



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

18 June 1987

nbpm

(EF) should have them papers

Dear Lady Porter,

Thank you for your letter of 14 May informing me that your Council will shortly submit for confirmation byelaws which will make it an offence for people in charge of dogs to fail to clear up any mess deposited in parks and on pavements and grass verges.

While I applaud your efforts to improve the cleanliness of the City's streets and other public areas, I was disappointed that the Council has chosen to disregard Douglas Hogg's statement that I would not be prepared to confirm such byelaws in respect of pavements and grass verges. For the reasons contained in his announcement, I do think that it is right to distinguish pavements from parks and ~~amenity~~ greens. First, while dog owners can choose whether or not to take their dogs into parks, they cannot avoid taking them on pavements. Second, there is already in existence a perfectly good model byelaw which makes it an offence for a person in charge of a dog to allow it to foul the pavement. This byelaw has been in existence for over half a century, and it is open to local authorities to secure compliance by effective enforcement, and also by educational programmes such as the one you launched on 12 May in Leicester Square.

I do believe that we have struck the right balance in formulating our policy in this area, and in the circumstances I hope the Council will reconsider its decision to apply the byelaws to pavements and grass verges. I shall be giving careful consideration to your parks byelaws, and if confirmed I hope that these will operate successfully. It will, of course, be for Nicholas Ridley to consider the byelaws for amenity greens.

Best wishes,

Yours,

Douglas Hurd

Councillor Lady Porter



City of Westminster

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
The Prime Minister

6-7-

14 May 1987

R16/5

With the compliments of
Councillor Lady Porter, Leader of the Council

P.O. Box 240, Westminster City Hall, Victoria Street, LONDON SW1E 6QP Main Switchboard 01-828 8070
Telex 8950917 WEST CCG LONDON Dx 2310 VICTORIA Direct line: 01-798 2003



City of Westminster

The Leader of the Council

Your reference:

My reference:

Direct line: 01-798 2003

Date: 14 May 1987

Councillor Lady Porter

Extension: 2003

Fax: 01-798 3156

This matter is being dealt with by:

Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
The Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT

Dear Member

As you probably know, Westminster has been following the progress of the Pilot Schemes for new dog fouling byelaws with great interest and in the light of their success, our Policy and Resources Committee has recommended that the City Council make new byelaws for parks, pavements and verges and amenity greens on housing estates.

You can thus imagine our dismay when we subsequently read your circular letter of 7 April stating that you would not be prepared to confirm byelaws for footways and grass verges. We simply cannot understand why it is an "unreasonable burden" to expect dog owners to clear up after their pets. It is not difficult to train dogs to 'go' in the gutter or to make sure that they are led to the gutter when necessary. If, despite these efforts, a pavement is still soiled, it creates a dreadful offensive mess for those unlucky enough to step in it. We already have a byelaw making it an offence to allow a dog to foul pavements. The new byelaw would in fact be less burdensome because it would allow a responsible owner to redeem himself if his dog was responsible for fouling the pavement.

Despite your circular, my Council have nonetheless decided on to make the byelaws as recommended by the Committee. These have now been advertised and you will shortly be receiving them for confirmation. (I am told the one for housing estates needs to go to Mr Ridley). I hope that you will not reject them. Whatever you may feel about the general applicability of footway and grass verge byelaws, I hope that you will accept that Westminster's unique location in the heart of the capital puts it in a special position. More than 23 million tourists visit Westminster each year, 9 million of whom come from abroad, and they are bound to form impressions about our country from what they see here.

I could say a lot more about promoting inner cities and the other efforts we are making to improve the environment but you know most of this and I am already grateful for your support in these fields. I am thus sorry for writing at such length about dog fouling but I hope you understand the depth of feeling in Westminster and why we are anxious to avoid any legal clash which might follow if you do not confirm the byelaws.

As I have previously written to the Prime Minister on this topic, I am sending her a copy of this letter.

Lady Porter



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

18 May 1987

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for sending her a copy of your letter of 14 May to the Home Secretary about new byelaws for parks, pavements and verges.

P. A. Bearpark

Councillor Lady Porter