



# Green Dog<sup>®</sup> Walkers

## TIPS ON HOW TO RUN A GREEN DOG WALKERS BOOTH

The Green Dog Walkers' groups in the Falkirk area use two kinds of "Green Dog Walkers" booths and have provided some useful tips -

**Formal Booth:** The first kind of booth is more formal, it is something you plan for ahead of time when you are invited to, or asked to be part of, another event like a bark in the park, dog show, community fair, school fair, etc. It can include, along with pledges and GDW accessories, a display board with images from your campaign and your own collection of photos from previous Green Dog Walkers events. Keep a scrapbook of your publicity and photos, so you can always be ready to set up a display.

**Path side Booth:** The second kind is the "path side" booth, which you can set up informally, instantly, on a whim or by making a quick phone call to get permission from the landowner. Or you may set up a schedule to run a path side booth every Saturday for a month, hitting different parks in your community. For example, in the Falkirk area, one of these has been set up next in a number of different areas - dog paths in the park (on a Saturday morning), near a local library, near the entrance of local shops (where people often park their dogs), at footpaths where there are problems with dog fouling, etc. They set up a booth in a different place each time, to get new pledgers and new attention to the project. Sometimes they put out fliers in advance to let people know when and where; mostly they just "show up".

1. **Permission** - For a path side booth, you will need to find out who owns the land or property where you wish to have the booth (i.e. grocery store managers, the council, landowners). Once you go through this process the first time, it gets easier.

2. **Insurance** - If you are a constituted group, no doubt you have public liability insurance. It's a good idea when you are mixing dogs, kids and strangers at a booth. If you haven't arranged that yet, look into it. If your group does environmental work, litter picks and by taking on GDW, you may qualify to join BTCV for a modest fee and then qualify for their very inexpensive public liability insurance.

<http://www.btcv.org.uk>

3. **Safety and Fun in Numbers** - A GDW booth doesn't really work with just one person running it (Falkirk GDW groups know as they have tried that!) Two or more running a booth is best, it's friendlier and people are more likely to come over to talk to you and sign up if you already seem "active" by talking with your partner, child or teenager. Maybe one of you has brought your (friendly, socialized) dog or puppy along - these things help keep the atmosphere friendly and upbeat. One person sitting alone is not too inviting - and in the rare event of a customer becoming confrontational, it's best to have a backup.

4. **Set a Good Example** - wear your GDW accessory while running the booth.

5. **Tool kit** - The basics you need for your path side booth are: small table, chairs, banner, pledge forms, stock of GDW accessories. Falkirk Council also suggest taking GDW printed business cards, dog biscuits, water bowl, local authority fliers about dog fouling laws, etc. Community Groups in the

Falkirk area found that having a backpack devoted to the small stuff and a small portable table is the best way to walk into a park from your car and set up easily. (If you are having a formal indoor booth, you may want to add a display background board to this, with your publicity materials. You may also want to start a scrapbook of your publicity and photos, to have handy at the booth for folks to browse.)

6. **Don't just sit there!** People may be reluctant at first to come over to your booth - they may think you are selling something or going to reprimand them. Take a pledge, approach them as they come near the area, ask if you can pet their dog, and ask the dog's name, chat, be friendly.

7. **How to Talk to People** - Be sure to use the magic words, "We are asking responsible dog owners to help us get the irresponsible ones to change their attitude about dog fouling." Just assume you are talking to a responsible owner from the outset, the dialogue will go much better if they don't feel they are being singled out or challenged. Offer them a pledge form to take home and consider, and then add that, alternatively, they can sign up right now. No pressure, give options. Often they will say, "Oh, I always clean up" and start to walk away, so then say "This is a good way to also let people know you **do** clean up, so they don't blame YOU when they see dog poo on the ground where you were walking." That usually gets their attention!

8. **Enticements** - For an outdoor booth where people are likely to come by with their dogs, keep a water dish on the ground and a basket of dog treats on the table. Consider taking a supply of dog 'poo' bags - people will come to talk to you just to get a free bag and then you can sign them up. Make your table look fun and friendly (dog toy, paw print fabric cover, banner, etc.)

9. **Sharing information** - visitors to the booth will share issues and concerns and you can provide helpful information. Talking about the law is helpful, asking about problem areas where they live or walk. If they want to discuss a lack of bins in a particular area, take notes so you can talk to your authority about that later.

10. **Kids** - Your best weapon and ally is a kid! Kids love GDW booths, they will end up helping you talk to people and pet their doggies. Use a dog costume and/or get a toy dog to use as a mascot - either a green one (try ebay) or one you can put a green bandana on, or one of the GDW armbands as a collar. Kids gravitate to talk about the mascot, give it a name, and adopt it (but not to take it home!). Even adults will stop to joke with you about your mascot and get their picture taken with the person in the dog costume. Brownies can earn badges by helping you run the booth. A booth on the badly-fouled path near your primary school may work to engage the pupils. You might engage them in doing a poo survey the same day you have a booth and their GDW activities can help them with their Green Flags awards. Falkirk suggests that you have a practice/role play session with children before the day of the booth event. They love to take turns playing the "grumpy dog owner" and the "nice dog owner".

11. **Publicity** - Think of your booth as a multi-purpose event - not only to sign up pledgers but to bring more attention to the campaign and help educate more and more people. Try to get photos of your booth event, get them in the newspaper or local newsletters, see if a photographer will attend from the local paper, etc. With publicity like that, next time people see your booth in the park, they will know more about who you are and be more interested to come talk to you. Set up a FACEBOOK page, social media blog about your campaign, go to dog-related chat areas and message boards, promote your event!

12. **Legal stuff** - Property owner permissions, council licenses (a group in Falkirk had to get one to put a booth up on the footway near a local library), public liability insurance, disclosures if you have kids working the booth with you, permission to use kids' photos in your promotions, etc. Be aware of these things, tick all those boxes! For your own protection and so that the Green Dog Walkers project as a whole never gets a bad publicity!

13. **Dogs at the booth** - It can help to have a friendly dog or puppy with you at indoor and outdoor booths. But make sure you know the dog you bring along is a good ambassador and be prepared to

leash or remove the dog from the scene if any dog confrontations loom. Don't bring a dog that can be aggressive - there's no point in setting up a booth with a guard dog! Be careful if setting up near a dog-walker path, don't block walker's access or exit, set yourself up next to the path so they can come and go along the route. Don't force your presence on them, or your dog's. Just be there if they want to stop by. At all times be friendly, courteous and aware.

14. **Banners** - A Green Dog Walkers banner is a handy thing to have. You can have them made up by companies at ebay for about £35, a six foot PVC that will last many seasons in all weather. If you need more information on suppliers, there are a number of helpful internet search engines.

15. **Be organised** - You can purchase a range of GDW accessories ahead of your event from Scottish Borders Council. A list of accessories and the prices are available online or by contacting us by telephone or email.

#### Contact -

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Email - [PlaceBusServices@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:PlaceBusServices@scotborders.gov.uk)

Online - [www.scotborders.gov.uk/greendogwalkers](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/greendogwalkers)

You can get this document on tape, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address below. In addition, contact the address below for information on language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

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