

Appendix 3 – Impact Statements

My name is PC Nicholas Mansell, I am the Anti Social Behaviour Coordinator for Coventry.

Part of my role involves working with partner agencies to address existing and emerging issues within the City to keep people safe and to make the city a better place to live.

I have reviewed the statistics involving incidents with dogs in the City over the past 12 months and the figures can be found below ;

Month	Reported incidents	Month	Reported incidents
April 2020	10	November 2020	10
May 2020	7	December 2020	9
June 2020	10	January 2021	12
July 2020	15	February 2021	8
August 2020	11	March 2021	11
September 2020	11	April 2021	2
October 2020	10		

These figures are for the entire City and do not distinguish between parks, green spaces or domestic settings. The majority of the reports we receive about dogs relate to dogs at specific properties and people expressing concern about the dogs behaviour towards others, incessant barking or similar.

We do not consider the City to have any significant issues with dogs. Officers that patrol parks and similar rarely have any dog related issues to deal with and they work closely with Council officers from animal welfare when appropriate to do so.

Whilst we cannot attribute the fact we do not have significant issues in parks and public spaces with dogs to the existence of the order, we do believe the clarity and guidance it offers owners in knowing what is expected of them is beneficial to the city and as such, on behalf of West Midlands Police, I support the renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order.

My name is Graham Hood and I am employed by Coventry City Council as the head of Streetpride and Greenspaces. This means I am responsible for the management of all parks and significant pieces of public greenspace where people might walk their dogs.

It is essential that all public greenspaces are places that people can enjoy themselves which means it is important that we respect the rights of all users. That means people should be free to enjoy public spaces without being fearful of the actions of others, this could potentially include any dogs that are not under the control of their owners or dogs being allowed to foul without their owners picking up their waste.

The existing Public Spaces Protection Order provides some clarity and flexibility which allows my officers to make dog owners aware of the behaviours that are expected of them and also allows us to specify when there are particular spaces where it is not appropriate to allow dogs to run around off the lead, such as the area in the War Memorial Park adjacent to the War Memorial itself and the children's playground.

We do not have a significant number of reports made to us in relation to the actions of dogs in parks and on greenspaces which leads me to believe that people are aware of the order, they observe it and the order works. I believe the order is fit for purpose and I support the renewal of the existing order.

My Name is Phil Hibberd I am employed by Coventry City Council as the Pest Control and Dog Enforcement Manager.

My job means I manage a number of officers that are responsible for enforcing the Public Spaces Protection Order, along with police colleagues. The majority of our role is to raise awareness amongst dog owners and members of the community when we are made aware of issues.

On the whole, dog behaviour within parks is very good, parks are usually busy locations with lots of people around, including other dog owners and as such it is largely self-regulating once we make people aware of the rules, which are set out in the order.

We find the majority of our enforcement and awareness raising is elsewhere in the City, in suburbs and built up areas where people may report increased amounts of dog fouling or they may report a particular owner that is regularly seen not clearing their dogs waste or allowing them continually to run off the lead in an inappropriate manner.

Our enforcement statistics are as follows for the duration of the existing order ;

- Dog Fouling – 37 fixed penalty notices issued
- Dogs (not) on Leads – 7 fixed penalty notices issued
- Too many dogs being walked at the same time – 1 warning letter sent

Whilst some may believe that the figures should be higher, we believe we strike the right balance between enforcement where appropriate and awareness raising, whilst ensuring our priority of keeping people and animals safe.

Without the order I believe it would make the job of my team significantly more difficult and would increase pressure on Police colleagues as the powers immediately available to my officers, and therefore the implied authority that gives them to do their job and to command the respect of dog owners would be diminished.

I support the renewal of the existing Public Spaces Protection Order.

Thank you for contacting the Friends of the War Memorial Park with regard to the renewal of the PSPO Dog Control Order for Coventry.

The matter was discussed at the General meeting of the Friends last night (12th May 2021) and the Friends agreed that the Order is operating satisfactorily within the War Memorial Park and that they support its renewal.

Kind regards,

Sue

Sue Konrad

Membership Secretary

Friends of the War Memorial Park

When the PSPO was initially drafted, many dog owners had serious concerns about what was being proposed. We therefore formed the Dogs in Coventry Group, in order to jointly express our concerns to the Council. This resulted in an amendment and we have since been able to work constructively with the Council (in particular Phil Hibberd and Craig Hickin) to hopefully make the implementation a positive one for the whole community.

I too share your view that the PSPO has generally worked. Over the last few days I have spoken with a number of other dog owners who are broadly in agreement too.

There has been one issue that I am aware of that several people have also brought up again - it relates to the management of the area around the Visitor Centre in the War Memorial Park. In the spring of 2019, the Council started making some improvements to the area in front of the cafe. The works continued until the end of the year, with a short break in August, so lasting for around 8 months. Many of the regular customers visit that cafe with their dogs and the constrained access forced people accessing the cafe to mingle with the dog fraternity more closely than normal. Because the works lasted for such a long period, this inevitably resulted in some disagreements and minor incidents. Until the access constraint which resulted from the Council's works, there had not really been any issue in the cafe area with dogs. The Council's response was to enforce the dogs on leads policy around the cafe aggressively, often catching out the regular users who were normal, decent people and therefore easy targets. This in turn resulted in a lot of bad feeling and I can assure you that the support for the Council's policies relating to dogs and the Council generally took a significant dip.

I think that the incident demonstrates the need for proportionality and common sense. The recent Covid lock-downs constrained people's ability to meet, exercise and socialise in their normal way. The city's parks became an outlet for many people's needs, and the parks became not just used but abused by the influx of those who would normally not have visited them. The park staff did a fantastic job in maintaining the parks in those circumstances, but the Covid situation was another demonstration of how insensitive over-control and reduction of space available for exercise increases problems in shared spaces. On the other hand, the Covid lock-downs did confirm to many both the mental and physical benefits of dog ownership.

With respect to the situation around the Visitor Centre, the general opinion of dog owners seems to be that it would be better served by not having the area designated as a 'dogs on leads' area, but by having a greater dog warden presence to help educate the few less socially minded dog owners. The request for more dog warden presence at weekends was particularly emphasised by one of the owners who had been fined earlier. So if I could recommend a change to the PSPO, that would be it - remove the dogs on leads area around the Visitor Centre in the War Memorial Park, but provide more dog warden presence at weekends.

Apart from that one issue that I am aware of and would recommend a change on, I support the renewal of the PSPO in its current form.

May I also take the opportunity to thank Craig and Phil for their positive attitude and support.

With best wishes

Mike Konrad (Dogs in Coventry)

(author note – please be aware that the point raised above regarding the War Memorial Park is being monitored to see if it is a long term issue or is just COVID or construction related. If felt appropriate local rules may be amended or if needed will return to amend the order itself)

From my point of view, I think the Dog Control Order (PSPO) is generally working. I still come across the odd owner who just thinks they are special and therefore don't have to put their dog on a lead in the lead-restricted areas of War Memorial Park. However, I think if the signage is re-painted on the pavements regularly, so that it's really obvious and can't be ignored, that does help. You cannot expect everyone to comply, but the DCO does act as a deterrent.

I do now fear that with all the "lockdown" puppies acquired last year, we may have a ticking timebomb of poor behaviour waiting to happen. These puppies will soon be turning adolescent, and the combination of inexperienced owners for whom the novelty of dog ownership may have worn off, along with the distraction of other activities as lockdown restrictions ease, is a concern. There's no quick or simple way of dealing with canine behavioural issues, which are complex and multifactorial. However, at least the existing DCO provides a framework for the authorities to take to task the owners of those dogs with poor behaviour, if they are failing to address it.

Overall, therefore, I am happy to express support for the renewal on the current basis.

Kind regards

Elly Pittaway BVSc MRCVS

Veterinary Surgeon & Director

[Broad Lane Vets Ltd](#)