

Dogs

New dog scheme to make the Commons safer for all

Introduced as of August 1st 2022

The Vale Commons Council is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the Commons as a place of public recreation and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the area.

The Council have been receiving increasing reports of uncontrolled dogs on the Commons. This has led to a number of complaints about dog attacks or causing nuisance to others, their pets and livestock. Whilst some dogs are being no more than enthusiastically friendly and mean no harm, this can be an unwelcome greeting and frightening to those who are uncomfortable or scared of dogs. Under the law, dogs must be kept under control at all times in a public place. This means they should have immediate, reliable recall. The increasing number of dogs off leads has also led to an increase in fouling across the Common due to dogs being out of sight of their owners.

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that the Commons can be enjoyed safely by all. In light of these reports, and before there is a serious incident where someone is badly injured, the Council are now asking all dog walkers to keep their dogs on a lead whilst on the Commons.

This is a voluntary scheme, for the benefit of all, that we hope will be widely accepted and adhered to. The Vale Commons Council wishes to thank those who walk their dogs on the Commons in advance for their cooperation.

Guidance Issued by the States Vet

Our publication "Welcome to The Vale Commons" includes a note entitled 'Dogs on the Vale Commons'. This is an extract from a more comprehensive note which David Chamberlain, the States Veterinary

Officer prepared at the request of the Commons Council.

The note is published here:

1) Walkers must not exercise dogs in areas where they are prohibited. See schedules parts I to IV of The Control of Dogs Ordinance, 1992. Dogs are prohibited from specified areas at all times and from specified beaches between the 1st May and the 30th September (both dates inclusive).

2) Walkers must clear up faeces immediately after it is deposited in public places by dogs of which they are in charge.

3) Walkers must have a means of removing deposited faeces with them at all times when they are exercising dogs in public places. So as to be clear a dog walker must have at least two empty waste bags on them for every dog they are in charge of. Faeces and waste bags must be placed in appropriate receptacles.

4) Walkers must exercise no more than five dogs at any time and must keep them in their sight to ensure that their activities are monitored at all times. Walkers who allow the dogs under their control to mix with other groups of dogs on walks remain responsible for the safety and behaviour of their dogs. The Summary Offences (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 1982, Section 2 Offences in connection with animals, fireworks or disturbances, etc. subsection 1) points a), b) and c)

5) Walkers must assess how robust a dog is, the dogs' temperament, fitness and determine the current stage of the sexual cycle of entire females so that dogs are exercised in a public place only if it is safe for both the dog and the public.

6) Walkers must only walk dogs that they are capable of managing. Walkers must not walk dogs, individually or as part of a group, that could overpower them or drag and pull them over. Only persons over 16 years of age should walk dogs in public places.

7) Where it is permitted only dogs with a reliable recall should be allowed

to exercise freely off a lead. If uncertain the walker should assess a dogs' recall in an enclosed area before allowing the dog to exercise freely in an open space.

8) Walkers must not use long-lines, extending leads and stretchy leads on more than two dogs at one time. So as to be clear a walker may still exercise up to 5 dogs at a time but no more than two must be controlled using long-lines, extending leads and stretchy leads.

9) All dogs that are exercised in a public place by a walker must wear flat, non-tightening collars around their necks bearing on it or having attached to it a disc with the initials of the Christian names of the registered owner/keeper followed by their surname and the distinguishing letter of the parish where the owner/keeper has their ordinary place of residence. This is in accordance with The Dog Licences (Guernsey) Law, 1969. Walkers may also want to consider placing a second disc on the dog's collar with their mobile phone number on it should a dog escape them while it's under their control.

10) The duration and intensity of exercise provided for a dog by a walker must be appropriate for the dogs' age and health status. The walker must also take into consideration the weather and environmental conditions when determining the appropriate duration and intensity of exercise to provide a dog. In a group the maximum duration and intensity of exercise provided must be no more than the weakest member of that group can manage in the prevailing conditions.

11) Walking dogs in extreme weather conditions should be avoided. The ability of dogs to cope with extreme weather conditions varies depending upon age, breed, health status and the state of the dogs' coat. Dogs must not be exercised in temperatures equal to or exceeding 24°C in the shade.

Responsible dog owners are always welcome on the Commons. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to ensure that your dog does not trouble other users of the Commons, their pets or livestock.