



Burnham Parish Council

Dog Policy

December 2024

Approved by Full Council 09/12/2024

Contents

Policy statement	Page 3
Policies summary	Page 3
Assistance dogs	Page 4
Restricted areas	Page 4
Dog fouling	Page 4
Dog control	Page 5
Identification	Page 5
Penalties	Page 5
Responsible dog walking initiatives	Page 5

Appendices

Open spaces map of dog walking zones	Appendix 1
--------------------------------------	------------

Policy statement

The Council encourages dog owners to walk their dogs. Most breeds should need one or two walks a day, and it's a great way for local residents to keep fit and healthy.

Our public spaces are there for everyone to enjoy, and that includes dog walkers. Our policy is a presumption in favour of dog walking throughout our green spaces, unless there is a strong reason against it.

We also want to encourage responsible dog walking – keeping control of your dog at all times (whether on or off the lead); cleaning up after your dog; and making sure your dog is identifiable.

Above all, we expect all visitors to our parks to show mutual respect for each other, and not interfere with another's enjoyment of our green spaces.

Policies summary

1. There is a presumption in favour of dog walking, unless there is a good reason to the contrary.
2. Likewise there is a presumption for dogs to be allowed to be off lead unless there is a risk of harm to wildlife, significant detrimental impact to park users, or if the setting is inappropriate such as in a graveyard.
3. All dog waste must be collected and disposed of in any litter bin (or household waste bin).
4. Dog walkers must carry, and produce on request by a member of Council staff, evidence that they can clean up after their dog.
5. Dogs must be kept under control at all times, both whilst on and off the lead.
6. No-one should be in charge of more than four dogs at any one time.
7. Professional dog walkers are welcome to use Burnham's parks and green spaces as any other dog walker would. However, it can be difficult to control a large number of dogs, and professional dog walkers should abide by the restriction above.
8. All dogs must wear identification, be microchipped, and walkers must allow inspection on request by a member of Council staff.

Assistance dogs

These policies do not apply to trained assistance dogs, which are permitted in all areas.

Restricted areas

Dogs will only not be allowed where an area meets one of the following:

- An enclosed children's playground
- A dedicated sports pitch
- An area of high heritage value, monuments, and war memorials

There is also a presumption that dogs will be allowed off the lead (although under control at all times) unless there is a high risk of:

- Harm to wildlife
- A significant detrimental impact on other park users

Dogs must also be kept on leads in graveyards, out of respect for the dead.

Attached are maps of Burnham's green spaces outlining what dog walking restrictions are in place.

Dog fouling

Dog waste is not only very unpleasant, but the eggs of the toxocara canis parasite, often found in dog mess, can remain in the ground for a long time after the waste has decayed, and can cause serious health issues, including blindness.

Buckinghamshire Council will fine or prosecute people who fail to clean up after their dog where this is witnessed by their dog wardens or sufficient evidence is supplied by a member of the public.

They can issue fixed penalty fines of £50. If you are prosecuted in court for allowing your dog to foul in a public place and you fail to clean it up straight away, the maximum fine is £1000.

Dog walkers can make sure they're prepared by bringing dog waste bags with them, and may be asked to produce evidence that they can clean up after their dog.

Dog waste can be disposed of in any dog waste or general litter bin, or in their household waste bin.

Dog control

It is an offence for someone in charge of dog if they cause reasonable apprehension to a person that they will be injured, whether or not they actually are.¹

Dog walkers should ensure they keep their dog under control including:

- Keeping them in sight
- If in doubt about their obedience, keep them on a lead

As it can be difficult to control a large number of dogs, there will be a presumption that no more than four dogs can be controlled adequately by one person at any one time.

Identification

When a dog is in a public place, it must wear a collar that states the name and address of the owner.² It must also be microchipped.³ In order to help us prevent and detect antisocial behaviour, the Council may also request to see / scan for the dog's identification.

Penalties

All Parish Council green spaces are held by the Council for the enjoyment of all its residents.

However, it is private land⁴ and the Council may regulate its use from time to time, to ensure that it remains well maintained and able to be enjoyed by all users.

As the landowner, the Parish Council, reserves the right to enforce these regulations and, in extreme cases, prevent any user in breach of these regulations from accessing one or more of the Council's green spaces.

These regulations do not replace or override any legislation, and where a dog walker is in breach of any laws, they may also be subject to prosecution by either the Police or Buckinghamshire Council.

Responsible dog walking initiatives

As well as prevent antisocial behaviour, the Council is keen to actively promote responsible dog walking and will be considering various initiatives including:

- Better advertising that regular litter bins can be used to dispose of dog waste
- A dog waste awareness campaign

¹ *Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, s.3*

² *Control of Dogs Order 1992, s.2*

³ *Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2014*

⁴ With the exception of Hag Hill Playground, which is common land and governed separately by the *Commons Act 2006*, and others

Appendix 1 - dog walking zones

Key:

Dog zone	Off lead
	On lead
	No dogs allowed