

Taking the Lead

Managing access with dogs to reduce impacts on land management



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Taking the Lead

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This guidance has been produced to help farmers, crofters, landowners, access managers and others identify and implement effective mechanisms to encourage responsible dog walking and reduce the negative impacts of dog walking on wildlife, game, farming, crofting and others enjoying the outdoors.

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1 Introduction

Walking is a very popular and accessible way to enjoy and learn about the outdoors, and brings many health and social benefits. The 2013/14 Scotland's People and Nature Survey revealed that, of the estimated 395.8 million adult visits to the outdoors for leisure and recreation, approximately 48% were accompanied by a dog. As well as providing motivation for daily exercise and a year-round reason to go outdoors, dogs contribute greatly to many people's lives through the enjoyment and companionship they offer.

The majority of dog walking causes no problems, even where there are large numbers of dog walkers. If dog-related access issues arise, this is often because dog walkers are confused or unclear about what is expected of them in a particular set of circumstances, or because they don't understand the problems that irresponsible behaviour can cause. Understanding the needs, rights and responsibilities of dog walkers and land managers is key to helping decide how to effectively address local problems.

The guidance which follows relates to dogs accompanied by people on foot or cycle. Stray dogs are a different issue, best dealt with by the local authority dog warden.



Dog walkers' rights

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides public rights of access to most land and inland water, both day and night, for recreational, educational and some related commercial purposes. Vehicular access is excluded from these access rights, apart from for people with a disability using a vehicle adapted for their use.

Access rights under the Land Reform Act are conditional on responsible behaviour (see page 5). Access rights include individual and commercial dog walkers, but do not apply to anyone with a dog which is not under proper control. Public access with or without dogs may differ on rights of way.

With particular relevance to people accompanied by dogs, the information in the table below, taken from the Land Reform Act, provides a summary of where access rights do / do not apply. Responsible use of access rights is guided by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

| Rights of access apply to: | Rights of access do not apply to: |
|--|---|
| Paths and tracks | A privacy zone around people's dwellings (such as a garden or farmyard), and land linked to non-residential buildings (such as a yard or compound). |
| Enclosed fields, hill, rough and common grazing in which sheep, cattle or other farm animals are grazing | |
| Open countryside - hills , mountains, moorland, grassland, woods and forests. | |
| Stubble fields and land in which cereal, fruit or vegetable crops have not been sown | Land in which cereal, fruit or vegetable crops have been sown or are growing, including grass grown for hay or silage at late stages of growth likely to be damaged by anyone exercising their access rights. |
| Margins of fields where crops are growing or have been sown | |
| Riverbanks, loch shores, beaches and the coast Most parks and open spaces | |
| Grass sports or playing fields whilst not in use. Crossing golf courses, providing access does not interfere with play and is not taken across greens. | Grass golf and bowling greens, cricket squares and lawn tennis courts; sports or playing fields with a synthetic grass, acrylic, resin or rubber granule surface, whether or not in use. |



Dog walkers' responsibilities

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (the Access Code) offers guidance on what is considered to be responsible behaviour under the Land Reform Act. For dog walkers, this includes:

- Not entering a field where there are young farm animals, such as lambs and calves.
- Where possible, choosing a route that avoids taking their dog into fields with livestock, such as going into a neighbouring field or onto adjacent land.
- If going through fields of grazing livestock, keeping as far as possible from any animals and keeping their dog on a short lead (2 metres) or close at heel. If cows react aggressively, dog walkers are recommended to keep calm, let the dog go and take the shortest, safest route out of the field.
- Keeping their dog on a short lead or close at heel during the breeding season (usually April to July) in areas where there are ground nesting birds breeding and rearing their young such as moorland, forests, grassland, loch shores and the seashore.
- Ensuring that their dog does not worry or attack livestock.
- Removing any faeces left by their dog in a public open place, as legally required under the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003. There is no legal requirement to do so on agricultural land, although, partly in response to increasing evidence of livestock disease linked with dog faeces, the Access Code recommends dog walkers always clean up after their dogs.

Under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, if a dog worries livestock on agricultural land, then the owner and the person in charge of the dog (if not the owner) are guilty of an offence. Worrying means attacking livestock, chasing livestock in a way that can reasonably be expected to cause injury or suffering to either the livestock or their unborn young, or not being closely controlled in a field or enclosure in which there are sheep.



Land managers' responsibilities

Under the Land Reform Act, land managers are required to:

- Respect access rights in managing land and water.
- Act reasonably, lawfully and with care at all times for people's safety.
- Avoid causing unreasonable interference with the rights of anyone exercising or seeking to exercise their access rights.

The Access Code provides guidance on land managers' responsibilities and states that land managers should not allow guard dogs or working dogs to alarm people, especially close to paths and tracks. Find out more on the dog walking pages at <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Practical-guide/land-manager/dog-walking>



2 Developing local approaches to encourage responsible dog walking

People accompanied by dogs that are under proper control can exercise their access rights, as long as they behave responsibly. Behaving responsibly means taking responsibility for their own actions (and those of their dog), taking care of the environment, and respecting the interests of others, including land managers.

If local issues arise relating to access with dogs, the Land Reform Act and the Access Code provide the framework in which to resolve them. Access authorities (local and national park authorities) have a statutory duty to uphold access rights and a key role in advising on responsible use and management of outdoor access.

In planning a local approach, it's important to recognise what most dog walkers are looking for, which is off-lead access, close to home and away from traffic. Understanding these needs, as well as how access interacts with local land management activity, is key in helping to decide how to address pressure points.



Guiding principles

- Managing access with dogs should be an integral part of positive management of public access. Identify which particular issues present the greatest problem and concentrate on these.
- People respond best to land managers who show that they welcome responsible public access.
- Clearly communicate the behaviour that is requested, why, where and when.
- Focus on encouraging and promoting access in less sensitive areas rather than trying to stop people elsewhere.
- Identifying and clearly signing areas suitable for letting dogs off-lead as well as areas where it is advised that dogs are kept on-lead shows dog walkers that their needs are being actively considered, which helps encourage a positive response.
- Raise awareness of issues through appropriate signs and direct communication with dog walkers, and if necessary by other routes such as local media.
- Enlist the help and support of responsible dog walkers to lead by example and apply peer pressure to those failing to behave responsibly.

A step by step approach

1 Identify the issue

- What precisely is the issue?
- Who is causing the problem – local dog walkers or visitors? Individual or commercial dog walkers?
- Are certain times or certain areas more sensitive than others?

2 Assess the relative scale of the issue

- How much of an issue is there? Establishing hard facts and figures about the extent of any problem is essential to monitoring the effectiveness of any action taken.
- Is access with dogs causing unacceptable problems for land managers or others? If there's not too much of an issue, it may be better to just monitor the situation and review the need for action if things change.
- Are dogs the biggest problem, or are there other more significant access issues which resources should be concentrated on?

3 Understand the site

- Consider how people get to/from the site, and how it is currently used. Where are the access and egress points? Are there any problem areas or pinch points?
- Identify areas particularly sensitive to fouling or disturbance by dogs where efforts to encourage responsible behaviour need to be focused.
- Identify areas which are less sensitive to disturbance, where dogs can be given more freedom to run around, paddle or swim, and promote access in these areas by signage or creation of suitable paths.

4 Engage with others

- Speak with local dog walkers to help develop an understanding of their needs and enlist their help in identifying solutions.
- Consult with the local access authority and local dog warden, who will usually be able to offer advice and support.
- To help address more serious or persistent issues, it may be helpful to consult the local community council, local access forum or dog training club, and perhaps national bodies such as the Scottish Canine Consultative Council (SCCC), police, Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA), the Kennel Club, Scottish Kennel Club, Keep Scotland Beautiful and other local groups such as "Friends of...".
- Demonstrating engagement with others is often essential to securing funding, if this is needed to implement any proposals.





5 Consider the options

The table in Section 3: “Deciding what to do where” will help identify locally appropriate solutions and which approach is most likely to work, depending on the nature of the problem and the location.

Options include:

Site planning & design

- Explore site planning and land-use options as a way to avoid conflict between land management and public access with dogs.
- Review scope to make physical changes to the site which would address current issues.
- Identify any liability issues and avoid directing people to areas which might be hazardous for either dogs or walkers.

Promoting responsible behaviour

- Consider how best to communicate with dog walkers (see below).
- Ensure that behavioural messages are realistic, fair and proportionate.

In considering the options, the possible displacement effects of any action also need to be assessed

- Will the problem simply be shifted elsewhere?
- Is the impact on other sites acceptable?

6 Agree who will take the lead

- Identify which person, organisation or group will lead on the favoured approach. This might be a farmer, landowner, community group, the local authority, local access forum or another relevant group or person.

7 Apply for funding (if required)

- Contact the local access officer for advice on potential funding options.
- Projects or action linked to health benefits for dog walkers are far more likely to attract funding than proposals solely focusing on dog-related access issues.

8 Implement, monitor, review and adapt

- Monitor the effects of the chosen approach on the site in question, and if necessary, any potential displacement effect on other sites in conjunction with other interests. If what’s been tried isn’t working, review why that might be, re-evaluate the options and try something else.
- If attempts to tackle site specific issues don’t work, consider scope for a broader approach to access management over a wider area: are there other routes that can be promoted for dog walkers which avoid sensitive areas? Where problems are particularly acute and prove resistant to positive management, access authorities may consider more formal regulatory measures such as byelaws.



Communicating with dog walkers

Raising awareness of dog walkers' responsibilities and positively managing access is usually more effective than confrontation or trying to keep dogs off specific areas of land, but sometimes a more direct approach is needed. When it comes to communicating with dog walkers, there is no substitute to talking informally with them when out and about. Land managers, rangers, access staff, dog wardens, local community representatives and others can all use the opportunity to share interests and concerns with dog walkers.

Other ways of communicating with dog walkers include:

- joint initiatives with the local community, dog training club, school or other appropriate groups.
- direct communication with commercial dog walking companies.
- articles in community newsletters or the local paper.
- media coverage.
- putting up a doggy notice board.
- signs and posters in vets surgeries or at venues used by local dog training groups.

As with all communication, information about responsible dog walking is most likely to be effective if appropriately targeted. On-site signs are usually most effective for first-time or occasional visitors with dogs. For local dog walkers who visit regularly, other methods of communication may work better. If it's only one or two individuals causing a problem, speaking with them or involving the dog warden or police may be the answer. If the issue is more widespread, then signs, media coverage or joint efforts with others may be required. Where commercial dog walking presents issues, the local dog warden or access officer may be able to help in other ways. In some parts of Scotland, for example, training sessions for commercial dog walkers or the promotion of accreditation schemes have helped to address issues of this type. Bear in mind that dog walkers are strongly influenced by what other dog walkers do and say.

Positive reinforcement is generally far more effective than confrontation or reprimands. This can be achieved by:

- emphasising that responsible dog walkers are welcome.
 - explaining land management concerns.
 - identifying less sensitive places and times for off-lead access.
 - asking for help from dog walkers and others to identify and implement positive solutions.
- Dog walkers often speak informally with each other when they pass or meet others with dogs. This can be used to encourage responsible dog walkers to help lead by example, self-police areas of land and positively influence others.

Checklist for communicating with dog walkers

Is it clear to dog walkers:

- where, why and when dogs should be kept on-lead or close at heel, and where and when it's appropriate to let them off-lead?
- whether they are expected to pick up after their dogs and if so what bin(s) they should use?
- what other routes they might use to avoid cattle/sheep/game/wildlife or other sensitive areas?

In popular areas, consider the scope to provide information before people visit (via websites, local media, leaflets, map boards, information packs in holiday lets etc.) as well as on-site.

Incorporating key messages into local communications

People generally respond best to messages that speak directly to them, that reflect the local situation and that use positive rather than negative language. Clarifying exactly what is expected or required of dog walkers, where and when – particularly in relation to fouling and on- and off-lead areas – is essential to making sure the Access Code works well for everyone. The table below provides key messages to guide responsible behaviour by dog walkers that can be incorporated into a range of information to suit local circumstances. All information presented locally must comply with the spirit of the Access Code.

| Land type/use | Key message |
|--|--|
| Everywhere | <p>Wherever you are, your dog should always be under proper control.</p> <p>Remove any dog fouling from paths and tracks. Bag it and bin it - any public litter bin will do.</p> |
| Access through fields with young animals (e.g. lambs, calves, foals) | <p>Do not enter with dogs. Find an alternative route.</p> |
| Access to fields or open ground where sheep, cattle, horses or any other livestock are grazing | <p>Wherever possible, use an alternative route to avoid going through any field with livestock.</p> <p>Always keep well away from any livestock, and prevent your dog from approaching livestock. In fields, keep your dog on a short lead or close at heel, and on open ground, keep it close at heel.</p> <p>If cattle act aggressively, keep calm and let the dog go – you'll both be safer.</p> <p>Always clean up after your dog in enclosed fields. Bag it and bin it - any public litter bin will do.</p> |
| Cropped fields | <p>Do not take your dog into fields where vegetables or fruit are growing unless you are on a clear path such as a core path or right of way.</p> <p>Don't let your dog stray from the field margin or unsown path through cropped fields.</p> <p>Never let your dog foul in a crop. If your dog fouls on a field margin or unsown path through a crop, bag it and bin it - any public litter bin will do.</p> |
| Woodland, field margins, open hill ground and moorland where wildlife or game are sensitive to disturbance | <p>During the breeding season (usually April to July) keep your dog on a short lead or close at heel to avoid disturbing ground-nesting birds, young game birds or wildlife. Be aware that lambing can also take place on open hill ground during this time.</p> <p>At other times of year, ensure your dog does not cause disturbance by keeping it in sight and under control.</p> |
| Riverbanks, lochshores and beaches | <p>Don't let your dog paddle or swim in places where people are fishing.</p> <p>Always clean up after your dog on beaches and alongside rivers, burns and lochs. Bag it and bin it - any public litter bin will do.</p> |

The following notional examples illustrate good and bad application of the key messages:

Welcome to xx Estate. (This sets a positive and welcoming tone which puts people at ease. It makes them more likely to read on and comply with the request.)

This stretch of River X is regularly fished. (Simple lay-person's explanation of the activity.)

To avoid disturbance, we would be grateful if you could keep your dog from entering the water for the next half mile when fishing is taking place. (Polite request, with brief explanation why it is being made. The request is also area specific (half mile) and time limited (while fishing is taking place) and so complies with the guidance given in the Code.)

We appreciate your co-operation.

YY Fishings + contact details. (Providing a name and contact details creates a favourably open and transparent impression.)

Compare this with the following poor example:

You are entering fishing beats. (The negative tone is likely to make the reader feel ill at ease about their presence in the area, and will affect how they interpret the rest of the message. They may not understand what a fishing beat is.)

The River A is fished year-round by both salmon anglers and coarse fishermen. All dogs to be kept out of the river at all times. (More of a command than a request, the message isn't limited to when fishing is taking place, nor is it area specific – it suggests the whole of the river is affected all of the time, which is unreasonable and not Code compliant.)

Your adherence to this request would be appreciated. (Abrupt language and no indication of who has made the request or how they might be contacted, which further undermines likelihood of compliance.)

On-lead or off-lead?

As noted in Section 1 under "Dog walkers' responsibilities", the Access Code recommends that dogs should be kept either on a short lead or close at heel in certain situations. Most dog walkers have a strong desire to let their dog run freely off the lead, and management approaches which accommodate this, where possible, will have a greater chance of success. There are some key points to bear in mind in deciding what, if any, action is required:

- General promotion of the guidance provided in the Access Code, leaving dog walkers to make their own judgements about where dogs are best kept on-lead or allowed off-lead, avoids littering the countryside with signs and may well be sufficient in many areas.
- Communicating where dogs are welcome off-lead can help encourage dogs to be kept on-lead where it matters most, and promoting off-lead areas is a positive way to encourage use away from more sensitive places.
- Where specific local issues or the level of access with dogs justifies further intervention, requests to keep dogs on-lead should be restricted to the minimum necessary space and time in order to be effective. See the Checklist for communicating with dog walkers on page 9 and the Taking the Lead Information sheet 2 "Dealing with dog-related access issues using signs".



3 Deciding what to do where: a range of management options for three key issues

| Dog fouling | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Management approach | Suitable sites | Key considerations | Case study example(s) |
| Promoting a “Bag it and bin it” approach | <p>High pressure sites where dog fouling is a very significant issue and/or where there are specific issues associated with fouling e.g. animal health concerns</p> <p>Sites with ready access to bins and ease of regular emptying</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strategically located, regularly emptied bins are essential to the success of this approach. – Bags left lying around can present even more of a problem than allowing natural rotting. – Bin location needs to take account of the fact that most dogs “empty” within several hundred metres of arrival, but it’s unrealistic to expect dog walkers to return to the start to deposit bags, or to carry filled bags for any distance. – Make it clear that any public litter bin will do. – Local authorities will usually only provide bins immediately adjacent to public roads where they are readily accessible for emptying as part of standard refuse collection rounds. – Use signs to explain why fouling is a problem e.g. the associated health risks for livestock or health risks associated with crops. – Provision of free bags can help reinforce this approach. – Reinforce with a “poo marking” flagging or spraying day (see below). | <p>Atholl Estates</p> <p>Wilsontown Ironworks</p> <p>Stirling Council</p> |
| Promoting a “Flick it with a stick” approach | <p>Popular rural sites with clearly defined paths/tracks and wide verge or undergrowth e.g. woodland, moorland and/or where bins are impractical</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Confusion can easily arise between different approaches on adjacent sites. Make sure it is clear what is expected of dog walkers and where. | <p>Invercauld Estate</p> |
| Marking each dog poo with a coloured flag or luminous spray paint | <p>High pressure sites with significant dog fouling problems</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some people may take offence but shock tactics demonstrating the extent of the problem can help highlight the effect that irresponsible dog walking is having on an area and make a significant difference to persuading dog walkers to pick up after their dogs. – Similar exercises around the UK have reduced dog fouling by 75%. – See Taking the Lead Information sheet 1 “Highlighting dog fouling problems” for practical tips on following this approach. – Before embarking on this approach, it is essential to review bin provision and clarity of information, to ensure dog walkers are clear what is expected and where. | <p>Wilsontown Ironworks</p> |

Dog fouling (continued)

| Management approach | Suitable sites | Key considerations | Case study example(s) |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|
| Alternative access provision | Sites where fouling conflicts with land use/management and there is scope to provide alternative access adjacent or nearby | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people will be happy to use alternative access provided it doesn't involve significant diversion or additional length. Alternative access where dogs can be off-lead is likely to be used preferentially to existing access through cropped or grazed fields where dog walkers are expected to keep dogs on lead or clear up after their dogs. | Meigle Farm |
| Fencing to keep people and dogs to path | Cropped or grazed areas where health risks are a primary concern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the fenced path coincides with where people want to go, most people will be happy to use it, although access rights continue to apply on both sides of the fence. Fenced paths need to be wide enough to allow all types of legitimate access, and to allow dog walkers and others to safely pass each other. Concentration of fouling along the path may require combination with a bag it and bin it approach. | Laggan Farm |
| Creation of dog exercise/dog toilet area | Larger estates, forestry/woodlands or other areas with high levels of use and sufficient space to create dedicated area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing enables facility to double as an off-lead exercise area which is more likely to persuade dog walkers to keep dogs on-lead or close at heel elsewhere. Location at entry points limits fouling elsewhere as most dogs "empty" within several hundred metres of arrival. Use by dog walkers depends on easy accessibility and awareness of the facility, which relies on clear signs. Use will also be influenced by how safe dog walkers feel the facility to be. Dog walkers need to be clear whether they are required to pick up after their dogs within the area. | Rothiemurchus |
| Let or lease field or other area to commercial dog walkers | Any farm/estate/croft with a suitable patch of land, in an area used by commercial dog walkers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential income generation for redundant pieces of land. Helps reduce pressure from commercial dog walkers on other land. Make sure that any land let on this basis does not unreasonably restrict access by other members of the public. | Denny commercial dog walkers |
| Media articles | Sites with particularly significant and persistent problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires specific angle to attract media attention. Make use of local community newsletters as well as local papers. | Rothiemurchus |



Sheep worrying/disturbance and conflict with cattle

| Management approach | Suitable sites | Key considerations | Case study example(s) |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| Signs | Fields, common grazing, hill or other ground grazed by sheep or cattle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly presented facts about number of past incidents of sheep worrying on a site can help endorse the message. Signs need to make it crystal clear what is expected, using messages from the Access Code (see pages 9-10). Wide-ranging requests to keep dogs on leads over large areas of hill ground are unlikely to be complied with. In these situations it will be more effective (and Access Code compliant) to limit such requests to when livestock are “around”. Take down signs when the risk no longer applies. | Stirling Council |
| Fencing to keep people and dogs to path | Enclosed fields, particularly those used for lambing or grazed with cattle which are close to housing or subject to high visitor pressure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing a path around the edge of a field is often the most practical option. Providing the fenced path coincides with where people want to go, most people will be happy to use it, although access rights continue to apply on both sides of the fence. Fenced paths need to be wide enough to allow all types of legitimate access, and to allow dog walkers and others to safely pass each other. Segregation of grazing may necessitate mowing /strimming to keep the path useable. Where the main risk is interaction of cattle and dogs, erection of line wires which still allow sheep to graze the path line avoids need for mowing. | Laggan Farm |
| Alternative access provision | Sites where there is scope to provide alternative access adjacent or nearby | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people will be happy to use alternative access provided it doesn't involve significant diversion or additional length. Alternative access where dogs can be off-lead is likely to be used preferentially to existing access through cropped or grazed fields where dog walkers are expected to keep dogs on-lead or clear up after their dogs. | Meigle Farm |
| Leaflet to promote areas that are less sensitive to disturbance by dogs | Sites with a visitor centre or information boards with leaflet distribution facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted approaches e.g. giving a leaflet to every dog owner visitor to a camp site can work well but leaflets work less well for regular local dog walkers. People will generally only pick up a leaflet if they are interested so use positive messages and images relevant to dog walkers. | Atholl Estates |
| Adapt management | Sites with relatively heavy access pressure with dogs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livestock typically congregate at feeding sites so distancing these from paths, tracks and other areas popular with dog walkers is common sense. | |
| Alternative land use e.g. cropping rather than grazing | Fields with paths or tracks regularly used by dog walkers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On most farms land use will be determined by economic and practical factors but it may be worth considering cropping instead of grazing where sheep worrying or disturbance is a major issue, where space allows. | Brahan Estate |

Disturbance to wildlife, game and crops

| Management approach | Suitable sites | Key considerations | Case study example(s) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Seasonal signs | Any site experiencing significant pressure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explain why dogs are to be kept on a lead or close at heel. – Clearly indicate where and when any requests start and finish. – Locally specific signs work best. – Consider innovative techniques e.g. wooden cut-out of key species to remind dog walkers why dogs need to be on lead. – Take signs down when no longer required e.g. at the end of breeding season or when crops have been harvested. – Where possible offer and clearly sign alternative “dog friendly” routes. | <p>Atholl Estates</p> <p>Boat of Garten Wood</p> |
| Leaflet to promote areas less sensitive to disturbance by dogs | Sites with a visitor centre or information boards with leaflet distribution facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Targeted approaches (e.g. giving a leaflet to every dog- owner visitor to a camp site) can work well, but leaflets generally work less well for regular local dog walkers. – People will generally only pick up a leaflet if they are interested so risk of preaching to the converted. | Atholl Estates |
| Alternative access provision | Sites where there is scope to provide alternative access adjacent or nearby | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Plan, manage and promote paths or areas where there is no conflict with dog access. – Develop and promote access around field margins, if necessary fenced. – Most people will be happy to use alternative access provided it doesn't involve significant diversion or additional length. – Alternative access where dogs can be off-lead is likely to be used preferentially to existing access through cropped or grazed fields where dog walkers are expected to keep dogs on lead or clear up after their dogs. | Meigle Farm |
| Adapt management e.g. re-site pheasant feeders | Sensitive ground e.g. where game birds are being reared | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Game birds will inevitably congregate around feeders, so distancing these from paths, tracks and areas popular with dog walkers is common sense. | |
| Guided walks or events to encourage use of less sensitive areas | Dog-friendly sites available as alternative to sensitive sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creates positive opportunity to pass on key messages, often very popular with local dog walkers. – Demonstrating positive approach to access with dogs helps encourage respect for more sensitive areas. – Encourages local dog walkers to help lead by example and self-police a site. – Publicise events through local media, outdoor access diary and community groups. – Enlist the help of local community groups, access officers, ranger services or dog walking clubs. | Boat of Garten Wood |

Taking the Lead

Information sheets

Linked resources:

- Managing access with dogs to reduce impacts on land management
- Case studies
- Advice and useful links

Find them at:
outdooraccess-scotland.com

Introduction



This set of information sheets has been produced to provide summary guidance on key topics related to managing access with dogs and reducing impacts on land management.

By providing guidance on the principles and practicalities, the information should help those working to address local issues. It should be stressed that any examples given illustrate what has been done in specific locations and should not be regarded as models to be applied in all other apparently similar situations.

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Information sheet 1

Highlighting dog fouling problems

Dog fouling is a problem common throughout Scotland. As well as being unpleasant for others trying to enjoy outdoor access, dog faeces can carry diseases which affect humans, farm animals and wildlife. Concerns about the health risks associated with dog fouling are greatest in fields where cattle, sheep and other animals are grazing, and in fields where fruit and vegetables are growing.

One option to highlight the extent of the issue and the cumulative effect that irresponsible dog walking is having on a popular route and immediate surroundings (say 5 metres on either side of a length of the path) is to use fluorescent chalk-based spray paint or flags to identify each incidence of fouling. This approach has helped reduce dog fouling by 75% in some places.



What the law says

The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 requires dog walkers to remove any faeces left by their dog in a public open space. Failure to do so can result in a fixed penalty fine or prosecution. There is no legal requirement on dog walkers to clear up after their dogs on agricultural land, or other land outwith the definition of “public open space”, although most responsible dog walkers would choose to do so if they were aware of the impacts.

Where to use flagging or fluorescent paint spraying

- Paths or areas with persistent unacceptably high levels of dog fouling.
- Cropped or grazed fields where there are concerns about health risks.
- Other sites where the level of fouling is particularly unpleasant for others trying to enjoy the outdoors.

Before considering this approach, it is worth reviewing the adequacy of bin provision and whether information encouraging people to clear up after their dogs, bag it and bin it is sufficiently clear. If necessary, arrange for more bins to be installed, and provide information that any public litter bin will do.

Timing

- Choose a time of year when flags or spray-paint marking will be visually evident, and when people are most likely to notice the flagging/spraying.

Who else to involve

- Involving local community groups, schools, cubs, scouts or environmental groups can help attract greater media coverage as well as directly raise awareness amongst dog walkers, friends and family of those involved.
- Local dog wardens will often be willing to help organise and promote flagging and spraying events.
- Local police may also be willing to get involved.

What to do

- Fix a date for when you're going to do the fluorescent paint spraying or flagging.
- Decide whether you are going to use spray-paint or flags, or a combination of both, to identify each individual dog poo. Organise the necessary materials, including disposable gloves.
- Issue a press release in advance and do whatever else you can to get local TV, radio and newspapers to cover your story. Media coverage is as important (if not more so) than the flagging and spraying itself.
- Do a formal written risk assessment, particularly if you're involving other people. Some people may object to use of spray paint (particularly if they don't know its biodegradable) but if you plan on using flags, think carefully about the safety risks. You may need to tape off the flagged "crime scene" to avoid someone falling and spearing themselves on a bamboo cane or skewer.
- Put up posters on site explaining what is being done and why.
- Carry out the event, marking each individual poo.
- Remove flags after 2-3 weeks. Paint will biodegrade naturally.

Review whether you need to repeat the exercise annually.

Case studies

Loch Leven National Nature Reserve ran a "flagging up the issue" event to highlight problems of dog fouling. Some of the associated press coverage is available online at <http://www.thecourier.co.uk/news/local/perth-kinross/loch-leven-nature-reserve-flags-up-problem-of-dog-mess-1.89850> and <http://lochlevennr.wordpress.com/2013/04/25/flagging-up-the-issue/>



Information sheet 2 Dealing with dog-related access issues using signs

Why use signs?

- To reduce disturbance to livestock, wildlife or game
- To reduce risk of crop damage
- To clarify what is expected of dog walkers, where and when
- To remind dog walkers of their responsibilities
- To alert dog walkers to specific risks or hazards
- To identify where sensitive areas start and finish
- To remind dog walkers to keep dogs to a path or track
- To help dog walkers make informed decisions and enjoy a conflict-free visit

Key points on using signs

- 1 People respond best to positive, helpful information. Positive endorsement is nearly always more effective than negative “no go” type signs, which many people will ignore and which may conflict with legal access rights.
- 2 Signage needs to be simple, clear, concise and specific. Stick to one message rather than diluting or risking confusing people by trying to put across too much information.
- 3 Explain why you are asking for certain behaviour e.g. associated health risks of dog fouling.
- 4 Make sure the sign clearly explains where and for how long the behaviour is being requested.
- 5 Keep words to a minimum – a single picture, symbol or cartoon is often more effective.
- 6 Humour usually helps, but with serious problems such as sheep worrying or health risks, some access authorities have found that hard-hitting facts are more effective.
- 7 State who is the author of the sign – and preferably provide contact details.
- 8 Remove the sign when it is no longer required, for example when cows and calves have been moved to another field or area.

Remember that signage is only one way of communicating with dog walkers. There may be other more effective approaches.

| Question to ask | Guiding principles |
|--|--|
| Are signs necessary? | Only use where and when needed. Putting up too many signs risks littering the countryside, diluting the message, alienating dog walkers and potentially causing confusion. |
| Is it clear to which area the sign applies? | Putting up signs at the end of sensitive areas where you expect dogs to be kept on-lead is as important as signs at the beginning, and far more likely to be respected by dog walkers. |
| Is the sign readily visible? | Brightly coloured signs are more visible. Locate signs where they will be seen, and tailor size to individual circumstances – small signs are easily missed or ignored on a wide track. Position signs so the bottom is at least 0.8 m above ground level and the top is < 1.85 m high. |
| Is the sign easily legible? | Make sure text and any illustration are big enough for people of all ages to read easily. Dark text on a light background works well, as does white text on a dark background. Avoid using red text which is hard to read and easily fades. Limit text to a maximum of eight words per line. Use an easy to read sans-serif typeface (without the squiggly bits!), using a combination of bold and normal type, and different sizes of the same typeface. Text in upper case is more difficult to read so use both upper and lower case lettering. |
| Is the message readily understandable by people of all ages and abilities? | Use language which is easy to understand, the minimum of words, and reinforce with a picture wherever possible. |
| Are dog walkers likely to pay any attention to the sign? | Make the sign relevant to dog walkers. Highlighting the risk of dogs getting lost or injured is more likely to be effective than simply stating the risks for wildlife or farm livestock. |
| Does the quality of the sign give it credibility? | Tatty signs rarely command respect. Laminated signs are cheap and easy to produce yourself if you have computer access, and will last for several years if mounted on a firm, flat background. Rigid or corrugated PVC, fibreglass or other similar materials are waterproof, lightweight and more durable. Professional signs can easily be ordered online for approximately £20 each. |
| Does the message comply with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code? | To avoid any doubt, check with your local access officer, who will always be happy to help advise and may be able to output signs for you. |
| Is permanent signage necessary? | Take down signs as soon as a risk has passed, hazard is no longer present, or a field, site or area is no longer sensitive to disturbance by dogs. Who can blame dog walkers for learning to ignore all signs when signs saying “lambing in progress” are left up all year? |

Standardised signage templates

Templates have been produced for lambing, young livestock, breeding wildlife and a range of other land management situations. You can choose whether to print out the standard template and then add your own information, or add your own details before printing and laminating.



The templates are downloadable from:

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Access-management-guidance/signs>

Alternatively, you may prefer to produce your own signs. Provided signs follow the principles summarised above, dog walkers will often respond better to a locally-specific sign which a land manager has taken the trouble of producing.



The table on page 5 suggests a series of guiding principles that you may wish to use. The examples which follow illustrate how some land managers have applied these principles. None claim to be perfect. The comments below each picture suggest scope for improvement.

Examples of signs about dog fouling



These two signs demonstrate different approaches to a similar issue in different situations. The sign on the left could be improved by incorporating the message “Bag it and bin it” to avoid dog walkers leaving dog waste they have picked up. The sign on the right could usefully also say “Any bin will do” to avoid confusion about which bins can be used for disposing of dog waste.

Examples of signs to reduce livestock disturbance

Signs are more effective if they make it clear exactly what area they relate to so that dog walkers are clear whether they are being asked to keep their dog on a lead for the next field, half mile or whatever. Signs at the far end of the area making it clear where the sensitivity ends will reinforce the message. Some dog walkers don't know what “close control” means, so more specific wording such as “close at heel” is usually better – as on the example below which was used by a crofter on Skye.



Sheep Grazing Close to Cliffs

Please keep dogs on a lead less than 2m or under strict control (walking at heel).

Thanks.

Signs to reduce risks of interaction of cattle and dog walkers

Anyone out enjoying the countryside should accept the likelihood that they will meet livestock. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code advises members of the public to seek an alternative route before entering a field with grazing livestock. Erection of signs saying “cattle in field” or “sheep in field” wherever livestock are grazing would quickly litter the countryside, and signs simply alerting people to animals in a field achieve little. However, in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, it is worth considering putting a sign at any gate or other access point to fields or open areas regularly used for public access where there are cows with calves or bulls at large. Signs should be removed when the animals to which they relate are no longer in that field or area.

The signs below are examples produced at local level where there have been specific issues with dogs and cattle, or where individual farmers have been concerned about liability.



A warning triangle and red outline have been used on these signs to alert people to a potential issue. Use of a picture makes it immediately clear what the risk is. Request to keep dogs on-lead around livestock is clear and simple, so too is advice to let dogs go if chased by cattle.



Remember that upper case lettering is harder to read than a mixture of lower and upper case.

Farm Animals Grazing

Please keep a sensible distance from animals.

Keep dogs well away from livestock at all times and never get between the bull, cows and calves.

Know the Code before you go
www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

This sign might also usefully include advice to dog walkers to let the dog go if chased, but signs which are too wordy are more likely to be ignored. As many people won't know what a “sensible distance” means, this sentence could be cut.

Examples of signs to reduce wildlife disturbance



Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) have produced a standard template reflecting best practice in terms of wording and design to help land managers reduce disturbance to capercaillie by dogs. Inclusion of the CNPA logo helps endorse the authority of the sign, a symbol for capercaillie identifies the issue pictorially, and the text includes dates and the area to which the signs relate. Inclusion of landowner contact details helps authenticate the signs.



Loch Leven National Nature Reserve has developed its own variation on signs to reduce disturbance to breeding wildlife. Wording on the signs is designed to encourage compliance by dog walkers by explaining the issue and thanking them for behaving responsibly.



Rothiemurchus Estate produces various signs specific to different parts of the estate, which are attached to a standard board to reinforce estate branding and endorse the authority of the signs. In wildlife sensitive areas, a cartoon figure of a dog is used to attract attention of dog walkers and encourage them to keep dogs on short leads during nesting season. The seasonal signs are erected at either end of sensitive areas, and removed at the end of the period.





Information sheet 3 Public access with dogs at lambing time

Public access by dog walkers can be a particular concern at lambing time. This information sheet provides a summary of the legal position, and advice on what you can do to minimise the risk of any problems.

What the Scottish Outdoor Access Code says

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides a right of access for everyone, including individual and commercial dog walkers, to most land and inland water, provided they exercise their rights responsibly. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides detailed guidance on the responsibilities of those exercising access rights. The Access Code says:

“Do not take your dog(s) into a field where there are lambs, calves or other young animals. Go into a neighbouring field or onto adjacent land. In more open country, keep your dog on a short lead if there are lambs around and keep distant from them.”

This means that land managers can take appropriate action to ask people with dogs not to enter fields where sheep are lambing or where there are young lambs. The Access Code does not advise people without dogs to avoid such fields. On unenclosed land, the advice to dog owners should follow the guidance in the Access Code for “more open country” as above.

Once lambs are old enough not to be considered vulnerable, the Access Code asks dog walkers to keep distant from them and says that dogs should be on a short lead or close at heel in fields with sheep, and under close control on open hill ground when there are sheep around.

The Access Code’s guidance for land managers includes:

“Where possible, avoid putting sheep close to lambing in fields where there is a well used route or, if this is not possible, you could indicate a reasonable alternative route.”

Understanding the problem

Most dog walkers' main concern is identifying safe, off-lead access within easy reach of their home. Most will avoid livestock if given a choice and if they are aware of the risks, but many dog walkers simply don't appreciate that dogs can cause serious problems in the weeks immediately preceding and during lambing time, even if kept on-lead. Disturbance of heavily pregnant ewes by dogs can lead to abortion. After lambing, ewes easily become distressed in trying to protect and defend their lambs, which can affect milk yield and put dogs at risk if the ewe becomes aggressive. From the farmers' or crofters' perspective, separation of lambs from their mother is also a serious issue. Dogs not under proper control can still cause problems of mismothering even when lambs are older, and the problems can be equally as serious on hill ground as in enclosed fields.

Land managers have an important part to play in reducing the risk of any problems associated with dogs at lambing time by clear, effective signage, and thinking carefully about which ground is used for lambing. In-byre or fields close to the steading are the obvious choice because they are most readily accessible and easiest to keep an eye over. Fields such as these are often also those under most pressure for public access, particularly around the edge of towns or villages, or where access to popular hill walks or other attractions is through enclosed fields.

Taking the lead in avoiding issues with dog walkers at lambing time

LAMBING
From
24/03/2012
to
30/04/2012
sheep are lambing in this field.
Do not enter with dogs
Know the code before you go,
thank you.
Your dog doesn't know any better
Make sure you do
www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

- Where practical, and where space allows, consider avoiding lambing in fields heavily used for public access with dogs.
- Erect signs during lambing at relevant gateways to remind walkers that they should not enter fields with lambs if accompanied by a dog. Keep the sign clear and simple, including dates so dog walkers know how exactly when the restriction applies. Templates which can be edited and printed can be downloaded at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Access-management-guidance/signs. Remove signs at the end of lambing.
- Identify and clearly sign alternative routes avoiding fields in which sheep are lambing.
- Explain to dog walkers you meet when you are out and about why dogs are a particular issue at lambing time, and help them identify alternative more appropriate routes or places to exercise dogs off-lead during lambing.
- On apportionment or other larger enclosures used during lambing, signs erected at gateways should alert walkers to the issues and ask dog walkers to keep their distance and to keep dogs on a short lead whilst in the enclosure.
- Where unenclosed ground is used for lambing, or ewes and lambs are turned out onto open ground soon after lambing, erect signs asking walkers, cyclists and horse riders to keep as far as possible from sheep, and for dogs to be kept on a short lead. Remember to take the signs down at the end of the period specified to encourage people to read and respect signs.

Ewes and lambs

**There are ewes with very young lambs
in this enclosure from
1st April to 15th May**

which are particularly sensitive to disturbance.

Please keep your distance and keep dogs on a short lead until the next gate. Thereafter keep your dog under control and a sensible distance from grazing animals.

Thank you for your consideration.
North Talisker Sheep Stock Club

This sign is a good example of providing clear, polite information. Clarification of what “sensible distance” means would be better still.

This real-life example of a sign from Skye demonstrates suitable wording, which could be improved further by asking for dogs to be kept close at heel to avoid any misunderstanding as to what close control means.

Sheep lambing

**Lambing takes place on these hills from
1st April to 15th May. During this period dogs
are a particular concern because ewes may
panic, resulting in separation of lambs from
their mothers, leaving them cold, hungry and
exposed to predators. To help avoid this please:**

- Keep well away from sheep and lambs
- Keep all dogs on a short lead or under close control

Thank you.

Responsible access is welcome here.

- Managing access with dogs to reduce impacts on land management
- Information sheets
- Advice and useful links

Find them at:
outdooraccess-scotland.com

Taking the Lead

Case studies

Introduction



This series of case studies has been produced to provide practical examples of tried and tested techniques for dealing with dog-related access issues at local level and encouraging responsible dog walking.

Focusing specifically on the practicalities, successes and shortcomings of different approaches, the case studies include pointers about relevance to other sites where a similar approach might be appropriate. In researching these case studies it became clear that each location has its own specific set of circumstances and it should therefore be stressed that this document provides illustrative examples which should not be regarded as models to be applied in all other apparently similar situations.

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Case study 1

Atholl Estates

| Location | Blair Atholl, Perthshire |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheep worrying and disturbance to livestock, particularly during lambing - Dogs chasing and killing pheasants - Wildlife disturbance |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dogs welcome leaflet - Seasonal site specific signage - Free dog poo bags and carefully sited bins |
| Background | <p>Making visitors feel welcome is fundamental to the economic contribution which tourism makes to Atholl Estates. Significant efforts are therefore made to encourage and manage public access as positively as possible. This includes provision of information to help walkers, cyclists and horse-riders plan their visit to achieve what they want without conflicting with stalking, grouse shooting or other commercial activities. Many visitors come with dogs, which has at times resulted in problems.</p> |



| Location | Blair Atholl, Perthshire |
|-----------------------|---|
| What's happened | <p>In line with their general positive approach to access management, and inspired by the head ranger, the estate's policy is positive reinforcement of responsible access rather than confrontation or unnecessarily restrictive requests. The estate's "Dogs welcome" leaflet endorses this approach, aiming to help visitors get the most from their visit by identifying suitable walks of different lengths, depending on dog walkers' individual interests and whether they want to allow their dogs off-lead. The leaflet also includes summary guidance from the Scottish Outdoor Access Code on responsible dog walking. Leaflets are distributed at the information centre, and a copy is given to all camp site visitors with dogs. Free dog poo bags and strategically located dedicated dog waste bins are provided in the most intensively used parts of the estate closest to the caravan park. Seasonal signage is erected to identify capercaillie nesting areas where dogs are required to be kept at heel, preferably on a short lead. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) signage templates, such as the "Dotty Dog" sign http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Access-management-guidance/promotional-campaigns, have also been used to endorse the principles of responsible dog walking, with the addition of a locally specific message such as the problems of sheep worrying in Glen Tilt.</p> |
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with requests to keep dogs under control in specific areas is far higher if dogs are not expected to be kept on-lead all the time. - Leaflets need to be inviting and useful to dog owners, rather than setting down rules. - Justifiable reasons as to why dogs need to be kept on-lead, in a defined area, for a defined period, command more respect than demands to keep dogs on-lead at all times. - A single, crystal clear, locally specific message on a sign represented or endorsed by a picture is far more effective than a range of competing written messages. - Discrete signs don't work, particularly on wide tracks. Signs need to be conspicuous and easily readable to maximise the likelihood of dog walkers seeing them. |
| Application elsewhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handing out leaflets to visiting dog walkers is a good way of getting messages through on camp sites, where there is formal parking provision, or at an information centre. - On sites with less direct contact with visitors, map boards could be used to differentiate dog-welcome and sensitive areas but information usually needs reinforcing on-site at transition between areas. - Locally appropriate seasonal signage can be used on any site. |

| Location | Blair Atholl, Perthshire |
|-----------------|---|
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making dog walkers feel welcome and highlighting where dogs can run off-lead encourages responsible behaviour. - Focusing efforts on key times of year when dog related access issues are a greater concern is more effective than year-round campaigns. - Signs to inform dog walkers of the end of defined areas where dogs need to be kept on a lead or close at heel are equally important as signs at the beginning. - Branding by the National Park or other authority confirms wider approval of signs, but a personal touch and locally specific message is more effective than prolific national or regional use of the same sign. - Use issue-specific signs (e.g. where sheep worrying is a problem) without diluting the message with other Access Code messages about risk of disturbance to game. |





Case study 2 Brahan Estate

| Location | Maryburgh, near Dingwall, Highlands |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | – Disturbance to wildlife and commercial game enterprises |
| Mechanisms adopted | – Identification of suitable off-lead areas |
| Background | Brahan Estate is typical of many others in Scotland in combining traditional enterprises such as farming and forestry with tourism and leisure activities including mountain biking, shooting, fishing, holiday cottages and caravan pitches. The estate encourages visitors to bring their dogs with them on holiday. It also attracts high levels of local access from the neighbouring village of Maryburgh, including many dog walkers. |
| What's happened | To minimise potential conflict between livestock, shooting or other enterprises, the estate has identified two preferred areas which are promoted for dog walking: a large area of woodland which wraps around the west side of Maryburgh, and a 50 acre island in the River Conon within one mile of the village, to which there is unrestricted public vehicular access via a private estate track. The island is deliberately cropped rather than grazed so that dogs can run free without risk of livestock disturbance. Elsewhere on the estate, signs have been erected at key access points reinforcing the need to keep dogs on-lead or under control to avoid disturbing wildlife. |
| Lessons learned | – Positive access provision encouraging dog walkers to use less sensitive areas works far better than trying to exclude dogs from sensitive areas. |
| Application elsewhere | – This approach is equally relevant to farms or crofts of any size as it is to large estates. – Selection of suitable off-lead areas should take account of wildlife interest as well as risk of disturbance to game, livestock and crops and other recreational users. |
| Keys to success | – Areas in which off-lead dog access is promoted need to be readily accessible to dog walkers, e.g. on the edge of village or with good parking provision. – Natural barriers such as rivers are ideal to contain dogs off-lead. Elsewhere, fencing may be necessary to avoid conflict between dogs and livestock, crops, wildlife or game where off-lead areas merge into sensitive areas. – Effective communication with local dog walkers and visitors is essential so that they are aware of areas particularly suitable for off-lead dogs. |

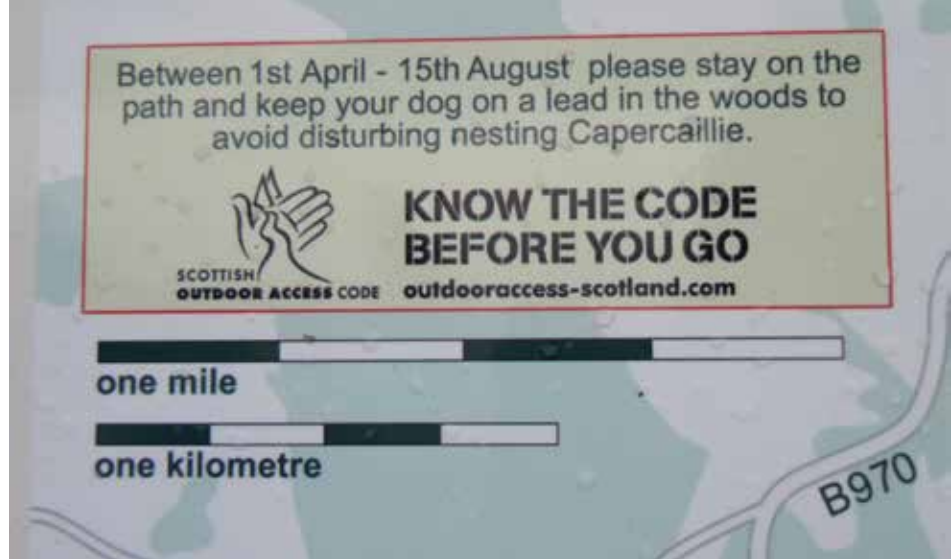


Case study 3 Boat of Garten Wood

| Location | Boat of Garten, Highlands |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disturbance to capercaillie and other breeding birds - Dog fouling |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part-time ranger - Education campaign re. capercaillie - Seasonal site specific signage - Spraying dog poo with fluorescent paint - Strategically located dedicated dog waste bins |
| Background | <p>The woodland which fringes Boat of Garten is a much valued resource for the wildlife habitat it provides, and by local people as an enjoyable place to walk on a daily basis. The wood is also popular with visitors to the area. Application for housing development in a small part of the wood has concentrated attention on its significance for capercaillie, and the impact of dogs running around in the most sensitive nesting areas during the capercaillie breeding season.</p> |
| What's happened | <p>With financial support from Cairngorms National Park Authority, the local community organisation appointed a recreational ranger 18 hours per week during the main capercaillie breeding season (April to August) whose main role was to modify behaviour of dog walkers to reduce adverse impact on capercaillie. Initially the ranger met with some resistance by local dog walkers averse to the idea of the wood being patrolled, but by adopting a positive approach and winning people's trust, the ranger was soon accepted as a friend. Large plywood cut-outs of capercaillie silhouettes were erected at key locations to remind people why dogs need to be kept on leads, even if the birds themselves were rarely seen. Local school children were involved in sculpting a capercaillie from wood gathered on site, which helps raise awareness and reminds dog walkers why responsible behaviour is important. Articles in the local press and community newsletters coupled with a blog highlighting the wood's national significance for capercaillie were used to raise awareness of the need for responsible dog walking, and to encourage responsible dog walkers to lead by example. Three litter picks have been organised over the season, together with a "poo spraying" exercise with fluorescent paint to highlight the extent of fouling issues.</p> <p>Further details of this case study are available in the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Commissioned Report number 634 "Visitor behaviour in sensitive woodland habitats – repeat photographic survey at Boat of Garten Woods".</p> |

| Location | Boat of Garten, Highlands |
|-----------------------|---|
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitors are far more likely to read and comply with signs, whereas many local people saw the wood as their own, even though it is privately owned. - Explaining why dogs need to be kept on-lead, in a defined area, for a defined period, commands more respect than demands to keep dogs on-lead at all times. - Small, discrete, generic signs are easily missed and ignored, particularly on wide tracks. Signs need to be conspicuous and easily readable to maximise the likelihood of dog walkers seeing them. - Some dog walkers persistently hang used dog waste bags in trees immediately after use instead of carrying to bins at the edge of the wood. - Dog waste bags, like litter, are a self-perpetuating problem: if not picked up, more will follow. |
| Application elsewhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This approach was developed jointly between Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the local community in line with recommendations in the National Access Forum's guidance on Managing access with dogs to safeguard breeding birds. Although few sites will be able to justify employing a ranger, many of the ideas and lessons learned can be adapted for use elsewhere. |





| Location | Boat of Garten, Highlands |
|-----------------|---|
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Path leaflet for all the trails around Boat of Garten includes specific mention of need to keep dogs on a short lead in woods where capercaillie nest during the breeding season. - Highlighting the wood's national claim to fame as having the highest density of capercaillie per hectare in the UK significantly increased local interest and responsible behaviour. - Focusing efforts on key times of year when dog-related access issues are a greater concern is more effective than year-round campaigns. - Branding signs with the community council's name makes them more locally relevant and increases chance of local buy-in. - Ensuring signs are easily legible and located at key entry points is essential to people reading them. - Information needs to be targeted where dog walkers are most likely to see it e.g. erecting a sign next to the dog tie-up point outside the post office explaining capercaillie sensitivity to disturbance and the importance of responsible dog walking. |





Case study 4 Denny Commercial Dog Walkers

| Location | Denny, near Falkirk, Central Scotland |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shortage of appropriate places to let dogs off-lead without conflict with other recreational users or dog walkers – Dog fouling |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Field rented by commercial dog walkers for exercising dogs |
| Background | <p>Increasingly frustrated by problems finding suitable places to exercise dogs off-lead, two enterprising commercial dog walkers (Let's Go for Walkies and It's All About the Dogs) approached various landowners to explore alternative options. After extensive enquiries, Callendar Estates identified a suitable 2 acre grass field with good road access on which the previous lease had expired, which had not been grazed or managed for several years. The lack of water supply and isolation of the field from other parts of the estate following motorway construction limited other commercial options in terms of letting the field.</p> |
| What's happened | <p>After reaching mutual agreement about the terms of the tenancy, the estate arranged for the field to be mown and deer fenced to secure the perimeter for dogs of all shapes and sizes. Preparing the site also involved the dog walkers clearing some of the densest patches of brambles, scrub and fallen branches.</p> <p>The two commercial dog walkers invited a third professional dog groomer friend to share use of the field with them. Splitting the costs and responsibilities between three makes it more affordable and less of a concern if any of their circumstances change in future. Come wind, rain or shine, they each take a pack of dogs to the field daily, often coinciding visits to make it more sociable for themselves and the dogs. Some of the dogs never have opportunity to run free elsewhere, and all clearly revel in the space, freedom, chance to chase balls or simply enjoy a good sniff.</p> <p>The dog walkers were already members of the Falkirk Green Dog Walkers Scheme and suggested including their pledge to always clean up after their dogs as part of the tenancy agreement, so there is no issue with fouling. The dog walkers are responsible for maintaining the field, which so far they have done by regular hand mowing.</p> |

| Location | Denny, near Falkirk, Central Scotland |
|-----------------------|--|
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A safely fenced bespoke facility gives the dog walkers complete peace of mind and allows them to safely exercise and socialise numerous dogs off-lead simultaneously which appeals to potential clients and helps attract extra business for the commercial dog walkers. - Area needs to be large enough to allow sufficient space but 10 acre field offered by another landowner was too big to manage, or to keep a close watch on numerous dogs running loose. - Most commercial dog walkers would be unable to afford the capital outlay of securely fencing a field, and many would be reluctant to do so for a short rental or lease. - A viable low-cost means of regular grass mowing needs to be factored into the arrangement. |
| Application elsewhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This type of arrangement works well for odd parcels of land of limited commercial value, but the rent which commercial dog walkers are likely to be able to afford will not necessarily match that which might be expected for good quality agricultural land. - Suitable sites need to be within easy reach of commercial (or other) dog walkers, ideally with good parking. - Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, non-motorised users enjoy a right of responsible access to most land, and access rights therefore continue to apply to such areas. To avoid any conflict, this kind of approach is best suited to fields or other land without a past history of public access and where there is little or no demand for access by others. |
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written legal agreement is essential to protect the interests of both the owner and dog walker(s). - Establishing a single contact/tenant is often easier for the landowner than maintaining communication with several interested parties. - 5 year fixed short term tenancy provides sufficient commitment for dog walkers without the complications or restrictions for the landowner of an agricultural tenancy. - Secure fencing is essential. - Suitable off-road parking space for dog walkers' vans with direct access to the site is an important consideration. - Landowners actively facilitating commercial activity are advised to check with their insurance company regarding any potential legal liability. - Because access rights will normally apply to such areas, any charges should relate to services provided by the land manager such as vehicle access, fencing or mowing. |





Case study 5 Invercauld Estate

| Location | Invercauld, near Braemar |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fouling on paths – Disturbance to wildlife and game |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Flick it with a stick – Seasonal signs on gates re: ground nesting birds – Talking with visitors |
| Background | <p>Although rural and relatively remote, Invercauld Estate's stunning location between Balmoral and Braemar attracts relatively high numbers of visiting walkers, perhaps one third of whom are accompanied by dogs. Most use well waymarked paths and tracks.</p> |
| What's happened | <p>Invercauld Estate has erected signs at the main car park encouraging dog walkers to flick dog faeces off paths and tracks into adjacent undergrowth, where it quickly degrades, helped partly by the break-up from the flicking action. This approach was inspired by a cartoon approach initially adopted in Delamere Forest, Cheshire, as part of a Forestry Commission/Kennel Club partnership project.</p> <p>Recognising that dog walkers want somewhere to let their dogs off-lead and that most will behave responsibly if they understand why, the estate uses seasonal signs on gates requesting dogs be kept on-lead only when and where ground nesting birds are most vulnerable. This message is reinforced by general guidance at the main car park, and through informal friendly conversation when estate staff meet dog walkers.</p> |
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Humorous cartoon approach encourages positive response to fouling. – Most dog walkers respond to positive friendly approach of estate by keeping dogs under control. – Flick it approach can work well in keeping paths and tracks free of fouling and can be more pragmatic than asking people to bag it and bin it away from areas of concentrated fouling and provision of bins. – In theory avoids problems of dog walkers littering the estate with doggy bags – but some dog walkers can be confused as to whether they should pick up or flick. |

| Location | Invercauld, near Braemar |
|-----------------------|--|
| Application elsewhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheap and easy to implement without resource implications of emptying bins. - Pragmatic approach for low pressure rural sites where bins are impractical and where a “bag it and bin it” approach can create problems with dog walkers leaving used bags alongside paths. |
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on dog walkers understanding when and where they are expected to pick up after dogs, and where they could flick it with a stick. |



© Forestry Commission



Case study 6 Laggan Farms

| Location | Kilmichael, Argyll |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | – Disturbance to grazing livestock |
| Mechanisms adopted | – Fencing path to scheduled historic monuments to physically separate visitors from livestock |
| Background | Promotion on the web and in historical guides attracts a large number of national and international visitors to standing stones and other archaeological features on the farm. Visitors walking through fields in which there are grazing livestock, particularly visitors with dogs, have created increasing problems with disturbance to livestock, especially in spring when mis-mothering problems arise from sheep separated from their lambs. |
| What's happened | Historic Scotland agreed to pay for erection of stockproof fencing, following an agreed line around the edge of the field linking the main access point and standing stones. Historic Scotland are responsible for maintaining both the fence and the path. |
| Lessons learned | – Creating a fenced path where dogs are physically separated from sheep allows visitors to the monument year-round access without any worry for the farmer. |
| Application elsewhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fencing can be an effective way of managing dog access issues on well used paths which follow a distinct line, and can also help address liability issues associated with cattle grazing, but should not unduly restrict public access rights. – Any alternative path or access provision needs to provide at least the same facility as the existing route (e.g. without undue extra length, gradient, muddy or difficult ground) and take account of all types of user rather than just walkers. |
| Keys to success | – Recognising where people want to go and making it easier for them to get there is essential to dealing with all access issues. |



Case study 7 Meigle Farm

| Location | Clovenfords, by Galashiels, Scottish Borders |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | – Dog fouling in a hay crop and along the field margin |
| Mechanisms adopted | – Creation of alternative path through area of adjacent unproductive woodland where dogs can be allowed off-lead |
| Background | The 'Green Road' or 'Velvet Path' which runs through Meigle Farm has a long history of public use, originally as a coach road and more recently as a link for walkers between Clovenfords and the small hamlet of Caddonfoot several miles to the south. For many years this caused no problems, but local housing development led to a significant increase in the number of people coming home from work and letting their dogs loose immediately through the gate of the first field they came to. When asked to clear up after their dogs, owners deposited tied nappy sacks along the edge of the field or hung them from adjacent trees like Christmas decorations. |
| What's happened | Recognising that a different approach was needed, in 2003 the owners of Meigle Farm started to develop a new alternative path through a strip of parallel woodland, but their attempts to cut a path through the undergrowth were overtaken by pressure of farm work. The local authority access officer suggested involvement of the Criminal Services Team who cleared scrub, built steps and finished off the path. The only cost to the farmer was labour and machinery involved in the initial felling and path clearance. |

| Location | Clovenfords, by Galashiels, Scottish Borders |
|-----------------------|---|
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trying to stop people using a path doesn't usually work unless you provide a suitable alternative, particularly where the path has a long history of past use. - Recognising and responding to dog walkers' needs is essential to dealing with the issues. - A bit of lateral thinking can lead to a more mutually acceptable alternative solution than frustrated attempts to deal with a problem. - Promoting access away from productively managed land reduces scope for conflict. |
| Application elsewhere | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative path development depends on availability of suitable land. - Any alternative path or access provision needs to provide at least the same facility as the existing route (e.g. without undue extra length, gradient, muddy or difficult ground) and take account of all types of user rather than just walkers. |
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most dog walkers will be only too pleased to use alternative paths which provide off-lead access with dogs. - Clear waymarking to encourage use of the new route is essential. - Signs may be necessary as reminders where dogs need to be brought back under control. - Involving the local community and access officer can help address access problems and develop worthwhile new opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside at little or no cost to the farm. |





Case study 8 Rothiemurchus Estate

| Location | Rothiemurchus, near Aviemore, Scottish Highlands |
|---------------------------|--|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dog fouling on popular paths – Disturbance to breeding birds and other wildlife, particularly protected species such as capercaillie |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fenced off-lead dog exercise areas – Seasonal signage – Free dog poo bags – Strategically located bins – Local media coverage |
| Background | <p>The integral relationship between tourism, recreation, biodiversity and sustainable management at Rothiemurchus goes back many hundreds of years. The estate prides itself on a longstanding culture of innovation, drawing on best practice solutions from around the globe to help the hundreds of thousands of visitors attracted here annually make the most of their visit with minimal impact on the landscape and wildlife which are core to the overall attraction.</p> |
| What's happened | <p>Encouraging responsible dog walking is only one part of a very positive, planned approach to overall visitor management at Rothiemurchus. The overall ethos is fostering the basic principle of “we care, you care”. Practical demonstration of this in respect of dog walking includes fenced dog exercise/toilet areas with free poo-bag dispensers and dedicated dog waste bins at the two main car parks (Loch an Eilean and Rothiemurchus information centre). As the Cairngorms National Park Authority already produce a responsible dog walking leaflet, Rothiemurchus took a conscious decision not to produce their own version, focusing instead on reinforcement of responsible behaviour through seasonal signage restricted to capercaillie breeding areas specifying that dogs must be kept on a short lead. Problems with dog-poo bags being deposited on fences have been tackled by an article in the community newsletter.</p> |



| Location | Rothiemurchus, near Aviemore, Scottish Highlands |
|----------------------------|--|
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dog walkers will only use exercise areas if they are clearly signed. – Most dogs will “empty” within a relatively short distance of parking areas but people will not necessarily return to bins at the start of a path so bins need to be located accordingly and emptied regularly. – Litter picking and maintenance is essential to foster respect amongst visitors. – Most visitors want to experience things themselves rather than be told, so not everyone will go in the visitor centre. – Return visitors (approx. 80% of visitors to Rothiemurchus) are unlikely to pick up leaflets or to look more than once at permanent signage. – The phrase “close control” means little to many dog walkers. |
| Application to other sites | Many of the approaches adopted by Rothiemurchus are equally relevant to other sites. |
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing information at the stage when people are planning their visit is essential to persuading all visitors to behave responsibly. – Estate branding and good quality signs reinforce authority of messages. – Dog walkers need to be clear that any bin will do for bagged dog waste. – Dog walkers need to be clear whether dogs are allowed off-lead and whether they are expected to clear up after their dogs in fenced dog exercise areas. – Pictures on signs requesting dogs be kept on lead in capercaillie sensitive areas makes it immediately relevant to dog walkers. |

Article from local newsletter

It is Christmas Eve in the woodsman's hut and a cruel frost rimes the surrounding pine trees. The woodsman has fallen on hard times and there is no prospect of a proper Christmas dinner or presents for the children. Three ragged little mites squat by the fire, supping listlessly from bowls of watery gruel.

Suddenly, the door of the hut bursts open and in strides the woodsman, a bulging hessian sack slung over his lean shoulder His eyes are alight with joy.

“Fear not, kiddiewinks,” he cries, “for Christmas is truly come!” He opens the sack and tips a pile of carefully tied plastic bags and packages on to the rough deal table. “Santa's elves have been everywhere with presents for us! Many of these I found hanging from trees and bushes, some from fences, others hidden carefully in drystone walls, still more cast down by the path.”

The childrens' eyes open wide with wonder as he shares out the packages. What goodies might they contain? Sweets, a small toy, plum duff, fruit, nuts....?

Trembling fingers untie the first bag to reveal dog poo. Same for the second and third. Every last bag and package yields the same grim results. Bitter tears trickle down the childrens' pinched cheeks and a pall of utter desolation settles over the lonely hut.

Rothiemurchus rangers have found that Santa's little elves are active all year round. Every patrol and foray into the forest brings a similar sad harvest of poo-filled plastic bags. We provide dog poo bags and bins at Inverdrue and Loch an Eilein, but seem to have generated an unexpected management conundrum. We may have to return to asking our dog walking visitors to revert to flicking poo off the path with a stick instead of popping it into a bag and turning the result into an unwanted 'decoration'.



Case study 9 Stirling Council on-farm signage

| Location | Balfroun, Stirlingshire |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fouling in livestock fields leading to disease problems in cattle |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Locally specific signs highlighting issues, adapted from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) sign template – Awareness raising events in local country park to promote responsible dog walking |
| Background | <p>Concerned about irresponsible behaviour and the increasing number of dog walkers, particularly commercial dog walkers, allowing dogs to foul in fields with grazing cattle, a farmer contacted Stirling Council access staff to ask for help. The significance of fouling problems was reinforced when tests on an aborted cattle foetus revealed evidence of neosporosis, which can be carried in dog faeces. The farmer was invited to present his problems for discussion by Stirling Local Access Forum, who agreed to trial posters at the entrance to the fields concerned.</p> |
| What's happened | <p>The pre-prepared "Dotty" dog poster downloadable from the SNH website provided the basis for signs, to which Stirling Council added a locally specific message as a newsflash alerting dog walkers to the neosporosis risks associated with dog waste and the resultant cattle losses on the farm in question. Various versions of the wording were considered and discussed with the farmer before coming up with the final, pictured below, which was felt to be informative and noticeable without being too hard-hitting. Stirling Council also added a banner across the base in words and pictures reminding dog walkers of the action required to address the issue i.e. bag it, tie it, bin it. The posters were then printed and laminated in-house by Stirling Council and either put up by access staff or distributed to farmers for them to put up at the entrance to the fields with specific problems. Access staff also organised a series of doggy events at Mugdock Country Park, including information about the interaction of dogs and livestock and associated risks for livestock, dogs and walkers. The response was very positive, with an immediate increase in the number of dog walkers picking up after their dogs, and consequent reduction in fouling in the fields to which the signs related.</p> |

| Location | Balfroun, Stirlingshire |
|-----------------------|---|
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Many dog walkers are unaware of the problems which can result from dog fouling. – Effective locally specific signage can have an immediate impact at minimal cost. – Highlighting key facts strengthens the message. – The locally specific message relating to cattle is diluted by more general Access Code guidance on the generic template re: planted fields which is irrelevant to this site. – Dog walkers need to be educated to put bags in bins rather than drop them in the field, hang them on the fence or leave them at the gate. – The focus on reducing fouling has not necessarily resolved issues with off-lead dogs disturbing cattle and worrying sheep. |
| Application elsewhere | <p>Farmers and land managers can easily download and adapt the free signage templates from the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) website to include their own site specific message (but note comments above re: adaptation to delete more general guidance irrelevant to the site in question). Most access authorities are also happy to supply or advise on appropriate wording for signs on request.</p> |
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alert dog walkers to the risks associated with dog fouling or irresponsible behaviour but don't alienate them by criticism. – Highlight the main facts but keep the message short. – Make the message specific to the site. – Replace or remove signs before they become tatty. |



YOUR DOG DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER. MAKE SURE YOU DO.

PLANTED FIELDS. Avoid taking your dog into fruit and vegetable fields unless there is a clear path.

LIVESTOCK. Keep your dog on a short lead around livestock and during bird breeding season (usually April-July). Never let it worry or attack livestock or disturb nesting birds.

CATTLE. Keep yourself and your dog at a safe distance as cattle can act aggressively.

DOG WASTE. Pick up and dispose of carefully.

KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO
www.scotland.gov.uk/visiting-scotland

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

NEWSFLASH

FACT: Dog waste can carry neosporosis!

RESULT: 6 cows aborted on this farm this year!

BAG IT, TIE IT, BIN IT

Keep Britain Tidy

www.encams.org



Case study 10 Wilsontown Ironworks

| Location | Wilsontown, near Forth, South Lanarkshire |
|---------------------------|--|
| Dog related access issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dog fouling – Interaction of dog walkers and other recreational users |
| Mechanisms adopted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Signage – Provision of strategically located dog poo bins – Luminous spraying of dog poo – Positive reinforcement of responsible dog walking – Path improvement, interpretation and development of entrance features |
| Background | <p>On the edge of a large village on the border between South Lanarkshire and West Lothian, in an area where most recreation opportunities are in woodland and forestry, the former mine workings and forestry plantation at Wilsontown have for many years provided a valuable recreational resource for local people to walk, cycle and ride. Community involvement in path improvement works and interpretation of the historical interest of the site has encouraged increased use of the path network, particularly by dog walkers but also by many others. As well as those walking daily from the village, people living within an average radius of 5 miles visit with their dogs, some several times a day. Commercial dog walkers also now use the site. The resultant increase in dog fouling, particularly within 100 m of the car parking areas and main access points, is unpleasant for everyone.</p> |
| What's happened | <p>Prompted by the issues dog fouling presented when mowing path verges, woodland wardens erected “bag it and bin it” signs encouraging people to use dedicated dog waste bins at key entry points, with limited success. Luminous paint was then used to highlight the extent of the dog fouling issue, which attracted some complaints from non-dog walkers who felt it further detracted from their enjoyment of the paths. Signs were subsequently erected explaining that Forestry Commission, as landowners, were trying to make the paths as friendly as possible and asking for everyone’s help encouraged more people to pick up after their dogs, but resulted in a proliferation of discarded poo bags, which were even more of a problem than the fouling. Forestry Commission’s community forester worked on a “poo tree” project with local children to get them to persuade their families to clear up after their dogs. “There’s no such thing as a poo bag fairy” posters were then erected at key entry points, which helped until one of the council maintained dedicated dog-poo bins was removed. New general waste bins have now been installed at the two main entrances, emptied by the council.</p> |

| Location | Wilsontown, near Forth, South Lanarkshire |
|----------------------------|---|
| What's happened | Over and above these campaigns, woodland wardens and community rangers positively reinforce messages by talking with people whenever they are out on site. "One day I met a commercial dog walker who I knew was repeatedly failing to clear up after the six dogs he walked daily. Rather than tackle him head on, I simply said "Gosh, you've got your hands full, haven't you. You must need eyes in the back of your head to keep tabs on all of them at once. Have you got enough bags?" and offered him some spare bags from my pocket. That way he knew that I was on his case, without an argument, and had no excuse not to pick up after the dogs." |
| Lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no universal solution to dealing with dog fouling. - As with litter, dog fouling problems are often self-compounding. Dog walkers who see that others are failing to pick up after their dogs are less likely to do so themselves. - Confrontational approaches achieve little and can provoke more problems. - Positive reinforcement of key messages coupled with fostering local pride in a site and encouraging self-policing can be as effective as signage, bins and other strategies. |
| Ongoing issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating dog walkers that any bin will do for bagged dog waste. |
| Application to other sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fouling problems typically become less of a problem as distance from access points increases, and dog walkers are reluctant to carry poo bags any distance, so it is better to concentrate on the areas of highest pressure. |
| Keys to success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategically located, regularly emptied bins are essential to the success of bag it and bin it approaches to dog fouling. - Dog walkers need to know that they can use any bin for bagged dog waste. - Ensuring other users of a site are aware of what is being done to manage dog-related access problems and why is important to maintaining community support and encouraging self-policing. - Learning from what doesn't work and trying a different approach is critical to addressing insidious problems like dog fouling. |



Taking the Lead

Advice and useful links

Linked resources:

- Managing access with dogs to reduce impacts on land management
- Information sheets
- Case studies

Find them at:
outdooraccess-scotland.com

Integrating public access with land management

Guidance can be found in the publication [Public access and land management](#).

Responsible dog walking

In partnership with NFU Scotland, Scottish Land & Estates, the Scottish Kennel Club, the Kennel Club and the Scottish Canine Consultative Council, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have produced a range of Scottish Outdoor Access Code (Access Code) [resources for dog walkers](#) at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com. Leaflets, editable posters and other resources can be downloaded. For a supply of leaflets to hand out to dog walkers, contact your [local access officer](#) or Publications at SNH on 01738 458530 or by email pubs@snh.gov.uk.

Signs

General guidance for farmers and land managers is available at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com and includes a series of [signs](#) that can be edited to include site specific information and then printed for local use. Members of Scottish Land & Estates can download [Access Information Sheet 9: Outdoor Access Signage](#).

Cattle and dogs

Many farmers and crofters are understandably concerned about dog walkers being injured or killed by cattle. The Health and Safety Executive's Information Sheet no 17S [Cattle and Public Access in Scotland](#) summarises the legal and practical implications. A more detailed joint briefing note on legal responsibilities to the public in relation to cattle has been produced by NFU Scotland and Scottish Land & Estates: [Access Information Sheet 20 "Outdoor Access in Fields with Cattle: Guidance for Land Managers"](#). This and [Access Information Sheet 2 "Public Access and Liability in Scotland"](#) can both be downloaded for free by members of both organisations.

Examples of appropriate signs to alert members of the public to the risks of walking with dogs near cattle are included in the [Taking the Lead](#) Information Sheet 2 "Dealing with dog-related access issues using signs".

Deer farming and dogs

Deer farming is becoming more common in Scotland. The Access Code does not give any specific guidance on entering enclosed fields of deer, but like all animals, females are protective of their young and stags can be aggressive during the autumn rut. The Health and Safety Executive [Agriculture Information Sheet No 7 \(rev\) Deer Farming](#) gives advice on managing deer and public access.

Livestock health and dogs

Posters for dog owners and briefing notes for access authorities which provide information on reducing the risk of spreading disease in livestock from dog faeces can be downloaded from the [dog walking promotional campaigns](#) pages of www.outdooraccess-scotland.com.

Dog fouling campaigns

[Clean Up Scotland](#), part of the Keep Scotland Beautiful charity, runs various campaigns, including one focusing on dog fouling.

[Green Dog Walkers](#) is a community based scheme that builds capacity amongst local dog owners to positively promote responsible dog walking, especially in relation to fouling.

Reducing disturbance to ground nesting birds

The National Access Forum's guidance on "[Managing access with dogs in protected areas to safeguard breeding birds](#)" is equally relevant to many other sites.

Guidance on commercial dog walking

Drawing on a series of workshops for commercial dog walkers organised as part of a partnership project with the Scottish Kennel Club, Kennel Club and Your Dog Magazine, Scottish Natural Heritage has produced guidance for access authorities on how to encourage commercial dog walkers to exercise dogs responsibly. "[Creating positive opportunities to engage with commercial dog walkers](#)" and the workshop report "[Commercial Dog Walkers in the Outdoors: Attitudes, engagement and opportunities](#)" are both free to download.

Legislation relating to access with dogs

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code reflect and embody other relevant legislation relating to access with dogs in Scotland. The most relevant Acts are the [Dogs \(Protection of Livestock\) Act 1953](#), the [Animals \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#), the [Dog Fouling \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) and [Control of Dogs \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

Advice

For further help and advice on dog-related access issues, the first point of contact should be:

- Your [local authority or national park access officer](#) and/or local authority dog warden.

Other organisations which may be able to offer help and advice include:

- Scottish Canine Consultative Council Tel: 01389 755133
- The Scottish Kennel Club www.scottishkennelclub.org Tel: 0131 665 3920
- The Kennel Club www.thekennelclub.org.uk Tel: 020 7518 1020.

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Vyv Wood-Gee
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Email: vyv.wood-gee@virgin.net

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