

DOG POO PATROL PERSON LIZZIE HAMEY

The days are longer and warmer which encourages more people to be walking their dog/s in Preston. I have been doing the DPP in Preston for over 10 years and I am resigning. I hope I have made some progress in making the dog walkers more aware of keeping the footpaths cleaner.

Every dog owner is expected to 'pick up' but some are irresponsible. It makes no difference as to whether or not the dog/s are on the lead or off the lead. the poo must be observed and dealt with.

It is important to check the health of your dog at all times. Dog faeces are a health hazard to other dogs and also (especially) to children. It is pointless reporting when seen because you never see the culprit. Even if by chance you did, it would be a brave person to run after them to deliver the accusation.

The person to take over from me to keep our lovely paths clean, especially the Church Yard, will have to walk the paths regularly with a water proof spray can or a collection of garden labels with appropriate slogans to make dog owners aware that the residents of Preston (who perhaps do not own or like dogs) do not put up with visitors' dogs fouling the public footpaths. Dog walkers on their mobile phones are not exempt from 'picking up'.

Thinking up slogans for the plastic signs which are placed next to the mess can be fun to invent. Such as 'We know where you live'. Another, 'Your dog is ill'. This just makes dog walkers aware they are leaving evidence which the villagers will not put up with. The dog walkers are not the only people to use the paths. Leaving dog poo on the road or foot paths alongside the road is not acceptable. Nothing worse then getting excrement onto pram or push chair wheels.

One person thought I was a janitor for the village! Some people deliberately tread into the pile to make it unnoticeable? Eight separate piles of poo were left 6 feet away from the dog bin even after having been sprayed! The worst behaviour of all is when dog walkers collect their dog's poo, proceed in chucking the plastic bag with the contents into the bushes where it remains swinging in the branches for years. Luckily this has not happened here for quite a while.

I have found with over 15 years' experience walking in Preston, the owners of dogs on leads are just as like to leave mess as owners who walk freely. It is an owner's attitude problem. Some people just do not care especially if they do not live in the village. This is why it is so important to inform newbies that the footpaths have to be kept clean. You just subtly bring the subject up in conversation.

It is very depressing when you walk the paths regularly to keep coming across dog poo. This is why I want to ask for someone else to take over the task of Dog Poo Patrol in Preston. The messes are probably caused by new walkers coming from Cirencester and the new housing estate opposite Tesco. There is a foot path which takes walkers from Tesco and Kingshill which brings them to the back of the Church in Preston. Whoever takes over from me will have to tactfully approach the newbies, welcome them to the Preston foot paths but insist on respecting the Church yard by keeping dogs on the lead. At all times 'pick up' and explain where the dog poo bins are situated. Most people are very aware of the dog poo problem in all public places and understand the predicament we are in now the Preston footpaths are more used by the newbies.

Liz Hamey