**Leisure & Cultural Committee**

**Tuesday 26 April 2022**

**BACKING PAPER: AGENDA ITEM 7 – POLICY ON DOG WALKING**

**Background**

Over the last six months there have been several complaints about dogs out of control at Victory Field and, at the end of March, there was an incident in which a woman was knocked over by a large dog. She sustained a broken leg and required surgery and hospitalisation.

Our parks, in particular Victory Field, Tom Green’s Field and South Ascot Recreation Park, are popular with dog walkers and professional walkers have been witnessed with several dogs for one person. This creates a large amount of dog waste, which forms part of the over £4,000 per annum the parish council spends on having dog waste bins emptied. Ascot Utd, which pays nearly £3,000 per annum for hire of the football pitches, regularly complains about finding dog faeces on the pitches.

The Professional Dog Walkers Guidelines (dogstrust.org.uk recommends:

* It is recommended that no more than four dogs are walked at any one time;
* Dog walkers should avoid areas that are heavily populated with children, eg playgrounds;
* Members of the public should be given right of way at all times.

**Other parish examples**

* Winkfield Parish Council – No rules are in place regarding dog walking.
* Hurst Parish Council – Dogs must be on leads at all times in all their parks/recreation areas.
* Twyford Parish Council – No rules are in place but a park warden is employed to speak to dog walkers, give out “poo bags” and spray pink any faeces left behind.

**Proposal**

To agree whether there should be a policy that dogs must be kept on a lead in certain areas and to provide signage to that effect.

To agree a policy regarding the use of the recreation areas by professional dog walkers and to provide signage to that effect.