



Dogs and the countryside

LAF National Conference (South)
4 February 2014

Outline of workshop



- What do we know about dog walkers ?
 - MENE survey main messages
- Identifying the issues dogs present to the work of LAFs
 - working groups exercise
- Identifying opportunities to tackle some of the issues
 - feeding this into the dog advice and ongoing promotion
- Case study – Dorset Dogs

What do we know about dog walkers ?



- 25% households have a dog (8 - 10 million dogs)
- Latest MENE survey shows:
 - 2.85bn visits to the natural environment includes 1.4bn taken with a dog
 - 49-50% of all visits show this level of use
 - Most visits taken close to home -
 - 49% less than 1 mile from home
 - 27% 1-2 miles from home
 - 14% 3-5 miles
 - 10% over 5 miles

Benefits of dog ownership



- Companionship, joy and fun
- Regular exercise provides for physical and spiritual well-being – improves the health of the nation
- Feedback on path conditions and standards, eyes and ears in the countryside
- Provides social interest groups
- Assistance dogs increase mobility and social interaction for owners across a range of disabilities

Understanding dog walkers



- Dog walkers go to safe areas for **off-lead** exercise
- Dog walkers want relaxed, trouble free enjoyment
- Often do not know the problems their dog can cause – may not be obvious what impact the dog has had eg disturbing feeding birds
- Will assume behaviours are ok if they see other dog walkers doing it

Feedback from you...



- Identify issues dogs and dog walkers present for LAFs
 - opportunities and
 - challenges
- Feedback from each group
- Prioritise the top 3 with sticky dot voting

Tackling the issues - Dorset Dogs



Other approaches



Hampshire Countryside Service

- <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/dogs>

Paws on Dartmoor

- www.dartmoor.gov.uk/dogs

Dorset Dogs

- www.dorsetdogs.org.uk

Forestry Commission

- www.forestry.gov.uk/england-dogs

Natural England

- www.naturalengland.org.uk/countrysidecode