

Comhairle na Tuaithe

Agreed position on responsible dog management in Ireland's outdoors

Protecting the countryside is a collective challenge for all of us. Whether you are a dog owner, farmer, land manager, activity provider, or recreational visitor, understanding and adhering to the different rules that apply in all areas is crucial.

We recognise the many benefits associated with dog ownership and we support the provision of dog-friendly amenities. Where permitted, amenities such as shared use trails like Greenways, Blueways and other recreational trails and forests can be suitable if the dog is kept on a short lead. Equally, we recognise that there are outdoor places which are not suitable to bring a dog for exercise, including upland areas and farmland.

Importance of Responsible Dog Management

- The consequences of irresponsible dog management are severe and addressing them requires a united effort.
- An uncontrolled dog risks harming the livelihood of farm families, livestock, wildlife, habitats, public access and people's enjoyment of the outdoors.
- A responsible dog owner is one that always complies with the rule of law and the requests of landowners and land managers.
- We support more effective use of existing legislation to ensure that there are consequences for irresponsible behaviours and will contribute, as appropriate, to any process aimed at the strengthening of dog control legislation.

Education

- Awareness is an essential first step, however we need a coordinated national effort to educate all users of the outdoors on the importance of responsible dog management.
- We must ensure that all dog owners, especially those unfamiliar with the countryside, understand their responsibilities.
- Clear communication through government departments and state agencies is needed, as well as through schools, communities and user groups, using best practice to ensure accessible and ongoing messaging through digital platforms, on-the-ground signage and other means.

The members of Comhairle na Tuaithe believe in respect for farmers and their animals, for nature, for rural residents and all users of the outdoors. If we don't act now, we risk losing access, farm livelihoods, and the landscapes we cherish. By working together, we will foster a culture of responsible behaviour in the outdoors including responsible dog management that protects livelihoods and biodiversity while enriching the outdoor experience for everyone.



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páircanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhlúla
National Parks and Wildlife
Service



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



MOUNTAINEERING
IRELAND



etbi
Education & Training
Boards Ireland
Boird Oideachais &
Oiliúna Éireann



IRISH CATTLE & SHEEP
FARMERS' ASSOCIATION



IRELAND'S ASSOCIATION
FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM



ICMSA

THE FAMILY FARM ORGANISATION



HORSE SPORT
IRELAND



Local
Development
Companies
Network
Collective Vision, Shared Society.



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann
Local Government Ireland



Waterways Ireland
Uiscebhéalaf Éireann Watterweys Airlann



active
disability
ireland