

# DAILY ECHO

## DorsetECHO

### **Dog 'used as weapon' is seized by police**

A DOG which was allegedly 'used as a weapon' by a man who got into an argument in Weymouth has been seized by police.

It is among the complaints about dogs which are being investigated by police and the borough council.

A valuable English mastiff was seized and the owner is facing a court appearance following an altercation in the town centre where it is claimed a dog was encouraged to attack people.

Police warned they will take action if dogs are found to be out of control, although they stressed in this case it appears the owner rather than the dog was at fault.

The warning comes after toddler Archie-Lee Hirst was mauled to death by a rottweiler in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, last week.

PC Kevin Eames of Weymouth police said two other cases had been referred to council dog warden Ian Lewis since Christmas.

They include a Staffordshire bull terrier which residents claim ran towards them in a 'very threatening manner'.

In another case, it is alleged a rottweiler escaped from a garden and fought with a Staffordshire bull terrier, inflicting puncture wounds. The terrier, two-year-old Jack, was being walked by Patrick Coulter, 15, and Dan Peters, 14, and Dan suffered a scratched hand as he tried to separate the dogs.

Patrick's father Graham, who owns Jack, said an attempt was made to contact the rottweiler's owner to come to an arrangement about paying for veterinary treatment but he alerted police when he refused to answer his door.

Mr Coulter said: "Jack is such a softie and probably thought he was in a play fight. The vet's bill wasn't that expensive, but it's not the point. I also have a German shepherd which acts as a guard dog but I keep him in the back. There's no way I would let him roam around in my front garden."

PC Eames said the majority of dog owners were responsible and kept their pets under control.

Dogs which come to attention of authorities can be made the subject of a

voluntary control order which includes conditions to keep it under control. Currently there are 56 orders in place.

Serious cases and repeat offenders are likely to end up in court. In the past two years there have been 26 court orders and in some extreme cases dogs have been destroyed and owners banned from owning or even walking dogs for lengthy periods.

11:33am Saturday 5th January 2008

*By Martin Lea*

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