

Paint Means Poo Campaign – Phase 2, Autumn 2016

Introduction

In June 2016 parishes throughout the District were invited to take part in a spray painting dog fouling campaign, for which the slogan 'Paint Means Poo' was adopted. The aim of the campaign was to highlight the problem of dog-fouling and to promote responsible dog ownership across the District. In addition, this campaign would provide evidence to enable the Council to make future plans to crack down on dog fouling and other forms of irresponsible dog ownership. This report gives details of the campaign, the results and recommendations for the future.

Background

Dog fouling is recognised as a rural crime indicator and repeatedly features as a major issue of concern for our residents.

In a bid to reduce dog fouling in the Daventry District various initiatives have been undertaken:

- Spray Painting Dog Fouling initiative
- We're Watching You Campaign – targeting night time offenders
- Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) – Enhanced Dog Control Powers
- Patrolling by our Dog Wardens
- Action days promoting responsible dog ownership

The initial spray painting campaign was undertaken in 2014 when 28 Parishes and 7 individuals took part in an 8 week campaign. Volunteers were provided with a can of spray paint, a set of instructions and an electronic recording form in Excel. However, a small proportion of volunteers submitted recording forms, making it difficult to establish if the campaign had a deterrent effect. Whilst some of the results submitted indicated that a reduction in fouling had been achieved, other results were less convincing.

After the initial 8 week campaign parishes were encouraged to contact the Environmental Improvement Service if they had identified a dog fouling hotspot and identified a volunteer willing to undertake a further 8 week campaign. This led to a piecemeal approach with individual Parishes arranging to undertake their own campaigns, having obtained a can of spray and instructions for its use from the Council. These were delivered by our dog wardens, who used this as an opportunity to establish a dialogue with volunteers patrolling dog fouling. Although uptake was good, it did not allow for a focussed District-wide approach to maximise impact and effectiveness. Despite this, it was considered that the campaign had raised the profile of the Council's efforts to counter dog fouling across the District and as a result contributed to underpinning a culture of picking up after your dog.

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In order to enable the Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the paint spraying campaign it was decided to hold a more focussed district-wide initiative and to ensure that the participants fed results back in a consistent format. This Phase 2 Campaign was undertaken over 6 weeks between 5th September and 16th October 2016.

Developments to the Existing Spray Paint Campaign

In addition to the creation of a memorable slogan 'Paint Means Poo!' prior to relaunching the campaign, the resources were reviewed, revised and added to in the following ways:

- The existing set of instructions (sent out in an email format) were refined and made into a comprehensive toolkit.
- In order to minimise the impact of the paint on the environment, an eco-friendly paint was sourced.
- A risk assessment covering the activity was developed and distributed to all participants.
- Recording forms were prepared in both Microsoft Word and Excel.
- The Dog Fouling page on the DDC website was revised and included a section relating to the Paint Means Poo Campaign.
- A Paint Means Poo poster and flyer was created, to enable participating volunteers to demarcate the area of focus and promote the campaign to nearby residents.
- A Dog Fouling leaflet, including information about the law relating to dog fouling and the health implications of dog poo, was written and printed, to educate residents as a part of the campaign.

These new documents were uploaded onto our website, located on the Dog Fouling page at: <https://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/dog-fouling/>

Organisation of the Campaign

All Parish Councils and existing volunteers were sent an email inviting them to participate in the campaign, if they considered that dog fouling remained a problem in their area. In order to encourage the existing network of volunteers to participate the volunteers and their Parish Councils received a telephone call and a follow up email to invite them to be part of the campaign: A total of 27 Parishes and 7 individuals acting on behalf of residents groups or other organisations expressed an interest in participating in the campaign. Appendix 1 is a list of the 34 interested parishes and areas.

Requirements of the Campaign

Each participating Parish was asked to provide details of a willing volunteer, committed to undertaking the six-week campaign and to record the results and provide feedback. In return they received an information pack giving the necessary information to run and promote a campaign. Each nominated volunteer received their own pack including a can of eco-spray paint, a toolkit, risk assessment, recording

forms, flyers giving details of the campaign, and Dog Fouling Leaflets. These were delivered to the volunteers at least 2 weeks before the start date.

Promotion of the Campaign

The aim of conducting a united district-wide campaign was to increase the profile of the campaign and to deliver a standard message, and enable us to maximise the promotion opportunities. This was done in the following ways:

- DDC's Dog Fouling webpage was revised and all campaign documents made available to download.
- Issuing press releases, at the beginning of the campaign and midway through.
- The campaign was promoted on the front page of the Council's website (www.daventrydc.gov.uk) and via the Council's social media (twitter and facebook).
- Participating Parish Councils promoted the Campaign to their residents via websites and in newsletters.
- Via our team of dedicated volunteers, who promoted the campaign in their focus area by displaying posters and handing out information flyers and leaflets.
- Copies of Paint Means Poo promotional materials (posters, flyers and a dog-fouling leaflet) were made available at nearby libraries and Daventry Pet Shops
- Emails were sent to interested organisations and individuals, along with a copy of the poster promoting the campaign, asking for them to promote the campaign via websites, social media and newsletters. These included Brixworth Country Park, District Councillors, pet shops, veterinary surgeries, kennels, registered dog walkers, The Ramblers Association, Neighbourhood Watch, and nearby schools.
- Via information boards along the Canal Towpaths, with the support of the Canal and River Trust.
- A free poo bag offer was made by Pets at Home, and promoted by a press release and on DDC's website and via the Community Safety Partnership. Information of this promotion was also emailed to Members of the Council, Parish Clerks, Volunteer Sprayers, and interested organisations.

Results of promotion

- On 7th September 2016 an article entitled, 'Paint Means Poo Campaign to tackle dog mess in Daventry District,' appeared on the front page of the Daventry Express online with a large photograph.
- A similar article and photograph also appeared in the Daventry Express newspaper on 8th September 2016.
- Brixworth Country Park advised that they would promote 'Paint Means Poo' by displaying posters and via social media. They also expressed an interest in participating in future campaigns.
- Links were developed with the Canal and River Trust who, in addition to permitting our Volunteer to spray along the towpath, offered to help promote the campaign and put copies of the poster on the community notice board. They also were provided with copies of the Council's PSPO signage.

- The campaign was noted country-wide: A request for information was received from the Severn Estuary Partnership; A further information request was received from a Local Community Council in Scotland, seeking advice on sourcing an eco-friendly spray paint.

End of Campaign

Volunteers returned their completed forms for inclusion in this report. It took longer than initially anticipated for all forms to be returned.

In the end a total of 28 recording forms were completed and returned for analysis. These were completed thoroughly, and many of the Volunteers provided very detailed comments. Comments arising from the campaign have been analysed and responses provided where necessary. These are attached in the Response Results Summary (Appendix 2)

Despite these efforts 5 recording forms remained outstanding.

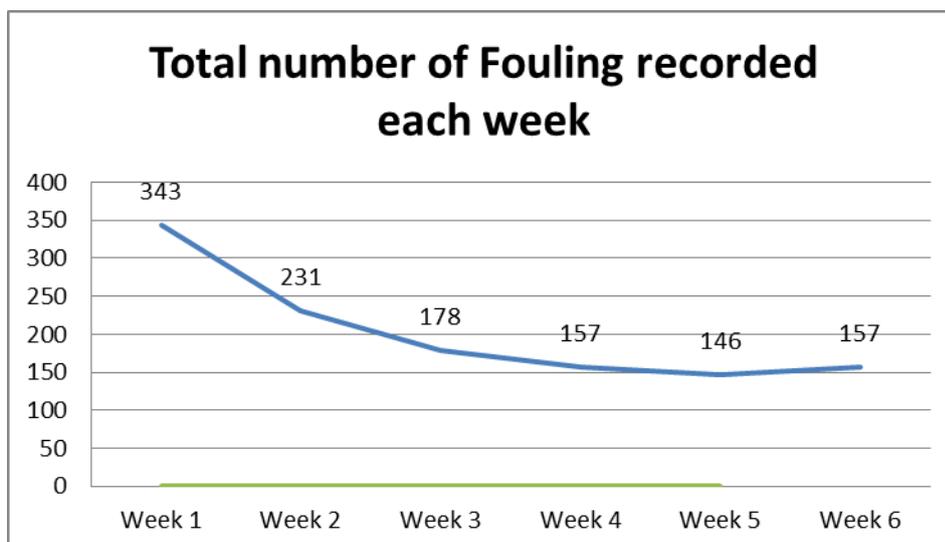
Other Issues Arising

One Parish pulled out of the campaign prior to the start, citing unresolved issues regarding the installation of bins with DDC's waste contractor, Enterprise as the reason. It was felt that without facilities to enable people to do the right thing, it was inappropriate to undertake the campaign. Therefore a total of 33 volunteer sprayers undertook the campaign.

Results of the campaign

It is recognised that the Paint Means Poo campaign can only provide a 'snapshot' of the actual situation with respect to dog fouling in certain areas of the District.

The total number of fouling recorded each week by participating Parishes and areas of Daventry can be seen in the line graph below.



This shows a general downward trend, with a 54% reduction of fouling from 343 in week 1, to 157 in week 6.

The chart shows a slight increase in fouling from week 5 to week 6. This fluctuation can largely be attributed to increases seen in week 6 in two areas: Daventry, Borough Hill and Long Buckby Wharf. Our volunteer for Long Buckby Wharf is of the opinion that the overall situation still varies considerably week by week due perhaps to the fact there is variable passing canal boat traffic. It is not believed that local dog owners are responsible for not clearing up. Comparative data for the same area during the same 6 week period in 2015 shows an average of 16 incidents of fouling, which is double that recorded during this campaign.

The majority of fouling reported can be linked to 5 main areas: Daventry, Borough Hill; Daventry, Middlemore; Everdon; Braunston and Spratton. A full breakdown of results can be viewed in Appendix 2.

Conclusion and recommendations

The results suggest that this initiative has been successful and further activities would be beneficial in building on the success of the campaign and utilising the data insight provided by the local volunteers. It is recognised that without a dedicated and reliable team of volunteers, and the support of participating Parishes, this initiative would not have been possible, and the feedback has been invaluable.

That a Forum be organised to review the evidence, with as many participants and parish representatives involved as possible, with a view to compiling an action plan to counter dog fouling in the District.