



Dog Control Orders

Consultation Analysis

Yate Town Council recognises that dog owners, along with those without dogs, are entitled to enjoy the town's open spaces and park areas.

It was suggested that the introduction of dog control orders would clearly set out rules for areas where dogs could run free, where dogs would have to be restrained on leads and in a few instances, where dogs would not be allowed. This would help to ensure that all members of the community have equal opportunities to enjoy the facilities throughout Yate. Alan Sherratt, a South Gloucestershire Council Dog Warden, fully supported the Town Council's dog control order proposals.¹

Further to Full Council held on 26 June 2007 (Minute No. 33, 8/5) Yate Town Council undertook a public consultation from 27 June 2007 - 24 August 2007 on the following proposals:

Proposed Dogs on Leads

Lye Field Kickabout Area
Kingsgate Park
Poole Court Pathway
Stanshawes Cyclepath
St Mary's Green (outside Yate Heritage Centre)
The Common Football Pitch Area
Tyndale Park

Proposed Dog Exclusion Zones

Town Council Play Areas (Eggshill Lane Play Area, Howard Lewis Park, Kingsgate Park Play Area and Kickabout Area, Millside Playzone and Kickabout Area, Peg Hill Skateboard and BMX Park, St Mary's Play Area, Tyndale Play Area, Wellington Road Kickabout and Witches Hat Play Area.)
Sunnyside Bowling Green, Sports Field and Tennis Courts.

Information about the consultation was available:

- on all Town Council noticeboards;
- on the Town Council website;
- in the July edition of the Town Council newsletter (available at public venues throughout the parish and also on the website);
- in The Gazette dated 28 June 2007.

¹ Please note that Alan Sherratt is no longer a Dog Warden. This function is now overseen by Alison Richards.

Responses

Evidence of Support for the Proposed Introduction of Dog Control Orders

One resident telephoned the Town Council to express support for the proposal that dogs be restrained on leads in all parks, open spaces and play areas.

Evidence of Opposition to the Proposed Introduction of Dog Control Orders

One resident contacted the Town Council in opposition to the proposal that a dog control order (dogs on leads) be introduced at Lye Field.

One resident commented that the open space at Wellington Road will soon be developed, therefore this will result in less space to let dogs off leads in north Yate.

A further twenty-nine residents contacted the Town Council objecting to the introduction of a 'dogs on leads' control order in Kingsgate Park. Of these twenty-nine objectors, five respondents specifically stated that they disagreed with the introduction of this order throughout the parish.

Of those in opposition to the proposal to introduce a 'dogs on lead' order in Kingsgate Park, six supported the proposal that dogs be excluded from the children's play area within the Park.

Reasons for Opposition

Respondents stated various reasons for opposing the 'dogs on leads' control order, as follows:

- (a) The amount of broken glass in the park should be addressed (18);
- (b) Other problems such as youth congregations, underage drinking, drug taking and vandalism are more pressing (17);
- (c) Litter is a greater problem (12);
- (d) Kingsgate Park is an accessible facility and is used by many elderly and disabled people, some of whom may not be able to give a dog the exercise it needs on a lead or may not be able to travel further afield (13);
- (e) Dog owners frequent the park and as a result, self-police the facility. The majority of dog owners are responsible (12) and encourage others to pick up after their dogs, in some instances, handing out doggie bags to those who may have forgotten one (3);
- (f) The proposals are unnecessary, unjustified and dismissive of the dog community (12);
- (g) Restraining a dog on a lead will not prevent it from fouling (7);
- (h) If dog walkers had to travel to use a facility where dogs could run free, it would result in increased car journeys within the parish and local area (7);
- (i) The issue of cyclists riding in the park is on a par with the dog issue (6);
- (j) Motorbike/scooter issue should also be addressed (5);
- (k) Five respondents questioned the time and cost of enforcement of the dog control orders (5);

- (l) The Animal Welfare Act 2006 s.9 (1) and (2)(c) states that it is an offence for an owner not to meet animal needs (4). The majority of respondents believe that letting a dog off its lead allows the dog the chance to properly exercise. One respondent commented on a greater risk of obesity in dogs if they have to be restrained (1);
- (m) It is important for a dog's social skills to interact with other dogs and also with people (3). Some dogs may become aggressive/territorial if denied this opportunity (2);
- (n) Two respondents stated that if the order comes into being the park will not be used by local dog walkers (2). One resident commented that he would ignore the dog control orders throughout the parish if they come into being (1);
- (o) Loss of freedom (1);
- (p) One respondent expressed a concern that owners may be forced to exercise their dogs in the surrounding streets instead, resulting in a traffic hazard (1).

Compromise Suggestions

Fourteen of those against the proposal in specific relation to Kingsgate Park suggested that a compromise be made. Suggestions included:

- (a) Imposing a time slot for dogs on leads (8). Suggested times were as follows:
 - 8.30 – 5pm (1)
 - After 9am (2)
 - 9am – 5pm (2)
 - 10am – 7pm (1)
 - 8am – 8pm (1)
 One respondent did not indicate a preferred time. (1)
- (b) Imposing dates when dogs are to be on leads (1). The suggested timeframe was given as 1 April – 30 October. (For the remainder of the year dogs to be permitted off the lead.)
- (c) Part of the park be fenced off to allow dogs off leads at all times. Six respondents suggested the area parallel to Scott Way (6). One respondent commented that this area should be opened up, with the hedges cut back and new path ways created (1). One respondent commented on the need for bins within the fenced area (1). One resident suggested the area from Elmwood to the children's play area with a new small circular tarmac walk (1). Two respondents did not specify a preferred area (2).
- (d) Four respondents commented on the need for a park keeper (4).
- (e) One respondent suggested re-educating the public (1). For example, issuing spot-fines to owners who allow their dogs to foul.

Miscellaneous Comments

- (a) Seven respondents queried the reasoning behind the proposal to introduce dog control orders (7).
- (b) Two respondents commented that the public toilets in the Park should be open (2). *(NB: Further to Full Council on 26 June 2007 (Minute No. 33, 8/6a), the toilets are publicly accessible from Monday – Friday from 8.30am – 4.45pm. This matter is being reviewed by the Environment and Planning Committee on 25 September 2007)*
- (c) Two respondents objected to the designs for the new play area in the Park (2). One respondent commented that they were impressed by the play area designs (1).
- (d) One person commented that the Town Council had not sufficiently consulted on the proposal to introduce dog control orders (1).
- (e) One respondent commented that the Westerleigh roundabout is similar to a car showroom (1).