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Children hurt in mad dog attack

Bull terrier put down after going berserk in Belfast

By Claire Regan

03 January 2006

A crazed bull terrier has been destroyed after attacking five people - including two children - when it went on the rampage.

The USPCA confirmed today the animal's owner had agreed for it to be put down after it was suspected of biting five people in the Ardoyne area of north Belfast yesterday.

It was reported one woman was bitten on the face while an eight-year-old boy and five-year-old girl also suffered injuries.

The extent of the injuries suffered by the other two victims is not known. It is understood two had to be taken to the Mater Hospital. Their injuries were not thought to be life-threatening.

Police from the Tennent Street station were called out at around 5.30pm after receiving reports of the deranged animal attacking people. It is understood a crowd of around 50 people had gathered and were demanding the dog's immediate removal.

Officers managed to contain the Staffordshire bull terrier, called Tyson, in the driveway of a house and called the USPCA for help.

The charity's chief executive Stephen Philpott said he was contacted by police after failed attempts to get a Belfast City Council dog warden, who has responsibility for dog control, to the scene.

"Dealing with a crazed dog is the responsibility of the local council but, despite the best efforts of the police and ourselves, a warden couldn't be raised," he said.

"A USPCA member of staff went along to the scene. He felt it would be in the best interest of public safety to remove the dog from the area as quickly as possible. He agreed to assist and I authorised the dog's removal."

Mr Philpott said exact details of the attacks were unclear but police officers told him that five people had been bitten and two of those had required hospital treatment in the Mater.

"The dog's owner came forward later in the day and agreed for the dog to be destroyed," he added.

"Once a dog attacks it has to be destroyed but normally that would be an issue for the local council to deal with. In this case, the owner agreed, so it was done yesterday."

According to bulldogbreeds.com, Staffordshire bull terriers are known to have great strength for their small size. The website said they are stocky and muscular, can grow to around 14-16 inches in height and can weigh between 24 and 38lbs.

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