



Your Moray - Your Safety

APPENDIX 1

Green Dog Walker Evaluation – February 2011

Dog fouling has been a persistent problem in Moray for many years and the Green Dog Walkers scheme aims to tackle the issue by promoting responsible dog ownership by becoming a volunteer.

On 22nd May 2010, the Safer Communities Partnership launched the Green Dog Walkers initiative as a pilot within the Forres area of Moray. The initiative is a non-confrontational, friendly way to change attitudes about dog fouling throughout the Moray area. Volunteers wear a GDW armband (or their dogs wear it on their collar) which signifies that they have "taken the pledge" to always: clean up after their dog, wear the armband when walking their dog, carry extra dog waste bags, be happy to be approached to 'lend' a dog waste bag to those without and to be a friendly reminder to other dog walkers to clean up after their dogs

In January 2011, 230 surveys were sent out to all the Green Dog Walkers that had signed up in the first 6 month period. A total of 74 surveys were returned which gives a reasonable return rate of 32%.

Evaluation

During the six month pilot;

81% of volunteers signed up to the Green Dog Walkers Scheme through the desire to help promote responsible dog ownership and are no longer willing to tolerate the amount of dog fouling in their areas.

64% of respondents who have children said their children wear the armband and clean up after their dog. This targets the correct generation to encourage a culture change over the long term.

85% of respondents have told and encouraged family, friends and others to join the scheme.

Only 25% of respondents said they have never been approached or asked what the GDW armband stands for.

Approximately 100 people have approached a Green Dog Walker for a dog bag because they have not had one on their person.

In excess of 165 people have been approached by our Green Dog Walker volunteers to offer them assistance, advice or dog bags in relation to dog fouling.

66% of the Green Dog Walkers who responded say there has been an improvement in dog fouling in their area in the six month period of the pilot.

83% of Green Dog Walkers who responded said they felt that since wearing their armband that people are more likely to pick up the dog fouling around their presence.

Complaints

Forres - Complaints of dog fouling for the Forres area during the 6 month period of the pilot reduced 38% compared to the six month period prior to the evaluation.

Figures to date show a significant reduction again in the 4 months since the end of the pilot.

Elgin - Complaints of dog fouling in the Elgin area for the six month period since it was launched has seen a 50% reduction compared to the same six month period the previous year.

71% of respondents felt that there is not adequate publicity about the Green Dog Walkers scheme in their area.

Additional Feedback

The majority of respondents took the opportunity to feedback regarding improvements to assist the scheme which resulted in the top areas being identified;

- More advertising, promotion of the scheme through leaflets/libraries, website, press, schools, younger people, waterproof posters
- More outlets/accessibility to supplies of dog bags
- More dog bins
- More patrols/FPN's issued

Recommendations

- 1) Ensure further promotion and education of scheme continues through community groups, community wardens, website and press coverage of scheme and its progress.
- 2) Target roll out of scheme in identified 'hot spot' dog fouling areas.
- 3) Ensure adequate supplies of dog bags at accessible locations
- 4) Co-ordinate extra patrols where resources allow.

Conclusion

These results shows significant, positive results in the relatively concentrated period of the scheme.

The pilot was recognised as good practice and it was agreed at the Communities Committee on 17th August 2010 to roll out the initiative throughout Moray.

To date there is approx 300 people signed up for the scheme which has overwhelming public support from responsible dog owners, puppy socialisation groups, local action group 'Action Against Dog Fouling', community councils, community groups and Elected Members

Local surgeries and patrols by Community Wardens in Burghead, Hopeman, Duffus and Lhanbryde over the next two weeks will result in further promotion and anticipated uptake of the scheme.

More responsibility needs to lie in the community to report individuals known to be offending in this manner. Communities can be empowered to assist in tackling offending and demonstrate that leaving dog fouling is not acceptable.

As with the change in laws regarding drink driving, seatbelts, mobile phones whilst driving, this is a cultural change that will not happen overnight. Education (particularly of younger generations), persistent promotion of the scheme to highlight awareness coupled with enforcement through FPN's is the best identified way to continue tackling this issue effectively to ensure sustainable long term results.