

DOGS (FOULING OF LAND) ACT 1996

There have been problems in Otterbourne over the last few months with bags of dog faeces being thrown into the bushes near the Otter pub. This is as much a contravention of the law as not cleaning up after the dog in the first place.

“Most owners clean up after their dogs these days,” explains Dave Griffiths, WCC’s Senior Animal Welfare Officer, “it is only a small percentage who are irresponsible so being in the right place at the right time is a ‘needle in a haystack’ scenario. That’s why we need the help of members of the public. Cleaning up the mess and leaving the bag on the land, on trees or in bushes is not complying with the law. It must be placed in an appropriate bin or taken home and disposed of in your own bin”.

How you can help

Offenders need to be identified. Should you witness an owner or dog walker failing to clean up after their dog in an area to which the general public have access and you know the offender’s address, please report the incident to the Council and appropriate action will be taken.

We would ask you to state that you saw the dog defecate on public land and that the owner left the land without clearing up, give a description of the dog and the person walking the dog, where that person lives if you know; give the exact time and date that the offence occurred and the exact location. A car registration sometimes helps if you see it.

Where a dog is loose without an owner or keeper present, fouling is still an offence if the owner is traced.

Commercial dog walkers are responsible for cleaning up after all dogs that are in their care.

The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996

The Act applies to all areas to which the general public have access with the exception of agricultural land, commercial woodland, marshland, moors, heath, rural common land and carriageways with a speed limit over 40mph. Privately owned land is included if the general public have access to the land but private gardens and drives are not included.

Offenders caught by the Animal Welfare Team may be issued with a fixed penalty fine of £50. Failure to pay the fine may lead to prosecution with a maximum penalty of £1000.

Guide dog owners are exempt from the law.

Contact

Please don’t hesitate to call if you require any more information about the legislation.

We are also happy to spread the word about responsible dog ownership by giving free talks to kids in schools. Year 5 or 6 kids are ideal for us but we are happy to talk to any age group.

You can contact us on 01962 848350 during office hours, or Email ehhealth@winchester.gov.uk. You can also find some information on our website; <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/environment/dog-fouling/>