



Breckland  
COUNCIL

# Dogs

A guide for responsible ownership



This leaflet is designed for both dog owners and those being affected by issues from other people's dogs. It offers advice on how to minimise disturbance to neighbours, how to make a complaint about dog issues and outlines other dog related legal requirements. If you require further information, please contact the Environmental Protection Team on **01362 656870** or email us on **[envprotect@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:envprotect@breckland.gov.uk)**

The Council receives many complaints regarding dogs every year. These range from complaints of strays and dangerous dogs to dog fouling. The most common complaints are dog barking and howling.

## Dog Noise

It is normal and natural for dogs to bark but, when barking or howling happens a lot or goes on for a long time, it can be annoying and upsetting for neighbours. Often the problem occurs when the dog owner is out of the house so the owner may be unaware of the matter until someone complains.

### Why do dogs bark?

Dogs are not naturally solitary animals. They need the security of a pack or a family group. Pet dogs regard their owners as a substitute family and can become distressed when left alone for long periods of time.

Some reasons why your dog may bark could include; loneliness, boredom or frustration, attention seeking, defending their territory or medical problems.

Some simple things to try;

- ⦿ Don't make a fuss of your dog when you leave.
- ⦿ Try putting your dog on its own in another room – for a few minutes at first, and then gradually build up the time you leave the dog alone. Don't return until the dog is quiet for a period. When you return, praise the dog.
- ⦿ If your dog barks at things outside the house or garden, don't let it go outside on its own. Keep the dog away from windows or leave it so that it cannot see outside.
- ⦿ Some dogs settle better when left alone if they can hear a human voice – try leaving a radio or TV on at a low volume.



- ⦿ Feed and exercise your dog before you go out and ensure it has fresh water.
- ⦿ Ensure its bed or basket is comfortable and leave a favourite toy or a chew.
- ⦿ Check that the room is not too hot or cold and that there is adequate ventilation.
- ⦿ If you have a problem with your dog barking when you are away from home, see if you can get a friend or relative to look after your dog or, if possible, take the dog with you.
- ⦿ Don't leave your dog outside if it's barking to be let in.
- ⦿ If your dog barks during play or when it's excited, don't play with it at anti social times; for example late at night or early in the morning.

If these ideas do not resolve the problem, please contact your veterinary surgeon or a specialist animal trainer or behaviourist for further advice. If your lifestyle is such that your dog is regularly left home alone for long periods and you are unable to resolve noise issues, then you should seriously consider if your dog is happy and whether a dog is the best pet for you.

## Investigation of complaints

Where a noise or smell nuisance complaint is made to the Council, we are obliged by law to investigate it under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In the first instance we would send the complainant a nuisance record sheet and ask them to record when the problem occurs and how it affects them.

We would also write to the owner of the dog and ask them to take steps to control the disturbance. Once record sheets are returned to us, if we believe there may be an issue, we will visit to witness the disturbance. This may be in person or using recording equipment. If the officer is satisfied that the disturbance constitutes a Statutory Nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, an abatement notice will be served. An abatement notice will always

allow time for remedial action to be taken and, in many cases, will require the reduction in barking and or howling but not complete cessation of all noise.

If an abatement notice is not complied with, the dog owner could be taken to the Magistrates Court and, if found guilty, face a maximum fine of £5,000.

In reality, legal action is always the last resort and we would seek to work with dog owners, offering advice and trying to find a practical solution first.

## Advice to complainants

If dog noise or smell is causing you disturbance, it is best to try to speak to the dog owners about the problem in a friendly way first. In many cases the dog owners may not be aware there is a problem.

If your neighbours dog barks at you when you are in your garden, you could consider liaising with your neighbour to make friends with the dog so he no longer sees you as a stranger.

If the situation doesn't improve contact the Environmental Protection Team on 01362 656870. We will require your name and address and as a minimum the address of the problem dog.

## Other information

**Dog fouling** – In Breckland all public open spaces are 'poop scoop' areas, with the exception of; rural common land, carriageways (and adjacent verges) with a speed of more than 40mph, agricultural land, woodland and land which is predominantly marsh, moor or heath.



In poop scoop areas you must clean up after your dog, even if it is off the lead and dispose of the waste properly. Any person in charge of a dog who fails to clean up after it could be committing a criminal offence and be issued with a fixed penalty notice or in extreme cases, face prosecution with a fine of up to £1000. Saying you didn't see your dog foul is no excuse!

A build up of dog faeces in your own garden can cause smell, attract flies and is a health hazard to those using the garden. Faeces should be regularly picked up, removed from the garden and disposed of properly. Where dogs are kept in paved/ concreted yards or kennels, the area should be regularly washed and disinfected with an animal friendly product.

**Straying** – Any unattended dog in a public place is a stray dog. Stray dogs are not only a danger to themselves but can be a risk or cause nuisance to members of the public. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 all local Councils are required to collect stray dogs. If they are unclaimed after a seven day period, seized dogs can be sold, re-homed or in extreme situations destroyed.



If you have any questions regarding lost, found or stray dogs please contact

Breckland's dog contractor, Animal Warden Services on 01362 858500 or check Breckland Council's web pages. You can receive updates on Breckland related activities including details about stray dogs by following Breckland Council on Twitter (@BrecklandVocal) or the Dog Warden service on Facebook by following Animal Warden Services Norfolk Dog Warden

**Collar and tag requirements** – The Control of Dogs Act 1992 requires that every dog of any age on a highway or in any public place must wear a collar with the owner's name and address inscribed or attached to it. Failure to comply is an offence. In the event that you lose your dog the details on the collar make it much quicker and easier for us to return it to you thus avoiding costly kennelling fees and fines.

**Micro chipping** – If a dog is micro chipped with its own unique identification number and registered on a national database, owners can be traced very quickly and the dog can be returned safe and sound. If your dog is already micro chipped, remember to update your details should your address or telephone number change. A micro chip doesn't relinquish your legal obligation to have a collar and tag.

**Dangerous dogs** – Any person who allows their dog (s) to be dangerously out of control in a public place could be prosecuted under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. If you have been attacked, bitten or are in fear of being bitten, please contact the Police on their non emergency number 101 as soon as possible.

## **Animal welfare**

If you are concerned that a dog is being neglected or badly treated please contact the RSPCA who will be able to offer advice and may investigate your concerns.



## Contact details and further information

### **Breckland Council Environmental Protection Team**

01362 656870

[envprotect@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:envprotect@breckland.gov.uk)

### **Animal Warden Services**

01362 858500

<http://www.animalwardenservices.co.uk>

Facebook by following Animal Warden Services Norfolk Dog warden

### **RSPCA**

Cruelty line 0300 1234 999

<http://www.rspca.org.uk/allaboutanimals/pets/dogs>

### **Norfolk Constabulary**

In an emergency always dial or text 999

Non emergency calls 101, Minicom equipment 18001 101,

Text to 07786 200777

Fax 0845 345 4567

Email: [enquiries@norfolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:enquiries@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)

<http://www.norfolk.police.uk>