

23rd April 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your request of 25th March 2026. We have provided our response below:

I am making a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for information relating to the seasonal blanket dog lead rule imposed each year in Richmond Park (1 May – 31 July). Please provide the following information:

1. LEGAL AUTHORISATION

Copies of any direction, order or written authorisation from the Secretary of State (or their delegate at DCMS) authorising The Royal Parks to exhibit notices requiring dogs to be kept on leads throughout Richmond Park during the deer birthing season, as referenced in Regulation 3(5)(b) of the Royal Parks and Other Open Spaces Regulations 1997 (SI 1997/1639). If no such authorisation exists, please provide the specific legal basis on which The Royal Parks considers these notices to be enforceable. Specifically, any orders beyond Covid period.

The Royal Parks is authorised by the Secretary of State to carry out the functions of the Secretary of State as regards Richmond Park (amongst others), pursuant to The Contracting Out (Functions relating to the Royal Parks) Order 2016 and under the contract for services awarded to it by the Secretary of State. The Royal Parks is required to perform and exercise the duties and powers of management of the park, which would otherwise have been exercised by the Secretary of State. The relevant notices are to ensure birds and animals in the park are not chased, worried or otherwise injured - which is not generally permitted under Park Regulations.

2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Copies of any formal public consultation documents, reports, impact assessments or correspondence with DCMS relating to the introduction or continuation of the whole-park blanket seasonal dog lead rule, including any evidence reviews conducted before the rule was introduced or made permanent.

Please see the attached paper from the Executive Committee of 23rd March 2022. Please note, under Section 40(2) 'Personal Information' of the FOI Act, we have redacted the names of our staff members.

3. HISTORY OF THE RULE

The date on which the blanket whole-park seasonal rule was first introduced, and whether it was preceded by a more limited zoned approach (for example, leads required only in identified deer nursery areas). If a zoned approach was previously

used, the reasons recorded internally for moving to a whole-park rule.

The blanket whole-park seasonal rule was first introduced in March 2022 as per the Executive Committee paper. Deer can and do give birth anywhere which is why the rule applies to the entire park as opposed to specific areas. There were signs used to illustrate where the deer are likely to give birth, but the rule regarding dogs on leads was still whole park specific. We phased out these signs in Richmond Park as inadvertently they were attracting people to try to view the baby deer.

4. ENFORCEMENT DATA

For each of the last five years:

(a) The number of penalty notices or fines issued to dog owners in Richmond Park solely for having a dog off the lead during the birthing season, where the dog was not observed chasing or harassing deer.

(b) The number of penalty notices or fines issued where a dog was observed chasing or harassing deer (which would fall under separate provisions).

(c) The number of prosecutions brought in each category, and their outcomes.

This distinction is important: I am specifically asking about enforcement of the off-lead rule itself, separately from incidents involving actual deer chasing, which are governed by different legislation.

The Royal Parks does not hold information relating to penalty notices or prosecutions. I recommend that you redirect your request to the Metropolitan Police. Contact information can be found here: [Make an FOI request to ask for information about the police | Metropolitan Police](#)

5. RESTRICTED FUNDS

Details of whether any restricted charitable funds held by The Royal Parks — including but not limited to grants received for conservation, biodiversity, heritage or wildlife protection purposes — have been used to fund any costs associated with implementing, enforcing or communicating the seasonal dog lead rule, including signage, ranger time, or legal advice. If so, please identify the restricted fund(s) and the amounts involved.

No restricted funds have been used to fund any costs associated with implementing, enforcing or communicating the seasonal dog lead rule, including signage, ranger time, or legal advice.

I hope this information satisfies your request.

Right of Review

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter, quoting the reference at the top of the page and should be addressed to:



Records Manager
The Royal Parks
The Old Police House
Hyde Park
London
W2 2UH
Email: records@royalparks.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision, quoting the reference at the top of the page. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Records Manager | records@royalparks.org.uk | www.royalparks.org.uk |
The Old Police House | Hyde Park | London | W2 2UH