

Spring Vale Rambling Class Darwen Dog Policy

This Dog Policy for Spring Vale Rambling Class Darwen (also known as Spring Vale Ramblers or the Club) is designed to provide clarity and to give adequate control of the risks arising from dogs on our walks for walk leaders, participants, and members of the public. Spring Vale Rambling Class Darwen is a dog friendly group, not dog walking groups, but there are occasions when some walks are unsuitable for dogs so walk leaders need to consider the environment, obstacles, weather and walker numbers.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Officers of the Club and will be reviewed to reflect current best practice.

In accordance with the 2010 Equality Act registered assistance dogs are permitted on Spring Vale Rambling Class walks. However, in some circumstances the walk may not be suitable, and it would not be safe for a walker with an assistance dog. For example, some terrain might be too challenging for an assistance dog. If you would like to walk with your assistance dog, we recommend that you get in touch with the Club in advance to discuss the nature of the walk.

1. New dog walkers joining a walk should be asked to read and follow the Countryside Code and this Dog Policy.
2. Dog owners must ensure their dog does not alarm other people and they must clean up after their dog. The walk leader will remind dog owners of their responsibilities at the start of the walk.
3. Always keep your dog under control and in sight. Dogs should be on short leads or trained to walk to heel on most walks. If livestock is encountered, the owner should keep the dog separate from the rest of the group and wait until the group have passed through before proceeding. Cattle and horses can become unsettled by the presence of a dog and give chase. The dog should be on short leads at all times where:
 - livestock, horses, other animals are present in fields,
 - and when notices ask for dogs to be on leads.
4. If attacked by cattle, dogs should be let off their leads. The dog will be much safer if it is allowed to run away from a farm animal in these circumstances.
5. Between 1 March and 31 July, dogs must be on a lead on 'Open Access Land', even if there is no livestock on the land. This is a legal requirement. On certain areas of 'Open Access Land' dogs are not permitted at any time. Always check with the Walk Leader beforehand.
6. The walk leader may also ask for dogs to be put on leads:
 - if a large number of walkers are passing through narrow paths,
 - on slippery sections of the route,
 - when approaching access to fields,
 - when there are a large number of walkers on the walk, and
 - when walking in single file is required.
7. The walk leader may on occasion ask for dog walkers to be at the back of the group. This may be because other walkers are anxious around dogs or children are walking with the group.
8. Dogs may go off lead if it is not a legal requirement for dogs to be on leads and the leader permits it. ONLY dogs with excellent recall may go off lead.
9. Occasionally a walk leader may decide dogs are not permitted on the walk. This could be because of:
 - stiles on the route are not accessible for some dogs (i.e. large dogs),
 - the weather is forecast to be above 25C.
10. We do not permit aggressive dogs on our walks.
11. Dog owners must carry poo bags and always pick up poo and either dispose in a bin if we pass one or take it home for disposal. On no account should bagged dog-poo be flung, hidden, or hung up for supposed later retrieval during the walk.
12. Dog owners must provide verbal confirmation to the walk leader that their dog is covered by pet owners' liability insurance before the walk. Any incident caused by a dog would be the responsibility of the dog owner.

Revised 10th April 2024