



Members' Information



www.StortfordCanoe.org.uk

14 November2022

WELCOME TO BISHOP'S STORTFORD CANOE CLUB

Bishop's Stortford canoe club has been established now for 50 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. You can also make donations to the club, at no cost to yourself, by using TheGivingMachine when you shop online. 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 & Facilities	Kevin Short	chair@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07713 986391
Secretary	Angela Aldam	info@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	01279 755089
Treasurer	Lee Gaulton	treasurer@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	
Welfare Officer	Mick Hussey	Mick@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07837 274660
Deputy Welfare Officer	Kayleigh Gaulton	Kayleigh@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07717 177878
Coaching & Quartermaster	Joe Fitzpatrick	performance@StortfordCanoe.org.uk quartermaster@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07825 371434
Safety Officer	Andrew Gurney		07917 062305
Social Committee Chair	Sue Commercial	social@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07456 747408
Volunteer Coordinator	Kerstin Queeney	volunteers@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07990 563342
Sprint Team Leader	Rich Winstanley	sprint@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07734 863330
Coach (non-committee)	Jacque Cayford	Jacque@StortfordCanoe.org.uk	07863 069737

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.

Arriving at the Club

Sunday sessions for most groups begin at 10am prompt (sometimes a bit earlier if we are doing a time trial). Ideally, please arrive dressed ready to paddle. If you know how, get out your boat and put on your buoyancy aid, and find your usual coach.



Leaving children at the club

Children under the age of 14 must be brought to the club by an adult responsible for them. You will probably need to help them to put on their buoyancy aid, adjust their boat and carry it to the water at the start of the session, and to put their equipment away correctly at the end of the session.

The club does not have any arrangements in place to look after young children if they have to get off the water early for any reason - while they are on the bank they remain your responsibility. Therefore, parents of under-14s must remain on site during club sessions unless they have specifically confirmed with their child's coach that they may leave. If you do leave, you must arrange for another adult present to take responsibility for your child if the need arises in your absence.

If juniors of any age are left at the club, make sure the club has your contact phone number and that the child's towel and warm dry clothes are available. If someone not known to the coaches will be picking up your child, this should be arranged in advance.

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.

We hold occasional time trials (short sprints, or longer ones of 5K or 10K) – an excellent chance to see how well you are developing. These may be during the Sunday sessions, or on Saturdays or weekday evenings. They are 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.

How will I know what's going on?

A regular newsletter comes out approximately monthly, as well as race reminders and other occasional news alerts. See the Social Media page (under the Members tab on the website) for a list of the Club's official channels and who is operating them.

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 ask for your consent to do this. We also take photos of members paddling for use on the website and in press reports. If you have any concerns about the use of your photo (or your child's photo) please speak to the Secretary.

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?

If you have a friend or relative who would like to join, please ask them to contact the Secretary and book a taster visit. We always try to give priority to members' family and friends but advance arrangements are essential to avoid disappointment.

Full Senior (adult) members are allowed to bring occasional guests who are experienced paddlers from other clubs, usually coming to participate in structured training sessions on a reciprocal basis. Such guests may not use BSCC boats or other equipment.

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.

Risk from disease/pollution

Any river in England could contain disease organisms or pollutants and hand washing and showering after canoeing are therefore strongly recommended.

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 any open cuts should be covered. 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](#).

Reporting incidents/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 specifics – these details should be written down separately on the British Canoeing and/or CRT incident forms provided 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. At the back of the Incident Book is a place for recording Near Misses.

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.

Dealing with Emergencies

An Emergency Action Plan can be found near to where the First Aid kit is kept (back of the main clubroom), 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 be 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 or 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 helpline number (0115 8968842, office hours only) 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 and TopClubGold accreditation in the past. This scheme has been discontinued and the club is now working towards British Canoeing's new QualityMark scheme which replaces it.

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 or not you have any medical conditions which could affect your safety at the club. The club will not attempt to record the nature or the medical condition and it is your responsibility to inform any coach who you work with.

These details should be checked every year in June/July when you renew your subscription, but please do let the Secretary know as soon as possible of any change in the meantime.

The club has a Privacy & Data Protection 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 can be 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 in Hasler races or National Sprints you should buy a racing vest in club colours, which can be purchased from the club. It is also possible to purchase other items direct from the suppliers, including hoodies, and it is planned to expand the range of items.

The club also accepts donations of outgrown or other paddling clothing for resale to members. Due to lack of space the items are not on permanent display but it will usually be possible to show you what is available on request at the clubhouse.

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 an early 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?

Please let the Quartermaster know about any damage to boats, other equipment, or the premises. Please do this in writing at the earliest opportunity. He can be emailed at Quartermaster@StortfordCanoe.org.uk .

There are also some swing tags which can be used to mark boats which need to be taken out of service.

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. If we have coaches willing to run additional sessions in the evenings or on Saturdays, there will be no additional charge. However, because our coaches run these in their own time, this is not always possible. Even when such sessions are run, the schedule may have to change at short notice to fit in with their availability.

Only members who hold personal BC membership can paddle from the club outside of scheduled sessions. Our boats licences only permit their use during official sessions and the club's insurance cover only extends to scheduled activities.

Members who have been given the appropriate instruction may be allowed to use the exercise room for indoor training using paddle machines and weights etc. Please speak to the coaches or email performance@StortfordCanoe.org.uk.

Awards and courses

Coaches will be happy assist in signing off DoE and GCSE Sport assessments - but please make sure you get this done at the appropriate time, as it is much harder for the coaches to do retrospectively. 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 when they arise. 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 – the national governing body for the sport of canoeing. Because BSCC is affiliated to British Canoeing, all our members are covered by BC's public liability insurance while they are taking part in our scheduled club activities, and our boats are also licensed for use in club sessions.



The additional advantages of having your own personal On-Water membership of British Canoeing are:

- a licence to paddle your own boat on certain waterways, including the Stort
- public liability insurance whenever you paddle
- eligibility to participate in high-level racing (Div 6+)
- a regular magazine
- discounts on some purchases, courses, and boat insurance

All members of Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club who do not hold personal On-Water BC membership will be registered with British Canoeing as "Club Associate" members of BC. Registered Club Associates can take part in competition (up to Div7 standard).

You can upgrade your British Canoeing membership to full On-Water membership by signing in to the BC membership portal from the BC website and going to the Membership tab. Full personal On Water membership of British Canoeing currently (June 2022) costs £45/year for an adult, but cheaper youth, junior or family options are available.

If you already have On-Water BC membership when you join the club, please sign in to the BC membership portal and add BSCC as your home club. If you prefer not to link your BC account to the club, please send a photo of your plastic membership card when it arrives, and every year when it renews, 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 Social Committee Social@StortfordCanoe.org.uk.

Can I join the Social 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 Social Committee which runs the club's social events – they are always looking for more people to get involved. Please speak to Sue Commercial or Charlotte Gurney if you would like to help with the Social 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. The club has a WhatsApp group that adult members, parents of junior members, and other supporters can join to coordinate this kind of ongoing volunteering - contact the Volunteer Coordinator (volunteers@StortfordCanoe.org.uk) to join the group.



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.

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 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.