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Man Jailed For Ten Years Over Fatal Dog Attack

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Irresponsible and arrogant, dangerous dog owner Aaron Joseph was jailed for 10 years this week after his out-of-control bull terrier attacked and killed his popular neighbour and school lollipop man David Ellam, as he tried to protect his own Yorkshire Terrier dog, Rollo. Mr. Ellam, 52, was attacked and savagely mauled, suffering fatal injuries during the 'sustained attack' by Aaron Joseph's Bull Terrier dog Alex, outside his flat in Riddings Road, Sheepridge, Huddersfield on 15th August 2016. On the day in question David Ellam met his death in the most appalling manner. He came out of his own front door and on to his doorstep, where he was attacked and mauled to death by Joseph's dog. Witnesses told the court that once the dog had hold of Mr. Ellam she would not let go. Alex was shaking her head from side to side as if trying to sever the leg she was holding in her mouth. They also described Mr. Ellam's calls for help as heart-rending.

Joseph's dog had been returned by Police a week before the attack took place because it was not classed as a dangerous banned breed.

At Leeds Crown Court, Joseph, 30, was convicted of owning a dog dangerously out of control in public, causing injury resulting in death and was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. It took the jury just 39 minutes to unanimously find Joseph guilty. Joseph, who had previously been out on bail during the trial, was locked up immediately by the judge.

Judge Sally Cahill QC told the court that the circumstances of this offence were nothing short of horrendous and sentenced Joseph to 10 years' imprisonment, of which he will serve half the sentence before he can be considered for release on license. He was also banned from owning a dog for life. The court heard aggravating factors which made the offence very serious. These included the fact that Joseph had been served with a legally binding (Dog) Community Protection Order which he completely ignored. Mr. Ellam's death could have been prevented if the dog Alex had been wearing a muzzle as it should have been, as stipulated by the (Dog) Community Protection Order.

The Judge told Joseph it was a case of 'high culpability' saying he (Joseph) knew his bull terrier Alex was dangerous which was demonstrated by the fact that the dog had bitten people on FOUR separate previous occasions and not least because he did not let her off the lead during walks, unlike his other dog. She told Joseph that there were many failings which led to a conclusion that he must bear complete responsibility for the events that fatal morning. The

attack, and Mr. Ellam's death, the judge concluded, happened because of Joseph's arrogant and stubborn disregard for the welfare and safety of others in the community where this dog, should have been carefully and strictly controlled but was kept in circumstances whereby she was able to escape and attack Mr. Ellam. Had a muzzle been properly used, Mr. Elam would still be alive today. The Judge concluded that Joseph's failings all led to a conclusion that he bore complete responsibility for the events of that fateful morning.

In a statement the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said that this was an appalling case in which a man lost his life in the most shocking way in a horrific, brutal and sustained dog attack. The CPS were able to present evidence to the court to show that Joseph had failed to comply with a previous control order, which stated that the dog must be muzzled, kept on a lead, insured, neutered and micro-chipped. In addition he chose to place a dog which he knew to have a history of attacking neighbours in a pen in the communal garden of the flats where he lived. Aaron Joseph's failure to comply with the control order together with his failure to take adequate steps to secure his dog led directly the tragic death of Mr. Ellam. The gravity of this crime is reflected in the severity of the sentence imposed today.

David Ellam's family paid tribute to the popular likable man. In a statement they said his loss was like someone turned out the light their lives. Dave was one of those people that once you had met was hard to forget, once he was part of your life it was hard to imagine life without him and he will forever and always be in their world. Dave was loved and adored by his nephews, niece, partner, wife, brothers, extended family and friends and all those that knew him. David's girlfriend Claire Josling said she was 'haunted by the memories' of how David suffered and said she still remembered getting the phone call saying Dave had been attacked by a dog and then rushing to the hospital. She added that it is simply unthinkable that anyone would die in these circumstances.

The CWU welcomes the sentence. With 3000 Postal workers attacked by irresponsible owners' dogs every year and with a recent spate of very serious injuries following attacks on Postmen and Women, we are calling on the Courts to be more consistent and to use the full range of their sentencing powers to hand down effective sentences along with ownership bans and destruction orders as in the Aaron Joseph case.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer