

Dog Fouling Monitoring- Aughnacloy & Castledawson March 2019

The Environmental Health Service received a number of complaints relating to dog fouling in the Aughnacloy and Castledawson village areas. In response to this an out of hours monitoring programme was put in place for two weeks in March 2019.

The monitoring programme was complimented by the erection of 'watching eyes' posters on lampposts in the villages. These were erected for a number of months around the period of the monitoring. The posters build on the fact the dog fouling has become stigmatised. When people consequently feel like they are being watched, they are more likely to pick up the dog mess after their dog. While the effect is likely to be of a short duration it reinforces the psychology that people know someone is paying attention.

Those conducting the monitoring also approached dog walkers they encountered and explained that monitoring was being undertaken further to complaints being received. They also advised that there was a Fixed Penalty of £50 for those owners observed letting their dog foul and not cleaning up after it. Dog walkers were also given a package of dog poo bags as a way of promoting the issue in a positive manner with them.

Aughnacloy

Monitoring in Aughnacloy took place in the period of 11th March 2019 until 22nd March 2019. The monitoring was undertaken seven times in the evening commencing between 18:25hrs and 20:50 hrs. The monitoring took place along the route identified below. In total is route is approximately 1.8KM long.

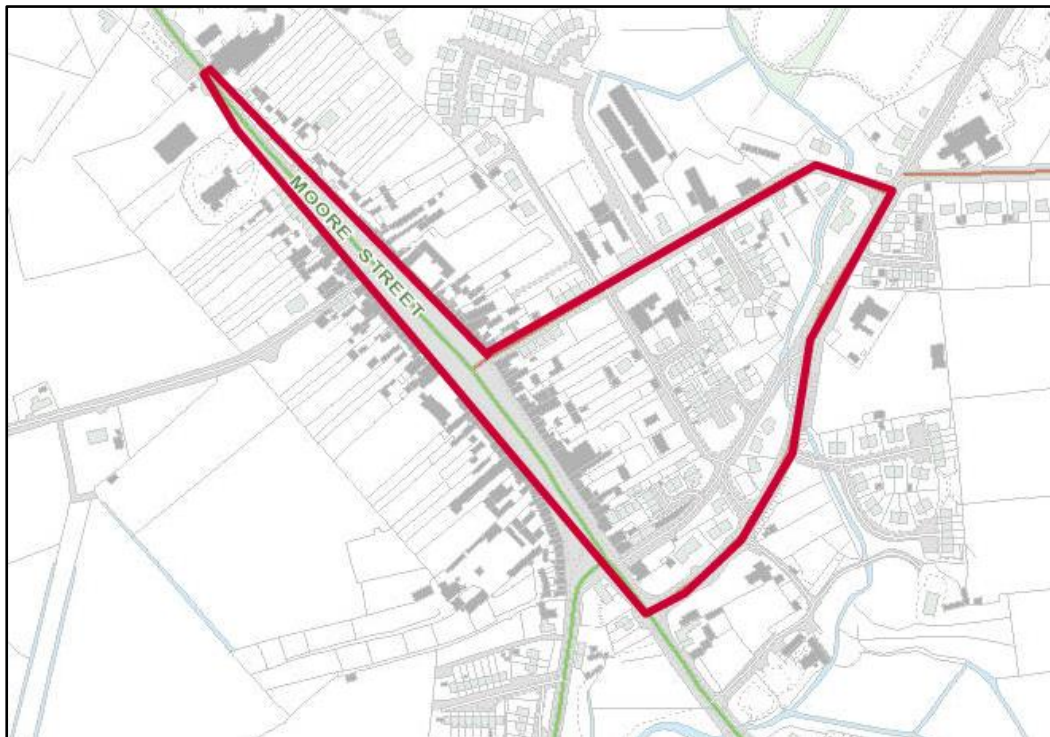


Fig 1. Monitoring Route for Aughnacloy

The route was chosen as it encompasses the areas complained of and forms a circular route likely to be followed by people out exercising their dogs. Again the times chosen were felt to be times of the early morning and evening when it is likely that dog walkers would be out and about with their dogs.

During the monitoring no dogs were observed committing a fouling offence. In total ten separate dog walkers were approached during the monitoring. None of those approached had allowed their dogs to foul. Advice was given and 'pooh bags' were distributed as required. Although a number of historical dog fouls were observed during most of the visits, in general the level of cleanliness of the streets in relation to this matter was found to be good.

Castledawson

Monitoring in castledawson took place during the period of 11th March 2019 until 19th March 2019. The monitoring was undertaken four times in the evening commencing between 18:10 hrs and 20:20 hrs. The monitoring took place along the route identified below. In total is route is approximately 1.5KM long.

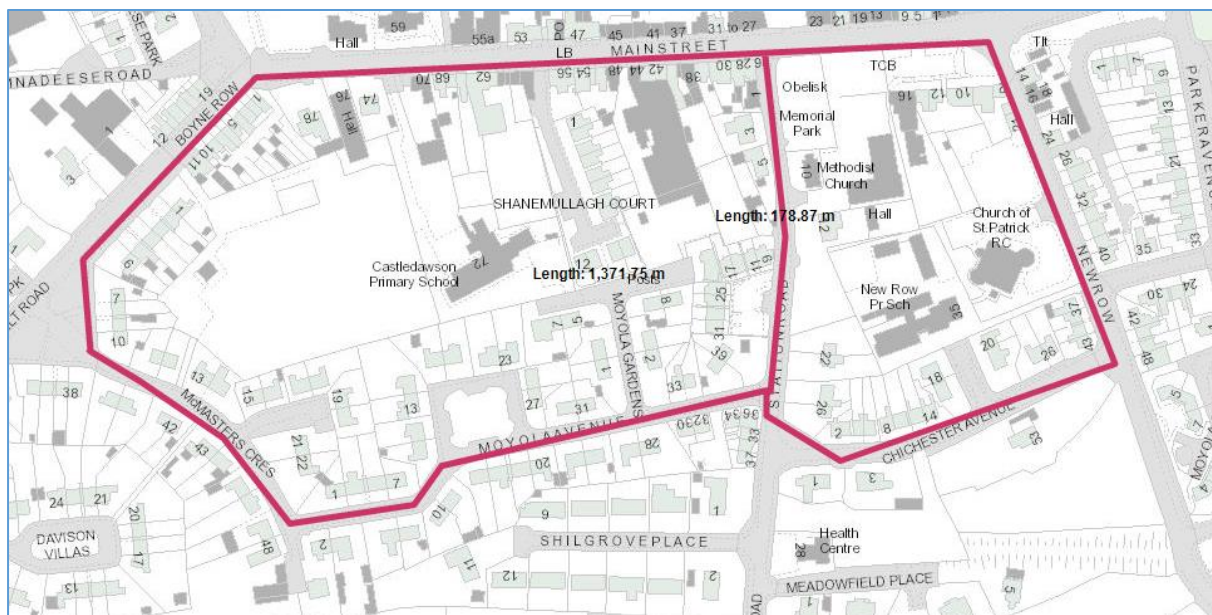


Fig 2. Monitoring Route for Castledawson

Once again, the route chosen encompassed the area complained of and formed a figure of eight route likely to be followed by people out exercising their dogs. The monitoring was undertaken in a manner similar to that outlined for Aghnacloy above. Once again no active cases of dog fouling were observed, and a total of seven dog walkers were approached regarding the monitoring programme. Officers noted that although they observed a number of historical dog fouls, the streets in general could be best described as clean.

Watching Eyes Posters

The 'watching eyes posters' also received some attention. Several people mentioned them when discussing dog fouling. 'Castledawson Life' also mentioned them in the course of one of its posts (see below). To this end it would seem they were effective in highlighting the issue of dog fouling.



Fig 3. Post appearing in Castledawson Life

Summary

In general the out of hours monitoring programme could be said to have been successful in highlighting the issue of dog fouling in two areas where the EHS had received a number of complaints over the preceding months. Once again it highlighted the difficulty in observing people actually committing an offence. However on a more positive note it was heartening that a number of people who were approached during the programme expressed support for the work being undertaken. The most incidents of observed historical foul recorded during any of the visits was seven over a 1.5KM route. This was referred to Environmental Services for a routine clean. In general the areas monitored were found to have a good level of cleanliness. No further dog fouling complaints were received by the Environmental Health Service between 1st April 2019, and the compilation of this report on 7th August 2019.