Ten years on: changes in thinking, policy and practice
People & dogs in the outdoors

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My changes in 30 years
- Human health
- Land & access management
- Psychology of people & pets

Specialist in dogs and people in the outdoors

10 years on… #1

Dog walking demographics

Even more robust UK data
- 26% of homes have a dog
- Dog on half of all outdoor visits
- 8.5 million dogs: 10%↑ on 2010
- 7,000 assistance dogs helping people in ever-more ways
- Significant mental & physical health benefits for all

There’s still problems too

“Chased my sheep”
“Raided our picnic”
“Disturbed local wildlife”
“Left poo on the path”

But instead of division and conflict

Or
Being less binary: a place for all

10 years on...

Happy, healthy, hassle-free dog walks

10 more years of data: what dog walkers seek
- To feel welcome and safe
- Daily dog walks: up to one hour, around 2.6km long
- 85% seek off-lead exercise
- Access close to home
- Avoid conflict when given an informed choice
- Restrictions balanced by accessible alternatives

US style “dog parks” concept doesn’t fit here

The best management ethos now

Reducing negative impacts ↔ Promoting the benefits

Happy, healthy, hassle-free dog walks

10 years on...

Dogs pose biggest threat to wildlife

A more informed approach
A Rural Myth now recognised

English Nature 2004

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<tr>
<th>Reasons for unfavourable condition on SSSIs (as at 30/09/03)</th>
<th>Public access: 3%</th>
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<td>Overgrazing</td>
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<td>Moor burning</td>
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<td>Lack of appropriate ditch management</td>
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<td>Diffuse pollution</td>
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<td>Inappropriate coastal management</td>
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Less science abuse in academic press

Psychology Today

True Fact: Dog-Walking Helps Dogs But Harms Birds

The good news and bad news about dog-walking

Banks and Bryant 2007

2017 APGAW sheep worrying investigation

- Public access most often not the cause
- A role for all to do things differently
- Highlights the need for interventions built on evidence

Unaccompanied dogs

Statistics from North Wales and North Yorkshire police and anecdotal evidence from Sheepwatch UK indicate that two-thirds of the attacks on livestock were from dogs who had escaped from the house or garden.

Simply leaving signs up for weeks at a time when there is no livestock encourages disregard by owners who see the signs as irrelevant and all too frequently misleading. This in turn reduces the compliance with the warning, (which may simply no longer be noticed) and thus increases the likelihood of incidents.

10 years on... #4

Legal powers: new ones

- For everyone (E&W), Public Spaces Protection Orders eg dog bans, fouling; leads etc
- For individuals (E&W), Community Protection Notices: leads, training, fences etc
- For individuals (Scotland), Dog Control Notices: leads, training, fences, etc
- Equality Act 2010 (E,W&S)

The Council will also now reimburse 44 other people who were fined under the Order which was shown to be failing to comply with regulations.

10 years on... #5

Displacement is a thing

Problem solved... ?

Just use the law, say “no” and if by magic...

Only saying “no” is ineffective because:

- 72% people will still walk their dogs as much
- 66% people will drive elsewhere
- 14% dog walkers unable / unwilling to go elsewhere
- It can displace dog walking to farmland and wildlife sites
- It can discriminate against assistance dog users
Faced with local restrictions or access loss, dog walkers have 4 options on a given site:

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

Access planning is needed to avoid simply increasing and displacing conflict.
10 years on… #7

Planning-out conflict from the start

- “Where are new residents going to walk their dogs?”
- Banning dogs from new homes doesn’t work
- So provide safe, nearby, one hour, off-lead dog walks
- 20 acres per 1,000 people = 1 acre per 5 dogs.
- Developer funded: £7k/home
- Underpinned by EU law

www.dogfriendlyhousing.org.uk

Former 46 acre farm: new dog-friendly greenspace

Enhancing greenspace: fencing against roads

10 years on… #8

The Dog Walking Code

Communicate outcomes

Launched 2015
www.dogwalkingcode.org.uk

This is general advice for dog walkers developed with input from:
The Dog Walking Code

For safe and happy walks with your dog, and to avoid causing problems for others:

1. Always bag and bin your dog’s poo whenever you are. You can use any public waste bin or your bin at home.
2. Prevent your dog from approaching horse riders, cyclists, or other people and their dogs uninvited.
3. You do not let your dog off the lead unless you keep it in sight and close enough to come back to you on command.

More enlightened about poo

- Fouling less in urban areas but still no single magic bullet
- Dual-use bins more apparent
- Better, greener disposal choices
- Moving bins to where needed
- It’s difficult to remove bins
- Complex reasons for non-compliance, esp. rural areas
- Complaints can rise as problem numerically decreases
- Peer pressure a key tool

10 years on... #9

Poo still happens

10 years on... #10

Partnerships are vital

One Health: interdependency

Human health  Environment health  Animal health

One Health Initiative

Our Four Legged Friends

Horse riders and dog walkers often visit this forest.

- Keep your dog calm, quiet and of your side around horses.
- Make sure you and your dog can always be seen.

Dog walkers, please

- Keep your dog calm, quiet and of your side around horses.
- Make sure you and your dog can always be seen.

Horse riders, please

- Slow down to a walk when passing dogs and walkers.
- Make sure dog walkers can see you approaching.

A startled horse may injure itself and any people or dogs nearby.
2017 Quality Meat Scotland Sheep Worrying Video

To improve the next 10 years

- Make it easier to do the right thing
- Promote the good, while reducing the bad
- Manage the demand: don’t try to suppress it
- Use outcomes to inform language & interventions
- Plan for dogs in new housing
- Collaborate across sectors