

Safe-Tay welcomes water rescues review

Lisa Stuart started the Safe-Tay charity following the death of 20-year-old Graham Motion, who drowned in July 2006.

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Last night Mrs Stuart told The Courier of her backing for the review, which will be undertaken by Paddy Tomkins QPM, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government.

This led to special alarms being fitted to lifebelts on the Queen's Bridge in Perth, in a project which involved the help of Tayside Police, Tayside Fire and Rescue and Perth and Kinross Council.

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She said, "Since the establishment of Safe-Tay in 2007 we have collected the data from 2006 up to 2008 annually regarding water-based incident responses by the emergency services, with an average of six to 10 water-related emergencies on the River Tay in Perth alone.

"We are delighted the government are to review all forms of water rescue capabilities throughout Scotland.

"The emergency services do a truly fantastic job and it is important that they can carry out their work effectively and safely. It is essential that the responders are equipped with the correct training and equipment when attending such dangerous incidents and that a standard should be set.

"As a charity our objectives are to raise public awareness of the dangers of water and promote water safety.

"We are extremely pleased that the level of public awareness and education of the risks associated with open water shall also be addressed.

"We shall be following this report with a keen interest."

And MSP for Perth Roseanna Cunningham said, "The review will look into all aspects of the issue including the resources and capabilities of all agencies currently involved in water rescue emergencies; the current operational arrangements between responders; whether there is a need for a change in the law; and public awareness about the risks associated with open water.

"As the weather improves more and more people will be attracted to the water but, as we have seen very clearly in a number of recent incidents, a bit of fun on the water can very quickly turn into a perilous situation, sometimes with tragic consequences.

"It is essential therefore that we ensure that the manner in which our emergency services respond to incidents on the water is as efficient and effective as possible and that is the purpose of this review."

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