



Commercial Dog Walking Policy - Nonsuch Park

Effective from 1 April 2025 – 12 Month Pilot

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

The Commercial Dog Walking Licence Scheme aims to regulate commercial dog walking activities within Nonsuch Park, ensuring the safety of all park users, animals, and the environment. The introduction of a licence fee also brings this commercial activity in line with other commercial users of the park.

The scheme, approved by the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, is a 12-month pilot, administered by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

The policy will ensure that commercial dog walkers are fully insured, conduct risk assessments, and adhere to the Dog Walking Code of Conduct established for the park.

LICENCE REQUIREMENTS

From 1st April 2025, all commercial dog walkers must be licensed to operate within Nonsuch Park. To obtain a licence, commercial dog walkers must meet the following criteria:

- **Proof of Public Liability Insurance:** Commercial dog walkers must provide proof of valid public liability insurance, covering at least £2 million for any claims made against them during their activities. The insurance must specifically cover dog walking, including risks such as injury to people, animals, or property.
- **Risk Assessments:** Dog walkers must submit a risk assessment for their activities, outlining any potential hazards and their measures to mitigate risks. This should include handling large groups of dogs, managing dog behaviour, and the safety of other park users, animals, and wildlife.
- **Maximum Number of Dogs:** Licensed walkers are permitted to walk up to six dogs at a time, in line with the terms of their public liability insurance. Dog walkers are expected to manage their dogs effectively and maintain control at all times.
- **Adherence to Code of Conduct:** All commercial dog walkers must sign and adhere to the park's Dog Walking Code of Conduct. This includes maintaining control of dogs, cleaning up after dogs, ensuring dog health and safety, and respecting public spaces and wildlife.
- **Qualifications and Training:** Walkers should be trained and competent in dog handling, animal welfare, and customer service. It is recommended that dog walkers undergo formal training in canine first aid and animal behaviour management.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL DOG WALKERS

Commercial dog walkers must follow these operational guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of all park users:

- **Control and Behaviour:**

- Always keep dogs on a lead (max. 1.8m) unless in designated off-lead areas.
- Dogs must be well-behaved and controlled at all times. If any dog becomes aggressive or unmanageable, they must be removed from the area immediately.
- Walkers should consider using muzzles if dogs are known to be reactive or prone to aggression.
- Limit the number of dogs walked together to avoid pack behaviour. The maximum number is six dogs at a time.

- **Health and Safety:**

- Ensure all dogs are vaccinated, flea-treated, and wormed.
- Provide adequate hydration and rest for dogs, particularly in extreme weather conditions.
- Be aware of the park's conditions and hazards, such as slippery surfaces or dangerous wildlife.

- **Cleaning Up After Dogs:**

- Carry biodegradable waste bags and clean up after the dogs in your care. Dispose of all waste in appropriate bins.
- Do not leave waste bags hanging in trees or bushes.

- **Respecting Public Spaces:**

- Walk dogs only on designated pedestrian paths and avoid restricted areas.
- Be considerate to other park users, particularly those with mobility aids, prams, or other dogs.

- **Wildlife Protection:**

- Ensure dogs do not chase or disturb wildlife. Dogs should be kept under control near water bodies, and owners must respect any "no-dog" areas protecting wildlife.

LICENSING PROCESS

To apply for a commercial dog walking licence, applicants must submit the following:

- **Completed Application Form:** Available from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's website.
- **Proof of Insurance:** A copy of the public liability insurance policy.
- **Risk Assessment:** Detailed risk assessment for operating in the park.
- **Signed Code of Conduct:** A declaration of commitment to follow the park's Dog Walking Code of Conduct.

Applications will be reviewed, and applicants must pass a compliance check before receiving their licence. Licences will be valid for 12 months and must be renewed annually if the pilot scheme is continued. The charging period will run from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026. The fee will be calculated from the date you wish to start operating on a monthly pro-rata basis.

Please allow two weeks for processing. Once you have received approval, you need to pay the licence fee which is set at £200 per annum.

You will receive a Nonsuch Park armband and will be registered on our database. You can transfer an armband from one of your employees to another, so long as neither of you are in Nonsuch Park at the same time. You cannot transfer your armband or licence to another dog walking organisation.

There will be an additional charge for replacement armbands that have been lost by the licence holder. Licence holders are to advise Epsom & Ewell Borough Council immediately of armbands that have been lost.

HIGH VISIBILITY IDENTIFICATION

To ensure public recognition and safety, licensed commercial dog walkers will be provided with the following:

- **High Visibility Arm-Band:** A high-visibility arm-band that must be worn while walking dogs in Nonsuch Park. The arm-band is essential for identifying licensed dog walkers, especially when managing large groups of dogs.
 - Replacement arm-bands will be available at an additional cost.
- **Car Sticker:** A car sticker to display in the vehicle used for transporting dogs to the park, signifying that the dog walker is licensed.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Commercial dog walkers are responsible for maintaining the terms of their licence throughout the year. Failure to comply with the policy may result in:

- **Suspension or Revocation of Licence:** For serious or repeated breaches.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will conduct regular checks to ensure compliance with this policy. Enforcement action will be taken against unlicensed walkers or those who fail to comply with the policy's conditions.

Licensed walkers are asked to report suspected licencing breaches in detail to nonsuchpark@epsom-ewell.gov.uk so targeted action can be taken.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency, commercial dog walkers must:

- **Have Identification:** Ensure all dogs under their care have proper identification (ID tags with contact details).
- **Report Incidents:** Immediately report any incidents involving dog attacks, injuries, or accidents to the police and/or Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

To maintain the safety and enjoyment of Nonsuch Park for all users, it is recommended that commercial dog walkers:

- **Train Dogs:** Encourage dog training to promote good behaviour in public spaces. Consider enrolling dogs in training classes for recall and lead manners.
- **Avoid Large Groups:** Do not walk large groups of dogs that may cause disruptions to other park users. It is advised that no more than six dogs be walked at any time.

CONCLUSION

The Commercial Dog Walking Licence Scheme is essential to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience for all park users and protect the park's wildlife and environment. By adhering to the Dog Walking Code of Conduct, maintaining proper insurance, and following these guidelines, commercial dog walkers will contribute to a responsible and regulated dog walking environment within Nonsuch Park.

For more information on the licensing process or to apply for a licence, please contact Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.