

Cardigan U3A Tuesday Walkers

Walking with dogs

Dogs are welcome on walks if they are well behaved and always under the effective control of their owner, both in urban areas and in the countryside, in accordance with the guidance contained within “The Countryside Code – Keep dogs under effective control”. For completeness this information is provided below.

Dogs can be off the lead where it is safe and legal, but always with the agreement of the walk leader, whose judgement and instruction are final.

Dogs are to be on the lead where common sense prevails and whenever the walk leader decides it is necessary. Situations where dogs should be on the lead include: urban areas, roads where traffic is likely to pass, around farm animals and horses, when passing through farm complexes and when walking along narrow paths that are either on a steep incline or have precipitous boundaries.

When off the lead dogs should not be a nuisance to others. If this situation were to arise then a resolution should be sought between the affected walker(s) and the dog owner. If the matter cannot be resolved amicably, by the individuals concerned, then the walk leader should be consulted for judgment and instruction.

The Countryside Code - Keep dogs under effective control

When you take your dog into the outdoors, always ensure it does not disturb wildlife, farm animals, horses or other people by keeping it under effective control. This means that you:

- keep your dog on a lead, or
- keep it in sight at all times, be aware of what it's doing and be confident it will return to you promptly on command
- ensure it does not stray off the path or area where you have a right of access

Special dog rules may apply in particular situations, so always look out for local signs – for example:

- dogs may be banned from certain areas that people use, or there may be restrictions, byelaws or control orders limiting where they can go
- the access rights that normally apply to open country and registered common land (known as ‘open access’ land) require dogs to be kept on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July, to help protect ground nesting birds, and all year round near farm animals

- at the coast, there may also be some local restrictions to require dogs to be kept on a short lead during the bird breeding season, and to prevent disturbance to flocks of resting and feeding birds during other times of year

It's always good practice (and a legal requirement on 'open access' land) to keep your dog on a lead around farm animals and horses, for your own safety and for the welfare of the animals. A farmer may shoot a dog which is attacking or chasing farm animals without being liable to compensate the dog's owner.

However, if cattle or horses chase you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead – don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it. Your dog will be much safer if you let it run away from a farm animal in these circumstances and so will you.

Everyone knows how unpleasant dog mess is and it can cause infections, so always clean up after your dog and get rid of the mess responsibly – 'bag it and bin it'. Make sure your dog is wormed regularly to protect it, other animals and people.