

Hearts star's kennel plea following fire

A petition to the Scottish Parliament calling for improved fire safety in boarding kennels following a blaze in which five pet dogs died, has been signed by over 22,000 people.

Julie Loudon, 40, started the [petition](#) on Thursday, after her Westiepoo Monty perished in the fire at Kirkland K9 kennels near East Kilbride, in the early hours of 3 June.

Hearts footballer Alex Lowry, 20, and his girlfriend also lost their daschund puppy Sunny in the fire, while other owners who lost family pets are also supporting the campaign.

The [petition](#) calls on The Scottish Government to urge Ministers to “improve fire safety within dog boarding kennels by mandating the installation of smoke detectors, smoke alarms and sprinkler systems”.

The kennel blaze had been raging for more than two hours before emergency services were alerted, giving the animals no chance of survival.

Mrs Loudon, a mum of one from Glasgow, who has also raised the issue with MSPs, said she didn't want other owners to suffer the same anguish.

She said: “The kennels had a fire extinguisher on site, which is all that is required under current legislation, but there

were no smoke detectors or alarms to alert anyone to the fire, which happened during the night. There were also no sprinklers in place as this is not a requirement.

“By the time the alarm was raised and the fire department called to the scene, a few hours had passed and, by then, all the animals had tragically perished.

“I want the fire safety standard within boarding kennels improved to at least have smoke alarms and early detection systems in place to try and ensure this does not happen again.

“I would not want any other family to go through what we have all had to go through, knowing our beloved pets died in such horrendous circumstances.”

She added: “We want something positive to come out of this hellish situation so that it has not been in vain.”

Mrs Louden said that she had felt helplessness and guilt about the loss of Monty, her two-and-a-half-year-old pet, which she had bought at eight weeks old.

She said: “He went everywhere with us, into the office every day, and everyone who knew him loved him. He was very well socialised and was a really great wee guy with the best nature and full of character.”

Scotland U-21 star Lowry, who is currently on loan at Hearts from Rangers, shared the [petition](#) on his social media, asking for the support of others.

He wrote: “During summer while we were on holiday one of my girlfriend and I’s pup Sunny tragically died in a fire at the boarders she was staying at (Kirkland K9). There were no smoke alarms, detectors or sprinklers installed at the boarders.

“She would have lived if there were fire regulations in place. Please take a second to sign this petition for kennels to require fire/smoke alarms.”

The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service initially suggested that the main cause of the fire was “heat source and combustibles brought together deliberately”.

However, Police Scotland said in July that its investigation had concluded the blaze was “not suspicious”. The force refused to provide further details, leaving the distraught dog owners without answers. The families are now unlikely ever to know what caused it.

The fire incident report, obtained under Freedom of Information, revealed the blaze had been alight for over two hours before emergency services were alerted at 5.31am and firefighters spent nearly three hours at the scene.

Tom Lang, a professional dog walker and the kennel’s owner, said in a Facebook post following the fire that he had been left “devastated” by the “tragic accident”.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “Our sympathies lie with the families who lost their pets under such horrible circumstances. The Scottish Government will carefully consider the issues raised in the [petition](#) and respond in due course.”



Sunny the dappled daschund which belonged to Hearts footballer Alex Lowry and his girlfriend



Monty the Westiepoo



Monty the Westiepoo



Julie Loudon launched the kennel petition