



DORSET DOGS / BCP COUNCIL

# HENGISTBURY PROGRESS REPORT

22

23

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# 1. OVERVIEW OF 2022/23

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The following actions have taken place from the 1st June 2022- 31st of May 2023:

- Costed and budgeted ideas from the action plan were implemented, these included: creation of a volunteer dog walker patrol group, bike (and ice cream) patrols, creation of a site map, educational signs erected around Lily Pond, creation of a marked dog trail, carved dog walker bench added to site, banners created to indicate the beginning of the nature reserve/ end of the seafront and next to the wildlife ponds on site, and the fenced dog exercise area with noticeboard were costed and planned.
- Dedicated social media pages were updated regularly, sharing photos of people taking their pets on wildlife friendly walks (following the doggy do code), sharing photos/videos about the engagement initiatives on site, and sharing photos from the volunteer ranger patrols.
- Baseline data collection was completed for the summer and winter seasons for 22/23. This data was collected from 1/5/22-31/8/22 (summer) and 1/9/23-31/5/23 (winter). Overall, we saw that people were avoiding the heath and sticking to pathways more often during bird nesting season. More visitors took the harbourside pathway during bird nesting season, indicating that this may be one of the more popular alternate routes.
- Multiple surveys were carried out investigating public opinions on the various initiatives implemented: Site map, Dog trail, Dog poo voting bin and Dog bench with additional surveys investigating support of various initiatives for the report such as a fenced dog area, dogs on lead restrictions in certain areas, additional signage etc. It should be noted; surveys on the whole were poorly responded to, and often participants had not seen the initiatives we were exploring. Often, open surveys allow for other issues to arise, and this happened on multiple surveys where participants expressed their dislike of fences, dogs and other site users generally. Therefore, face-to-face surveys may be more suitable and access more relevant information from visitors.
- 78.5 hours were spent leading or assisting with events and activities. A total of 8 pitstops were carried out and 10 bike patrols completed with 116 dog ice creams given out. These totalled 555 people engaged with.
- A total of £46,920 has been spent on this project for the 2022/23 year, leaving a remaining budget of £7030 for any additional spending for this project.

## Actions that are recommended to take place from 2024 onwards:

The most requested changes were:

- Implementation of routine surveys both exploring behaviours on site and the opinions of visitors to explore where resources are most needed.
- Creation of a year-round fenced area for dog exercise and training (the suggested location for this is the East part of Westfield parallel to Southbourne coast road). This should include public engagement and feedback to ensure support from site users,
- Fencing of barn bight pathway.
- Differential mowing of Westfield.
- Exploration into changes to restrictions on the seafront from blanket seasonal to time of day restrictions seasonally.
- Further collaboration with Dorset Dogs to ensure best practice and increase engagement on site.
- Expansion/continuation of the volunteer dog ranger scheme.
- Maps installed onto site, with hand outs to accompany them for the visitor centre.
- Implementation of a county-wide commercial dog walking charter to promote best practice and provide sites with guidelines to follow.

# 2. DATA COLLECTION

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Planning: Volunteers were recruited throughout the 2022/2023 period to assist with data collection and engagement. This was via the Bournemouth University volunteering page and through the placement supervisor.

## Summer:

From 1/5/22-1/10/22 data collection was completed for the Westfield, Saltmarsh and Heathland locations. Data collection was completed for all locations and times, except one two-hour slot (7-9am at Westfield on a weekend). The date was extended for one day at Westfield due to a bank holiday with good weather on the 2/10/22, to ensure as many slots were completed as possible. The following totals were recorded for each of the areas: Westfield: total groups - 495, total number of people - 1058, total number of off lead dogs - 366 and total number of on lead dogs - 82. The average summer temperature was 17.7 degrees Celsius. Heathland: total groups - 271, total number of people - 559, total number of dogs off lead - 61 and total number of dogs on lead - 27. The average summer temperature was 20 degrees Celsius. Saltmarsh: total groups - 262, total number of people - 565, total number of off lead dogs - 140 and total number of on lead dogs - 36. The average summer temperature was 18.5 degrees Celsius.

## Winter:

From 3/10/22-31/5/23 data collection was completed for the Westfield, Saltmarsh and Heathland locations. Data collection was completed for all locations and times, except one two-hour slot (9:30-11:30am at Westfield on a weekend). The following totals were recorded for each of the areas: Westfield: total groups - 316, total number of people - 483, total number of off lead dogs - 281 and total number of on lead dogs - 52. The average winter temperature was 7 degrees Celsius. Heathland: total groups - 307, total number of people - 761, total number of dogs off lead - 81 and total number of dogs on lead - 29. The average winter temperature was 9.5 degrees Celsius. Saltmarsh: total groups - 145, total number of people - 299, total number of off lead dogs - 102 and total number of on lead dogs - 17. The average winter temperature was 10 degrees Celsius. See the Hengistbury Data Collection summary 2022/23 for a full overview of the data collected.

# 3. RESEARCH

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Relevant projects, news articles and scientific reports were searched for on a semi-regular basis to ensure we were keeping up to date with the latest developments in this subject.

Formal research was conducted to explore public opinions on the suggestions from the action plan. These included a number of surveys posted on social media channels, collecting feedback on the dog trail, dog poo voting bin, bench and site map. Additional surveys were created focused on the proposed fenced dog exercise and training area, additional signage and dogs on leads restrictions for certain areas on the reserve. An overview of these surveys can be seen in section 7; the full results of these surveys can be found in the data collection report for 2022/23.

# 4. SOCIAL MEDIA

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The following social media pages were kept updated throughout this phase of the project. The most active page was the Instagram page, which involved sharing our main messages, alongside sharing and reposting others photos. This seemed to generate a good amount of interest in the page. This differed from the Facebook page which was more of a community, where people shared information and acted as a place to disseminate our messages, and from the TikTok page which shared direct messaging through the form of short videos. It was important to ensure all posts had a dog-centric theme on all platforms to ensure they would reach the intended audience.

- Facebook group (Hounds of Hengistbury Head)
- Instagram page (@hengistburyhounds)
- TikTok page (@hengistburyhounds)

Content was created in collaboration with Dorset Dogs pages and Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre pages to provide consistent, positive messaging with a Dorset Dogs tone and message. Most common tags used across all platforms were: #WildlifeFriendlyWalks, #Dogs, #DorsetDogs, #LoveDogs, #LoveNature, #NatureReserve, #Walkies, #Wildlife, #DogWalks, #Bournemouth, #Christchurch, #Dorset. These tags were chosen to highlight our main themes, and also the locations where visitors are likely to be located.

## **5. STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

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The stakeholder group were kept updated about the initiatives being trialled on the site, and many completed the public surveys carried out. We had no formal stakeholder meetings in this recorded period. A copy of the end of project summary report will be sent to each member.

## **6. FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT**

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A mixture of 'Pitstops' and 'Bike patrols' were carried out across Hengistbury Head and some other nearby sites. Pitstops consisted of a full setup including all the signs and kit from the Dorset Dogs van, and usually with the Dorset Dogs Area Project Officer. The bike patrols consisted of cycling around site with seasonal signage; handing out doggy ice creams and goody bags.

Other engagement this role supported/created were: co-hosting SCCAMP online event, running a guided walkies at Hengistbury Head, school group assistance, walk with stakeholder group, running a moth event for heath week, running a stall at the Steamer point Christmas fair and assisting with the managing dogs in the countryside conferences. See below for more details on these events.

- SCCAMP online event: Along with other organisations within the Southern Counties Canine Access and Management Partnership, an online quiz show themed night was created and streamed across the counties in the partnership. This was themed around canine access management and promoting positive behaviours on natural sites.
- Guided walkies at Hengistbury Head: Taking visitors with dogs on a guided walk around the less sensitive area of the site. Including seeing livestock, and chatting about how best to complete wildlife friendly walks.
- School group assistance: Taking a school group pond dipping, allowing me to engage with younger audiences around wildlife and how finding doggy dip areas can help protect sensitive pond/river wildlife.
- Walk with stakeholder group: Took the stakeholder group around the site to talk through the actions on the action plan, and further investigate their opinions.
- Heath week moth event: Connecting members of the public with nature, relating this to how best to enjoy natural spaces (for all visitors). No dogs were permitted at this event.
- Steamer Point Christmas fair: held a small pitstop chatting to fair goers about Dorset Dogs and appropriate site usage.
- Managing dogs in the countryside: Conference hosted by Dorset Dogs sharing knowledge from ourselves and Stephen Jenkinson about how best to engage and manage dog walkers on natural sites. This was aimed at site managers and other dog-specific engagement projects.

## 7. OTHER ENGAGEMENT

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A range of surveys were created to investigate general feedback on the action plan formulated by the stakeholder group. See below, an overview of responses for each chosen topic:

- Dog poo voting bin: Results came mostly from visitors with pets who visited weekly. Only 38% of respondents had seen the bin sign, of which 88% had used it to dispose of waste. Overall feelings were that the initiative worked well, but the novelty had worn off after a few months. When asked how effective the initiative was on a scale of 1-10, it was scored on average, 5.

- Dog walker bench and trail: Results were from majority dog walkers who had mostly positive feedback for both the trail and bench. The majority of participants stated the trail shared good information and provided a suitable alternative route for visitors with dogs to explore with added benefits for wildlife. Some feedback stated that it may encourage more visitors, and that trails/signage are unneeded and restrictive. It scored 7.3 out of 10 for effectiveness.
- Site map: Feedback for the site map stated that information portrayed as positive, but that text needed to be simplified and that the codes may be a little confusing. Most suggested the map should be larger, clearer and in more locations. It scored 3.4 out of 10 for effectiveness.
- Action plan suggestions: Results came mostly from visitors with pets who visited weekly. When asked if they would like to see site maps with up to date information, 76% said yes, with most wanting to see sensitive wildlife areas highlighted (123), followed by dog walking routes (103) and dog bin locations (93). 87% of visitors would like to see information boards on site, focusing on wildlife (30%), habitats (24%), history (23%) and dos/don'ts (22%). 77% of responses supported some areas with no public access by using signage (40%), fencing (39%) and vegetation (20%) these areas were suggested to be in sensitive wildlife areas with dog proof fencing, with some suggesting the main paths should be included. Support came for a fenced dog exercise and training area; 52% responded yes to seeing such an area. In this, they would like to see a fenced training area (83 people), user etiquette signage (66), poo bag dispensers (58), carved agility equipment (56) and information/community notice boards (44). When asked where these should be, many people spoke about the grassy area between the car park and Broadway (West field), or near the Hiker; many responded that it should be far away from the heathland and the Spit. Volunteer wardens were welcomed from 69% of respondents, most responses thought they should share information about the site, wildlife, archaeology, as well as sharing dog specific information and the things people should be doing to respect the site. 67% of people support dogs on leads in some respect across the head; most supporting restrictions along the saltmarsh/harbourside path all year round (68 people). This was followed by Mudeford spit all year round (58) and along the main path/train road (57).

Comments surrounding this topic were very polarised; with concerns around impact on wildlife, dog fouling, and the dogs impact on other visitors, against concerns for further restrictions; forcing dogs together, increasing instances of bad behaviour, and reducing the spaces that dogs/people can access.

## 8. FINANCE

The expenditures and income from 2022/23. No income was received during this period. The total spend from 1/4/22 - 31/3/23 was £46,920 including VAT and salary costs. See below for breakdown of expenditure, see Appendix 1 for full project costings for proposed engagement.

### 2022/23:

Date	Company	Product/service	Amount	VAT	Total
01/04/2022	Dorset Council	Sensor install	£1,585		1585
11/06/2022	Halfords	Mountain Bike	170		170
10/06/2022	Amazon	Bike Trailer	£89.99		£89.99
10/06/2022	Amazon	Ice box	£29.99		£29.99
29/06/2022	Judes	Dog Ice Cream	£300		£300
20/06/2022	Amazon	Bin	8.99		8.99
19/08/2022	Big Bear Promo	Wooden dog tags	270		270
29/09/2022	Printed 4 You	Dog Bandanas	260.4		260.4
10/06/2022	Amazon	Velcro tape	7.99		7.99
20/10/2022	Mike Hughs Wildlife Art	Artwork for Map	400		400
24/10/2022	Top Notch Signs	Signage printed	292.3	58.46	350.76
07/12/2022	Rob Beckinsale	carved bench/trail	4970		4970
08/12/2022	Advantage Digital Print Ltd	Dog trail booklets	199		199
12/10/2022	Green Gate	DDC Branded napkins	557.05	111.41	668.46
21/10/2022	Top Notch Signs and Graph	Correx signs (A1 and A3)	292.3	58.46	350.76
09/12/2022	Top Notch Signs and Graph	QR code foamex signs	171.35	34.27	205.62
09/03/2023	Advantage Digital Print Ltd	Banners	512	102.4	614.4
31/03/2023	Dorset Council	Salary	32438.76		32438.76
31/03/2023	Dorset Council	Management Costs	4000		4000
Running total			£46,555	£365	£46,920

# 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following recommendations have been put together using a mixture of suggestions/ideas formulated from the stakeholder groups and from staff, evidence from the data collected over the course of the project, feedback from visitors and research conducted across the course of the project. Full costings for these recommendations, and all put forward from the stakeholder group can be found in Appendix 1.

- **Signage**

- + Accessible signage: carved tactile sign for people with visual impairments or using braille printed signs.

- + Positive messaging: Focusing on using "do's" instead of "do not's", making clear which activities are not appropriate, and how to perform the appropriate activities in the most suitable manner/locations.

- + More signage placed in decision making points (path intersections, beginning of habitat types, sensitive wildlife areas, high traffic areas, cafes) this should be positive messaging and not in too high a volume as to result in "sign blindness".

- + Site maps: 10x A0 Map signs at each entrance to the site. These should include the positive messaging along with an easy to follow visual map. See Figure 1 for the map created during this project.

- + Temporary signage: Banners for a range of seasonal topics commissioned (bird nesting season, overwintering birds, etc.) these should be made with mesh material to allow for the wind to pass through easily.

- **Fencing**

- + Fenced area for dog exercise and training.

- + Barn bight to restrict access for people and dogs.

- + Long field to restrict access for people and dogs.

- **Vegetation management**

- + Long field: Allowing vegetation to thicken up around the edge of the unfenced portion of long field to restrict access for people and dogs, whilst providing additional habitat.

+ Westfield: Differential mowing across the fields to encourage use of the less sensitive area of the site and reducing long grass areas as requested from dog walkers due to issues with grass seeds.

+ Edges of pathways: Allowing vegetation to grow dense alongside pathways to encourage people and dogs to stay on paths.

- **Engagement**

+ Ongoing engagement: Continuation of pitstops and park and patrols from Dorset Dogs and BCP staff members.

+ Events/Activities: Hosting suitable events/activities with dog walkers e.g. habitat maintenance, tree planting, guided walks etc. to encourage involvement with the nature reserve and importance of wildlife-rich areas.

+ Bike patrols: Continuing with bike patrols, this may extend to other local sites.

- **Volunteers**

+ Dog ranger volunteers: Further recruitment of volunteer dog rangers, and management of this. routine checking of patrol logs and dealing with reported issues.

+ Training supplied to volunteers in the centre regarding positive messaging and the engagement initiatives on site; promoting the work carried out during the project and surrounding this.

- **Professional dog walker charter**

+ Creation of a professional dog walker charter to outline rules and regulations for professional dog walkers to help protect the natural sites, and other visitors/dog walkers.

+ Could implement a licence to ensure professional dog walkers are respecting the local area and receiving the correct messages about these sites and how to responsibly run their business whilst using public sites.

- **Social media**

+ Continuation of dog-focused social media for the site. This helps to spread messages to dog walkers through sharing images of dogs on site. Could be widened to include all natural sites across BCP to extend knowledge and messages.

- Beach restrictions

+ Alteration of the restrictions on the seafront during the Summer (1st May-30th Sept) from the current protocols of dogs not allowed on the beach, only the promenade on a lead, to allowing dogs between the hours of 6pm - 10am. This would help reduce the pressure on Hengistbury, being the one of the only long stretches of dog friendly beach for the BCP conurbation.

+ It is advised that the stretch of beach from Fisherman's Walk to Hengistbury Head be classed as dog friendly, or with 6pm-10am timings trialled to create a long, beach walk which will be more desirable to dog walkers.

+ These suggestions have been put forward to the BCP Seafront team.

- Other recommendations

+ In early 2024, the bridge by Holloways Dock and the Saltmarsh area had been destroyed due to a storm. If this bridge were to be replaced, it is

suggested that access restrictions are explored (dogs on leads) for this location due to increased disturbance and interest from the public on surveys.

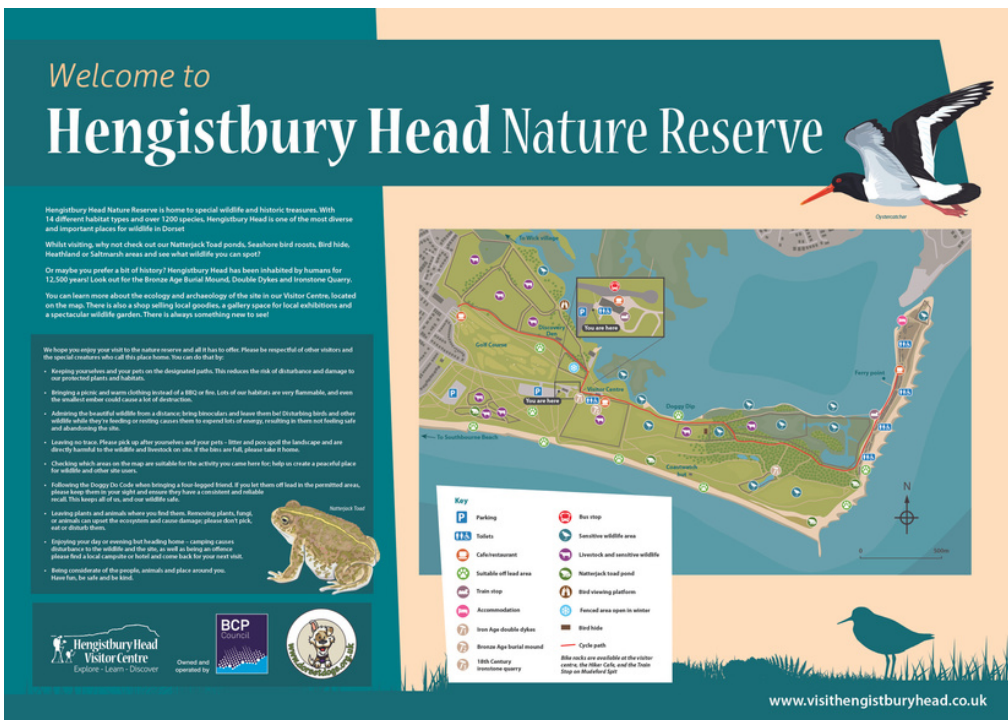


Figure 1 - Site map created for Hengistbury as part of the project.

This report was produced by Dorset Dogs for the Hengistbury Dog Walker Engagement Project hosted by the Urban Heath Partnership and BCP Council.



# 10. APPENDIX

## 10.1 APPENDIX 1- FULL BUDGET

<b>Budget:</b>	<b>£22,500</b>
<b>Volunteer expenses</b>	
Logo merch (100 lanyards + 100 dog bandanas)	£350.00
Refreshments	£50
Printing	£250
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£650.00</b>
<b>Signs</b>	
Foamex - Temporary (10x)	£250.00
Map Artwork	£375
Map Signage (x10 A1)	£9,000
Interpretation Artwork (x5)	£2,000
Interpretation Signs (x5)	£4,500
Trail marker posts (x15)	£2,625
Tactile carved sign	£3,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£21,750.00</b>
<b>Land management</b>	
Fencing (Dog area)	£8,000
Fencing barn bight	£2,500
Fencing long field	£3,000
Rope Barriers (for sand dune area)	550
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£14,050</b>
<b>Engagement ideas</b>	
Dog trainer (4 x 4 hours + travel for Natalie Light)	£800
Bike and Trailer concept	£400
Dog Ice Cream	£400
Wood for bike sign	£100
Seasonal signs	£1,250
Unique signs/traffic lights	£75
Goody bag supplies	£250
Bird scale sculpture	£1,500
Trail leaflets	£200
Dog trail infrastructure bench	£2,400
Dog totem pole	£1,250
Branded napkins	£470
Dog Chalkboard	£1,000
Leaflets/advertising with café, train, ferry	£500
Litter pickers	£500
Stickers	£20
Session with Stephen Jenkinson	£500
Dog bag dispensers	£250
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£11,865</b>

<b>Social Media</b>	
Boosted posts (6x £10 per post)	£60
<i>Subtotal</i>	£60
<b>Total</b>	£48,375.00
<b>Minus land management &amp; signage</b>	£35,800
<b>Total to be funded by dog project</b>	£12,575
<b>Additional Income/Funding</b>	0
<b>Remaining dog project budget</b>	£9,925