

New RNLi information service on safe crossing times to Cramond Island



Members of the public can now text the word CRAMOND to 81400 and the RNLi will reply with safe crossing times for the tidal causeway which leads to the popular tourist attraction.

This new initiative follows a five year period (2008-2013) where nearly 600 people were rescued from Cramond Island by Queensferry lifeboat.

If you're heading to Cramond Island this weekend you can text CRAMOND to 81400 to get the latest safe crossing times free of charge.

The text service is part of a Community Safety Action Plan run by the RNLi in the area serviced by the Queensferry lifeboat. The aim is to inform people when they can safely cross the causeway to Cramond Island and avoid becoming stranded.

Between 2008 and 2013 the Queensferry lifeboat and her volunteer crew launched to Cramond Island 178 times, they rescued 593 people and saved 4 lives.

Michael Avril is the RNLi's Community Incident Reduction Manager and is building the Community Safety Action Plan with local stakeholders, speaking of the Text for Tides service Michael said:

'We're really pleased to be able to offer this service to the public free of charge, the service is easy to use and will tell people when it is safe to walk across to Cramond Island so they won't end up cut off by the rising tide.

'Our research has shown that a high number of people become stranded on the island and we're hoping to dramatically reduce that number with services like Text for Tides and allow people to enjoy Cramond Island safely.

'We're also working with the Coastguard, the council and local businesses to try and reduce the number of people who need to be rescued from Cramond as part of our Community Safety Action Plan.'

This initiative is part of the RNLI's national Respect the Water campaign which is aimed at alerting the public to the dangers of drowning. 39 people drowned off the coast of Scotland in 2013 with a total of 150 over the last four years.

The figures show a clear gender divide with adult men accounting for over two-thirds (68%) of the coastal deaths.

UK-wide, an average of 160 people die at the coast each year and the RNLI is aiming to halve this number by 2024.

If anyone finds themselves stranded on Cramond Island they should call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. The volunteer crew of the Queensferry lifeboat are on call 24/7.

PHOTO RNLI : Jo Mitchell, Coastguard (left) & Michael Avril, RNLI (right)