

## Dog attack blamed on broken fencing

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A 24-YEAR-OLD woman ended up in court after her bull mastiff dog mauled a spaniel when he escaped through a broken fence the council had failed to fix.

Samantha Beardmore, of Recorder Grove, Chell, had made a number of requests for her damaged garden fence to be fixed prior to Merlin breaking free and attacking another dog, North Staffordshire Magistrates' Court heard.

Beardmore was handed a conditional discharge of 12 months and told to pay vets fees of £259.61 plus costs of £85.

Merlin, who lived in the back garden of the property, had caused a gash to the dog after swinging it backwards and forwards during the incident in Recorder Grove.

The injured animal was taken to a vets to receive treatment.

The defendant pleaded guilty to being the owner of a dog which was dangerously out of control on July 24, and did not oppose a civil complaint by Staffordshire Police to keep Merlin under proper control.

Gary Corbett, defending, said: "She has been on to the council for the last two years about the state of the fence.

"They have now been out and inspected it and say she will be on the waiting list for nine months.

"The situation has been very distressing for her.

"When she first realised the dog had gone she was in bed. She got straight up and went to search for him in the fields in her pyjamas."

Mr Corbett confirmed that with the help of a friend, some temporary repairs had been done to the fence.

Council officials say the fence may be repaired sometime next year.

Councillor John Daniels, cabinet member for housing, environment and neighbourhood services, said: "When the inspection of the fence was made, the budgets for this financial year had already been committed.

"The fence is therefore to be considered for repair in the next financial year.

"There is also a responsibility on the owner to ensure that the dog, if deemed sufficiently dangerous, is prevented from being in an area where it could cause harm to people or animals without being properly and humanely restrained."



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