factsheet 10 - Dog Walking



Dunbar is a great place to walk your dog; there are many open spaces as well as wonderful paths and scenery. Walking the dog is good for both your physical and mental health, providing a great deal of pleasure for you and your pet. However, you do have a number of responsibilities as a dog owner, you must keep your dog under control, particularly around animals and people, and you must clean up after your dog and ensure that they are wormed regularly to prevent the spread of disease.

Health Issues



Stepping in dog mess is smelly and difficult to remove, but it also poses a major health risk to humans, particularly small children. Many dogs, particularly puppies, harbour a roundworm known as *toxocara canis* (t.canis), which can be passed by dog faeces to humans as *toxocariasis*. This can survive for up to two years in the faeces. It can be ingested accidentally by children through contact with contaminated soil or sand. Around 20 cases of human infection are recorded in the UK each year. Symptoms can range from tummy upsets, headaches and sore throats to irreversible eye damage

Dog Walkers and the Law



The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 aims to protect residents from the risks and dangers of dog mess. If you are in charge of a dog, it is your responsibility to clean up after it. If you don't do this, you could be given a fixed penalty notice by the Council or the Police. The fine is currently £40, rising to £60 if not paid within 28 days.

What We Can All Do

Dog Owners and Dog Walkers

- ✓ Always pick up your dog's mess to reduce the risk of contamination and infection.
- ✓ Keep a supply of bags in your pocket. East Lothian Council provides these for free at its council offices and local libraries.
- ✓ Find out where the nearest dog bins are on your journey. If there aren't enough, lobby the Council to provide more. Remember, picking up dog fouling in a bag and then leaving the bag lying around is still an offence.
- ✓ Make sure that you worm your dog or puppy regularly. Worming tablets are cheap and easily available.

Everyone

- ✓ Let East Lothian Council's Landscape and Countryside Department know about persistent problem areas so they can trace offenders or install more facilities.
- ✓ Carry out a Dog Watch campaign in your local area to raise awareness.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code

You now have the right to be on most land for recreation providing you act responsibly (as set out in the Scottish Access Code). When walking in the countryside, the main rules for dog walking are:-



- Don't take your dog into a field where there are lambs, calves or other young animals. Instead, go into a neighbouring field or land next to it, and keep your dog on a short lead.
- Don't take your dog into a field of crops (unless you are on a clear path).
- Keep your dog on a short lead or under close control in fields where there are farm animals; cows and horses in particular can be frightened by dogs and may react aggressively. If this happens, keep calm, let the dog go and take the shortest, safest route out of the field.
- During the bird breeding season (usually April to July); keep your dog under close control or on a short lead in areas of moorland, forests, loch and sea shores.
- Pick up and remove your dog's faeces.
- Some reservoirs and streams are used for public water supply. If there are intakes nearby, keep your dog out of the water.
- In recreation areas and other public spaces, avoid causing concern to others by keeping your dog under close control.

More information at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

The Dog Watch Campaign

In 2010, East Lothian Council launched its Dog Watch Campaign, based on the principles of Neighbourhood Watch. Dog Watch aims to encourage local communities to police themselves by advertising their involvement with the campaign and to report cases of dog fouling. The Council offers support by way of following up on repeat



offences, targeting the areas with the greatest number of complaints with covert surveillance and ensuring a high profile presence from time to time. Local community groups who wish to join the campaign should call 01620 827430 or e-mail landscapeandcountryside@eastlothian.gov.uk. If you see an offence being regularly committed, contact 01875 824305, or there is a dedicated e-mail service, please contact ELC for details. www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/Dog_Watchdownload.pdf

National Poop Scoop Week

This is organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Dogs Trust, and is usually held in the Summer. It could be used by your community group as a focus for an awareness campaign. More information at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org