

CHILDREN HELP TO TACKLE DOG FOULING IN INNOVATIVE NEW WAY



Yesterday children from the 15th Cheltenham (Shurdington) Cub Scouts and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust are appealing to dog owners to clean up their pet's mess following a large number of incidents of dog fouling.

The Cub Scouts designed a number of signs asking people to clear up after their dogs when walking in the Coombe Hill nature reserve as part of their efforts to gain their Global Conservation Service badge.

Yesterday they helped to display their artwork along the canal bank on the Trust's Coombe Hill nature reserve as part of an appeal to encourage dog owners to clear up after their dogs.

"It's not nice for visitors if there is dog mess on the path. It also isn't good for the wildlife, and may spread diseases. This is why I made the poster and also it was part of my Global badge" says Daniel Edwards, a member of the 15th Shurdington Cub Scouts.

Dog mess is an on-going problem for some nature reserves where the public frequently exercise their dogs, and Coombe Hill is particularly affected along the towpath running down the side of the canal.

"The cub scouts have done a marvellous job of creating some really eye catching signs to try and encourage people to clean up after their dogs, and we hope it'll make a real difference."

Jackie Birch, Severn Hams Nature Reserves Manager



"Dog walking on the reserve is a really popular activity, and we welcome considerate dog owners. It's only a minority of individuals who are spoiling this beautiful location for other walkers" says Jackie Birch, Severn Hams Nature Reserves Manager.

"Coombe Hill suffered quite considerably during the 2007 flood, and funds donated generously through a public appeal and the Coombe Hill Patrons meant that we've been able to restore and improve the access to the site via an extension to the boardwalk last autumn. It's a real shame that dog fouling is beginning to create a problem after all our hard work to encourage visitors and make the nature reserve a real haven."

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Coombe Hill nature reserve was one of the Trust's biggest restoration projects after the damage caused by the 2007 floods and is known for its diversity and large number of wading birds and overwintering wildfowl.

Dog fouling is not only unpleasant and unsightly but can also present a serious health risk for people as well as other dogs, passing on worms and diseases in addition to potentially carrying *Toxicaris*, a disease which can result in blindness in humans.

The signs will be forming a display along the tow path down the side of the canal for the next couple of weeks.

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