

Willerden & Brent Times

News

Call for dangerous dogs amnesty has been rapped by animal experts

AN INCREASE in dog attacks has prompted calls for a dangerous dog amnesty.

According to police figures, attacks by dogs in Brent have doubled in the last year, with a total of 22 incidents recorded in 2006.

The recent death of five-year-old Ellie Lawrenson, in Merseyside, who was killed by a 'pit-bull type' dog on New Year's Day, also triggered the calls for change.

Brent Council has launched a borough-wide review on how to deal with out of control dogs and is working closely with its partners and the police.

One proposal includes the introduction of an amnesty, giving owners of illegal breeds, such as the pit-bull terrier, the opportunity to hand it in to police without the fear of prosecution.

Mayor of Brent, Cliff Bertha Joseph, is also calling for tighter byelaws to strengthen the current Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

But the move has been criticised by representatives from the Mayhew Animal Home, in Trenmar Gardens, Kensal Green, who have branded the byelaws draconian.

Acting general manager, Caroline

Yates, said: "A dangerous dog amnesty would more than likely result in people handing in all types of dogs and crossbreeds, not just the five breeds on the dangerous dogs list. Staffordshire Bull Terriers are a typical example.

"What would happen to those dogs? Rescue centres are already overcrowded and wouldn't be able to cope with the demand, which would result in numerous innocent dogs being destroyed needlessly.

"No, killing lots of innocent dogs doesn't solve the root of the problem."

But the Mayhew manager agreed that tougher action was needed to tackle

dog fighting, which she said was on the increase.

Chief Inspector Raj Kohli, in charge of operations in south Brent, said: "Dangerous dogs are an issue and there are criminals in Brent who use dogs as a weapon.

"We welcome any initiative that makes people feel safer and will be working closely with our partners to reduce dog incidents across the borough."

Police are also in the process of introducing special dog-pulls in all area cars and vans, which will assist officers when dealing with out of control dogs.

The issue was also discussed at last week's council meeting.

Cllr Erwin Van Colle, lead member for environment, planning and culture, said: "The council totally condemns those who keep dangerous dogs and use them to intimidate people. We will work with the police and do everything we can to protect the public."

Councillors and police are due to meet with Mayhew representatives in March to discuss further action.

Anyone wishing to report an incident involving a dangerous dog can call the council on 020 8937 5252. In an emergency always call 999.

↑ How it all got started ↓