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## Dog attack horror

07 November 2008 | 16:18

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TERRIFIED walkers today told of their shock after witnessing a dog savage a spaniel in an Ipswich park - and blasted police for failing to send officers to the scene of the mauling.



The bull mastiff who attacked the spaniel in Orwell Country Park

The bull mastiff, which ran amok despite signs warning that dogs should be kept on leads, tore into the spaniel's hind legs in the horror attack at Orwell Country Park.

Several members of the public bravely grabbed the animal, managing to wrestle it until it released its jaws from its injured prey.

But they claim they were forced to wait with the aggressive dog for more than an hour-and-a-half because police would not send an officer to the scene.

The ordeal only ended when a dog warden from Suffolk Coastal District Council was dispatched to the park.

However, the owner was located in the car park and the dog was returned before being driven away.

A woman, who asked to remain anonymous but is a regular user of Orwell Country Park, said she was appalled at the police response.

She said: "We had been taking our four-month-old puppy for a walk when I saw a flash of a dog.

"A woman started to scream and scream and then we saw that a dog had got hold of the back of the spaniel and there was blood coming out of it.

"I kicked the dog and grabbed its collar and it eventually broke its grip. The dog was between my legs. It started to bite at my hands and arms. I didn't know what to do.

"There was blood spittle dripping from its fangs - it was really shocking."

The woman, who by that time had been joined by a number of other park users, made several calls to the police. But the operator said all the force could do was contact a dog warden.

She said: "When I called the police for a second time they said it was no longer a police matter. I said 'what am I supposed to do?' and the operator said 'I have called the dog warden and that's all I can do'.

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"I was appalled. We waited for an hour-and-a-half. I have never been so frightened in all my life. It took me two or three days to calm down.

"I was left with a dangerous dog with no help whatsoever from police."

Paul Browes was one of those who helped snare the dog. He said: "The (police) operator was adamant they were not going to send an officer and suggested we tied the dog to the tree. I couldn't believe it.

"It would have killed something had it got its teeth into it."

Has your dog been attacked in similar fashion? Write to Your Letters, Evening Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AN or e-mail [eveningstarletters@eveningstar.co.uk](mailto:eveningstarletters@eveningstar.co.uk)

SUFFOLK police today said a change in legislation meant responsibility for responding to dangerous dogs had been transferred to borough council dog wardens.

However, a force spokesman said that had the dog turned on anybody, officers would have been dispatched.

He said: "A member of the public called police at 3.26pm on Tuesday 28th October reporting that two dogs had been fighting in Orwell Country Park.

"We immediately put a call into the dog warden asking for attendance, as the dogs had been separated and restrained.

"This is in line with new legislation introduced in April 2008."

Officers interviewed the owner of the attacked dog on Monday evening. A decision has been made, in conjunction with the owner, that no further action will be taken.

Suffolk Coastal District Council said as the dog had been reported as a stray rather than a dangerous animal, the warden had no power to seize it.

A spokesman said if the force had deemed it dangerous, officers could have seized the dog as police still have powers to act in those circumstances.

A spokesman for Ipswich Borough Council said the authority did not employ any dog wardens, but had two pest control officers who would deal with stray dogs as and when required.

The owner of the dog chose not to comment.

## YOUR VIEW

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Quote 'It started to bite at my hands and arms. I didn't know what to do'. What reason have the police got for failing to attend.

**Peter Taber**

Me and my wife witness an attack by a bull mastiff up at orwell park last year,dog owners from all over ipswich come up here now because they know that

they can get away without cleaning their mess up. Dogs should be kept on a lead while in the park and wear a muzzle

**Michael Bartlett, Ipswich**

This doesn't surprise me, but remember it was the police operator and not a police officer who refused to help, it's the stupid idiot owners who think the world owes them a living walking these horrible animals, and if anyone finds this harsh then tough. It's the second time I've replied to a letter like this, the same thing happened a month ago by the same breed. And as I put in that reply I had to fend off a bull terrier that was wondering around after it decided to attack my 4 year old, if the owner hadn't turned up I would have gladly killed it. What is the point of these dogs, this isn't the ghetto, this is Ipswich, they just think look at me, I'm hard, I've got a savage dog. Prats.

**Brian Primett**

It is quite worrying knowing that dangerous dogs like this are wandering in public areas with no owner in site!! Now that this dog has attacked another dog surely it must be made to be muzzled at the very least. Have we got to wait until a child is next?

**Claire Peck**

We walk our dog over there and last year were attacked by two Rottweilers, they were off the lead and no muzzles or owner in sight for a minute or two. Quite frightening. With regard to this Bull Mastiff what was it doing off lead without a muzzle and what was the owner doing in the car park? Doesn't sound like a stray to me? More like a type of dog owned by an inexperienced owner who hasn't trained it to return on command who chooses to own a powerful and potentially dangerous breed such as this without the responsibility that goes with it. It is all right owning a trophy dog but they must appreciate exactly what they are taking on and the potential for aggression of these breeds.

**Rusty Potts**

Dogs of aggressive nature should be muzzled and kept on the lead. To wait 1 1/2 hours for help in those circumstances is just not on.

**Janet Essex**

Well if that is a picture of the dog concerned it is not a bull mastiff - It may be a cross of a bull mastiff although even that is dubious, so before naming breeds it would be wise to get your facts right. The breed of dog is irrelevant to the story, the deed however is relevant, whatever dog had caused the damage.

**Jessica Chaston, Ipswich**

This is NOT a Bullmastiff!! I raise this breed and the dog is some kind of a mixed breed. Before you slam my breed, get your dog breed correct. It looks like it has some Pit Bull mixed in.

**gayle wallen**

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