

VISITING CONSTABLE COUNTRY



Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No. 196 (Sudbury, Hadleigh and the Dedham Vale).



East Bergholt and Flatford can be reached by following the B1070 from the A12 (junction 31). Stratford St. Mary and Dedham can be reached by following the B1029 from the A12 (junction 30).



Flatford car park - CO7 6UL; Dedham Mill car park - CO7 6DH; East Bergholt Red Lion car park - CO7 6TB; Manningtree Station car park - CO11 2HH



Public transport information: www.traveline.info
0871 200 22 33



Manningtree Station is on the London Liverpool Street to Norwich main line. Train information: www.nationalrail.co.uk - 03457 48 49 50

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Front cover image of Flatford Bridge © James Fletcher,
Environment Agency

Disclaimer: Whilst the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of maps and information within this publication, they are provided as guidance only and we cannot accept any liability for their interpretation and use.
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THE DEDHAM VALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

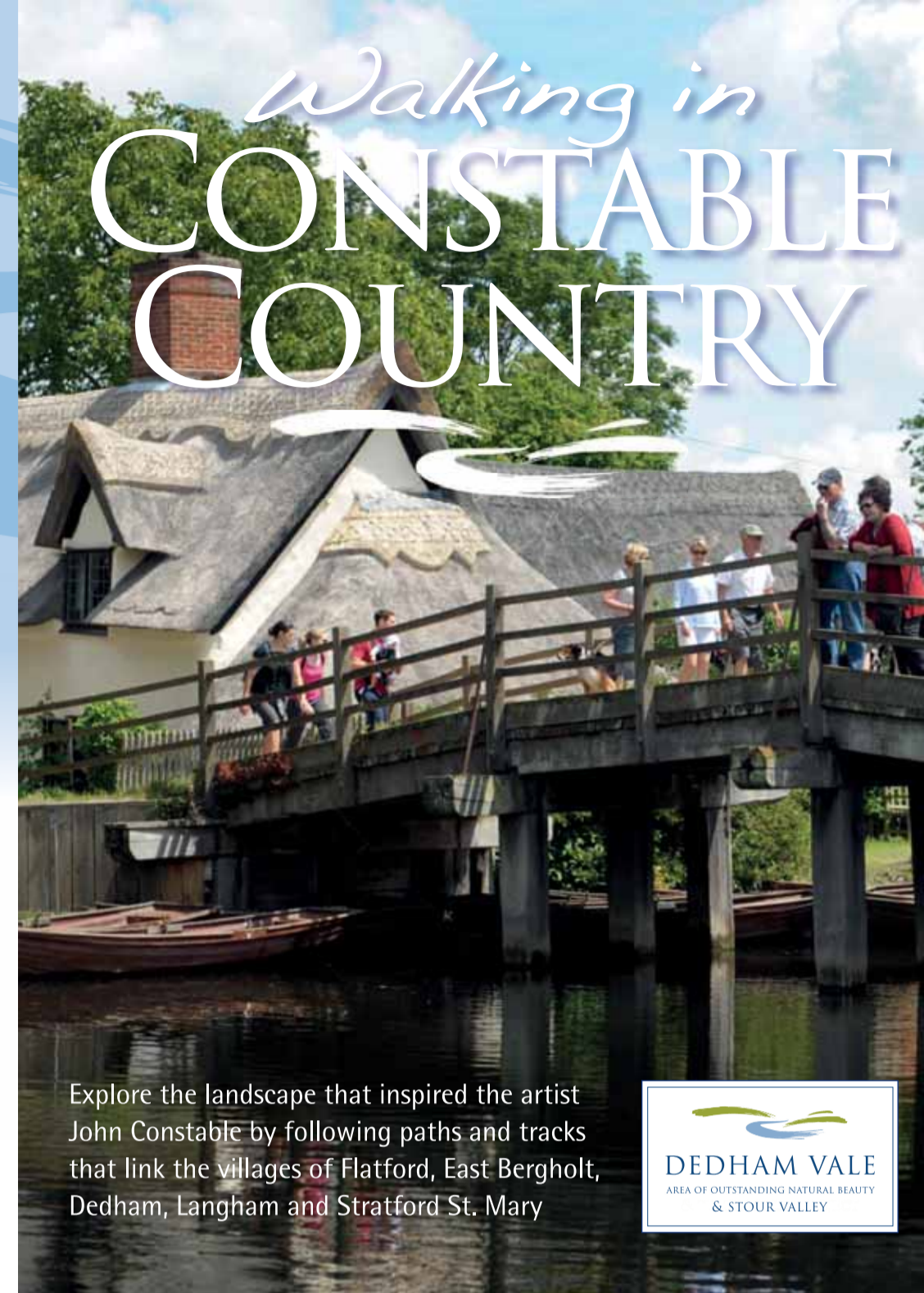
The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour estuary in the east to the village of Warmingford in the west. A wider project area extends further west along the length of the Stour Valley to the Cambridgeshire border.



The AONB was designated in 1970 and covers 90 square kilometres. It is a diverse landscape which includes ancient woodland, rolling farmland, rivers, meadows and attractive villages.



Walking in CONSTABLE COUNTRY



Explore the landscape that inspired the artist John Constable by following paths and tracks that link the villages of Flatford, East Bergholt, Dedham, Langham and Stratford St. Mary



CONSTABLE COUNTRY Highlights

The villages and hamlets of Constable Country are famous for their beautiful buildings and fascinating history. These communities are linked by the river Stour, which was once a major trade route into the heart of Suffolk and north Essex.

1 THE DEDHAM VALE is an area which stretches from Flatford in the east to Warmingford in the west. The Dedham Vale was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1970 because of its landscape and history. In the Middle Ages, the combination of woodland and pasture was ideal for sheep rearing. This made the area wealthy through wool production, allowing for the construction of imposing churches and impressive village buildings. Later still, artists such as Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable and Sir Alfred Munnings immortalised the landscape in paint. Despite being close to Ipswich and Colchester, the landscape has survived relatively unaltered, making it a very special place to visit.

2 FLATFORD inspired many of John Constable's most familiar paintings, including *The Hay Wain* and *Flatford Mill*. When Constable painted at Flatford, around 200 years ago, it was a working grain mill and bustling riverside hamlet. The dry dock was used to repair barges, as depicted in the famous painting by Constable. Constable's family ran the milling business and owned



barges on the river. Today, the landscape is managed by the National Trust to reflect this history. You can sit by the river in the National Trust Tea Room or hire a rowing boat. The RSPB owns a beautiful wildlife garden whilst Flatford Mill is now an environmental learning centre run by the Field Studies Council.



3 THE RIVER STOUR is a peaceful water way today, but 200 years ago, it was the main trade route into Suffolk and north Essex. Cargo, such as coal and bricks, was unloaded from sea going vessels at the estuary port of Mistley and transported 25 miles by barge to the inland port of Sudbury. Local goods, including grain and wool, were exported in the same way. This river traffic stopped many years ago, but the river is still popular with canoeists and people hiring rowing boats from Flatford and Dedham. The River Stour Trust run trips on electric launches from Flatford, Dedham and Sudbury.



4 DEDHAM has a history stretching back many centuries. The main street is flanked by beautiful buildings, some of which feature Georgian façades in front of Tudor timber frames. The Sun Inn is a beautiful survivor from the Tudor period and even features a covered carriage way from the days when it was a coaching inn. The magnificent church of St. Mary the Virgin has one of the tallest towers in the area. In the summer, the tower is open and the views from the top reach to the sea at Harwich. Inside the church, you can see Constable's painting, *The Risen Christ*.



5 EAST BERGHOLT has many links to the artist John Constable. The house where he was born, East Bergholt House, was demolished in the 1840s, but there is a plaque on the railings of the present house to indicate where it was located. Constable's first studio, Moss Cottage, is situated opposite the village shop. His parent's tomb is in the churchyard of St. Mary's, although he



was buried in Hampstead. St. Mary's Church does not have a bell tower, probably due to lack of funds when the church was built in the 16th Century, so the bells are hung in a wooden bell cage at ground level. Watching the bells being rung is a fascinating (if noisy) experience!

6 STRATFORD ST. MARY is located on what was the Essex Great Road. For centuries, this was the main route from East Anglia to London. The three pubs in the village indicate it was a key stopping point. In the 1970s the old road was bypassed by the A12, making the village a more peaceful place.









7 LANGHAM CHURCH is situated on the Langham Hills, well away from the village. One of Constable's earliest patrons, Dr John Fisher, was rector of the church. His enthusiasm for Constable's work is the reason why the artist did so many sketches and paintings of the surrounding area. Dr John Fisher went on to become the Bishop of Salisbury. To the left of the church is the Hurlock Schoolroom, built in 1837 for the education of the girls of the parish.



Front Cover: Walking beside the river Stour; 1 The Dedham Vale - a gentle landscape of fields and woods 2 Willy Lott's House - features in Constable's painting *The Hay Wain*; 3 The River Stour - willows, water meadows and cows; 4 Dedham Main Street - features many beautiful buildings; 5 East Bergholt Bell Cage - houses the heaviest set of 5 bells in England; 6 East Bergholt Church - an imposing building; 7 Stratford St. Mary - traditional buildings of timber frame and red tile; 8 Langham Church - a peaceful location.

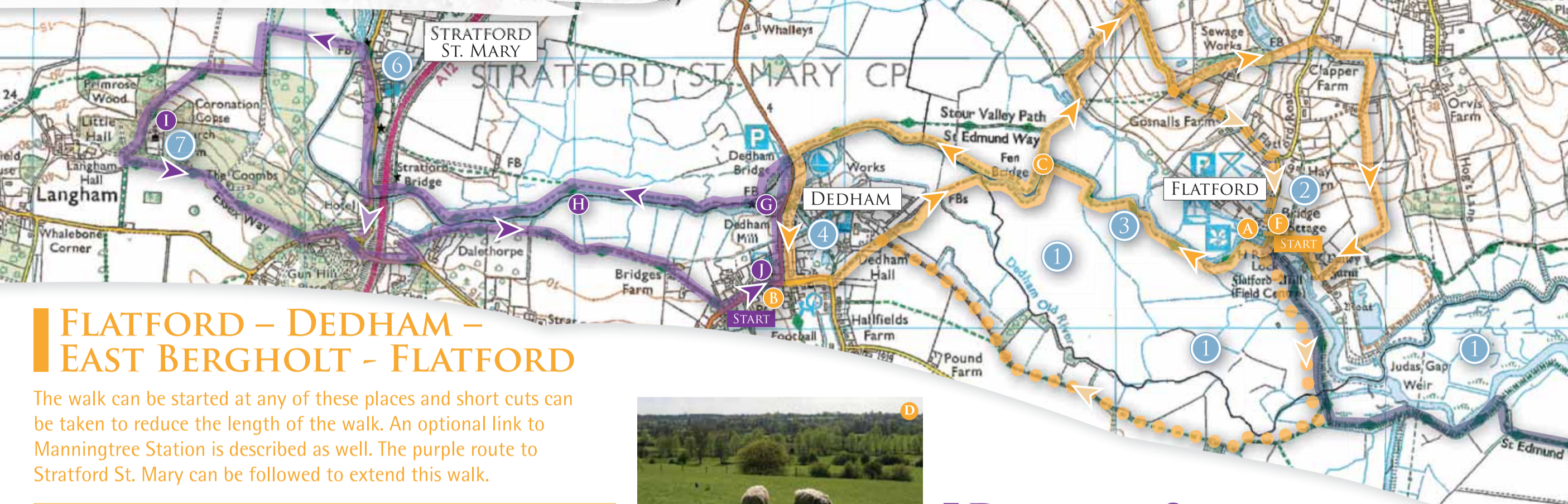
Walking in CONSTABLE COUNTRY

DEDHAM VALE
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
& STOUR VALLEY

-  Dedham – Stratford St. Mary – Langham – Dedham
-  Shortcut
-  Flatford – Dedham – East Bergholt – Flatford
-  Shortcut
-  Alternative route to Dedham
-  Connection to Manningtree Station
-  Point of interest on route
-  'Highlights' location

500m

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FLATFORD – DEDHAM – EAST BERGHOLT – FLATFORD

The walk can be started at any of these places and short cuts can be taken to reduce the length of the walk. An optional link to Manningtree Station is described as well. The purple route to Stratford St. Mary can be followed to extend this walk.

WALKING DISTANCES AND TIMES: (not including stops)

Flatford-Dedham-East Bergholt-Flatford: 4.7 miles/7.5 km. 1¾ hrs

Flatford-Dedham-Flatford: 3.4 miles/5.5 km. 1¼ hrs

Flatford-Dedham-Flatford via alternative route: 3.7 miles/6 km. 1½ hrs

Manningtree Station-Flatford (one way): 1.7 miles/2.8 km. 35 mins

TERRAIN: Paths and tracks, some minor roads and village roads. Route can be very muddy in places and flooded after heavy rain. Take care near areas of deep water.

Starting from Flatford (Bridge Cottage): cross bridge and turn right. Follow riverside path until Fen Bridge **C**. Cross bridge and turn sharp left. Follow path across meadow and beside river until road. Turn left and follow road to reach Dedham main street.



Starting from Dedham (beside Marlborough Head Inn): turn left and follow main street until it bends to right. Continue ahead on track. Follow track and then path. Pass National Trust sign on right (turn right here for alternative route to Flatford as detailed below) and continue straight on footpath through trees and then across meadows. When river reached, bear right across small concrete bridge (it can be very muddy here). Follow path beside river, bearing left to reach Fen Bridge. Cross bridge and follow track ahead. Continue on this winding track until lane.



Turn left to reach village of East Bergholt. At War Memorial, cross road and enter churchyard. Turn left and walk under arch. Exit churchyard and continue on pavement beside site of Constable's birthplace to reach village centre.



Short Cut to Flatford: turn right here and follow path that runs parallel with lane. Continue on path then lane to reach Flatford car park. Walk through car park to Bridge Cottage.

Starting from East Bergholt (Red Lion Pub): Follow road through East Bergholt towards village centre and St. Mary's Church. Enter churchyard and turn left. Follow path around outside of church, passing historic bell cage. Exit churchyard through gate opposite war memorial and continue straight across road down Flatford Lane (note oncoming traffic).



When junction reached with Fen Lane, continue straight, but use path that runs parallel with lane on left hand side.

When path junction reached, adjacent to sharp left bend in road, turn left across field. Follow path into wood and continue down hill, passing sewage works on right. Cross small stream and continue up hill to reach lane. Turn right and then immediately left into



drive of Flatford Farm House. Follow drive between buildings and join path. Continue until junction, then turn right and follow path between paddocks. When gate and open meadow reached, continue straight down hill. Bear right at bottom and join track to Willy Lott's House. Continue on lane beside Flatford Mill to Bridge Cottage.



ALTERNATIVE ROUTE from Flatford to Dedham (useful if the route described above is flooded). Starting from Flatford (Bridge Cottage), cross bridge and turn left. Follow path beside river until gate beside flood barrier. Go through gate and bear right away from barrier. Cross concrete bridge and bear right along grassy track. Continue when this becomes concrete track. At sharp left bend near buildings, continue straight on path across field. Follow path for some distance beside fields, ignoring all left exits. At path T junction, turn left and follow track to Dedham, keeping left at entrance to business centre.

DEDHAM – STRATFORD ST. MARY – LANGHAM – DEDHAM

The walk can be started from Dedham or Stratford St. Mary. The green route to Flatford and East Bergholt can be followed to extend this walk.

WALKING DISTANCE AND TIME: (not including stops)

Dedham – Stratford St. Mary – Langham – Dedham: 4 miles/6.4 km. 1½ hours

TERRAIN: Paths and tracks, some minor roads and village roads. Route can be very muddy in places and flooded after heavy rain. Take care near areas of deep water.



Starting from Dedham (opposite St. Mary's Church). Almost immediately, turn left between the Essex Rose Tea Room and Marlborough Head Inn and follow road to river. Cross Bridge and turn left onto path beside mill pond. Follow path across meadows, keeping river to left. Cross wooden footbridge. When A12 embankment reached, follow tunnel under dual carriageway to road.

Cross road and turn right, following pavement into Stratford St. Mary, passing Black Horse Inn. Take path on left across long narrow river bridge. Follow path ahead straight across meadow. On far side, turn left along track for short way. At path sign, turn right and follow path beside field. At path junction bear left uphill towards house. Pass church **1** and take sharp left bend in front of gateway. Follow



Short cut to Milsoms Hotel and route to Dedham: turn left here and follow road as it bends to left across A12 bridge. Follow pavement down hill and turn left into entrance to Milsoms Hotel. Path to Dedham leaves opposite Hotel.

surfaced drive to reach ornate gates and main road. Turn left along pavement and follow around to right, then cross road and bear right across A12 bridge. Follow pavement down hill and turn left into entrance to Milsoms Hotel.



Starting from Stratford St. Mary (Milsoms Hotel): take footpath opposite hotel building. Follow path downhill through trees to beside river. Continue across meadows, eventually joining track beside field. Follow track through the National Trust's Bridge Farm. At end of track, turn left into Dedham main street **1**. Continue until opposite church.



A Rowing boats – the perfect way to spend a summer afternoon; **B** St. Mary's Church, Dedham – one of the tallest towers in the area; **C** Fen Bridge – an historic crossing point; **D** The Dedham Vale – a traditional landscape; **E** East Bergholt's most famous son; **F** Bridge Cottage – discover more about John Constable; **G** Dedham Mill – once owned by the Constable family; **H** Willows beside the Stour; **1** Langham Church – features in Constable's famous painting Glebe Farm; **2** Dedham Main Street – beautiful buildings and interesting shops (photo credit: Esther Wilkinson).

Countryside CODE

The area has a network of footpaths and bridleways. We have marked suggested routes on this map and have a few simple suggestions to help you enjoy the area safely and assist our work to care for it.

Please follow the Countryside Code: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code:

- Plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave things as you find them. Take your litter home.
- Help look after our plants and wildlife by keeping to footpaths and not trampling verges.
- Dogs are welcome, but please keep them under close control at all times, especially when amongst farm animals and in bird nesting season (March-September). Release your dog if chased by cattle.
- Always clean up after your dog

Thank You
FOR HELPING US KEEP THIS
OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFUL