

DOGS (FOULING OF LAND) ACT 1996

Micheldever has become the target of irresponsible dog owners in recent months. Of particular concern are the Lord Rank Playing Field, where the football team are having to clear the pitch before they can play on it, and Warren Field near Micheldever Station. Winchester City Council (WCC) have been informed and will be carrying out patrols of the area in an attempt to catch offenders.

“Most owners clean up after their dogs these days,” explains Dave Griffiths, WCC’s Senior Animal Welfare Officer, “it is only a small percentage who are irresponsible so being in the right place at the right time is a ‘needle in a haystack’ scenario. That’s why we need the help of members of the public”.

How you can help

Offenders need to be identified. Should you witness an owner failing to clean up after their dog in an area to which the general public have access and you know the offender’s address, please report the incident to the Council and appropriate action will be taken.

We would ask you to state that you saw the dog defecate on public land and that the owner left the land without clearing up, give a description of the dog and the person walking the dog, where that person lives, give the exact time and date that the offence occurred and the exact location. A car registration sometimes help if you see it.

Where a dog is loose without an owner or keeper present, fouling is still an offence if the owner is traced.

The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996

The Act applies to all areas to which the general public have access with the exception of agricultural land, commercial woodland, marshland, moors, heath, rural common land and carriageways with a speed limit over 40mph. Privately owned land is included if the owner wants the Act in place and if the general public have access to the land; private gardens and drives are not included.

Remember that leaving a bag of dog faeces on public land is not complying with the law unless it is placed in a bin.

Offenders caught by the Animal Welfare Team may be issued with a fixed penalty fine of £50. Failure to pay the fine may lead to prosecution with a maximum penalty of £1000.

Guide dog owners are exempt from the law.

Contact

Please don’t hesitate to call if you require any more information about the legislation.

We are also happy to spread the word about responsible dog ownership by giving free talks to kids in schools. Year 6 kids are ideal for us but we are happy to talk to any age group.

You can contact us on 01962 848350 during office hours, or Email ehealth@winchester.gov.uk. You can also find some information on our website www.winchester.gov.uk/environment/hs/dog-fouling/