

Landowners and Dog Walkers Meeting.

St Mary's Church, Bloxham.
24th April 2019

Present.

Landowners. Tom Smith, Bertie Facon, Ian Adams, Graham Woodard
Councillors. Jenny Yates. Nick Rayner. Steve Craggs. Leonard Leigh.
Mary Groves.

Dog Walkers. Catherine Berry.

Background.

Following a number of informal discussions with the local farmers and landowners a meeting was arranged to review the issues and look for suggestions and ideas that might help improve the situation for dog walkers, walkers, and the farmers and landowners around the village. A failure to address this issue is putting the public access to permissive paths in the various walks around the village severely at risk and costing farmers money in terms of livestock losses and damage.

Discussion Points and suggestions.

Dog Fouling:

1. Local farmers are losing money because some of the dog walkers are not cleaning up after their dogs in the fields. This results in the livestock being infected with a variety of parasites and diseases. This can be pin pointed to specific fields.
2. It's the very small minority who don't take responsibility for their animals and don't clear up after them, who are putting the walks at risk.
3. Notices with advice and instructions at key locations.
4. Educating people is key and this was agreed by everyone in the meeting.
5. Leaflet drop to every house in the village
6. NFU yellow signs are a good start covering both Fouling and Dogs under Control.

Dogs Under Control:

1. What does "Close Control" actually mean?
2. Dogs under "Close Control" around livestock, should we ask if they can be put on a lead around the livestock?
3. Could the PC implement a bylaw on keeping dogs under control or does this rest with CDC. How do we manage the wording?
4. What have other Parish Councils implemented where're they have similar issues and concerns?
5. What other signs are farmers and landowners using on their land to help educate and work collaboratively with the walkers and dog owners?

Trespass onto non-public areas:

1. There is also a degree of vandalism on stiles and gates, many because (according to the farmers experience), dog walkers can't get dogs through the gates or over the stiles and so feel it's acceptable to break down hedges and fences for a way through
2. Need to clearly differentiate and explain the differences to the village between Public footpaths and bridleways, permissive paths and an assumed 'right to roam'.
3. Improve the signage on what's allowed and what is meant in terms of access.
4. Round Bloxham Walk info sheets and advice needs to be reviewed, to include information on how to walk and appreciate the countryside, then amended and reprinted.

5. Need to emphasise that walkers need stick to the authorised routes and that there is no latitude to cross private land.
6. We need more maps available showing where you can and can't walk.
7. How do we get people's attention on the leaflet cover to read and help improve the situation?

General Points

1. Farmers liked the idea of putting a stall at the Bloxham Fun Day on 8th June to talk about their concerns and what help they need. A large-scale map would be useful for this event showing all the PROWs, bridleways and permissive paths, surrounding the village. Could OCC be approached to provide this?
2. It was also suggested that the farmers could do something in the schools for the children at the Warriner and Primary schools. The Primary School have been approached and would welcome a presentation from Mr Facon.
3. Unfortunately, if the abuse of farmland continues there may even need to be a prosecution to raise the profile and publicise the issues.
4. Could we ask CDC to support with Dog warden enforcement?
5. The Dog Walking group have an App that could be used to provide information.