Dogs-Unleashed

The campaign by responsible dog owners to amend DunLaoghaire/Rathdown bye-laws
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20th February 2012

Senior Executive Officer
Environment, Culture and Community Department
DLR County Council, Level 3, County Hall
Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin

Re. Draft Beach Bye-Laws 2012

Dear Sir,
We wish to register our objections to the proposed amendments in the Draft Beach Bye-Laws 2012 (Section 11: Animals) in this submission to the current public consultation. Our objections are based on the following points:

1. The Dogs Unleashed organisation represents over 3,500 responsible dog owners. We are campaigning for fairer 'dog control' bye-laws that balance the needs of dog walkers with those of other beach users. We have consulted widely with DLR Council management, Councillors, residents' associations, community groups, Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company, An Garda Síochána, business associations, vets and other pet professionals, and the wider community of dog lovers, as well as with dog detractors.

2. We contend that the amended bye-laws regarding leashing must be underpinned by a rationale that is clearly understood by all members of the public.

3. The debate centres on dog walkers who find the proposal to keep their dog on a leash between 10am and 7pm on the larger beaches *outside designated bathing areas* unnecessary and punitive, while in no way tackling the two key issues of dog fouling and irresponsible dog owners.

4. The concerns of year-round swimmers, people who fear dogs and families using beaches on summer days are given careful consideration and respect in our measured, moderate and balanced proposals (*see p. 2*).

5. We reiterate the offer made to Councillors and Council management that we will use our considerable influence among the dog walking community and beyond to develop a programme to help regulate and change anti-social behaviour among a certain element of irresponsible dog owners.

6. We fully support any initiatives by our Council to help educate society in responsible and accountable dog ownership. However, we will continue with our campaign, with increased vigour and support, until the dog control bye-laws are more balanced and actively seek the cooperation of all responsible dog owners.

7. We are in complete agreement that irresponsible dog owners are a real threat to all of society, including responsible dog owners. Their out-of-control dogs frighten and sometimes injure people as well as other (well-behaved) dogs. They leave unsightly and offensive dog faeces uncollected, which under certain conditions, can lead to toxocariasis, which, as previously noted, research shows to be an extremely rare occurrence in Ireland. In this way, they not only undermine the very many benefits of dog ownership throughout society, but also damage those who make every effort to be responsible dog owners.

8. We take this opportunity to remind Councillors and Council management that dog walking is a cherished activity, that it promotes human and canine health, and that the County Council should facilitate rather than criminalise it. It should be noted that as a constituency, we include the elderly, the disabled, the lonely, families with children, regular beach users and those who choose, for the benefit of the community as a whole, to embrace a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise, with their best friends safely by their side.

9. Below, you will see our proposals for amending the Draft Beach Bye-Laws 2012 in a way that reflects our organisation's very reasonable demands and shows respect for others. The changes are highlighted in **bold** type in Clauses (i), (ii) and (iv).

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT BEACH BYE-LAWS 2012 (SECTION 11) BY DOGS UNLEASHED ASSOCIATION

Section 11: Animals

(i) No person shall take or allow any animal which is under his/her ownership or control on the designated bathing/lifeguard control areas on

(a) **Seapoint beach** at any time all year round, **except as access to the rest of Seapoint in which case all dogs should be leashed at all times**.

(b) Sandycove beach at all times between June to August inclusive.

(c) Killiney beach during the hours 10.00am to 7.00pm **June to August inclusive**.

(ii) Without prejudice to (i) above, a person in charge of a dog in all other areas of the **beaches shall ensure that the dog** is under effectual control (per Control of Dogs, Act 1986).

(iii) A person in charge of a dog shall at all times ensure that:

(a) The dog is not causing annoyance to any person using the beach or worrying, chasing, injuring or disturbing any animals, birds or other creatures

(b) The dog's faeces is removed and disposed of appropriately

(iv) This Bye-Law shall not apply to guide dogs for the blind **or to any assistance dogs for improved mobility and independence.**

(v) Persons bringing any animal onto the beach shall be responsible and liable for any damage, injury to property or persons which may be caused by it.

(vi) Persons in charge of specified classes of dogs must ensure that they comply with the Control of Dogs Act 1986 and the 1992 Control of Dogs (Amendment) Act and the Statutory Instruments S.I. No. 442 of 1998 Control of Dogs Regulation.

In effect, our amendments to the Draft Beach Bye-Laws 2012 mean that dogs must be kept on a leash at all times on any part of a beach designated as a bathing/lifeguard control area and shall not be allowed to enter those beach areas during the summer months, except on a leash as specified at Clause (i) above.

It is recommended that the above proposed amendments be approved and incorporated into the Beach Bye-Laws 2012.

We look forward to your response and assure the Council of the full cooperation of responsible dog owners in supporting fair and reasonable bye-laws.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Neligan
Chairperson
Dogs Unleashed
www.dogs-unleashed.org