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Court told of dogs' horror attack



l Roger Constable leaves Harborough Magistrates' Court.



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By Staff Copy

AN 87-year-old man with a heart condition could only look on in horror as a pack of large dogs savaged his pet Jack Russell to death in front of his eyes.

The 12-year-old dog was rushed to the vets with terrible injuries after being set on by five Newfoundlands in a Harborough street but was dead on arrival.

At Harborough Magistrates' Court court on Tuesday was the Newfoundlands' owner Roger Constable (53), now of Garden House, Pipewell, but formerly of Caxton Street, Harborough, where the attack happened on June 14, 2006.

He pleaded guilty to being the owner of dangerous dogs out of control in a public place.

The court heard this was not the first incident involving dogs owned by Constable. He is already subject to a Crown Court control order after the dogs' parents were involved in attacking a person.

Louise Harman, prosecuting, told the court the Jack Russell's owner, Mr Wigfall, has a heart pacemaker fitted. He was taking his pet, Tinker, for an afternoon walk when it was set on by the five eight-stone Newfoundlands.

He described the growling dogs as being like “a pack of wolves” as they set on the small animal and ripped him apart.

Constable waded into the dogs and suffered bites on his hands and arms as he fought them off Tinker, said Mrs Harman.

He then put Tinker in his van and took him and Mr Wigfall to the Town and Country vets practice in Harborough, but he was already dead.

Said Mrs Harman: “Constable paid the vet’s bill and offered to buy Mr Wigfall a new dog but he refused, because he wanted to go to the police because he did not want the dogs to attack a child.”

Tinker was a pedigree Jack Russell worth £250-£300, she said.

A woman nearby was visibly shaking after witnessing the attack and a nearby builder phoned the police.

Hugh Middleton, for Constable, said he was putting the five dogs and their parents in his people carrier when one of the young dogs jumped out of the window to get to Tinker and the four others followed. The dogs were all on short leads.

Constable had done what he could to make amends by paying the vets bill, offering to pay for a new dog and paying to have Tinker cremated, he said.

Constable had now reduced the number of dogs he owned to four - the parents and two of the young.

Court chairman David Chambers told Constable he had acted negligently and to some degree recklessly.

He ordered reports to be prepared and told Constable he was facing a high community sentence.

Constable will appear in court again today (Thursday).

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