

## A Guide to Responsible Dog Ownership



**The Animal Welfare Act 2006 stipulates five welfare needs for your dog:**

1. A suitable living environment
2. A suitable diet
3. To be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
4. To be housed with, or apart, from other animals
5. To be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

### **The Responsibilities of Dog Ownership**

Owning a dog is a life-long commitment and expense, as most dogs can live for up to 15 years or more. Spending time with your new pet can be fun, but you need to be prepared that owning a dog will take up a great deal of your time as your pet will require lots of attention; mental stimulation and exercise.

We encourage all owners to attend dog training classes to allow your pet to meet others in a controlled environment and to learn basic commands. Both you and your dog will be happier if he or she is socialised with people and other animals.

### **Protect your Dog with micro-chipping**

Micro-chipping your dog gives your pet the best chance of being returned to you should they become lost or stolen.

A tiny identification micro-chip the size of a grain of rice is inserted under the dog's skin in a quick and relatively painless process. Should the dog be picked up by the Council Dog Warden or taken to a vets or kennels, the dog can be scanned for a micro-chip and the owner will be contacted through the address details provided. The law currently states that all dogs need to be micro-chipped and must wear a collar and tag, which needs to display the owner's address details.

For more information on micro-chipping or to book an appointment to have your pet chipped, call the Dog Warden service on 01303 858660 during office hours only.

### **Stray Dogs (Lost and Found)**

If you need to report a lost or stray dog, contact the Council on 01303 858660 during normal office opening hours (9am to 5.00pm). Stray dogs found outside of these hours will be taken to the local kennels. For more information contact the Council's Out of Hours Service on 01303 221888.

### **Dog fouling**

Allowing your dog to foul in a public place and then failing to remove the waste is an offence and could result in you receiving a fixed penalty of £80 and possible prosecution if you fail to pay the fine.

Rain water does not wash dog faeces away and it is every owners legal duty to clean up after their dog by picking it up in a bag and disposing of the waste responsibly. This means by placing small quantities in litter bins, or where possible we encourage residents to take the waste home and dispose of it in with your domestic rubbish or flush it down the toilet.

As well as being unpleasant and unsightly, dog faeces is a risk to human health as it carries a parasite which can cause an infection called Toxicariasis. At its worst Toxicariasis can result in blindness, particularly in children.

### **Control Orders and dog free beaches**

The Council enforces Dog Control Orders to stop problems caused by dogs in public places. From October 2017 these Dog Control Orders will become Public Space Protection Orders in line with legislation updates to the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. It is an offence not to remove dog faeces from the following areas:

- Any public road
- Any private road to which the public have access (unless the owner of the road declares that he or she does not wish the order to cover it)
- Any public footpath
- Any private footpath to which the public have access (unless the owner of the footpath declares that he or she does not wish the order to cover it)
- Any other land, which is open to the air and to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment).

Dogs are banned from any enclosed and fenced designated children's play area within the district. We will issue £80 Fixed Penalty Notices for persons who fail to comply with the above order and anyone who fails to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted.

A number of the district's beaches are dog-free between 1 May to 30 September each year. Please check for the 'dog-free' signs and continue to keep checking - most signs are on the promenade and you might not see them from the beach itself! Find out what beaches are dog-free by visiting <http://www.shepway.gov.uk/dogs-on-beaches>

### **Barking dogs**

Barking is a natural part of a dog's life, but constant barking or whining can be a noise disturbance for your neighbours. Often this problem occurs when you are out of the house and you may not realise that your dog is barking until someone makes a complaint.

Dogs are social animals so we encourage owners not to leave their pets alone for long periods of time. If you have to leave your pet, see if there is someone who can visit your dog during its time alone, or maybe that person could take the dog for a walk or let them out in to a garden for exercise. If you discover that your dog is causing a noise nuisance by repeatedly barking and whining then try some of the following suggestions:

- Leave at differing times during the day, that way your dog may not be so concerned each time you leave. Don't make a fuss of your dog before you leave them.
- Try putting the dog on its own in another room for a few minutes, then gradually build up the time that you leave your dog alone. Do not return to the dog unless they are quiet for a period of time. Praise your dog when you return.
- Some dogs will settle only if they can hear a human voice. Try leaving the radio or the television on at a low volume as company for your pet whilst you are out of the house.

### **More information**

Please contact the Environmental Health (Protection) team on 01303 858660 during office hours only or visit the Council's website [www.shepway.gov.uk](http://www.shepway.gov.uk)