

Dear Dog Owners,

The mornings and evenings are now darker, which means that we all need to be extra vigilant when we are exercising our pets. Please ensure that you are properly prepared for a stress free walk by having a torch so that you can see where your dog has fouled, and plenty of poo bags so that you can clear it away and dispose of it as required by law. (SHDC Dog Control Orders 2013)

Please remember that dogs have their own welfare needs and should be walked for a minimum of twenty minutes twice a day. This is their time, and should be used to engage with the dog. I frequently see people walking their dogs but not taking any notice of them – frequently on the phone or chatting away to their friends. This is not fair on the dog, and it can also lead to the owner being unaware that the dog has fouled.

Many dogs are on their own for several hours during the day, so please do try to make your time with him count, by giving him/her your full attention – this will ensure that you have a happy and contented pet and best friend!

My attention has recently be drawn to an article in a National Farmer's Union magazine concerning the fact that faeces are often left on public footpaths which cross agricultural land, and the effects that this has on livestock:

Neosporosis can cause abortions in cattle and is thought to be responsible for the highest percentage of all cattle abortions reported in the UK. Neospora eggs are produced by infected dogs and excreted in their faeces. Cattle will then become infected if they eat food, ie: grass, or drink water contaminated with the eggs.

Sarcocystosis is also caused by parasites, which can use dogs as intermediate hosts, and similarly the eggs are produced and excreted in faeces. Sheep will become infected if they eat food or drink contaminated by the eggs.

In terms of both these diseases, faeces from infected dogs can contaminate pasture and animal feed, water or bedding. There is currently no licensed vaccine or drugs available for these diseases.

Please therefore consider your surrounding's more carefully and reduce the impact of dog faeces on people, livestock, and land.

There is no excuse for any dog fouling anywhere in SHDC Towns, Villages or the surrounding fields. If you use a footpath which crosses farmland, please ensure that you bag your dog's faeces, and take it home with you.

And finally –

Thank you to all those people who attended Ivybridge Town Council Parks meeting on Monday October 6th. It was encouraging to meet you all, thank you for your suggestions, and offers of support.

If you would like to discuss any issues, please contact [Tracey Weaver, South Hams District Council Dog Warden](#) on 01803 861117