



Police did not need to kill mastiff, says dog warden

A COUNCIL warden who offered his services to round up a dangerous dog has said he could have stopped it from being killed.

David Costello, who works for Derwentside District Council, said he was not given the chance to catch 18-month-old mastiff Freya before it was shot by police.

He said he was ordered from the scene by police, who used a helicopter and an armed response unit to search for the animal on June 8.

The dog had been loose for 18 days and injured its owner's mother-in-law, Ann Ridsdale, when she tried to catch.

Police cordoned off a cemetery, near Chester Road, in Stanley, County Durham, and nearby allotments.

Mr Costello, 50, from Consett, who has been a dog warden for 20 years, said he was asked to leave the scene soon after Freya's owner, Rob Rainbow, was told to go.

He said: "I have caught thousands of dogs and this dog was not dangerous. Part of my job is pick up strays.

"It was frightened. These are calm dogs and usually quite amiable. We were not given the chance to get that dog.

"They could have got a vet and got tranquillising tablets to put on some food, but I think because of all the resources they put in, they had made their minds up.

"Given the fact that the dog could have been caught safely, it was the wrong thing to do."

Mr Rainbow has spoken to a solicitor and is considering taking legal action against the police.

He said: "She seemed to think I have got a case."

A Durham Police spokesman said: "The dog was destroyed on the grounds of public safety.

"If the owner has any issues with the police action, he should put them in

writing to the area commander."

A website has been set up so people can show their feelings on the issue.

It includes pictures of Freya after she was shot that some people will find disturbing.

To visit the site, go online at www.police-shoot-dog.co.uk

8:40am Thursday 21st June 2007

[Back](#)