



Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common

Registered Charity



Newsletter Update

Get in Touch

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The City of London provides 14 green spaces in and around London for the benefit of local communities. Most are registered charities operating at little cost to the general public.

Introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches

Information about the Statutory Public Consultation

Burnham Beeches is a nature reserve of local, national and international importance.

There are around 220,000 visits by dogs here every year. We welcome dog walkers but must, as with all activities on the site, consider their impact on both the wildlife and other visitors. The Burnham Beeches Dog Code makes it clear that visitors should pick up after their pets and keep them under effective control but rangers still deal with socially unacceptable dog-related incidents each week.

Following surveys and consultation, we propose to implement Dog Control Orders. Dogs will **not** be excluded from any of the site, other than the existing small dog-free area around the Beeches Café.

If you are a cyclist, rambler, picnicker, runner, nature watcher or dog walker, please read the information inside and contact us with your feedback (please include name and address).

Consultation dates: 12 June - 14 July 2014

The Statutory Consultation documents may be viewed at the office, information point, website and the information boards on-site during the consultation period.

... find out more:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches

Finding the Right Balance

A Public Open Space and Nature Reserve

Few urban communities have a Special Area of Conservation and National Nature Reserve of the quality and international significance of Burnham Beeches on the doorstep. The Beeches has always been, and always will be, hugely important - not just because of its recreational value but also because of its wildlife. Balancing the needs of both is one of the most important, and difficult, roles of the Open Spaces Department of the City of London Corporation.

Getting that balance right is absolutely critical. At Burnham Beeches we carry out surveys to ensure we understand not only the habitats and species present but also the numbers of visitors, their habits and any impact they may have within the reserve. These surveys show we have in the region of 585,000 visits per year and that this number is growing; around 40% of these visits are to walk one or more dogs, with the estimated total visits by dogs to the Beeches being somewhere around 220,000 each year.

We welcome dog walkers at Burnham Beeches: as dog walkers ourselves, we understand the benefits for human and canine health through taking a walk at any open space; both can enjoy improved fitness and general wellbeing, as well as having the opportunity to socialise with other dogs and walkers. We do, however, have to consider their impact on other site users and wildlife.

Our track record of supporting dogs at the Beeches

- ◆ The voluntary Dog Code, adopted in 2006, was created with the help and support of our visitors. They helped define what is meant by 'effective control' and to come up with a simple set of rules: owners should pick up dog mess, keep their dog under control and ensure it does not disturb or chase wildlife, livestock or visitors.
- ◆ Leaflets, posters, news articles and ranger contact are used to highlight issues and help visitors understand why they need to follow the Dog Code.
- ◆ Dog waste bins were first installed in the 1990's and there are now 16 at key points of the reserve. When the first dog bag dispensers were installed in 2003, around 16,500 bags were distributed to dog walkers; we now provide over 100,000 bags each year and dispose of many tonnes of dog waste.
- ◆ Rangers talk to irresponsible dog owners and attempt to resolve difficulties; prosecutions have been brought under the site by-laws for serious incidents.

Why we are introducing Dog Control Orders

Persistently high levels of dog related incidents show that this 'voluntary approach' to responsible dog ownership has not worked. The Dog Control Orders will provide a more enforceable approach to protect visitors, wildlife and livestock.



The number of dogs visiting Burnham Beeches equals about 1,000 dogs/hectare.



Last year we highlighted the continuing issue of dog mess with 'flag the poo' days; in one 50 m stretch of path we flagged 75 piles of dog mess.

The annual cost of providing dog gloves, dog bins and disposing of faeces is £7,000.



Every year we still find evidence that not all dogs are being kept under effective control.

Dogs will continue to be welcome Burnham Beeches NNR

The whole of Burnham Beeches will still be open to dogs after the introduction of Dog Control Orders, apart from (as at present) the small exclusion area by the café.

There will be 220 acres where dogs can be off lead; the rest of the reserve will remain open to dogs on leads. The boundary has been carefully chosen to ensure that the majority of dog walkers have the choice of whether to walk in an 'on-lead' or 'off-lead' area as soon as they arrive; both provide walks in popular and quieter areas of the reserve.

The 'on-lead' area (**Schedule 2**) includes some of our most fragile habitats such as the mire, heath, paddocks, and ponds, as well as the popular easy access paths (where the majority of incidents are reported). It will guarantee a 'sanctuary' area for wildlife and walkers who do not want to interact with your dog.

The 'off-lead' area (**Schedule 3**) includes the main common, the majority of the car-free roads, the quiet woodlands of Egypt and the Moat and the car park on Lord Mayors Drive.

We propose to introduce Dog Control Orders in September 2014

The DCOs build on the existing Dog Code. They should – with the exception of the introduction of the on-lead area - have little impact on the many responsible dog owners and walkers who enjoy coming to Burnham Beeches.

Dog walkers wishing to use Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve will be expected to observe the rules listed below. Failure to comply may result in a fine or prosecution, issued according to specific DCO schedules. The legislation allows the option of offering the offender a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of around £80 as a means of avoiding an appearance at a Magistrates' Court, which could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

Dog walkers will be expected to:

1) Pick up after their pet everywhere in Burnham Beeches.

95% of people surveyed support picking up at all times.

DCO Schedule 1: Failure to pick up dog faeces.

2) Keep a dog on a lead (5 m or less) in designated areas.

We know, from observation surveys, that fouling often occurs when the dog is out of sight. When a dog is on a lead it is always in sight and faeces can therefore always be easily found and picked up. The wildlife of the nature reserve will benefit from reduced disturbance.

DCO Schedule 2: Failure to keep a dog on a lead in an area so designated.

3) Put a dog on a lead (5 m or less) if requested by an authorised officer.

This will give Rangers the authority to insist that dogs are put on leads in response to bad behaviour and complaints from other users.

DCO Schedule 3: Failure to put a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer.

4) Observe the existing dog-free zone at the Beeches Café.

DCO Schedule 4: Permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded.

5) Walk no more than four dogs at any one time.

DCO Schedule 5: Taking more than a specified number of dogs onto the site.

Consultation Data, Nov 2013

- A large majority of respondents supported Schedule 1.
 - The majority of respondents supported the introduction of Schedules 2 and 3 across around 50% of the site.
 - A large majority supported Schedule 5; most respondents suggested no more than three dogs per person.
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Where will you be able to walk your dog?




Everywhere except the existing exclusion area by the Café.

- ◆ Using the map below, as you enter from Beeches Road/ Lord Mayors Drive, all the areas to your right and left until you reach Victory Cross will be available for walking dogs off lead (**marked 3 on the map**).
- ◆ The boundary between the off-lead and on-lead areas is along Halse Drive and Sir Henry Peeks Drive (**marked with a dotted black line on the map**). Dogs can be walked off lead along these roads.
- ◆ Everything to the west of the boundary roads (**shaded and marked 2 on the map**) once you pass Victory Cross is where dogs must be on leads at all times.



Please note: the Rangers will be realistic and fair about applying the Dog Control Orders.

Key

-  Boundary of site within which the Dog Control Orders apply. **Schedules 1 & 5 apply in all areas, Schedules 2,3 & 4 as indicated.**
-  Boundary between areas for Schedules 2 & 3.
-  Area covered by Schedule 2 (dogs on leads).

