

A How to Guide to #doodoowatch For Community Groups.



#pickuporpayup



Written by Amanda Carlin

Image by Tash Scott.



#Doodoowatch Co-ordination Pack for Community Groups

Amanda Carlin.

Setting up a #Doodoowatch campaign is straightforward but only works with a few dedicated volunteers (we have three in Wimblington at the moment) to co-ordinate and then the commitment and backing of your local community.

Here are some facts about #Doodoowatch:

1. Abandoned dog mess is an issue throughout the country; in small rural hamlets, villages, towns and cities. If you are experiencing a problem, pride in your local area has brought you to investigate #Doodoowatch – thank you.
2. It is purely social media led, utilising both Twitter and Facebook accounts – these are not specific #Doodoowatch accounts, but pre-existing community accounts.
3. #Doodoowatch is about mapping, monitoring and reporting. To date in Wimblington we have minimised the issue completely and there have been no fines issued yet.
4. It is necessary to work in collaboration with the local Town, District or Borough Council, especially the area responsible for Dog Fouling, if you are enquiring from a Parish Council this recommendation applies too.
5. It is illegal to abandon dog mess. On the spot fines can be issued by local authorities.
6. A #Doodoowatch campaign is free to run but takes individual's time. Therefore a committed team is necessary for the initiative to work, if you have quite a few people available, a rota could be set up.
7. The #Doodoowatch campaign has been endorsed by the CEO of the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign. Keep Britain Tidy have confirmed if activity is known to be monitored incidents of abandoned dog mess are minimised.
8. This is not a 'Big Brother' campaign or a 'Name & Shame' campaign, this is a community led initiative to clean up our streets and verges; and the good news is, it works!

How does #Doodoowatch work within the community?

9. The first thing that needs to happen is a conversation about dog fouling in your area.
10. It is the same situation across the country, there is a problem in our cities, towns and villages; so when a conversation is sparked on a community Facebook or Twitter page on the subject of abandoned dog mess, it will gain momentum.
11. It will be recognised there is a problem with dog mess being abandoned by some owners.
12. The typical times that dog mess is abandoned seems to be very late at night to very early in the morning. Since we started #Doodoowatch that situation has changed – which is interesting.

13. As a community, in Wimblington, we discussed how we could deal with this very serious issue.
14. Major problems reported were, mothers with children walking into the abandoned mess, disability scooters and wheelchairs picking up the mess as well as pushchairs.
15. The problem had reached our village school where some unfortunate pupils had walked the mess in. Not the child's fault and quite upsetting for all concerned.
16. It was decided that if we somehow mapped and monitored the sightings, this would act as a deterrent; these sightings would then be reported to our District Council.
17. The mapping indicates we know where the mess is being abandoned, logging the times sightings occur as soon as they occur, means we have an idea of times the mess is typically abandoned – so we advise the District Council of hotspots and also areas that need clearing.
18. Parishioners either report directly onto our community Facebook page or relay their sightings to a co-ordinator, (myself or Wimblington Facebook Administrator: Jayne Whytock), we then record the sightings on social media on behalf of the person reporting.
19. Sometimes Parishioners do not want to be seen as reporting, or being a serial reporter either. That's fine; we can just copy and paste their report.
20. Thankfully one of our Facebook Group members, Tash Scott has expertise in mapping and monitoring. Tash very kindly created our #Poopfolio, which Tash updates for us as reports come in, which can be up to three or four times a day.
21. Another Facebook Group member Matt Willis came up with the map name of #Poopfolio, all through general communication on a small village Facebook page.
22. Some Parishioners will photograph the abandoned dog mess. If a photograph is taken Tash places it under the marker icon, so it is important to warn anyone with a delicate constitution not to double click on the icons, because they could view abandoned dog mess. The photographs are sent directly to me or Tash through the Facebook messenger service.
23. Tash has created a specific icon for Wimblington's #Doodoowatch. When a sighting is made the icon is red, when the area is cleared the icon turns green.
24. In order for Tash to map as accurately as possible, the reporter needs to give as much detail of the area they have sighted the abandoned dog mess as possible. We ask for addresses the sighting is closest to etc. This also helps us pinpoint hotspots for the local authority to patrol.

How does #Doodoowatch work with the Local Authority?

25. It is important to establish which area of your local authority deals with dog fouling?
26. Does your local authority have a street cleaning department that carries out tidying campaigns such as Street Pride clearing? In Fenland our District Council has a department called 'Streetscene'. Streetscene clears areas such as fly tipping, dog

mess and graffiti. Streetscene are also responsible for fining pet owners abandoning dog mess.

27. Fenland District Council issues an on the spot fine of £75 for anyone caught breaking the law by abandoning dog mess.
28. Our District Council has recently advertised in the local media, that they have upped their patrols and will issue on the spot fines, under their #pickuporpayup initiative.
29. By coincidence and purely by coincidence, Wimblington's #Doodoowatch launched at the same time as Fenland District Council's #Pickuporpayup initiatives so we were able to tap into that.
30. Given that, we did not need to have a formal conversation with the District Council, and as our initiative emerged organically, now, we most certainly would recommend that community groups do communicate with their local authorities in the first instance, so that a formal collaboration is formed from the beginning.
31. Having a collaboration is a good thing, and if you are a community group thinking of setting up a #Doodoowatch, I would be very happy to assist in identifying the department and officers you would need to speak with and helping you in communication with that department.

How does #Doodoowatch work?

32. If you do not have a community discussion page on Facebook or Twitter start one on each medium and invite all members of the community to join.
33. If you do have a community discussion page but are not a member, join a page.
34. Start a conversation about abandoned dog mess.
35. Others will soon join in on the conversation because it is a problem right across the country that needs dealing with.
36. State in the conversation that it is illegal for owners to abandon dog mess.
37. Mention #doodoowatch and that it is free to run and ask if anyone has heard about it.
38. Add a press release on the initiative, there are quite a few available but I quite like this one because it includes Tash's updated icons:
<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/pooshaming-map-sets-out-to-target-owners-of-fouling-dogs-a3786566.html>.
39. Ask if anyone is interested in starting an initiative, it can all be done online; there is actually no need to meet at all.
40. Requirements: Administrators – a minimum of three are required.
41. An administrator to accept reports and photographs from individuals who do not want to report and record online.
42. An administrator to collate the reports made directly online via social media, establishing which areas have been cleaned, and which need to be cleaned and to identify hotspots in order to update the local authority.

43. A co-ordinator is required to map sightings and to upload photographs to the map if they have been included in a report and to mark when the sightings have been cleared.
44. If your group has more than one administrator carrying out each job, I would advise putting a procedure in place to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that everyone is appropriately kept up to speed.
45. As a group, in Wimblington we use Facebook Messenger to communicate with each other, this works very well and we communicate with each other a few times a day.
46. Be respectful of each other and their time however and do not swamp individuals with messages. There clearly will be more reports in the early stages of the initiative, but it might be an idea to tackle this issue as you put procedures together. One way would be to identify reporting times so that it does not become overwhelming to each of you. #Doodoowatch works very quickly and so the first week, will see lots of reports and as you have success it will calm down.
47. Once you have decided to start a group, decide when the initiative will be launched. We will provide each of you with a specific #doodoowatch hashtag for your area, please use that, and please always include #doodoowatch into your social media listings.
48. We would like to keep a track of how each initiative is working across the country. Also it will prevent people from your local area becoming confused with which area is reporting – this is particularly important with Twitter.
49. Establish which local authority department is responsible for dog fouling and fining pet owners that abandon dog mess. They are usually the same department. If you wish I would be happy to help you identify the correct person and department to speak to.
50. Make contact and state you are starting a #doodoowatch scheme in your area in order to map and monitor abandoned dog mess. As a group of individuals, it is perfectly acceptable for you to do that, and you can explain how you see the initiative working. If you would like help in putting a communication together, I would be happy to help.
51. Ask if the local authority has patrols? Do the patrols automatically fine individuals for breaking the law in regards to abandoned dog mess?
52. Ask if the local authority have a/or if they would consider a #pickuporpayup initiative. Explain how it has worked successfully with #doodoowatch in Cambridgeshire and that it has the endorsement from the CEO of the Keep Britain Tidy campaign.
53. Ask if sightings are made from individuals who are unable to pick up the mess for one reason or another or if the mess is too bad for an individual to pick up, does the local authority have a Streetscene or Streetpride service that would remove the mess. State this service would only be requested if it was not possible for an individual to pick up and so would not be a strain on the service.

54. Think of an event to help with a launch. There could be a dog show. The local council could be providing a new dog poo bin in the area. There could be a litter pick in collaboration with the local authority's team (Streetcene or Streetpride), or just promote that you are forming your own #doodoowatch team following the success in Cambridgeshire.
55. #Doodoowatch here in Wimblington went viral and was featured on BBC Breakfast all within a week!!
56. How did that journey start I hear you ask? Well especially as at the time our Facebook page had little over 1,000 members and it is a closed group! I have to say we were all completely overwhelmed by it, but it is a good thing and we are pleased that the work we put in is recognised as doing good, not just for us here in Wimblington but for others who will adopt a similar scheme across the country. Thank you also for your interest.
57. The initiative went viral because a BBC Cambridgeshire reporter is a member of our closed group. So a tip, make sure the discussion page you use includes local media members and if it doesn't, share your page, invite them to join or include them in whatever way you can. This is a social media led initiative but it does need media attention to get the message out there.
58. Johnny Dee from BBC Radio Cambridgeshire called me, and asked if he could do a piece about #doodoowatch. Johnny came to my home, recorded the interview and it was broadcast the following morning.
59. That morning a reporter from BBC News heard the broadcast as she was arriving at work and she contacted me for an interview. I provided an interview. That weekend BBC News featured the item, at one point over the weekend #doodoowatch was trending more than Kim Kardashian!! I know unbelievable, but it is a nationwide problem.
60. The Associated Press contacted me for an interview and that was it, #doodoowatch was featured in publications far and wide, across the nation and abroad.
61. A friend of mine in the US sent his children a link about #Doodoowatch! We have no real idea just how far it went.
62. I was interviewed live on 5Live, on Sky News and BBC Breakfast, all dealing with the dreaded issue of dog mess, so important is the problem. BBC Breakfast interviewed me and my dog Molly and the CEO for the Keep Britain Tidy campaign at the same time, and that is when we thankfully received our endorsement.
63. So who would have thought that amount of media attention was possible from a tiny closed, Facebook, discussion group? Really this proves that anything is possible.
64. Once you have your local community on board, once you have your local authority on board and once you have the local media on board, you will be well and truly ready to roll.
65. Before the launch, advertise the event. Start taking #doodoowatch sightings from the community and start mapping prior to the event, so that you can put a

PowerPoint presentation together for those not using social media to show how it works at the event, but the launch will be the official 'start'.

How to use Social Media with #Doodoowatch.

66. Once you start your #doodoowatch initiative in your area, some morning's dog walkers will just post what they have seen, or if their usual circuit is clear. They may also automatically send reports directly to the administrator appointed to take reports. However if there are no reports post something along these lines:

[Amanda Carlin](#)

Admin · 7 March

Do you have photos for #doodoowatch? Could you pm me please and let me know roads? TIA

[Amanda Carlin](#)

Admin · 10 March

#Doodoowatch has one sighting today Eastwood End - [Tash Scott](#) has kindly updated the #poopfolio 😊:)

[Amanda Carlin](#)

Admin · 15 March

#Wimblington #doodoowatch link to #poopfolio 15/03/2018, Please click on link and look how many green areas 😊:) #cleaningupwimbo [Tash](#), [Jayne](#) #pickuporpayup - Please let us know your sightings and clearings - all going well 😊:)

[Amanda Carlin](#)

Admin · 11 April at 08:32

#doodoowatch - hotspots reported to FDC Streetscene #pickuporpayup and are; March Road, Meadow Way & Eaton Estate. Doddington Road, seems to have cleared - this is good. Has anyone walked between Blue Lane and Wood Street to confirm if those areas have been cleared please? Thank you everyone for your continued support.

67. We publish the updated #poopfolio once per day, and then ask if there are any sightings. It is great when the village is ALL CLEAR! It has happened several times since we started last month. Here are some examples:

[Amanda Carlin](#)

Admin · 1 April at 09:56

#Doodoowatch has delivered a wonderful Easter gift of NO SIGHTINGS! Yay!

[Amanda Carlin](#) [to Wimblington](#)

16 March at 14:53

No #doodoowatch sightings reported yet today. Are we doodoo free?

[Amanda Carlin](#)

Admin · 9 March

[#Doodoowatch](#) - any sightings Wimbo peeps to record on our [#poopfolio](#) today or are there none to report? Is [#Doodoowatch](#) working? Watch this space, competition to follow 😊

68. As reported sightings are received and mapped, you will start to notice spikes in times and locations of abandonment, this creates recognised hotspots.
69. It is advisable to keep a record in a spread sheet or similar of locations, dates and times of sightings and clearings; additionally Tash has kindly added the dates cleared on the [#poopfolio](#), which is very helpful.
70. These help twofold, one because you are then able to pinpoint hotspots to help with the local authority's patrols, and it helps individuals know where to avoid walking in order to avoid the mess, as the map is updated regularly it helps mothers walking with children, buggies and wheelchair users in particular.
71. To aid new dog walkers to the area, Tash has also mapped the location of our dog bins too.
72. We also recorded and monitored abandoned bags filled with dog mess, this is very strange but it is also happening throughout the country, where owners will pick up the mess but will not bin it.
73. However [#doodoowatch](#) seems to have put a complete halt to that practice. No bad thing!
74. In Wimblington, in the early days of [#doodoowatch](#) people reported and sent photos of the abandoned dog mess. Now, most report and do not send photographs.
75. Most individuals will report and clear the mess at the same time. This is fortunate, as it puts less strain on the local authority to come out and clear. Tash maps when the report has been made in red and when cleared in green.
76. In situations where the mess is too much for an individual to pick up, I will notify the District Council via Twitter, asking for the area to be cleared.
77. All notifications on social media need to include the [#Doodoowatch](#) hashtag. Here are some examples:

[Wimblington PE15](#) @WimblingtonPE15 22h22 hours ago
[#Doodoowatch](#) [#Wimblington](#) @a_j_carlin @TashScott3 @Wimblington @FenlandCouncil - we are very grateful to the [#Streetscene](#) team 4 helping us keep our beautiful village clean - THANK YOU! Feels a good collaboration :) @SteveBarclay @BBCCambs @BBCNews @cambstimes @JohnDevine1961

[Wimblington PE15](#) @WimblingtonPE15 Apr 14
[#Doodoowatch](#) abandoned dog mess this am @ 10 King Street - kindly cleared by parishioner - hotspot. Please patrol Sat am. [#Wimblington](#) [#Pickuporpayup](#)

@FenlandCouncil #streetscene #dogfouling @a_j_carlin @TashScott3 @Wimblington @SteveBarclay @BBCCambs @BBCNews @cambstimes

Wimblington PE15 @WimblingtonPE15 Apr 13

#doodoowatch #Wimblington #pickuporpayup #streetscene @FenlandCouncil @wimblington @TashScott3 @JohnDevine1961 @johnelworthy @SteveBarclay @cambstimes @fenlandcit @BBCNews early evening, abandoned dog mess in grass verge, Blue Lane increased, 22 to 26. #Hotspot! Please patrol.

Wimblington PE15 @WimblingtonPE15 Mar 21

#Doodoowatch. #Wimblington Hotspots: March Road - Bridge Lane, dyke @ 30 March Road, alleyway - Eaton Estate & Morley Way, Hassock Way - Bridge Lane, latter part of Blue Lane & Woodman's Way. @FenlandCouncil these areas should be patrolled please #pickuporpayup. @JohnDevine1961

Wimblington PE15 @WimblingtonPE15 22h22 hours ago

#doodoowatch #Wimblington - grass verges between Blue Lane & Ransonmoor Farm all clear - thank you #Streetscene #Pickuporpayup #Bagitandbinit @KeepBritainTidy @FenlandCouncil @SteveBarclay @TashScott3 @a_j_carlin @wimblington @johnelworthy @cambstimes @fenlandcit

Wimblington PE15 @WimblingtonPE15 Apr 5

#doodoowatch #poopfolio update #Wimblington #dogfouling #pickuporpayup @FenlandCouncil @a_j_carlin @TashScott3 @wimblington @BBCCambs @cambstimes @fenlandcit @JohnDevine1961 @johnelworthy #Streetscene @SteveBarclay

78. The hashtag #poopfolio is used when we distribute the map.

79. Here is the URL for the #poopfolio:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1iSphzE8xnIMxHB81r_zqWFclZY7oUJ2X&ll=52.51458192682894%2C0.0844660999999986&z=16

80. As you can see it is quite long; and when adding the updated #poopfolio to the Facebook page with reports it does not make a difference because you have all of room in the world to write your comment, but with Twitter there is a character limit, so we have reduced the URL using www.tinyurl.com.

81. We have been able to reduce the size of the URL to,

<https://tinyurl.com/doodoowatch>.

82. It is important to include the hashtag #doodoowatch and #poopfolio to Facebook and Twitter listings because when you go to the search tool on either platform all hashtagged messages come up and so it is easy to track reportings etc. It also makes it easier for other people to view progress.

83. As you can see with our Tweets, we add additional hashtags including; #bagitbinit and #pickuporpayup. We also include our District Council, and local media outlets. We do this with every posting. It helps to keep the message going and out there.

84. Even if there are no sightings, we add a #doodoowatch message each day to Facebook and to Twitter in order to keep the initiative fresh in peoples' minds and we are committed as a group to doing that.

How to deal with a backlash or negativity towards the initiative.

85. Each and every journey will be different, ours was interesting and yes, we did come across some negativity sadly. Here are some examples of the local media coverage of the negativity:

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/villagers-cry-foul-after-doodoo-watch-campaign-to-beat-dog-mess-problems-in-wimblington-goes-viral-1-8411451>

<http://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/wimblington-doodoo-watch-kuwait-amanda-carlin-1-5433040>

86. I can tell you these reports came out directly after a very short lived backlash. It was only a matter of approximately 10 people within the village making the comments and it is also true to say the Facebook page these comments were being made on have now all been completely removed.

87. Sadly the local media (newspapers) have not reported on the positive outcome from the backlash, but the local Radio has. As I said it was very short lived.

88. The dog fouling issue had been reported for approximately 6 years by the Parish Council during their meetings and each comment was minuted.

89. When #doodoo-watch went viral, some people felt the village would only ever be remembered for having a lot of abandoned dog mess, rather than individuals being proud of the village and wanting to clean up and for being innovative.

90. It was an unpleasant 48 hours, whilst a very small proportion of the village had their say, which they are entitled to.

91. The comments were being made on a Wimblington Facebook page but not on the main discussion group that started #doodoo-watch.

92. Please be aware it is necessary to have a spokesperson for the group, and some people due to the nature of the issue may have something to say about the matter and may attack the spokesperson personally.

93. In remaining cool and not saying anything, individuals who want to clean your area up will defend the initiative rigorously, if you do find there is negativity towards it in the early stages. Everyone has a right to have their say.

94. In our case, in Wimblington, by the morning the group against #doodoo-watch had given up and stopped posting any comments about it and then removed the comments altogether. I do not know why, but I was pleased the group chose to remove them.

95. We now no longer receive any negative comments about the initiative and we do have good community engagement.

96. I think there is a sense that the initiative is working, that it is making a difference to the village and everyone is pleased with that.

97. You will note the District Council had started the Green Dog Walking campaign on the following Saturday that #doodoo-watch started and #doodoo-watch does feed into the #pickuporpayup initiative from the District Council which is part of that initiative, so the report is slightly incorrect.

98. It is important to remember that any initiative that raises awareness of abandoned dog mess is really important to any area, so all efforts should be appreciated.
99. As a group we have communicated now with our local MP, District Council and with our Parish Council in order to work collaboratively.
100. Dialogue is important and the local authorities cannot do everything themselves, so having willing volunteers will always be welcome.
101. Be assured if something is working, there will always be some negativity towards it. It is a sign you are doing something right. I wish you luck with dealing with any situation but if you do find yourself in a difficult situation, I would be happy to help you through it, if you felt it would be of assistance.

How, when and where to use signage?

102. Please find an example of a #doodoowatch poster/signage in your pack, kindly designed by Tash Scott.
103. There is space for your local authority to include their logo.
104. We were fortunate in Wimblington because we were offered sponsorship for the printing and making up of signage from a local organisation.
105. If you can gain interest from local firms for sponsorship it's great, it helps with community cohesion.
106. We approached the Parish and District Councils for permission to use and put up the signage with a view to working in collaboration and to demonstrate our collaboration.
107. The intention being once the signage was printed, the local authority would then be able to place in areas they have authority over without any issues.
108. We advise not to print signs and put them up without first gaining permission from the local authority.

How to create a #poopfolio.

109. Please find Tash Scott's easy to follow 'how to' guide on creating a #poopfolio and creating icons to go with it.

Thank you for enquiring about #Doodoowatch. Please remember always use your own #Doodoowatch hashtag issued to you and #Doodoowatch so that we can help support you in getting the message out there of the good work you are doing.

If you require any further help and assistance, please do feel free to get in touch.

Regards,

Amanda Carlin

Email: amandacarlin@hotmail.com

Twitter: @a_j_carlin

Facebook: www.facebook.com/amandajcarlin