

## **A proposal to change the restrictions on dog-walking that are currently in place on Jersey beaches.**

### **Proposition**

To have designated beaches or stretches of beach that allow dog walking, off the lead, throughout the daytime, during the summer months. Using Guernsey as a model; Guernsey has adapted its restrictions so that the 7 most popular beaches on the Island have a complete ban on dogs throughout the daytime during the summer months and on all other beaches people are able to walk and be with their dogs off the lead throughout the day.

Dog walkers are still able to walk their dogs off the lead on all beaches before 10.30am and after 6.00pm. Guernsey have recently imposed a restriction on evening dog walking on a few beaches where it has identified disturbance from dogs may be contributing to the decline in the numbers of sea-birds on the shoreline.

This could mean that beaches such as St Brelades, most of St Ouens, Plemont, Greve d'Lecq, Portelet, Archirondel, Green Island, Gorey Beach and Beauport could be completely dog free throughout the summer.

Examples of beaches that are much less frequented and could potentially be identified are West Park to Bel Royal, La Greve d'Azette to La Mare, Seymour Tower to the Royal Jersey Golf Club, Ouaisne and the Barge A'ground to L'Etaq stretch of St Ouens beach.

### **Rationale**

Tourism has reduced consistently over the years, which means there are now beaches or areas of beach that are less popular and often remain quiet even on the hottest summer days.

If specific beaches or stretches of beach were identified as suitable for dog walking throughout the summer, this would mean the nicer, more popular beaches would be free from dogs for those people who worry because they have small children or who would prefer not to be bothered by dogs. It would also give dog walkers and dogs the freedom of access to beach space throughout the day where dogs could run freely, socialise, swim and play without the time restrictions or the worry of upsetting other people.

The large majority of dog owners abide by the rules currently in place with respect to dog walking, they are vigilant about dog mess and will be prompt to pull up other dog walkers who are perhaps less vigilant.

I believe that should dog walking become more concentrated on certain beaches then they will become more successfully self policed. Changes in restrictions should also have an additional benefit of a reduction in public calls of complaint to the parish halls. These are currently high, particularly in parishes such as St Clements and for the Centeniers they are time consuming, inconvenient and costly.

The complaints can be over zealous with people commonly reporting 'dog, with owner, off lead, playing with a ball on a quiet beach. In such a case the honorary

police need to take the time to respond to the complaint, attend the said scene by which time the dog and owner may have moved on or they may be presented with a well looked after, well controlled dog causing little disturbance, albeit off the lead.

Additionally daytime, summer dog walking, on beaches would also help to reduce the number of reports of people losing small dogs down rabbit holes on the sand dunes. I have been a dog owner (of a large dog, thankfully) and dog walker for the past three years and heard a disconcerting amount of times of people tragically losing small dogs down rabbit holes.

The issue of dog walking is an ongoing “bone” of contention that if addressed properly could appease both those people who are disgruntled about the rules being broken or having to share their space with dogs as well as the law abiding and perhaps even less law abiding dog owners.

I will look forward to hearing your views on this proposition.

With Regards

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