

A guide for dog owners and dog walkers





A stroll through Wiltshire's countryside really shows rural England at its best. Wiltshire is famous for prehistoric sites, white horses and is a haven for wildlife. Much of the county is designated 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and is particularly suited to travelling on foot.

Wiltshire's Rights of Way network provides over 6,100km (3,800 miles) of footpaths, bridleways and byways together with 27,000 hectares (67,000 acres) of 'access land' across the county.

Many of Wiltshire's public rights of way cross fields used to grow crops or graze animals. People walking their dogs are welcome, provided dogs are kept under control and their owners clear up after them.

Did you know
that walking only
30 minutes every day
makes you feel good,
gives you more energy,
helps reduce stress, can
lower blood pressure and
helps keep your heart
in good working order.
Walking keeps you
and your dog happy
and healthy.

Is dog mess a serious problem?

Yes. The UK's dog population excretes roughly 10,000 tonnes a week. That's enough dog mess to fill four Olympic sized swimming pools.

Why do I need to clear up after my dog?

Clearing up after your dog helps prevent the spread of some nasty infections and diseases.

Dog mess can contain roundworm parasites which cause Toxocariasis in humans. It is spread from animals to humans through contact with infected faeces. Toxocariasis symptoms include dizziness and nausea, asthma and epileptic seizures. It can even lead to serious eye damage or permanent blindness. Dog mess also harbours parasites that can harm farm animals especially cows and sheep.

Please don't let your dog foul a public right of way or open space. It is easy to train your dog to go in the garden before taking it out for a walk. Always carry a plastic bag with you so that if your dog is caught short you can pick up its mess and dispose of it in a bin.



Should I worm my dog?

Yes. Regular worming is a very important for your dog's health as well as your own. If your dog has never been wormed you can pop him or her along to your local vet for treatment. You can also buy worming tablets over the counter from your local pet shop. Although worming helps prevent the spread of disease, please continue to clear up after your dog. Leaving dog mess or filled dog mess bags behind is anti social. It is most unpleasant to have to wash dogs' mess from your shoes, or from your hands if you're a wheelchair user.

What could happen if I don't clear up my dog's mess?

If you don't clear up after your dog, Community Police Officers and the council's dog warden can serve you with a fixed penalty notice; you could be prosecuted and, if found guilty, fined up to £1,000.

Why keep my dog under control?

Dogs are naturally inquisitive, especially around livestock, other dogs and people. You may know your dog is friendly, but other people, dogs, livestock or wildlife may be frightened if your dog is running towards them.

The Countryside Code highlights that your dog should be kept under close control. Please ensure your dog is trained to respond to your commands and stays close to you. If your dog wanders out of sight or doesn't come back when called, it should be walked on a lead.

What if I come across livestock while walking my dog?

If you meet farm animals whilst out walking it's usually best to put your dog on a lead. Always leave as much space as possible between your dog and the animals. Sheep usually run away but cows can be very inquisitive of dogs, especially when they have calves with them. If cows do start acting aggressively it is usually best to let go of your dog and let it run free to safety while you leave the field as quickly as you can. Always keep your dog on a lead if you are in a field with sheep.

You may come across a sign asking you to put your dog on a lead. If you see one of these signs or a farmer asks you to put your dog on a lead, please do so.



What can happen if my dog chases or worries livestock?

It is an offence to allow your dog to chase or attack livestock. A farmer is legally entitled to shoot a dog if they can't stop it chasing or worrying their livestock. An out of control dog could cause a pregnant ewe to miscarry or cause a newborn lamb to be separated from and rejected by its mother. As a responsible dog owner please do everything you can to make sure no one has to protect their livestock by destroying your dog.

Could my dog disturb ground-nesting birds?

Yes. Dogs running loose can disturb wild animals and ground nesting birds. During the nesting season between March and July keep your dog close to you or on a lead, especially if you are walking through woodland or across fields. If your dog is running loose it could accidentally damage a nest, trample fledglings or scare off their parents leaving young birds to starve. If you come across a nest please don't let your dog disturb it.

What could happen if my dog is considered dangerous or out of control?

If your dog is considered dangerous, aggressive or out of control it can be reported to the police or the dog warden. If you are not able to keep your dog under control, enforcement action may have to be taken.

What if I lose my dog?

A visit to the countryside should be enjoyable and trouble-free for you and your dog. Even so, every year many dogs go missing; they can become trapped, scared by loud noises, injured in road accidents, or even stolen.



To help prevent your dog from becoming lost:

- Keep it in sight when on a walk
- Train it to always come back immediately when called
- Make sure it always wears a collar, with your name, address and a mobile telephone number
- Ensure it is microchipped and your details are kept up-to-date on the pet registration database.

Reporting dog fouling

If you witness someone in a public place letting their dog foul without cleaning it up afterwards, please report this to the dog warden with as much information as possible, such as:

- Time/date/location of incident
- Frequency of offence if it happens regularly
- Description/breed of dog
- Description of the offender
- A photo of the dog/incident is useful to identify the dog (but cannot be used as evidence)
- Your name/address/phone number
- Name/address of offender if known.

It is difficult to catch offenders without the above information, and an authorised officer usually needs to witness the offence being committed before a fixed penalty notice can be issued.

To help get your pet back as soon as possible keep a record of your dog's details, such as colour, markings along with any unique features, breed, sex and age.

Don't forget to change your contact details with the pet registration database and on your dog's collar, if you move or go away on holiday.



Reporting dog issues

Dog wardens have the powers to issue fixed penalty notices of £75 to anyone seen not clearing up after their dog. Failure to do this could lead to prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000.

Dog wardens respond to the public's reports of fouling problems. They carry out patrols throughout Wiltshire, specifically targeting well used dog walking areas.

Bag and bin it, any litter bin will do.

Did you know that from 6 April 2016 it will be compulsory for all dogs to be microchipped.

Contact information

The Dog Warden Service

This service is available 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, excluding bank holidays.

Tel: **0300 456 0107**

Email: lostdogs@wiltshire.gov.uk

Out of office hours, please report stray or lost dogs on **0300 456 0107**

Dangerous dogs

Dogs which have attacked or you fear will attack a person are dealt with by the police. If you have any worries about an out of control dog please call Wiltshire Police on **101**

RSPCA

Mistreatment of animals should be reported to the RSPCA on **0300 1234 999**

Look out

for cyclists, vehicles, horse riders and joggers. They can startle your dog or your dog can startle them, which can cause an injury or accident. It's therefore safest to put your dog on the lead as they come past. Be careful when letting it approach other people or their dogs, unless you are sure they are happy to be approached. Be particularly careful around children. Dogs can misunderstand their high-pitched voices and jerky movements, and so jump up or try to play, which can be extremely frightening for a small child.



**Enjoy your walks,
always follow the Countryside
Code and leave only pawprints.**