

STATES OF JERSEY



DOGS: IMPROVED FACILITIES

Lodged au Greffe on 28th September 2010
by Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to request the Minister for Planning and Environment and the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to investigate and, if deemed acceptable, implement programmes to –
 - (i) introduce better facilities for dogs in Jersey by creating enclosed areas set aside for the exercising of dogs;
 - (ii) improve the means of addressing the waste from dogs through the provision of an increased number of dog toilets and waste bins;
- (b) to further request the Ministers to consult and co-operate as appropriate with the Comité des Connétables, the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Health and Social Services and all other relevant stakeholders in order to achieve the goals set out above.

DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

I appreciate that there may be some eyebrows raised when it comes to debating such a proposition as the one that I have tabled before the Assembly. There are perhaps issues which require our attention that may appear on the surface of things to be more of a priority. I am concerned though, that after having spoken about this issue on several occasions to States members, that it is not given enough of a priority at present on a strategic level. I believe that this is a mistake. There are from time to time letters in the JEP and members of the public who phone in to the radio stations to voice their concerns about the current state of our streets, green lanes and public spaces due to inconsiderate dog owners who allow their animals to foul the Island without picking up after them. This creates not only a slipping hazard and an unsightly appearance to our roads and pavements, but also a danger in my view to health, in children in particular. I have researched some articles on the Internet and attach some information for reference on some of the issues that relate to the points I have made. It is interesting to see that issues are as diverse as conflicts arising between neighbours to eco-benefits.

Integrating animals into the community

For over a decade, the city of Rennes, France, has successfully carried out a series of initiatives to improve the integration of animals into the city and outskirts. The coherence and continuity of the actions developed by the Parks and Gardens Department illustrates the resolve of the local community to take this vital environment concern into account.

The Rennes Parks and Gardens Department organized a teaching farm in the Basses-Gayeulles leisure centre, installed dog toilets and dog areas in the city centre, integrated pets into local neighbourhood developments, and carried out appropriate communication campaigns.

Reorganizing local areas has been one of the main themes carried out in the Blosne neighbourhood since 1990. The project addressed issues such as child and adult safety, play areas, waste collection, planting flowers at the entrance to housing units, and the integration of dogs. Dialogue with, and input from, the community has been very important. The input from the community resulted in dog toilet installations forming an integral part of the planning arrangements.

The Rennes Parks and Gardens Department has constructed nearly 30 special dog toilets, to provide sanitary spaces in parks. They also created large off-leash areas in parks. The city's gardener teams provide maintenance of the areas to ensure they are kept in good condition. The Rennes Town Hall developed a leaflet for pet owners that gives a map of the dog toilet locations, explains the signs used, and provides a code of good conduct.

The idea for the Basses-Gayeulles children's farm dates back to 1975 and was inspired by German, Dutch, and Scandinavian examples. The farm was designed where an operational farm already existed. The Rennes Parks and Gardens Department took on the task of renovating the farm, repairing the yard, preparing a teaching area, and building a pony stable and pens for other animals. The farm has a variety of animals including cows, ponies, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry and rabbits. It also has a 3,000 m² garden for vegetables, flowers, and fruits. Four Parks and Gardens Department

employees run the farm and provide educational programs. The farm has been given approval as a leisure centre and receives an annual subsidy.

Good Dog Campaign and Poop Scoop Scheme

The physical and psychological benefits of pet ownership have resulted in a significant increase in pets in the United Kingdom during past 30 to 40 years. Along with this increase, the many problems posed by irresponsible dog owners have led to a high level of complaints on dog-related matters to Environmental Health Departments across the U.K.

In Warwickshire, the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council determined that these problems could be solved through promotion of responsible dog ownership and the adoption of “poop scoop” schemes at key locations. The council developed 2 programs, the Good Dog Campaign and Poop Scoop Scheme, and launched them simultaneously in 1991.

Their programs’ activities include –

- Promotion of the concept of responsible dog ownership.
- Involvement of local animal welfare groups and dog training clubs.
- School visits incorporating videos, talks by animal control officers, and a learning package.
- Publicity and promotion of the project throughout the region.
- Encouraging owners to train their dogs and to use a poop scoop to clean up messes in public places.

Good Dog Campaign

The Good Dog Campaign was a major health education initiative. The program developed educational materials, tested them in schools, and packaged them for easy use by teachers in elementary and middle schools. The teacher’s resource pack included activities, games, information sheets, stickers and posters that encourage responsible dog ownership.

A variety of educational leaflets on responsible dog ownership were developed and distributed for dog owners, as well as promotional posters, stickers and t-shirts. One of the most invaluable promotional resources proved to be ‘Oscar’, the campaign mascot, who provided numerous photo opportunities. A video, created as a central part of the teaching package on responsible dog ownership, included a humorous musical finale, “Oscar’s Rap”.

The campaign was launched with a variety of activities, including performances of a play dealing with dogs in parks and open spaces; exhibits at museums, libraries, and civic buildings; a carnival float, and a presentation from animal control.

Poop Scoop Scheme

The program surveyed local sites for possible candidates for the pilot program and chose 4 parks. The program equipped the parks with waste bins and signs. Local stores were encouraged to stock a variety of devices to be used as poop scoops.

After the first 6 months of the Poop Scoop Scheme's operation in the 4 selected parks, the program conducted a full evaluation. The evaluation showed a high level of awareness of the program, high compliance in the use of poop scoops, and improvement in the environment of the parks. People interviewed provided overwhelming support for both the Good Dog Campaign and the Poop Scoop Scheme.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Community Services Department
Council House
Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV11 5AA
United Kingdom

The Responsible Pet Ownership Neighbourhood Program

The Responsible Pet Ownership Program was developed and implemented in Tallahassee, Florida, as a response to problems caused by animals in the Leon County community. The community wanted to help animals fit more successfully into their rapidly growing community and wanted to improve the behaviours of companion animal owners and future owners. The community was concerned with the increasing anti-canine sentiments and wanted to change the attitudes of non-owners.

The program has 4 goals –

- Owners will properly confine or control their pets and animals will not be permitted to run at large.
- Pets will be provided with routine health checks and immunizations.
- Dogs will receive obedience training, particularly training designed to teach them “good citizen” behaviours.
- Citizens will learn about pet overpopulation, state and local laws, and related topics.

The project was started with an eventual goal of training most of the 250 neighbourhood associations in the area. Relevant groups were contacted to get feedback. A slideshow and script were developed to standardize training.

Working through individual neighbourhood associations, training was provided on the concept of responsible pet ownership. Topics covered in training included the County Ordinance and Florida's Dangerous Dog Law, pet overpopulation, spaying and neutering pets, canine good citizenship training, and the importance of immunizing pets.

Modelled after the Neighbourhood Crime Watch concept, training was provided at neighbourhood association meetings. The program implemented a systematic approach to encourage voluntary compliance. When a neighbourhood completes training, the neighbourhood association receives a sign to be posted near the entrance

of the neighbourhood. Animal control officers and consultants work with neighbourhood members to give advice regarding appropriate housing, fencing, and care of pets.

The pilot programs resulted in a decrease of dogs at large from a high of 6 per day to zero. Some realtors are now telling buyers: "I see that you have pets. One of the great things about this house is that it is in a 'Responsible Pet Ownership Neighbourhood'. You're going to be really happy living there."

Today, the Leon County Animal Control Agency continues to promote responsible pet ownership through quarterly pet fairs.

Leon County Animal Control Agency
501B Appleyard Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32304
(850) 487-3172

Picture of dog toilets:

Photo: Dr Gábor Turcsányi



One Council's information on the subject in part is –

Dog Waste

Much of this is left on footpaths, parks and playing fields. At best it gets on shoes and clothes. At worst it can cause blindness through an infection called '**Toxocara Canis**'.

Local Authorities can now designate land under the **Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996**. On the designated land, it is an offence for an owner or keeper of a dog to fail to clear up after their dog has fouled. Failure to comply can result in a prosecution and a fine of up to **£1,000**.

It is not a defence to claim that you did not know or were not there when the dog fouled.

Never let your dog out alone.

Solutions: When you walk a dog, always carry the means to clean up after it. Parks and other areas are not provided as dog toilets! Remember, rain does not wash the problem away. Never let your dog out alone to go to the loo! It is everyone's duty to clean up after their dog.

There is no excuse, fouling is unacceptable!

Beach toilets for dogs

A Brazilian seaside town has built 2 toilets for dogs to try and stop pets fouling the beach.

The local authority at Sao Vicente, in Sao Paulo, was behind the scheme at Biquinha beach.

The toilets are surrounded by flowers and offer three choices of relief areas – a green grass, cement or sand. All of them feature a wooden pole for dogs to urinate on and a bin for owners to dispose of dog mess.

The provision of special walks for dogs and fenced-in exercise areas is becoming more common in most countries, as Governments recognise the interaction of animals with humans and the important provision for facilities that enable healthy lifestyles for animals to be catered for. The fenced-in areas in Russia that I saw recently afforded the dogs and their owners a place to go where the animals could not run away unchecked and kept them from approaching children at play. The facilities were free and the access was through one gated entrance in the fence. Of course those of us that have watched Crufts and other dog shows have seen this type of activity when in the final events it is common to hold agility tests. This is where dogs run a timed assault course, with their owners running alongside them. The course can include tunnels, seesaws, ramps, walls, fences and obstructions of various heights, as well as poles for weaving around. The dog with the fastest time is the winner; these courses are similar to those used to train security, police and army dogs. There is of course no requirement in public dog areas for the owners to run alongside their animals!

There are times of course where the facilities afforded to most dog owners are increased substantially in Jersey by the ability to let dogs run free on our beaches. I am informed by Jersey Tourism that there are restrictions from 10.30 to 18.00 from the beginning of May until the end of September each year on beaches when dogs must be kept on a lead. There are, of course, signs at Island reservoirs where the JNWG inform members of the public that dogs must be kept on a lead but may be walked. I walked in one such area last Sunday and in the space of one and a half hours passed 8 dogs who were running free with their owners walking briskly behind them, at some distance at times, many of whom appeared to be quite aware as they passed me that this was not allowed. In some respects it is hard to criticise these people as I too love dogs and appreciate their needs for exercising in safety without the danger of being run over by vehicles. It does, however, represent in my view not only a potential pollution problem, but a hazard to children from excited animals that may run up to them and may in some extreme and unfortunate incidents cause injury.

Financial and manpower implications

It is difficult to quantify what will be provided, so it is equally difficult to state what cost will be incurred. It is perhaps possible to put a proportion of money which is generated by licensing and fines towards this Proposition's aims and objectives. It may be that the Territorial Army can facilitate the provisions utilising their many skills. Perhaps land can be donated by benefactors, and materials and areas sponsored by businesses and voluntary organisations who might wish to have the areas named after them and their businesses. I think the challenge will be reduced if dog owners and animal lovers take an active part in the ongoing process which would, according to each Parish perhaps, become an ongoing issue to address and expand upon. It is certain with the number of dogs currently in Jersey whose owners walk them or desire to walk them at night or day in our town streets and country Parishes that there is a need for these facilities in one degree or another throughout the Island. As stated in my report, as a health concern the danger of dog waste is stated by one local authority in the U.K. in the following terms: 'At worst it can cause blindness through an infection called **'Toxocara Canis'**'. It will, in the first instance, be capable of being investigated by existing post-holders within existing resources of Ministries, in my opinion; therefore it will meet the requirements of Standing Orders that no finance or manpower will be incurred in accepting this.