

24 June 2019

“No one should experience the pain we have”

The family of a teenager who drowned in the Jubilee River has warned people to stay out of the water as the weather warms up.

Dajarn Daly was just 17 years old when he went into the shallows of the weir at the river to cool off on a searing hot day in July last year. However, he lost his footing and was dragged into deeper and very cold water and lost his life.

Slough Borough Council has worked with the guardian of the Jubilee River, the Environment Agency, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Thames Valley Police to discourage people from getting into the river, to prevent another life being lost.

Fences have been extended in places to physically prevent people getting to the river bank and new information and warning information boards will be put up at strategic points to make people aware of the dangers.

Dajarn’s mother Shantel and grandmother Denise, both of Wexham Lea, welcomed the efforts to warn people how dangerous the man-made river is - especially as the warmer weather arrives.

Shantel said: “On Dajarn’s 18th birthday we had a barbecue to remember him but he should have been celebrating.”

Denise said: “No one should go in the water there. It is really dangerous. The weir is shallow and looks inviting but Dajarn was swept away into deep and cold water.

“We had spoken to him about swimming there and he said he was ok and that the water only went up to his waist, but he was taken by the current into deeper colder water.

“No other families should have to go through what we did that day, Dajarn hadn’t come home which was unusual for him and we heard someone had drowned in the river. We knew it was him, we went to the police station and they told us.

“We live without him every day.

“Parents tell your children about the dangers, it is never too early to warn them of the dangers, and adults don’t go into the water as children could follow.”

Natasa Pantelic, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said because the river is man-made the sides are steep and the water is deep and very cold which can lead to people going into cold water shock very quickly.

“We want people to stay safe as the weather gets warmer and that means not getting into the water at all,” said Cllr Pantelic.

“I would like to thank Dajarn’s family for sharing their tragedy to try and prevent another young person losing their life.

“The river is a large expanse of water which is extremely cold even in the hottest of days. It does not matter if people think they can swim, the temperature of the water affects the heart and breathing within seconds.

“The weir looks shallow and looks like people would be able to paddle or cross from one side to the other. But the river level and flow can change at any time because it is a flood relief rather than a natural river.”

Three weeks after Dajarn’s death a 22-year-old man also drowned after going into the Jubilee River to swim. Three years earlier Michael Scaife, 20, died while swimming in the river in Datchet.

The Berkshire Coroner ruled at an inquest earlier this year Dajarn’s death was accidental.

On average more than two people die every day and more than 700 drown every year in the UK and Ireland according to the Royal Life Saving Society UK which aims to reduce that number.

Of the deaths 52 per cent of accidental drownings happen in open water with 80 per cent being male. A third of deaths happen in the summer with the highest proportion of drownings occurring in people who are aged between 20 and 29 years old.

The advice is to stop and think and look for the dangers and always take heed of nearby warning

signs. In an emergency others should call 999 and those in the water are encouraged to float on your back or someone should throw in an object which is buoyant. It is also important that safety devices are left in their rightful place along the river bank and not vandalised for when they are actually needed.

Slough Borough Council is also providing school children with bespoke safety information about all the potential dangers of Slough's waterways.

For safe swimming use The Centre, Farnham Road, or Langley Leisure Centre, Parlaunt Rd.

Ends

Note to editors:

Pic 1) shows Dajarn

Pic 2) His mother Shantel holding the memorial to him

Pic 3) His aunt Latisha holding the memorial with mum Shantel (l) and grandmother Denise (r).