

The Towpath Code – in full

Using the Towpath

The towpath is an unsegregated route for the use and enjoyment of pedestrians, runners, cyclists and dog walkers and due to the nature of its historic origin as a towpath, it will always be narrow.

Users should be aware at all times of the shared use of the path and are asked to be courteous and considerate at all times to each other. To help you to respect others please follow these simple rules:

Cyclists

Cyclists must give way to pedestrians at all times.

Cyclists must have a bell and use it to warn others of their approach.

Cyclists should not ride at speed as it causes accidents. The towpath is not provided for the purpose of racing.

Cycling events are not encouraged but those that use the towpath must have prior approval and have Public Liability Insurance.

Pedestrians

Walkers are asked to keep to the left and allow others to pass easily when they need to.

Please make yourself aware of movements around you and do not obstruct others. Listen out for the two tings of a bike – they ring to let you know they are there and make you aware of their presence.

Walking and running groups using the towpath should be aware that this is a shared use path and should not obstruct other users.

Dog Owners

Dogs must be kept under control at all times, especially when close to water.

Do not allow extending leads to impede other users.

It is your legal responsibility as a dog owner to remove your dog's excrement from the towpath and deposit it in the nearest litter bin, which may be some distance away. Do not throw bags anywhere on the towpath, in the hedges or in the water.

Anglers

Anglers must keep the towpath free from tackle and rods and not obstruct other users.

Take care when casting and be aware of other users, such as canoes.

Fishing tackle kills wildlife, please dispose of all line, hooks and other tackle responsibly.

All users

Keep to the left and allow others to pass beside you.

Small children and children riding bikes must be kept safe at all times. Always hold their hand or use a safety rein when near water. Children must be kept away from the edges of Locks and care should be taken crossing bridges.

Please show consideration to elderly and disabled users at all times.

Take all litter home with you or to the nearest bin which will be in one of the car parks.

Protect Wildlife. Do not disturb nesting sites or leave debris that can injure or kill wildlife.

Always close gates behind you, and do not damage fences or stiles.

Horse Riding, Motorcycling and Shooting

Horse riding is not permitted on any part of the Towpath.

Shooting is not permitted.

The use of motor cycles and any motor vehicles are not permitted with the exception of operational vehicles and mobility scooters for the use of elderly and disabled people.

LEGAL FACTS

Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994

Offence of leaving litter

3. –(1) If any person throws down, drops or otherwise deposits in, into or from any place open to the air and leaves, anything whatsoever in such circumstances as to cause, or contribute to, or tend to lead to, the defacement of litter of any such place, he shall, subject to paragraph (2), be guilty of an offence.

Under the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994, it's a criminal offence to drop litter or dump rubbish. If you drop litter or dump rubbish, you may face the following penalties:

- a £80 fixed penalty notice
- a fine of up to £2,500 for more serious offences

4. - (1) Subject to paragraph (4), if a person in charge of a dog, permits that dog to deposit its excrement in any place prescribed by regulations he shall, subject to paragraph (2), be guilty of an offence. This regulation does not apply to a blind person in charge of a dog or to a stock person in charge of a working dog being used to drive livestock.

Road Traffic Order (Northern Ireland) 1995

Pedestrian endangering own safety or that of others

38. If a pedestrian through his own negligence on a road endangers his own safety, or that of any other person, he is guilty of an offence.

Dangerous cycling

42.—(1) A person who rides a cycle dangerously on a road or other public place is guilty of an offence.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is to be regarded as riding dangerously if (and only if)—

(a) the way he rides falls far below what would be expected of a competent and careful cyclist; and

(b) it would be obvious to a competent and careful cyclist that riding in that way would be dangerous.

(3) In paragraph (2) “dangerous” refers to danger either of injury to any person or of serious damage to property; and in determining for the purposes of that paragraph what would be obvious to a competent and careful cyclist in a particular case, regard shall be had not only to the circumstances of which he could be expected to be aware but also to any circumstances shown to have been within the knowledge of the accused.

Careless, and inconsiderate, cycling

43. If a person rides a cycle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road or place, he is guilty of an offence.