

Report to	Southern Wilts Area Board
Date of Meeting	8 th Sept 2022
Title of Report	Dogs-a parish experience

Response from Wiltshire Council’s Public Protection Team Leader to Cllr Charles Penn, Chairman of the Winterbournes paper in the attached appendix

Thank you for your request for information on the Dog warden Service I think it may be useful to explain a little about the service and the role of the team. We have two dog wardens covering the whole of Wiltshire. The dog wardens are responsible for collecting stray dogs, dealing with dog-on-dog attacks, fouling complaints, education on responsible dog ownership and working closely with the RSPCA and Wiltshire Police. In the last 12 months we have taken more than 157 stray dogs to kennels and responded to 350 dangerous dog complaints. In May 2022 one of our dog wardens left the team, we have successfully recruited and have a new officer joining us on the 1st of September 2022 but understandably this has impacted on some of our response times.

- i. Re-establishment of applicable Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) with provisions that include *inter alia* penalties for: lack of control of dogs; failure to remove dog faeces from public spaces, highways and rights of way; and allowing dogs into fenced children’s play areas.**

The Council does not currently have a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in place to cover dogs and fouling within Wiltshire. Orders can be introduced in a specific public area where the local authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that certain conditions have been met. This includes that the antisocial behaviour activity has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. The issue being addressed by the order must also be causing a persistent and ongoing behaviour and the order restrictions must be justified.

The process to obtain an order is not a quick fix and requires detailed long-term evidence of an issue causing anti-social behaviour and extensive public consultation on the proposed order. Where an order is agreed then any breach of the order must be witnessed so for example dog fouling must be witnessed and then the owner must be witnessed not clearing it up, both of which can be difficult to see happen.

There are currently no plans to implement a PSPO for dog fouling in Wiltshire.

- ii. Provision of guidance for local councils, communities & landowners on effective measures to reduce problems arising from dog waste, poor control of dogs and trespass.**

We have lots of information on our website which can be found [here](#). We are also able to put up signs where fouling is an issue and work with the Countryside team to put up signs on rights of ways. Areas where signs are needed can be e-mailed to dogs@wiltshire.gov.uk The Countryside team will be able to help with issues regarding rights of way and access to land, they also have a really useful leaflet “A Guide for dogs owners and dog walkers” which can be found [here](#).

iii. Provision of guidance (including on matters of law)¹ and notices, signage and other publicity for dog owners/walkers on removal of dog waste, control of dogs, trespass.

The Public Protection team has an active Facebook page [Public Protection Service - Wiltshire Council | Facebook](#) where advice on responsible dog ownership is posted at least weekly as well as reminders about the law for dog owners. We also work with Wiltshire Police's Dog Watch scheme and provide articles on law for followers of the scheme. In 2021 we also launched a voluntary scheme for dog walkers to follow a code of conduct on walking dogs as a business as this is not currently covered by the animal license requirements for home boarders. We are slowly gaining members and again we are advertising this on social media and have issued a press release on this. The full details can be found on our website [Dog walker scheme - Wiltshire Council](#)

iv. Review of the procedures for issue of Community Protection Notices and prosecution so that the more serious problems are dealt with more effectively and rapidly.

I understand there was an incident in the Winterbourne area where someone was bitten by a dog which was investigated by the Police and the Dog Warden. In accordance with the legislation, Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and relevant guidance we must issue a Community Protection Warning in the first instance and then if a further incident occurs a Community Protection notice can be served. A prosecution also took place under the Dangerous Dogs Act and no further complaints have been received.

We have over the last 18months updated our procedures on investigating dog attacks, whilst the police have the responsibility for dogs attacking humans, we work closely with them and often carry out joint visits with the dog handlers. We also have a risk-based procedure when dealing with complaints which helps determine our response to any dog-on-dog attacks. This helps ensure we can target our resources effectively and information is shared with the police to ensure we have records of any dogs that have caused concern.

We would encourage anyone with concerns about the safety of a dog to report it to us on dogs@wiltshire.gov.uk
