



Members' Information



www.StortfordCanoe.org.uk

WELCOME TO BISHOP'S STORTFORD CANOE CLUB

Bishop's Stortford canoe club has been established now for over 40 years, and during that time has had success at national and international level – a tradition that we are keen to continue. The club has a wonderful family feel and a membership that ranges from young children to more senior members.

Throughout the year we provide the serious competitor and recreational canoeist alike with the opportunity to develop and improve their paddling through structured training and coaching. BSCC's small but dedicated team of coaches will be happy to talk to you about your paddling ambitions and provide you with guidance on how to achieve your goals. Perhaps you might even be willing to consider becoming a coach yourself.

BSCC is run completely by volunteers. Each of the committee members works hard on your behalf to develop the club and maintain the facilities. We are always glad to see new faces on the committee, so if you would like to offer your services please let one of the committee know. In fact, volunteers are needed to help with many of the duties and tasks around the club, such as maintenance – again, if you feel you can help, please do not hesitate to speak to a committee member.

The Fundraising Committee arranges a number of off-water activities throughout the year which help to raise much needed funds for the club. There are also opportunities to donate to the club through schemes like TheGivingMachine and Decathlon loyalty card. These funds, along with the annual subscription, are our only regular means of income and are used to maintain the premises and purchase new equipment, so please do give your support whenever the opportunity arises.

We are sure you will soon make new friends and find a welcome whenever you arrive.

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Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club Committee

Chairman	Joe Fitzpatrick	Chairman.Joe@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07825 371434
Secretary	Angela Aldam	info@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	01279 755089 07401 878781
Treasurer	Eddie Cooley	treasurer@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	01799 550308
Welfare Officer & Fundraising Committee Chair	Jacque Cayford	Jacque@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07863 069737
Deputy Welfare Officer	Siobhan Latham	Siobhan@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	
Deputy Welfare Officer	Wayne Stevens	Wayne@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07545 578278
Coaching Co-ordinator	Danny Beazley	Danny@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07912 741898
Safety Officer	Dave Cayford	safety@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07814 757986
Team Leader	Ken Duncan	TeamLeader@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	01279 842310 07947 339214
Quartermaster & Facilities	Andrew Gurney	quartermaster@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	01279 832205 07917 062305
Volunteer Coordinator	Stewart Parkes	volunteers@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07860 152770
Committee Member	Ant Wright		

There are photos of the committee, coaches and other members on the board in the clubhouse if you are not sure who is who! Photos of the committee and coaches can also be found on the About Us section of the club website.

2. Getting Started

When is the club open?

Sunday morning sessions are open to members of all ability levels. Because the races that the club attends are almost always held on Sundays, the club will not always be open for normal Sunday paddling. Sometimes on race days the club will open but paddling will be restricted to adult members or specific training groups only.

The routine Sunday sessions are listed on the printable list of club events which is emailed out with the newsletters and can also be downloaded from the button on the "Club Calendar" page of the website (under the "Events" tab). This list also shows the competitions the club is attending.

As proficiency improves, members may attend more serious training at other times – see "*5. Developing in the Sport*" below.

Arrival and Signing In at the Club

Sunday sessions for most groups begin at 10am prompt (sometimes a bit earlier if we are doing a time trial). Members should tick the registration list whenever they arrive to paddle or train at the club – it is important that the club has statistics on attendance to show to past and prospective sponsors.



Which group am I in?

Each of BSCC's coaches tends to work regularly with a particular age group or ability level. As you improve, you will be passed from one coaching group to the next, and you will also be encouraged to try more advanced boats. A typical Sunday morning will involve longer and longer distances. This can be interspersed with more detailed technique work with a Competition Coach if you wish.

Every few weeks, the normal Sunday training routine gives way to a 5K or 10K Time Trial – an excellent chance to see how well you are developing. It's a handicap, so it is the most improved paddler (rather than the fastest) who will win.

After a while, your coach will start to suggest that you attend competitions as part of the club team.

Leaving children at the club

For junior members, the club may require a parent/guardian to remain at the club during the session, depending on the age, confidence and ability of the paddler. If parents/guardians are not staying at the club, they must make sure that the club has their contact details for the day, in case of emergency, and that the paddler's towel and dry clothes are waiting for him/her in the changing room.

How will I know what's going on?

A regular newsletter comes out about every few weeks, as well as race reminders and other occasional news alerts.

Why does the club ask for permission to use my photo?

Named photos of all our members are usually put on the noticeboard at the clubhouse and in the newsletter so that everyone can recognise everyone else. We also take photos of members paddling for use on the website and in press reports. If you don't want your photo (or your child's photo) to be used by the club, just let the Secretary know.

Please note that races generally take place in public places and that many spectators will be taking photos which they may share or publish, and that results including paddlers' names and boat numbers are routinely published on the internet. If you have concerns, please raise them before racing.

Can I bring a friend?

Full Senior (adult) members are allowed to bring occasional guests, but the adult member will need to sign them in using the Visitors Book and supervise them. Such guests may not use BSCC boats or other equipment. These will usually be paddlers from other clubs coming to participate in structured training sessions on a reciprocal basis.

Friends or relatives can also come for a one-off visit and be signed in using the Visitors Book, but if they need to use club equipment they will have to be assessed by a BSCC Coach who will advise on a suitable boat and may require them to be supervised by a coach. Members and previously-booked visitors will have priority for boat use and coaches' time, so it is important to arrange the visit in advance to avoid disappointment.

If you have a friend or relative who would like to join, please ask them to contact the Secretary to arrange a suitable date for a free taster visit. We start a new novice class on an approximately monthly basis from early spring to late autumn – during the summer months there is often heavy demand for places in this group. We always try to give priority for places to members' family and friends but, to make this happen, we need to know that they want to come along.

3. Safety & Welfare

Paddling safely

Although the risks involved in paddling open cockpit kayaks and canoes on a placid river like the Stort are relatively small, it is obviously in everyone's best interest that all possible care is taken, particularly where juniors are involved.

Members must read and adhere to the Club Rules and Buoyancy Aid Policy. These and other documents, such as the club's Risk Assessments and full Safety Policy, can be found in the reference folder at the clubhouse, and can also be downloaded from the Members' section of the club website.

How big is the risk of Weil's disease?

Weil's disease (leptospirosis) is caused by bacteria which could be present in river water and on the riverbank from animal urine. The risk of catching Weil's disease is very small indeed, but it has the potential to be serious, so normal precautions like covering cuts with a plaster are advised. In the very unlikely event that someone did contract it, the chief danger would be if it was not recognised, because it requires prompt treatment with specific antibiotics. It is therefore important for every paddler to know about the condition and, if you should fall ill, tell your doctor that you have been canoeing. Symptoms vary but may be broadly similar to influenza, usually occurring 7-14 days after exposure. Find out more on the [NHS Direct website](#). Hand washing and showering after canoeing are strongly recommended anyway, because it's just good hygiene when you have been in a river.



Reporting accidents at the club

If you have an accident while you are at the club, a brief entry should be made in the Incident Book which is kept on the reference shelves in the clubhouse. The date and a general note of the nature of the incident should be made – no names of parties involved or details, these should be written down separately and handed to the Secretary. In particular please note injuries resulting in hospital referral. Other types of incident which should be noted include, damage to 3rd party property, libel/slander, and anything involving child welfare. In all cases, whenever an entry is made, a committee member (ideally the Safety Officer or Welfare Officer as appropriate) should be informed as soon as possible.

At the back of the Incident Book is a place for the reporting of Near Misses.

Dealing with Emergencies

An Emergency Action Plan can be seen on the door to cupboard where the First Aid kit is kept (left of the sink), together with details of the nearest hospital etc. Please take the time to read it.

The club has a semi-automatic AED (defibrillator) located in the hallway. A few club members have received specific training in using it, but it is designed to be used by ANYONE if the need arises – when the lid is opened it will talk the operator through the procedure. It is fitted with adult-sized pads, but a set of junior pads are also kept with it and can be exchanged as needed, plus a bag of accessories (shears, razor, facemask).



Equality at BSCC

BSCC is committed to operating without discrimination. Our Equality Policy can be found on our website. If you feel that there may be discrimination within the club, or that anything is causing disadvantage to certain members, you should bring your concerns to the attention of the committee without delay.

The club is committed to being as accessible as possible to people with disabilities.

Can medicines be taken with me while I'm paddling?

If you need to take medicines such as an asthma inhaler out with you on the water they should be in a sealed plastic bag or special dry bag. Ensure that the coach/trip-leader is aware of any medical conditions and any medication that you have with you. Junior's inhalers should be given for safe keeping to their paddling parent / coach / adult assistant. If other medication needs to be carried on the water (for the use of junior or senior paddlers), this must be discussed in advance with a coach or committee member and an appropriate arrangement agreed.

Can I accompany my child into the changing rooms?

The club has male changing rooms (for men/boys only) and female changing rooms (for women/girls only). The club expects that paddlers will be able to shower and dress themselves without assistance. If this is not the case, please discuss with a committee member – you will probably need to ensure that your child is always accompanied by a parent/carer of the same sex.

What precautions does the club take to ensure the well-being of juniors?

Everyone who works closely with children at the club and who may find themselves unsupervised (i.e. all the coaches) must undergo a DBS check. The club has Codes of Practice, and Child and a Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy.

BSCC acknowledges that coaches are particularly well-placed to notice the first signs of child abuse. We understand the importance of the role we have in recognising the early signs and symptoms of child abuse or neglect and are fully aware of the referral procedures.

In the event that you have any concerns you should raise them immediately with the club's Welfare Officer (or secondary Welfare Officer if you prefer), who will deal with all confidential information. A person needing help of guidance could approach any adult member of the coaching staff or committee. The person they approach does not have to be someone trained in child protection, but they will need to speak with the Welfare Officer on any matters that they feel need support. This should enable any person who has a query to approach either a male or female depending on who they feel comfortable with. If you feel unable to do this, there is a British Canoeing 24-hour helpline number (0773 4453430) and other contact details on their website here:

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/guidance-resources/safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts/>

By following the correct procedures, you are protecting both yourself and BSCC.

The club is committed to ensuring the well-being of its members and is proud to have been awarded ClubMark accreditation by SportEngland.

What information does the club hold about members?

The Secretary and the Treasurer hold basic contact details for each member. You will also be asked to indicate whether you can swim, whether you consider yourself to have a disability, and whether you have any medical conditions which could affect your safety at the club – these details will also be passed on to the club coaches. The club will not attempt to record detailed medical information about any member– paddlers themselves (or their parents/guardians in the case of juniors) should talk directly to the coaches to let them know anything helpful or relevant. We will invite you to update your details every year when the subscriptions are renewed (June/July) but please do let the Secretary know if any of your contact or medical details change in the meantime.

The club has a Privacy Policy which can be seen in the blue folder at the clubhouse and downloaded from the Members' pages of the website.

4. Kit & Equipment

What should I wear?

BSCC paddles all year round, and it is important for your safety and comfort that you are appropriately dressed. Clothing for paddling should be thin, close-fitting and allow free movement. It should be made of a synthetic fabric which will absorb as little water as possible and which will dry quickly. Fleece is not suitable.

Items sold for "canoeing" won't necessarily be the right kind of thing, as they may be targeting the other types of paddlers. You may have to look instead for items intended for running or cycling (cycling items tend to be cut longer to cover the back, which can be an advantage). Tops are often described as a base layer, and favoured brands include HellyHansen, RonHill and Skins. Popular leggings (sometimes described as "tights") include RonHill Bikesters/Tracksters. On colder/rainy days this should include a cagoule ("cag") and perhaps thin wind/water-proof trousers.

For winter paddling, it is vital that paddlers, particularly children, are warmly dressed.

The most effective insulation will be achieved by having many thin layers under a windproof top, and adding a knitted or thermal hat. Some people find that paddlemitts ('pogies') help to keep their hands warmer.

In summer, a lot of light is reflected off the water, so a hat with a brim may help to reduce glare. Remember to use a waterproof sunscreen to prevent sunburn.



Shoes: Paddlers are always advised to wear footwear, though finding something that will fit into a racing kayak is always a challenge. Many paddlers favour aqua shoes or scuba boots. For the "Lightning" section of the club, the coaches have a strict "no footwear – no paddling" rule.

Swimwear: The club does not have individual shower cubicles, so you may like to wear swimming trunks/costume under your other kit and keep this on while showering.

Club Colours: If you are going to race regularly you should buy a racing vest and/or cagoule in club colours, which can be purchased from the club. For supporting the club off the water, T-shirts, hoodies and caps are also available – see the Members' pages of the club website.

Where can I buy paddling clothing?

Items can be ordered from specialist online retailers (see the Links page on the club website). There are sometimes stalls at races. Some performance clothing can also be found locally at Nomad (Potter Street, B/S), Fast Feet (High Street B/S) and GoOutdoors or Decathlon (Harlow). Planet Scuba (2, The Links, Raynham Rd, B/S) may be worth trying for neoprene gloves/boots. Inexpensive water shoes are available from many ordinary sports shops such as ScottSports (Potter St, near Jackson Square, B/S).

Should I buy my own boat?

The club can provide the equipment you need to get started, but eventually you will need to buy your own paddles, and ultimately your own boat. When you become proficient, the Coaches will be happy to give help and advice on a suitable purchase.

Requests for rack space should be made in writing to the Quartermasters. Full membership does not guarantee the use of a rack; the Quartermasters will consider a number of factors when allocating the available racking, including whether the boats are regularly used to compete on behalf of the club – the club's boat storage policy can be seen on the website. Insurance for private boats (paddles etc.) is the member's own responsibility.

The club licences its own boats, but when you buy your own you will need to have personal membership of British Canoeing to get a licence to use it on canals and rivers.

At some stage you will probably also need to purchase a suitable roofrack for your car – please speak to experienced members for advice.

Which boats can I use?

Some of the boats at the club are the private property of members, and these must not be used without their permission. Most club boats have stickers on them. However, not all of the club's fleet are suitable for use by all the paddlers – for your safety (and that of the equipment!) please ask a coach before attempting to paddle a boat you have not used before.

What should I do if I notice a damaged boat?

There is a Boat Damage book in which you should write the identity name/number of the boat, a description of the damage, your name and the date. The book can be found on a shelf between the doors of the new boathouse. There are also some swing tags which can be used to mark boats which need to be taken out of service. If possible, please also bring the problem to the personal attention of the Quartermaster.

5. Developing in the Sport

What coaching/training is available to club members?

Our small team of dedicated qualified coaches and experienced helpers give their time and skill free of charge to members, who therefore have free access to ongoing training in flat-water kayaking and canoeing.

Novice coaching mainly takes place on a Sunday. Once the basics have been mastered, all members are welcome to attend additional coaching/training sessions at no additional charge. There will usually be various groups on the water from 6pm onwards several times during the week in summer, and also on Saturday morning. During the winter months, evening training may make more use of the gym (paddle machines and weights).

A copy of the current programme of open sessions can be seen on the "Racers" section of the website. Because our coaches run these in their own time, the schedule may have to change at short notice to fit in with their availability, so do liaise with coach to let them know whether or not you intend to participate and to make sure that the session is suitable for you.

Awards and courses

Coaches can assist in GCSE Sport assessments and some coaches can award 1-Star and 2-Star certificates. Performance in the club's regular time trial tests can lead to Placid Water Racing Award certificates.

BSCC occasionally organise courses such as First Aid and Foundation Safety & Rescue, usually at much cheaper prices for members than can be obtained elsewhere., or may be able to offer discounts for certain courses taking place elsewhere. In particular, the club is keen to encourage and support any paddlers who would like to progress to become coaches themselves.

What about racing?

BSCC is primarily a racing club, and we encourage our members to start racing with us as soon as they are proficient. Most paddlers find they enjoy using their new skills in this way and attending the races is a sociable family event. However, not everyone wants to race and it is certainly not compulsory! For more details, see the "Get Racing" document.

What else can I try?

Opportunities to try other forms of paddlesport sometimes arise and are advertised to our members as they occur. In the past these have included closed-cockpit training days, canoe polo, slalom events and white-water races. Most of these require some proficiency in closed-cockpit kayaks.

BSCC is occasionally able to run indoor pool sessions for training in closed-cockpit kayak – these will be announced as they come around. Some neighbouring clubs also run pool sessions throughout the year – please ask for details.

Do I need to join British Canoeing?

Ideally, all regular canoeists should belong to British Canoeing (previously known as the British Canoe Union, BCU, or Canoe England). They are the governing body for the sport of canoeing. Because BSCC is affiliated to British Canoeing, all our members are covered by their public liability insurance. The additional advantages of having your own personal membership of British Canoeing are:

- a licence to paddle your own boat on certain waterways, including the Stort
- eligibility to participate in certain races, e.g.
the Hasler series & National Sprints
- a regular magazine
- discounts on some purchases, courses, and
boat insurance

The club's affiliation to British Canoeing includes a Registered Youth Section, which means that by joining Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club, juniors become eligible to take part in British Canoeing competitions without the need to join themselves. Your Youth membership card will be kept on file by the committee, unless you need to use it for outside activities, such as attending an out-of-region race.

Adult club members who wish to race or to receive the benefits listed above should take out individual membership. Adult membership of British Canoeing currently (April 2017) costs £45/year, but cheaper youth, junior or family options are available. You can join online or by printing out and sending their membership form – see their website at <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/membership/>

We get a small reward fee for each new member who joins BC. Please help the club by adding this information to the postal form or if using the interactive online form please also send a separate email to membership@britishcanoeing.org.uk - please copy the club in so we can make sure it does not get overlooked!

When you get your plastic membership card, please send a photo of it to the Secretary for club records.



6. Club Management & Social

Does the club run any social events?

The club holds an annual summer BBQ with fun race, an awards dinner, and Christmas mulled wine. Other fundraising events, such as quiz nights are occasionally held – please help the club by bringing all your friends. If you have an idea for a social or fundraising event that you would like to see at the club, please speak to the chair of the Fundraising Committee.

Can I join the Fundraising or Management Committees?

If you would like to be involved in the running of the club, please consider joining the management committee, which meets approx 6 times a year. Members are usually elected at the AGM (October), but can also be co-opted throughout the year. A copy of the club's Constitution is on display at the clubhouse and on the website.

Another important area where family members can help is by joining the Fundraising Committee which runs the club's social events – they are always looking for more people to get involved. Please speak to Jacque Cayford, Charlotte Gurney or Jan Parkes if you would like to help with the Fundraising Committee.



Who does the cleaning?

The club relies on all the members to keep the clubhouse clean and tidy. Please try to tidy up after yourself and help out by grabbing the hoover or a mop whenever you see that something needs doing.

Please note that the club does not have any council rubbish collections and everything thrown in the bins has to be taken home by somebody.

How can non-paddlers (parents/partners) support the club?

Bankside supporters at races are always appreciated, and in the case of children who are racing, their families play a vital role in transporting them to the events.

The club could not function without the time given by members and their families in clubhouse maintenance (e.g. grass cutting, painting), help at events (e.g. refreshments, marshalling) etc. If you have particular skills which could be of use to the club (for instance, if you are a qualified plumber or first aider, or hold a Food Hygiene certificate) please do mention this to a committee member.

Family members are welcome to attend all the social events and may be able to join us on the water occasionally as guests, particularly for events like canoe picnics and fun days.



TheGivingMachine

If you ever use online shopping, one of the simplest ways that you can support the club is by signing up to "TheGivingMachine". Each purchase you make from hundreds of major retailers will then create a small cash donation for club funds – without it costing you a penny!



Online businesses routinely pay a commission to whoever guides shoppers to their websites. TheGivingMachine is a charity which exists to enable you to channel those commissions towards good causes. Registering as a Giver with TheGivingMachine is very simple – just tell them your name and email address, set a password and select the Beneficiary organisation you want the money to go to. After that, all you need to do is go to TheGivingMachine website on your computer or iPad each time you intend to shop, and select from one of the 1,500 participating retailers listed. The commission on any sales will then be sent to TheGivingMachine, who will pass 75% of it on to us. Individually, the amounts raised may be small (a few percent of the value of each sale), but if lots of people join in the total can quickly add up.

Why not go to the website now to find out more and register as a Giver:

www.TheGivingMachine.co.uk

Computer users can also choose to download the "Shop&Give" reminder app which spots when you visit a participating retailer's website and prompts you to sign in to the TheGivingMachine before you start shopping, to make sure that your purchase is counted.

Already registered as a Giver? - please consider adding BSCC to the list of up to four organisations that you are supporting.