

Walkers with dogs:
new approaches to better management



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About me

Career path:
Health → Countryside → Pet psychology =

Specialist consultant:
Dogs in the countryside & urban greenspace

Other clients include:




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About the Kennel Club

- Founded in 1873 – best known for Crufts Dog show
- Not-for-profit, UK-wide body
- Protection & promotion of the varied roles dogs have in society
- £500k surplus annually donated to charitable trusts
- Supports other canine bodies: Animal Health Trust, rescue and rehoming centres etc




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UK-wide activity

- Registration: Petlog database, pedigree & cross-breed dogs
- Breed regulation & accreditation
- Health screening & research
- Competitive & fun event regulation
- Vulnerable breed support
- 1,000+ Good Citizen Training Clubs
- Lobbying on canine welfare
- Lead canine body on access issues



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Outdoor access work

- Jointly-funding strategic research on influencing behaviour
- Identifying & sharing best practice
- Supporting good practice by councils and land managers
- Facilitating partnership working
- Green infrastructure & mitigation
- Challenging poor management and suggesting alternatives
- Legislative lobbying



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Walkers with dogs 

- Evenly spans all socio-economic groups
- 20% of all households in SE England
- Most frequently parents
- Half of all outdoor visits taken with a dog
- Local residents, day visitors and tourists
- Off-lead somewhere priority for most
- Very active people doing dog sports
- People only walking due to dog ownership



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A dog in the home gives people: as are brilliant!

- ✓ Daily motivation to go walking
- ✓ Confidence in the outdoors
- ✓ Better physical & mental health
- ✓ More social contact with others
- ✓ Enhanced learning & empathy in children



Access principles 

- Supporting good aspects of access taking with dogs
- Equally accepting and acting to minimise negative impacts
- Pragmatic approach reflecting diversity of KC interests
- Supporting evidence-based, proportionate restrictions
- Restrictions on dogs are restrictions on people



Making it easy to do the right thing

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We instinctively react to

WHAT


we see

To change behaviour we need to know

WHY

it happens

Principle behind new approaches

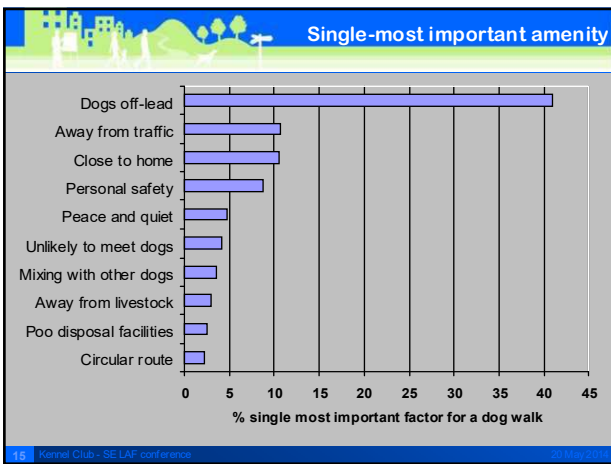
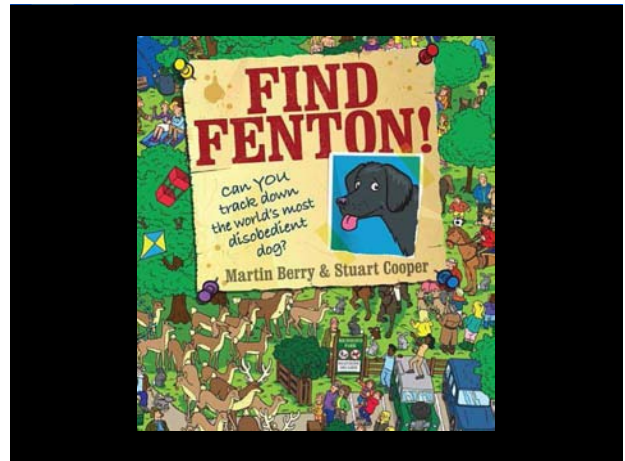
Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour 

- How you feel about it → Attitude to behaviour
- How others judge you → Subjective norm
- Can you do it? → Perceived control

Intention to act in a given way

Actually doing it

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Displacement

Question: Impact on owners if more restrictions on Kent's coastline

- 28% walk their dogs less often
- 17% less likely to get another dog
- 44% drive further

Where walk instead:

- 49% farmland
- 41% nature reserves
- 34% heathland

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Supply and demand

City of Winchester study 2008: greenspace availability for dog owners

- 34 sites surveyed by dog owners
- 54% felt less accessible greenspace than 10 years ago
- Average 12 mins extra walking or driving to get to alternative sites
- Double impact of new housing = less greenspace + more dogs

Access and Countryside Management research contract for Hampshire Countryside Access Forum 2008. Available at: www.hants.gov.uk/dogs

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A planned approach

The need for a strategic approach

When faced with local restrictions or access loss, dog owners have 4 options:

1. Keep visiting if needs still met
2. Go somewhere else
3. Practically and/or politically challenge the restriction
4. Ignore the restriction, given a low likelihood of being caught/fined

In a climate of "fewer places to go" strategic planning is needed to minimise the ever-increasing potential for conflict.

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Making it easy to DO THE RIGHT THING

Danebury Hill Fort, Hampshire

Addressing all 3 TPB elements

Personal beliefs


- ✓ Accept that people are highly motivated to exercise dogs off-lead
- ✓ Management to accommodate rather than suppress this

Peer pressure

- ✓ Develop positive rapport and influence within community of dog walkers

Ability to do the right thing

- ✓ Make it easier to dispose of dog waste
- ✓ Be clear about where dogs can be off lead as well as on lead, or prohibited



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TPB in action

In practice this meant:

- ✓ Moving existing waste bin and providing another
- ✓ On-site events for dog walkers: listening & understanding their views
- ✓ Guided walks for dog owners in the Hill Fort dog exclusion area
- ✓ Traffic light system for lead usage that changes with grazing patterns
- ✓ New leaflet explaining changes and where to exercise dogs off-lead
- ✓ Informally talking to people!

Sheep Grazing

Please keep dogs on a lead in this field

Exercise area




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TPB delivering


And the result was...

- ✓ 82% reduction in poo left on site
- ✓ 83% improved clarity about where dogs could go
- ✓ 92% better understanding of "on-lead" areas
- ✓ 75% improved clarity on livestock location
- ✓ No dog attacks on livestock since
- ✓ Exclusion areas works despite having no enforcement powers
- ✓ Happy graziers: happy visitors
- ✓ Good public relations

Before...



After...



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Jeskyns Wood • FC • Kent




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Finding the solutions

Using TPB to analyse non-compliance shows us:

- "Educating" alone is not enough
- Motivations must be identified and understood
- Peer pressure is a powerful and enduring influence
- Control beliefs are key... and often the least considered
- Understanding why is crucial
- Change comes from influencing feelings, not just stating words



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Special needs?

Why are dog walkers so special they need different management approaches?



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Still problems in San Francisco, even with guns...

Managing for THEIR NEEDS on OUR TERMS

Conservation grazing: Malvern Hills

- Accurate, up to date grazing information: newspaper & website
- Outdoor dog training organised: more control = more freedom
- Drop-in vet checks provide engagement and influence
- Land managers working positively with a major access user
- Minimised conflict & bad publicity




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Part of the solution

Lookers - volunteer shepherds

Most of our downland sites are on the edge of the city so we need to make more regular checks on our sheep, if the shepherd had to make all of these checks it would take up a large amount of time and make grazing many small sites impractical.

We have volunteers, known as lookers, that help keep an eye on our sheep.

Lookers need to be able to

- attend a lookering course so that you know what to do.
- check the sheep, making a report or ensuring another looker has.
- spare around one hour a week while the sheep are on site.
- get around on quite steep uneven slopes, as that is where the sheep graze.
- be available in the winter months - we normally graze our sites in the winter so that the sheep do not eat flowers!
- have a mobile phone so that you can receive any updates on the sheep, phone in your report and contact of emergency.



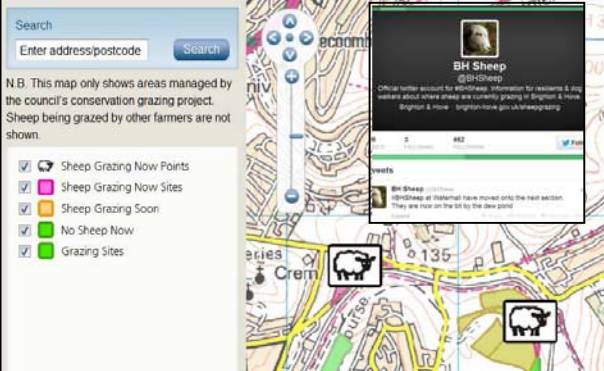
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Brighton and Hove Council

Search
Enter address/postcode Search

N.B. This map only shows areas managed by the council's conservation grazing project. Sheep being grazed by other farmers are not shown.

- Sheep Grazing Now Points
- Sheep Grazing Now Sites
- Sheep Grazing Soon
- No Sheep Now
- Grazing Sites



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Sandwich & Pegwell Bay

- Jointly funded project: NE and KC
- Strategically important case study for coastal access restrictions

Original aims

- Produce Dog Walker Management Strategy
- Zoning: clarity about what dog walkers can and cannot do
- Better interpretation & signage
- Improved relationships with dog walkers

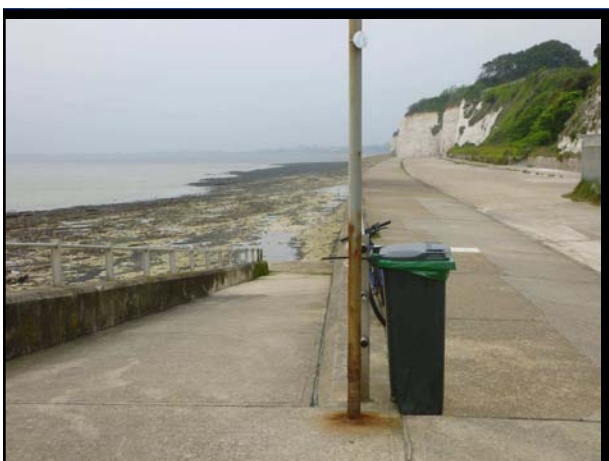
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Wider recommendations

- Produce access management plan
- Complement by up-to-date and costed site management plan
- Prioritise actions and integrate with coastal access
- Actively engage with partners & stakeholders on displacement
- Establish baseline data for access as well as wildlife
- Better management of access demands – not just restricting
- Site-based management alone won't work

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Planning out problems from the start



EU Directives: SPAs and SACs

Natura 2000 sites prompting new approaches

- Development can't take place if "likely significant adverse effects" on designated SPA / SAC site
- Dog owners' needs a key issue: can't build if not addressed
- Builders need mitigation strategies
- Suitable **A**lternative **N**atural Greenspace designed to be very attractive to dog walkers
- NE minimum 20 acres (8ha) SANG per 1,000 population. £4k to £10k developer contribution per home



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www.dogfriendlyhousing.org.uk

- Need for early engagement in the planning process
- Managing demand rather than just suppressing it
- Potential source of income
- Management of **new** visitors, not existing ones (in theory!)
- Displacement to and from SANG greenspace a reality
- More than ever a need for integrated management



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Dog activity trails

“Enhancing opportunities for people to experience and enjoy responsible healthy exercise and interaction with their dogs in the outdoors.”



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THE KENNEL CLUB Forestry Commission
Making a difference for dogs England

- ✓ Built at Coatham Community Woodland, Tees Valley
- ✓ Constructed by in-house team
- ✓ Construction costs: approx £2,600 including signage
- ✓ High level of media interest at launch in June 2008
- ✓ Very popular with local dog walkers
- ✓ Evaluation: 60% owners now more active; 36% dogs lost weight/healthier
- ✓ www.dogactivitytrail.org.uk and journal paper with full details



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Lee Valley Regional Park

- ✓ Cheshunt Country Walk, Windmill Lane, EN8 9AJ. M25 jct 25.
- ✓ Ranger Amy Lewis – built with volunteers
- ✓ Info: alewis@leevalleypark.org.uk




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Principles for success

1. See value of dogs and walkers as well as problems
2. Address causes, not symptoms
3. Positive solutions to negative impacts
4. Restrictions on dogs = restrictions on people
5. Recognise that poor management is also to blame for problems
- 6. Make it easy to do the right thing**



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