

## Amenities and Leisure Committee Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023

### **Agenda Item 16 – DOG WASTE BAGS**

#### **Background**

For some years, Earley Town Council provided Dog Waste Bags free of charge to Earley residents (in packs of 50 bags), the cost of purchasing the bags was budgeted for each financial year. The cost of providing free dog waste bags was £1,000 - 2022/23, £1,000 - 2021/22, £900 - 2020/21, £1,434 - 2019/20 and £1,235 - 2018/19.

This service proved very popular with residents, but town council staff had concerns that it was not just Earley residents who were obtaining the free bags and that a minority of those asking for a pack of dog waste bags were visiting several times a week saying that they were collecting bags for friends or family. In 2022, there was an increase in the number of people requesting ETC's packs of dog bags and, although this may be entirely coincidental, this increase happened at a similar time to WBC stopping provision of food waste bags (ETC's dog waste bags are far larger than regular dog waste bags and are biodegradable).

Town councillors have often been divided in their opinion on the provision of free dog bags. Some councillors take the view that not all residents are dog owners and therefore funds from the precept are being spent on something that benefits a minority, whilst some councillors have expressed concerns in relation to the Council providing single use plastics. There has also been a concern that, should the Council stop this free resource, that incidents of dog fouling being left in our parks and open spaces would increase.

To help address these concerns, in November 2022 ETC agreed to impose a limit on the number of packs (a pack contains 50 bags) each resident could collect per month, the limit was set at one pack per month. Then in December 2022 ETC introduced a charge of £1 per pack. This charge would just about cover the purchase cost to the Council.

#### **Current Situation**

Packs are only given out to residents who provide their postcode and that postcode is within Earley. Helpshop staff have recorded a decline in the number of people coming in to collect bags – details in the table below. The feedback has generally been along the same lines - people are happy to pay £1 for a pack of ETC dog bags as they are larger than standard bags and of such good quality, however, we do receive complaints that they are only allowed to purchase one pack per month. ETC's grounds staff have not reported any change in the incidences of dog fouling in our parks and open spaces.

#### **For Consideration**

Town councillors are requested to consider removing the limit of one pack per resident per month whilst retaining the charge of £1 per pack.

Members are asked to **RESOLVE** accordingly if appropriate.

**Figures**

	<b>No of packs collected 2022</b>	<b>No of packs collected 2023</b>
January	152	66
February	124	46
March	159	68
April	147	45
May	147	45
June	136	45 (up to the date of the agenda)
July	136	-
August	172	-
September	132	-
October	133	-
November	137	-
December	82	-

Emma Carroll  
Deputy Town Clerk  
28.06.2023