

- Managing access with dogs to reduce impacts on land management
- Information sheets
- Advice and useful links

## Taking the Lead

# Case studies

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### Introduction



This series of case studies has been produced to provide practical examples of tried and tested techniques for dealing with dog-related access issues at local level and encouraging responsible dog walking.

Focusing specifically on the practicalities, successes and shortcomings of different approaches, the case studies include pointers about relevance to other sites where a similar approach might be appropriate. In researching these case studies it became clear that each location has its own specific set of circumstances and it should therefore be stressed that this document provides illustrative examples which should not be regarded as models to be applied in all other apparently similar situations.

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**Case study 1**

**Atholl Estates**

Location	Blair Atholl, Perthshire
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sheep worrying and disturbance to livestock, particularly during lambing</li> <li>- Dogs chasing and killing pheasants</li> <li>- Wildlife disturbance</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dogs welcome leaflet</li> <li>- Seasonal site specific signage</li> <li>- Free dog poo bags and carefully sited bins</li> </ul>
Background	<p>Making visitors feel welcome is fundamental to the economic contribution which tourism makes to Atholl Estates. Significant efforts are therefore made to encourage and manage public access as positively as possible. This includes provision of information to help walkers, cyclists and horse-riders plan their visit to achieve what they want without conflicting with stalking, grouse shooting or other commercial activities. Many visitors come with dogs, which has at times resulted in problems.</p>



Location	Blair Atholl, Perthshire
What's happened	<p>In line with their general positive approach to access management, and inspired by the head ranger, the estate's policy is positive reinforcement of responsible access rather than confrontation or unnecessarily restrictive requests. The estate's "Dogs welcome" leaflet endorses this approach, aiming to help visitors get the most from their visit by identifying suitable walks of different lengths, depending on dog walkers' individual interests and whether they want to allow their dogs off-lead. The leaflet also includes summary guidance from the Scottish Outdoor Access Code on responsible dog walking. Leaflets are distributed at the information centre, and a copy is given to all camp site visitors with dogs. Free dog poo bags and strategically located dedicated dog waste bins are provided in the most intensively used parts of the estate closest to the caravan park. Seasonal signage is erected to identify capercaillie nesting areas where dogs are required to be kept at heel, preferably on a short lead. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) signage templates, such as the "Dotty Dog" sign <a href="http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Access-management-guidance/promotional-campaigns">http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Access-management-guidance/promotional-campaigns</a>, have also been used to endorse the principles of responsible dog walking, with the addition of a locally specific message such as the problems of sheep worrying in Glen Tilt.</p>
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance with requests to keep dogs under control in specific areas is far higher if dogs are not expected to be kept on-lead all the time.</li> <li>- Leaflets need to be inviting and useful to dog owners, rather than setting down rules.</li> <li>- Justifiable reasons as to why dogs need to be kept on-lead, in a defined area, for a defined period, command more respect than demands to keep dogs on-lead at all times.</li> <li>- A single, crystal clear, locally specific message on a sign represented or endorsed by a picture is far more effective than a range of competing written messages.</li> <li>- Discrete signs don't work, particularly on wide tracks. Signs need to be conspicuous and easily readable to maximise the likelihood of dog walkers seeing them.</li> </ul>
Application elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Handing out leaflets to visiting dog walkers is a good way of getting messages through on camp sites, where there is formal parking provision, or at an information centre.</li> <li>- On sites with less direct contact with visitors, map boards could be used to differentiate dog-welcome and sensitive areas but information usually needs reinforcing on-site at transition between areas.</li> <li>- Locally appropriate seasonal signage can be used on any site.</li> </ul>

Location	Blair Atholl, Perthshire
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making dog walkers feel welcome and highlighting where dogs can run off-lead encourages responsible behaviour.</li> <li>- Focusing efforts on key times of year when dog related access issues are a greater concern is more effective than year-round campaigns.</li> <li>- Signs to inform dog walkers of the end of defined areas where dogs need to be kept on a lead or close at heel are equally important as signs at the beginning.</li> <li>- Branding by the National Park or other authority confirms wider approval of signs, but a personal touch and locally specific message is more effective than prolific national or regional use of the same sign.</li> <li>- Use issue-specific signs (e.g. where sheep worrying is a problem) without diluting the message with other Access Code messages about risk of disturbance to game.</li> </ul>







## Case study 2 Brahan Estate

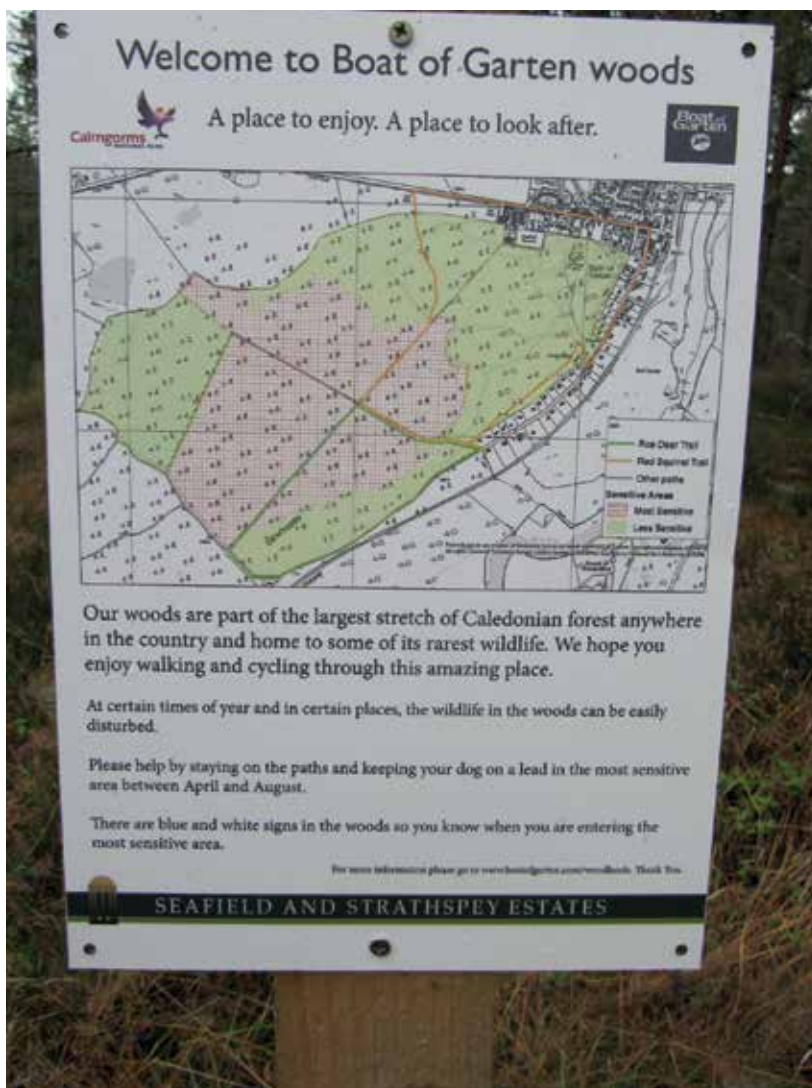
Location	Maryburgh, near Dingwall, Highlands
Dog related access issues	– Disturbance to wildlife and commercial game enterprises
Mechanisms adopted	– Identification of suitable off-lead areas
Background	Brahan Estate is typical of many others in Scotland in combining traditional enterprises such as farming and forestry with tourism and leisure activities including mountain biking, shooting, fishing, holiday cottages and caravan pitches. The estate encourages visitors to bring their dogs with them on holiday. It also attracts high levels of local access from the neighbouring village of Maryburgh, including many dog walkers.
What's happened	To minimise potential conflict between livestock, shooting or other enterprises, the estate has identified two preferred areas which are promoted for dog walking: a large area of woodland which wraps around the west side of Maryburgh, and a 50 acre island in the River Conon within one mile of the village, to which there is unrestricted public vehicular access via a private estate track. The island is deliberately cropped rather than grazed so that dogs can run free without risk of livestock disturbance. Elsewhere on the estate, signs have been erected at key access points reinforcing the need to keep dogs on-lead or under control to avoid disturbing wildlife.
Lessons learned	– Positive access provision encouraging dog walkers to use less sensitive areas works far better than trying to exclude dogs from sensitive areas.
Application elsewhere	– This approach is equally relevant to farms or crofts of any size as it is to large estates. – Selection of suitable off-lead areas should take account of wildlife interest as well as risk of disturbance to game, livestock and crops and other recreational users.
Keys to success	– Areas in which off-lead dog access is promoted need to be readily accessible to dog walkers, e.g. on the edge of village or with good parking provision. – Natural barriers such as rivers are ideal to contain dogs off-lead. Elsewhere, fencing may be necessary to avoid conflict between dogs and livestock, crops, wildlife or game where off-lead areas merge into sensitive areas. – Effective communication with local dog walkers and visitors is essential so that they are aware of areas particularly suitable for off-lead dogs.

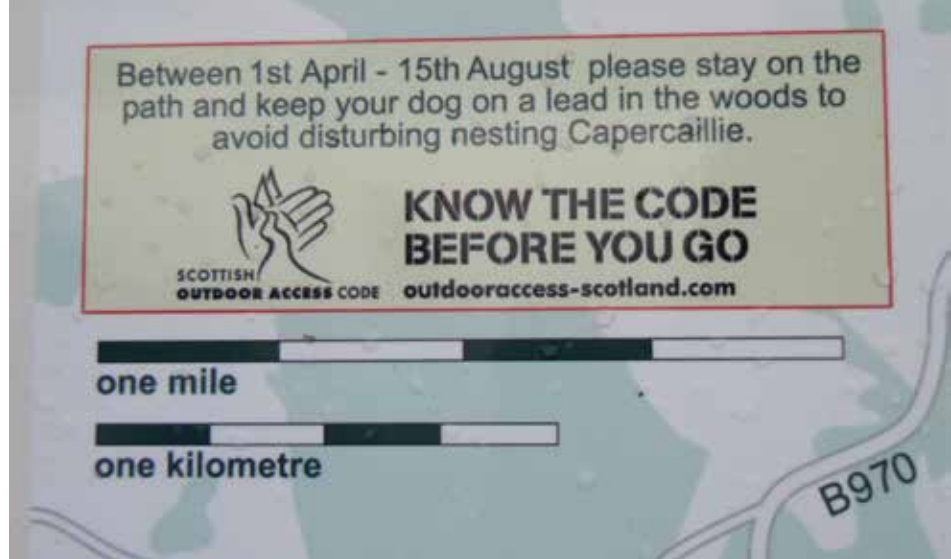


### Case study 3 Boat of Garten Wood

Location	Boat of Garten, Highlands
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disturbance to capercaillie and other breeding birds</li> <li>- Dog fouling</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part-time ranger</li> <li>- Education campaign re. capercaillie</li> <li>- Seasonal site specific signage</li> <li>- Spraying dog poo with fluorescent paint</li> <li>- Strategically located dedicated dog waste bins</li> </ul>
Background	<p>The woodland which fringes Boat of Garten is a much valued resource for the wildlife habitat it provides, and by local people as an enjoyable place to walk on a daily basis. The wood is also popular with visitors to the area. Application for housing development in a small part of the wood has concentrated attention on its significance for capercaillie, and the impact of dogs running around in the most sensitive nesting areas during the capercaillie breeding season.</p>
What's happened	<p>With financial support from Cairngorms National Park Authority, the local community organisation appointed a recreational ranger 18 hours per week during the main capercaillie breeding season (April to August) whose main role was to modify behaviour of dog walkers to reduce adverse impact on capercaillie. Initially the ranger met with some resistance by local dog walkers averse to the idea of the wood being patrolled, but by adopting a positive approach and winning people's trust, the ranger was soon accepted as a friend. Large plywood cut-outs of capercaillie silhouettes were erected at key locations to remind people why dogs need to be kept on leads, even if the birds themselves were rarely seen. Local school children were involved in sculpting a capercaillie from wood gathered on site, which helps raise awareness and reminds dog walkers why responsible behaviour is important. Articles in the local press and community newsletters coupled with a blog highlighting the wood's national significance for capercaillie were used to raise awareness of the need for responsible dog walking, and to encourage responsible dog walkers to lead by example. Three litter picks have been organised over the season, together with a "poo spraying" exercise with fluorescent paint to highlight the extent of fouling issues.</p> <p>Further details of this case study are available in the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Commissioned Report number 634 "Visitor behaviour in sensitive woodland habitats – repeat photographic survey at Boat of Garten Woods".</p>

Location	Boat of Garten, Highlands
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitors are far more likely to read and comply with signs, whereas many local people saw the wood as their own, even though it is privately owned.</li> <li>- Explaining why dogs need to be kept on-lead, in a defined area, for a defined period, commands more respect than demands to keep dogs on-lead at all times.</li> <li>- Small, discrete, generic signs are easily missed and ignored, particularly on wide tracks. Signs need to be conspicuous and easily readable to maximise the likelihood of dog walkers seeing them.</li> <li>- Some dog walkers persistently hang used dog waste bags in trees immediately after use instead of carrying to bins at the edge of the wood.</li> <li>- Dog waste bags, like litter, are a self-perpetuating problem: if not picked up, more will follow.</li> </ul>
Application elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This approach was developed jointly between Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the local community in line with recommendations in the National Access Forum's guidance on Managing access with dogs to safeguard breeding birds. Although few sites will be able to justify employing a ranger, many of the ideas and lessons learned can be adapted for use elsewhere.</li> </ul>





Location	Boat of Garten, Highlands
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Path leaflet for all the trails around Boat of Garten includes specific mention of need to keep dogs on a short lead in woods where capercaillie nest during the breeding season.</li> <li>- Highlighting the wood's national claim to fame as having the highest density of capercaillie per hectare in the UK significantly increased local interest and responsible behaviour.</li> <li>- Focusing efforts on key times of year when dog-related access issues are a greater concern is more effective than year-round campaigns.</li> <li>- Branding signs with the community council's name makes them more locally relevant and increases chance of local buy-in.</li> <li>- Ensuring signs are easily legible and located at key entry points is essential to people reading them.</li> <li>- Information needs to be targeted where dog walkers are most likely to see it e.g. erecting a sign next to the dog tie-up point outside the post office explaining capercaillie sensitivity to disturbance and the importance of responsible dog walking.</li> </ul>







## Case study 4 Denny Commercial Dog Walkers

Location	Denny, near Falkirk, Central Scotland
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Shortage of appropriate places to let dogs off-lead without conflict with other recreational users or dog walkers</li> <li>– Dog fouling</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Field rented by commercial dog walkers for exercising dogs</li> </ul>
Background	<p>Increasingly frustrated by problems finding suitable places to exercise dogs off-lead, two enterprising commercial dog walkers (Let's Go for Walkies and It's All About the Dogs) approached various landowners to explore alternative options. After extensive enquiries, Callendar Estates identified a suitable 2 acre grass field with good road access on which the previous lease had expired, which had not been grazed or managed for several years. The lack of water supply and isolation of the field from other parts of the estate following motorway construction limited other commercial options in terms of letting the field.</p>
What's happened	<p>After reaching mutual agreement about the terms of the tenancy, the estate arranged for the field to be mown and deer fenced to secure the perimeter for dogs of all shapes and sizes. Preparing the site also involved the dog walkers clearing some of the densest patches of brambles, scrub and fallen branches.</p> <p>The two commercial dog walkers invited a third professional dog groomer friend to share use of the field with them. Splitting the costs and responsibilities between three makes it more affordable and less of a concern if any of their circumstances change in future. Come wind, rain or shine, they each take a pack of dogs to the field daily, often coinciding visits to make it more sociable for themselves and the dogs. Some of the dogs never have opportunity to run free elsewhere, and all clearly revel in the space, freedom, chance to chase balls or simply enjoy a good sniff.</p> <p>The dog walkers were already members of the Falkirk Green Dog Walkers Scheme and suggested including their pledge to always clean up after their dogs as part of the tenancy agreement, so there is no issue with fouling. The dog walkers are responsible for maintaining the field, which so far they have done by regular hand mowing.</p>

Location	Denny, near Falkirk, Central Scotland
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A safely fenced bespoke facility gives the dog walkers complete peace of mind and allows them to safely exercise and socialise numerous dogs off-lead simultaneously which appeals to potential clients and helps attract extra business for the commercial dog walkers.</li> <li>– Area needs to be large enough to allow sufficient space but 10 acre field offered by another landowner was too big to manage, or to keep a close watch on numerous dogs running loose.</li> <li>– Most commercial dog walkers would be unable to afford the capital outlay of securely fencing a field, and many would be reluctant to do so for a short rental or lease.</li> <li>– A viable low-cost means of regular grass mowing needs to be factored into the arrangement.</li> </ul>
Application elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This type of arrangement works well for odd parcels of land of limited commercial value, but the rent which commercial dog walkers are likely to be able to afford will not necessarily match that which might be expected for good quality agricultural land.</li> <li>– Suitable sites need to be within easy reach of commercial (or other) dog walkers, ideally with good parking.</li> <li>– Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, non-motorised users enjoy a right of responsible access to most land, and access rights therefore continue to apply to such areas. To avoid any conflict, this kind of approach is best suited to fields or other land without a past history of public access and where there is little or no demand for access by others.</li> </ul>
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Written legal agreement is essential to protect the interests of both the owner and dog walker(s).</li> <li>– Establishing a single contact/tenant is often easier for the landowner than maintaining communication with several interested parties.</li> <li>– 5 year fixed short term tenancy provides sufficient commitment for dog walkers without the complications or restrictions for the landowner of an agricultural tenancy.</li> <li>– Secure fencing is essential.</li> <li>– Suitable off-road parking space for dog walkers' vans with direct access to the site is an important consideration.</li> <li>– Landowners actively facilitating commercial activity are advised to check with their insurance company regarding any potential legal liability.</li> <li>– Because access rights will normally apply to such areas, any charges should relate to services provided by the land manager such as vehicle access, fencing or mowing.</li> </ul>





## Case study 5 Invercauld Estate

Location	Invercauld, near Braemar
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fouling on paths</li> <li>– Disturbance to wildlife and game</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Flick it with a stick</li> <li>– Seasonal signs on gates re: ground nesting birds</li> <li>– Talking with visitors</li> </ul>
Background	<p>Although rural and relatively remote, Invercauld Estate's stunning location between Balmoral and Braemar attracts relatively high numbers of visiting walkers, perhaps one third of whom are accompanied by dogs. Most use well waymarked paths and tracks.</p>
What's happened	<p>Invercauld Estate has erected signs at the main car park encouraging dog walkers to flick dog faeces off paths and tracks into adjacent undergrowth, where it quickly degrades, helped partly by the break-up from the flicking action. This approach was inspired by a cartoon approach initially adopted in Delamere Forest, Cheshire, as part of a Forestry Commission/Kennel Club partnership project.</p> <p>Recognising that dog walkers want somewhere to let their dogs off-lead and that most will behave responsibly if they understand why, the estate uses seasonal signs on gates requesting dogs be kept on-lead only when and where ground nesting birds are most vulnerable. This message is reinforced by general guidance at the main car park, and through informal friendly conversation when estate staff meet dog walkers.</p>
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Humorous cartoon approach encourages positive response to fouling.</li> <li>– Most dog walkers respond to positive friendly approach of estate by keeping dogs under control.</li> <li>– Flick it approach can work well in keeping paths and tracks free of fouling and can be more pragmatic than asking people to bag it and bin it away from areas of concentrated fouling and provision of bins.</li> <li>– In theory avoids problems of dog walkers littering the estate with doggy bags – but some dog walkers can be confused as to whether they should pick up or flick.</li> </ul>

Location	Invercauld, near Braemar
Application elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cheap and easy to implement without resource implications of emptying bins.</li> <li>- Pragmatic approach for low pressure rural sites where bins are impractical and where a “bag it and bin it” approach can create problems with dog walkers leaving used bags alongside paths.</li> </ul>
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Depends on dog walkers understanding when and where they are expected to pick up after dogs, and where they could flick it with a stick.</li> </ul>



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## Case study 6 Laggan Farms

Location	Kilmichael, Argyll
Dog related access issues	– Disturbance to grazing livestock
Mechanisms adopted	– Fencing path to scheduled historic monuments to physically separate visitors from livestock
Background	Promotion on the web and in historical guides attracts a large number of national and international visitors to standing stones and other archaeological features on the farm. Visitors walking through fields in which there are grazing livestock, particularly visitors with dogs, have created increasing problems with disturbance to livestock, especially in spring when mis-mothering problems arise from sheep separated from their lambs.
What's happened	Historic Scotland agreed to pay for erection of stockproof fencing, following an agreed line around the edge of the field linking the main access point and standing stones. Historic Scotland are responsible for maintaining both the fence and the path.
Lessons learned	– Creating a fenced path where dogs are physically separated from sheep allows visitors to the monument year-round access without any worry for the farmer.
Application elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fencing can be an effective way of managing dog access issues on well used paths which follow a distinct line, and can also help address liability issues associated with cattle grazing, but should not unduly restrict public access rights.</li> <li>– Any alternative path or access provision needs to provide at least the same facility as the existing route (e.g. without undue extra length, gradient, muddy or difficult ground) and take account of all types of user rather than just walkers.</li> </ul>
Keys to success	– Recognising where people want to go and making it easier for them to get there is essential to dealing with all access issues.



## Case study 7 Meigle Farm

Location	Clovenfords, by Galashiels, Scottish Borders
Dog related access issues	– Dog fouling in a hay crop and along the field margin
Mechanisms adopted	– Creation of alternative path through area of adjacent unproductive woodland where dogs can be allowed off-lead
Background	The 'Green Road' or 'Velvet Path' which runs through Meigle Farm has a long history of public use, originally as a coach road and more recently as a link for walkers between Clovenfords and the small hamlet of Caddonfoot several miles to the south. For many years this caused no problems, but local housing development led to a significant increase in the number of people coming home from work and letting their dogs loose immediately through the gate of the first field they came to. When asked to clear up after their dogs, owners deposited tied nappy sacks along the edge of the field or hung them from adjacent trees like Christmas decorations.
What's happened	Recognising that a different approach was needed, in 2003 the owners of Meigle Farm started to develop a new alternative path through a strip of parallel woodland, but their attempts to cut a path through the undergrowth were overtaken by pressure of farm work. The local authority access officer suggested involvement of the Criminal Services Team who cleared scrub, built steps and finished off the path. The only cost to the farmer was labour and machinery involved in the initial felling and path clearance.

Location	Clovenfords, by Galashiels, Scottish Borders
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trying to stop people using a path doesn't usually work unless you provide a suitable alternative, particularly where the path has a long history of past use.</li> <li>- Recognising and responding to dog walkers' needs is essential to dealing with the issues.</li> <li>- A bit of lateral thinking can lead to a more mutually acceptable alternative solution than frustrated attempts to deal with a problem.</li> <li>- Promoting access away from productively managed land reduces scope for conflict.</li> </ul>
Application elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alternative path development depends on availability of suitable land.</li> <li>- Any alternative path or access provision needs to provide at least the same facility as the existing route (e.g. without undue extra length, gradient, muddy or difficult ground) and take account of all types of user rather than just walkers.</li> </ul>
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most dog walkers will be only too pleased to use alternative paths which provide off-lead access with dogs.</li> <li>- Clear waymarking to encourage use of the new route is essential.</li> <li>- Signs may be necessary as reminders where dogs need to be brought back under control.</li> <li>- Involving the local community and access officer can help address access problems and develop worthwhile new opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside at little or no cost to the farm.</li> </ul>





## Case study 8 Rothiemurchus Estate

Location	Rothiemurchus, near Aviemore, Scottish Highlands
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dog fouling on popular paths</li> <li>– Disturbance to breeding birds and other wildlife, particularly protected species such as capercaillie</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fenced off-lead dog exercise areas</li> <li>– Seasonal signage</li> <li>– Free dog poo bags</li> <li>– Strategically located bins</li> <li>– Local media coverage</li> </ul>
Background	<p>The integral relationship between tourism, recreation, biodiversity and sustainable management at Rothiemurchus goes back many hundreds of years. The estate prides itself on a longstanding culture of innovation, drawing on best practice solutions from around the globe to help the hundreds of thousands of visitors attracted here annually make the most of their visit with minimal impact on the landscape and wildlife which are core to the overall attraction.</p>
What's happened	<p>Encouraging responsible dog walking is only one part of a very positive, planned approach to overall visitor management at Rothiemurchus. The overall ethos is fostering the basic principle of “we care, you care”. Practical demonstration of this in respect of dog walking includes fenced dog exercise/toilet areas with free poo-bag dispensers and dedicated dog waste bins at the two main car parks (Loch an Eilean and Rothiemurchus information centre). As the Cairngorms National Park Authority already produce a responsible dog walking leaflet, Rothiemurchus took a conscious decision not to produce their own version, focusing instead on reinforcement of responsible behaviour through seasonal signage restricted to capercaillie breeding areas specifying that dogs must be kept on a short lead. Problems with dog-poo bags being deposited on fences have been tackled by an article in the community newsletter.</p>





Location	Rothiemurchus, near Aviemore, Scottish Highlands
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dog walkers will only use exercise areas if they are clearly signed.</li> <li>– Most dogs will “empty” within a relatively short distance of parking areas but people will not necessarily return to bins at the start of a path so bins need to be located accordingly and emptied regularly.</li> <li>– Litter picking and maintenance is essential to foster respect amongst visitors.</li> <li>– Most visitors want to experience things themselves rather than be told, so not everyone will go in the visitor centre.</li> <li>– Return visitors (approx. 80% of visitors to Rothiemurchus) are unlikely to pick up leaflets or to look more than once at permanent signage.</li> <li>– The phrase “close control” means little to many dog walkers.</li> </ul>
Application to other sites	Many of the approaches adopted by Rothiemurchus are equally relevant to other sites.
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Providing information at the stage when people are planning their visit is essential to persuading all visitors to behave responsibly.</li> <li>– Estate branding and good quality signs reinforce authority of messages.</li> <li>– Dog walkers need to be clear that any bin will do for bagged dog waste.</li> <li>– Dog walkers need to be clear whether dogs are allowed off-lead and whether they are expected to clear up after their dogs in fenced dog exercise areas.</li> <li>– Pictures on signs requesting dogs be kept on lead in capercaillie sensitive areas makes it immediately relevant to dog walkers.</li> </ul>

### Article from local newsletter

It is Christmas Eve in the woodsman's hut and a cruel frost rimes the surrounding pine trees. The woodsman has fallen on hard times and there is no prospect of a proper Christmas dinner or presents for the children. Three ragged little mites squat by the fire, supping listlessly from bowls of watery gruel.

Suddenly, the door of the hut bursts open and in strides the woodsman, a bulging hessian sack slung over his lean shoulder His eyes are alight with joy.

“Fear not, kiddiewinks,” he cries, “for Christmas is truly come!” He opens the sack and tips a pile of carefully tied plastic bags and packages on to the rough deal table. “Santa's elves have been everywhere with presents for us! Many of these I found hanging from trees and bushes, some from fences, others hidden carefully in drystone walls, still more cast down by the path.”

The childrens' eyes open wide with wonder as he shares out the packages. What goodies might they contain? Sweets, a small toy, plum duff, fruit, nuts....?

Trembling fingers untie the first bag to reveal ..... dog poo. Same for the second and third. Every last bag and package yields the same grim results. Bitter tears trickle down the childrens' pinched cheeks and a pall of utter desolation settles over the lonely hut.

Rothiemurchus rangers have found that Santa's little elves are active all year round. Every patrol and foray into the forest brings a similar sad harvest of poo-filled plastic bags. We provide dog poo bags and bins at Inverdrue and Loch an Eilein, but seem to have generated an unexpected management conundrum. We may have to return to asking our dog walking visitors to revert to flicking poo off the path with a stick instead of popping it into a bag and turning the result into an unwanted 'decoration'.



## Case study 9 Stirling Council on-farm signage

Location	Balfron, Stirlingshire
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fouling in livestock fields leading to disease problems in cattle</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Locally specific signs highlighting issues, adapted from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) sign template</li> <li>– Awareness raising events in local country park to promote responsible dog walking</li> </ul>
Background	<p>Concerned about irresponsible behaviour and the increasing number of dog walkers, particularly commercial dog walkers, allowing dogs to foul in fields with grazing cattle, a farmer contacted Stirling Council access staff to ask for help. The significance of fouling problems was reinforced when tests on an aborted cattle foetus revealed evidence of neosporosis, which can be carried in dog faeces. The farmer was invited to present his problems for discussion by Stirling Local Access Forum, who agreed to trial posters at the entrance to the fields concerned.</p>
What's happened	<p>The pre-prepared "Dotty" dog poster downloadable from the SNH website provided the basis for signs, to which Stirling Council added a locally specific message as a newsflash alerting dog walkers to the neosporosis risks associated with dog waste and the resultant cattle losses on the farm in question. Various versions of the wording were considered and discussed with the farmer before coming up with the final, pictured below, which was felt to be informative and noticeable without being too hard-hitting. Stirling Council also added a banner across the base in words and pictures reminding dog walkers of the action required to address the issue i.e. bag it, tie it, bin it. The posters were then printed and laminated in-house by Stirling Council and either put up by access staff or distributed to farmers for them to put up at the entrance to the fields with specific problems. Access staff also organised a series of doggy events at Mugdock Country Park, including information about the interaction of dogs and livestock and associated risks for livestock, dogs and walkers. The response was very positive, with an immediate increase in the number of dog walkers picking up after their dogs, and consequent reduction in fouling in the fields to which the signs related.</p>

Location	Balfroun, Stirlingshire
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Many dog walkers are unaware of the problems which can result from dog fouling.</li> <li>– Effective locally specific signage can have an immediate impact at minimal cost.</li> <li>– Highlighting key facts strengthens the message.</li> <li>– The locally specific message relating to cattle is diluted by more general Access Code guidance on the generic template re: planted fields which is irrelevant to this site.</li> <li>– Dog walkers need to be educated to put bags in bins rather than drop them in the field, hang them on the fence or leave them at the gate.</li> <li>– The focus on reducing fouling has not necessarily resolved issues with off-lead dogs disturbing cattle and worrying sheep.</li> </ul>
Application elsewhere	<p>Farmers and land managers can easily download and adapt the free signage templates from the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) website to include their own site specific message (but note comments above re: adaptation to delete more general guidance irrelevant to the site in question). Most access authorities are also happy to supply or advise on appropriate wording for signs on request.</p>
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Alert dog walkers to the risks associated with dog fouling or irresponsible behaviour but don't alienate them by criticism.</li> <li>– Highlight the main facts but keep the message short.</li> <li>– Make the message specific to the site.</li> <li>– Replace or remove signs before they become tatty.</li> </ul>



**YOUR DOG DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER. MAKE SURE YOU DO.**

**PLANTED FIELDS.** Avoid taking your dog into fruit and vegetable fields unless there is a clear path.

**LIVESTOCK.** Keep your dog on a short lead around livestock and during bird breeding season (usually April-July). Never let it worry or attack livestock or disturb nesting birds.

**CATTLE.** Keep yourself and your dog at a safe distance as cattle can act aggressively.

**DOG WASTE.** Pick up and dispose of carefully.

**KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO**  
[www.scotlandscotland.com](http://www.scotlandscotland.com)

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

**NEWSFLASH**

**FACT:** Dog waste can carry neosporosis!

**RESULT:** 6 cows aborted on this farm this year!

**BAG IT, TIE IT, BIN IT**

Keep Britain Tidy

[www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org)



## Case study 10 Wilsontown Ironworks

Location	Wilsontown, near Forth, South Lanarkshire
Dog related access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dog fouling</li> <li>– Interaction of dog walkers and other recreational users</li> </ul>
Mechanisms adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Signage</li> <li>– Provision of strategically located dog poo bins</li> <li>– Luminous spraying of dog poo</li> <li>– Positive reinforcement of responsible dog walking</li> <li>– Path improvement, interpretation and development of entrance features</li> </ul>
Background	<p>On the edge of a large village on the border between South Lanarkshire and West Lothian, in an area where most recreation opportunities are in woodland and forestry, the former mine workings and forestry plantation at Wilsontown have for many years provided a valuable recreational resource for local people to walk, cycle and ride. Community involvement in path improvement works and interpretation of the historical interest of the site has encouraged increased use of the path network, particularly by dog walkers but also by many others. As well as those walking daily from the village, people living within an average radius of 5 miles visit with their dogs, some several times a day. Commercial dog walkers also now use the site. The resultant increase in dog fouling, particularly within 100 m of the car parking areas and main access points, is unpleasant for everyone.</p>
What's happened	<p>Prompted by the issues dog fouling presented when mowing path verges, woodland wardens erected “bag it and bin it” signs encouraging people to use dedicated dog waste bins at key entry points, with limited success. Luminous paint was then used to highlight the extent of the dog fouling issue, which attracted some complaints from non-dog walkers who felt it further detracted from their enjoyment of the paths. Signs were subsequently erected explaining that Forestry Commission, as landowners, were trying to make the paths as friendly as possible and asking for everyone’s help encouraged more people to pick up after their dogs, but resulted in a proliferation of discarded poo bags, which were even more of a problem than the fouling. Forestry Commission’s community forester worked on a “poo tree” project with local children to get them to persuade their families to clear up after their dogs. “There’s no such thing as a poo bag fairy” posters were then erected at key entry points, which helped until one of the council maintained dedicated dog-poo bins was removed. New general waste bins have now been installed at the two main entrances, emptied by the council.</p>



Location	Wilsontown, near Forth, South Lanarkshire
What's happened	Over and above these campaigns, woodland wardens and community rangers positively reinforce messages by talking with people whenever they are out on site. "One day I met a commercial dog walker who I knew was repeatedly failing to clear up after the six dogs he walked daily. Rather than tackle him head on, I simply said "Gosh, you've got your hands full, haven't you. You must need eyes in the back of your head to keep tabs on all of them at once. Have you got enough bags?" and offered him some spare bags from my pocket. That way he knew that I was on his case, without an argument, and had no excuse not to pick up after the dogs."
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no universal solution to dealing with dog fouling.</li> <li>- As with litter, dog fouling problems are often self-compounding. Dog walkers who see that others are failing to pick up after their dogs are less likely to do so themselves.</li> <li>- Confrontational approaches achieve little and can provoke more problems.</li> <li>- Positive reinforcement of key messages coupled with fostering local pride in a site and encouraging self-policing can be as effective as signage, bins and other strategies.</li> </ul>
Ongoing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educating dog walkers that any bin will do for bagged dog waste.</li> </ul>
Application to other sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fouling problems typically become less of a problem as distance from access points increases, and dog walkers are reluctant to carry poo bags any distance, so it is better to concentrate on the areas of highest pressure.</li> </ul>
Keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategically located, regularly emptied bins are essential to the success of bag it and bin it approaches to dog fouling.</li> <li>- Dog walkers need to know that they can use any bin for bagged dog waste.</li> <li>- Ensuring other users of a site are aware of what is being done to manage dog-related access problems and why is important to maintaining community support and encouraging self-policing.</li> <li>- Learning from what doesn't work and trying a different approach is critical to addressing insidious problems like dog fouling.</li> </ul>

