

Corfe Mullen Dog Walkers

*Ann Darnell
Lead Spokesperson
Corfe Mullen Dog Walkers
4 Henbury Close
Corfe Mullen
Wimborne
Dorset BH21 3TF
tel: 01202 698669
email: ann.darnell@assoc.prestel.co.uk*

8th October 2009

Cllr John Little, Lead Member for Health and Housing
East Dorset District Council
Public Health Services
Council Offices
Furzehill
Wimborne
Dorset, BH21 4HN

Dear Cllr Little,

Re: Proposed Dogs Exclusion Order (East Dorset) 2009

I am writing on behalf of Corfe Mullen Dog Walkers (CMDW) to submit our comments in respect of the Proposed Dogs Exclusion Order (East Dorset) 2009. The background to this submission is explained below.

Following publication of EDDC's Proposed Dog Control Order Consultation Pamphlet, a public meeting was held at Lockyer's School on 21st September 2009 to afford Corfe Mullen residents the opportunity to discuss the matter. The meeting was attended by more than a hundred people who, whilst being sympathetic to the problem of dog fouling, nevertheless expressed their dismay at the prospect of banning dogs off lead in the major part of the Recreation Ground. The meeting agreed to form a small committee to be led by Ann Darnell to represent the interests of Corfe Mullen dog walkers.

Our comments apply particularly to the area known as Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground.

We do not agree with the need for any additional dog control orders.

We do not agree with the additional dog orders proposed. Our reasons are as follows:

Other measures should be tried and tested before Orders with such wide-ranging consequences are contemplated.

Any problems have not been brought to the attention of the 'dog walkers' that regularly use the recreation ground and are easily contactable.

The whole idea of owning a dog is companionship. Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground is an area of

open space used during the majority of the year by residents who live in the immediate vicinity. We are aware of lots of friendships in the recreation ground particularly among the elderly and disabled, some of whom live alone and part of their day is about exercising their dog and meeting and making friends.

Ladies walking their dogs alone feel quite safe in Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground because it is relatively open and there are always lots of people about. In contrast, many ladies feel uncomfortably vulnerable when walking on the heath with regard to accidents and being accosted by strangers..

How many health issues have there been relating to dogs in the recreation ground?

Local dog walkers are willing to work with the council to come up with a solution that is acceptable to the majority. It was not so long ago that Councils and Neighbourhood Watch groups were applauding dog walkers who were being used to report anti-social incidents. They are after all the eyes and ears of the open spaces. But now we, the majority of whom are law-abiding and responsible are being both vilified and punished for the actions of a few. Have the Council taken any determined action to deal with the inconsiderate minority?

An exclusion during an organised football or cricket match (ie Saturday & Sunday) and which would only be for a few hours a week would seem to be far more appropriate than a blanket ban which would result in gross under-utilisation of our beautiful amenity.

Yours Sincerely,

Ann Darnell
Lead Spokesperson
Corfe Mullen Dog Walkers