



THE KENNEL CLUB

Making a difference for dogs

Kennel Club response to Carmarthenshire County Council Public Spaces Protection Order consultation

Submitted on 1 March 2019 by: The Kennel Club, Clarges Street, Piccadilly, London W1J 8AB, tel: 020 7518 1020, email: kcdog@thekennelclub.org.uk

The Kennel Club is the largest organisation in the UK devoted to dog health, welfare and training, whose main objective is to ensure that dogs live healthy, happy lives with responsible owners. As part of its External Affairs activities, the Kennel Club runs a dog owners group KC Dog which was established to monitor and keep dog owners up to date about dog related issues, including Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) being introduced across the country.

As a general principle, we would like to highlight the importance for all PSPOs to be necessary and proportionate responses to problems caused by dogs and irresponsible owners. It is also important that authorities balance the interests of dog owners with the interests of other access users.

Summary

We are happy to support an extension of the existing PSPO for a further three years.

For information please find our position on the various measures contained within the existing / proposed extension Order below.

Perhaps the only point that we would seek to draw specific attention to, would be our updated position on exemptions for assistance dogs and the definition of an assistance dog.

Assistance dogs

We welcome the exemptions that have been included in the 2016 Public Spaces Protection Order. However, we would encourage the council to consider a broader definition of assistance dogs. .

A number of well-known assistance dog providers are members of Assistance Dogs UK. This umbrella group, currently has eight member organisations which can be viewed here - <http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/>. However, it is important to note that the membership of Assistance Dogs UK is not a definitive list of all UK assistance dog organisations, and may change during the currency of the PSPO, it also does not provide for owner trained

assistance dogs. We would therefore encourage the Council to allow some flexibility when considering whether a disabled person's dog is acting as an assistance dog.

The Council could consider adopting the definitions of assistance dogs as used by Mole Valley District Council which can be found on page 4 of this document -

https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/media/pdf/1/b/83072_-_Completed_PSPO.pdf

For further information on assistance dogs we encourage the Council to review the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance for businesses and service providers –

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/assistance-dogs-a-guide-for-all-businesses.pdf>

Dog fouling

The Kennel Club strongly promotes responsible dog ownership, and believes that dog owners should always pick up after their dogs wherever they are, including fields and woods in the wider countryside, and especially where farm animals graze to reduce the risk of passing Neospora and Sarcocystosis to cattle and sheep respectively. The exception to this is when there is a clear indication from the landowner to the contrary.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage the local authority to employ further proactive measures to help promote responsible dog ownership throughout the local area in addition to introducing Orders in this respect.

These proactive measures can include: increasing the number of bins available for dog owners to use; communicating to local dog owners that bagged dog poo can be disposed of in normal litter bins; running responsible ownership and training events; or using poster campaigns to encourage dog owners to pick up after their dog.

Dog access

The Kennel Club does not normally oppose dog exclusion or dog on lead orders in playgrounds or in enclosed recreational facilities such as tennis courts or skate parks, as long as alternative provisions are made for dog walkers in the vicinity. We would also point out that children and dogs should be able to socialise together quite safely under adult supervision, and that having a child in the home is the biggest predictor for a family owning a dog.

Dogs on lead by direction

The Kennel Club strongly welcomes 'dogs on lead by direction' orders, as these allow responsible dog owners to exercise their dogs off lead without restriction providing their dogs are under control, whilst allowing the local authority powers to restrict dogs not under control.

We would recommend that the authorised officer enforcing the order is familiar with dog behaviour in order to determine whether restraint is necessary. There is a danger that, through no fault of its own, a dog could be a 'nuisance' or 'annoyance' to another person who simply does not like dogs.

We would also recommend local authorities make use of the other more flexible and targeted measures at their disposal such as Acceptable Behavioural Contracts and Community Protection Notices. Kennel Club Good Citizen Training Clubs and our accredited trainers can also help those people whose dogs run out of control due to them not having the ability to train a reliable recall.

Appropriate signage

It is important to note that in relation to PSPOs the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Publication of Public Spaces Protection Orders) Regulations 2014 make it a legal requirement for local authorities to –

“cause to be erected on or adjacent to the public place to which the order relates such notice (or notices) as it considers sufficient to draw the attention of any member of the public using that place to -

- (i) the fact that the order has been made, extended or varied (as the case may be); and
- (ii) the effect of that order being made, extended or varied (as the case may be).”

While all dog walkers should be aware of the requirement to pick up after their dog, signage should be erected for the PSPO to be compliant with the legislation.