

In March 2018 my elderly mum was walking her small dog in a quiet residential street in our local area when it was attacked and killed by two out of control Alsatians. Tilly was rushed to the vet but bled to death soon after.

The dogs' owner was eventually found and charged with being in charge of dogs dangerously out of control in a public place. The police informed us at the time that a report would be passed to the Procurator Fiscal but the likelihood was that it would be dropped as the PF 'has bigger fish to fry' and usually looks on these scenarios as a dog fight. This was no dog fight – a tiny white fluffy handbag dog minding its own business vs two out of control Alsatians.

Twelve months on, after repeated phone calls for an update to the COPFS we finally received notification in March that in November last year the Fiscal dropped the charges based on their being insufficient evidence of the dogs being out of control. They 'forgot' to write to us to give us that update at the time.

We cannot understand how two Alsatians with no recall (the owner repeatedly tried to call them back as they ran at speed towards mum) who killed another dog were not dangerously out of control?

We have a number of issues, frustrations and concerns which I'll document a briefly as I can, below:

- Should you fail to clear up your dog's excrement then you're liable to an instant spot-fine of £80 which the Procurator Fiscal can increase to £500. However if your dog(s) maul another animal to death causing untold trauma and cost there is absolutely no penalty or consequences under current law and due process.
- My 81 year old mum was walking Tilly in a quiet residential street out of fear for using local parks to exercise her pet. Large dogs often off the lead and with limited recall overwhelmingly dominate the park and owners of smaller dogs are intimidated to use the. We conducted a local Facebook campaign about Tilly and dozens of local dog owners confirmed this to be the case.
- This case and many others like it are often considered quite coldly as 'just a dog fight' and as no human being was physically hurt it is swept away. My mum however suffers post-trauma symptoms to this day from what she witnessed. As an elderly person who lives alone Tilly had been her companion and friend for over 7 years. Her loss was a huge bereavement for mum and significantly impacted her mental health causing loneliness, anxiety and depression.
- The tardiness of the Procurator Fiscal in reviewing the matter and taking four months post-decision to get around to advising us of their decision was very poor and adds to the trauma of the situation.
- The Police cannot share the details of the dog owners with us to allow us to pursue a claim for damages. We are significantly out of pocket having had to settle a huge vet's bill and later in the year pay for a new puppy as company for mum who was deteriorating without the company of a companion. Speaking with several lawyers they advised that legal fees and court costs would significantly outweigh any compensation or reimbursement of costs so would be futile. Again, the injured party is on the back foot.
- From the social media coverage, radio interviews and local and national newspaper coverage we generated at the time of Tilly's death we were approached by literally hundreds of well wishers and dozens of people who had suffered similar experiences, confirming to us that my mum's experience was far from an isolated incident.

- To compound the issue mum herself was savaged by a Bull Mastiff 70 years ago when she was only 10 years old. It happened two streets from where Tilly was killed in 2018. She endured 8 years of hospital treatment and over 20 plastic surgery operations to reconstruct her face. All these decades later the law is barely any more robust to keep people safe or act when things go wrong.