



Your Green Dog Walker® Guide



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Introduction

Green Dog Walkers (GDW) is a non-confrontational, friendly way to change attitudes about dog fouling. It is a community based scheme that volunteers can adopt and promote in the community.

The philosophy of this campaign is to start shifting public attitudes so that it becomes socially unacceptable not to clean up after your dog. With this change in attitude it is hoped for a general acceptance that dog owners must clean up after their dog fouls and therefore reduce the amount of litter in public areas.



The secret to a successful GDW campaign is the volunteer groups and dog owners who are the ones "on the ground" running the pledge stalls and gathering pledgers. It is for those groups that this booklet has been put together. We hope these tips will be of help to you and remember to **LEAVE ONLY PAWPRINTS!**

*Environment Section
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How it works:





Volunteers wear a Green Dog Walkers (GDW) hi vis vest or carry a bag dispenser that signifies that they have “taken the pledge” to always:

-  Clean up after their dog
-  Wear the hi vis vest / carry bag dispenser when walking their dog
-  Carry extra dog waste bags
-  Be happy to be approached to ‘lend’ a dog waste bag to those without
-  Be a friendly reminder to other dog walkers to clean up after their dog/s

The hi vis vest/bag dispenser acts as a friendly reminder to pick up after your dog. All you have to do is sign a pledge form with your local organiser or Westmeath County Council and you will receive from them a GDW hi vis vest or a bag dispenser.



To adopt the GDW programme and roll it out in your community you need to:

-  Be a constituted community group and registered with the Public Participation Network (PPN)
-  Administer the project e.g. promote the pledge, distribute materials etc.
-  Help with promotion of the campaign in your area
-  Run or take part as a volunteer in at least 2 GDW events annually
-  Help with the monitoring and evaluating of the campaign at a local level e.g. before and after surveys, participate in questionnaires sent and feedback on the number of hi vis vest wearers approached to ask for a dog bag etc.

The project works best the more visible the hi vis vest/bag dispensers are in neighbourhoods where volunteers really get behind it. Walking around without having to keep your eyes on the ground in case you step in or on something is a bonus for many walkers, cyclists, wheelchair/ buggy users, runners etc.











Working with primary schools is also highly successful.

The key to a successful GDW campaign is active participation.

The campaign will not “go live” if you leave the supplies in a press! Take the initiative and get out there next to a dog walkers path, the canal, at a school or at any local community event that allows stalls for various causes and start talking to people.

You will start off with just a few people/volunteers from your group but as time goes by and more people hear and see about the campaign, the more people will volunteer as they know what it’s like trying to walk around and not step in poo.

Setting targets is also a good idea, for example:

-  To have at least two events annually
-  An event can be a small pledge stand on say a Saturday morning/sports day etc.
-  A talk in your local primary school
-  A poster and/or a leaflet campaign
-  A GDW newspaper column
-  Dog shows

The definition of “an event” is endless, it’s just a way to keep your group thinking about the campaign and always keeping an eye out for possible venues for pledge stalls or an awareness raising opportunity.



Tips on running Green Dog Walkers® campaign

1 Keep it friendly

Remember the pledge, to never be confrontational when wearing the hi vis vest/using the bag dispenser. The best way to approach someone is to preface your message with "We are talking to dog owners who are good about picking up after their dogs, so they can help get the message out to those who are not". Assume the person you are talking to is a responsible dog owner and the dialogue will go well. If you approach them in a reprimanding tone it will not be very good for the conversation nor the overall message of the GDW programme.

2 Wish people a good day

Most people are curious, interested and eager to sign up. However, if you do find that the person you are talking to has an attitude, is confrontational, grumpy or begins offering reasons why they won't or can't pick up after their dog, it is best not to engage or let it escalate – they will always have another excuse. Stay friendly, wish them a good day – and move on!



3 Your "True Ambassadors"

Often after you explain what the hi vis vests/bag dispensers are for, some people may smile and say "Oh I already pick up after my dog", and start to walk away as they don't think GDW applies to them. It's very important at this moment to say, "Yes, that's why we need people like YOU to wear a hi vis vest/use the bag dispenser" or "Yes, it's the GOOD dog owners whom we are asking to sign the pledge, because you can be a good example to others". Usually they will stop then and sign the pledge - try not to let these good dog owners/walkers get away, these are exactly the people you want to take the pledge. They are your ambassadors to help change attitudes by the non-verbal sign of the hi vis vest/bag dispenser.

4 Connecting with other groups

Teaming up with other services, agencies and groups helps broaden the campaign so you can reach more & more people.

Think of ways to involve others and be responsive to their invitations.

People may prefer a bag dispenser rather than a hi vis vest so make sure both are available.

5 Distributing Pledge Brochures

You can arrange to leave some pledge brochures at a public establishment, such as a shop, vet surgery, pet store, groomers or any business which will agree to keep them on the counter. Don't leave hi vis vests/bag dispensers with them unless the people/person who runs the establishment is willing to be responsible for only dispensing them to those who sign the pledge and get it back to you. Just leave the brochures with them so people can pick them up and mail them to you in order to receive their hi vis vest/bag dispenser.

6 Vets are great resources

Vets may be happy to include a brochure in any "puppy packs" they might give to their clients the first time they bring their new pup in for its vaccinations. Or they may be willing to mention the project and hand a brochure to all of their clients.

7 Media

Contact your local newspaper and send in photos of your "launch" of the GDW programme in your area. Include it in any newsletters in the area and get the message out there. Include it in your application for Tidy Towns as an initiative that you have undertaken and are rolling out in your community.

8 Keep it friendly

Make sure that any communications that issue under the logo is always in a friendly, non-confrontational manner. For example, it should not be used to post notices that are entirely about enforcement or a reprimand from a neighbourhood group to any individual about their dog fouling habits etc.

These are just some of the ways to promote the GDW in your area - new ones are always coming up and you will think of your own different ways.





Acknowledge your volunteers

Think of ways to motivate and thank your volunteers for the time spent signing up pledges and always keep a sense of humour in the campaign.



Green Dog Walkers® Tool Kit

Westmeath County Council will provide a Green Dog Walkers Tool Kit to each community/organisation, registered with the Public Participation Network (PPN), that wishes to be an official GDW group.

Tool Kit includes:

- Guidebook
- Pledge forms & pens
- Hi vis vest or bag dispenser for dog collar
- Outdoor signs for your area
- Children's colouring sheets



For more information contact:
Environment Department
Westmeath County Council

Tel: 044 93 32226

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leave only pawprints®...





Put some fun into your event!

Fake dog poo recipe for children

Children love to make things, the messier the better, so to dramatise the problem why not make some fake poo to capture their interest more.

Ingredients

Chocolate spread.

Peanut butter.

Dirt, with bits of grass/leaves mixed in.

What to do

Mix until you get the right consistency.

(Tip – Don't mix too much or the chocolate gets runny)

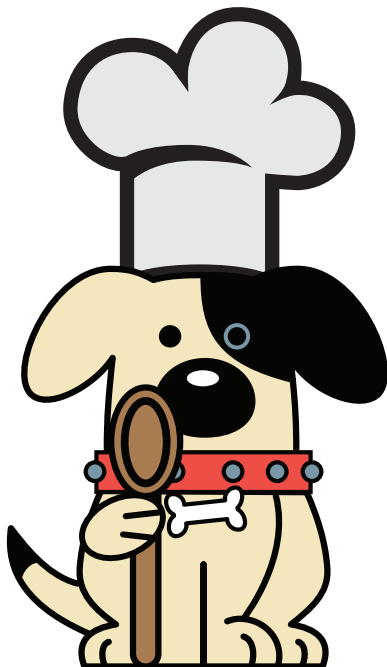
Put in a freezer bag.

Cut a one inch hole in a corner and squeeze the fake poo out, from there you can make it into shapes etc.

Do not leave it where dogs can eat it!

Keep away from small children.

Caution: could stain furniture.



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leave
only
pawprints®...

Join
**Green Dog®
Walkers** 
Today



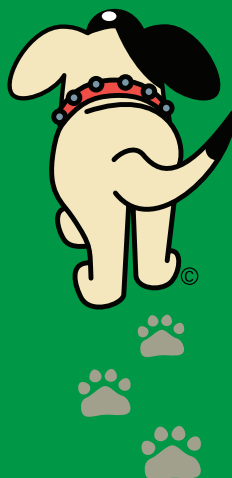
WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Contae na Ríomh



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



eastern-midlands
waste region



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WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

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