BSCC Risk Assessment

Operator	Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club		
Correspondence:	Secretary, 14 Chantry Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire. CM23 2SF	**Tel:**	01279 755089
Date of Assessment:	17 March 2025	**Assessment review date:**	March 2025
Approved:	Andrew Gurney (BSCC Safety Officer) & Joao Spinola (BSCC Welfare Officer)	**Approval Date:**	25th May 2026

ACTIVITY:	General club paddling (including progress assessments)	**LOCATION:**	BSCC Clubhouse, Southmill Lock, Bishop's Stortford & along the River Stort
DATE OF EVENT	N/A		

Group Leader refers to the person taking charge of the session or group who may be a coach or experienced paddler. At the discretion of the group leader, further preventative measures may be deployed following a dynamic risk assessment to take into account the nature of the activity on the day, the ages/abilities of paddlers and prevailing conditions. Outside of designated club sessions run by a Coach, only independent paddlers with PUK on water membership may use club facilities and access the river, under 18 participants are only permitted if they have PUK on water membership and are supervised by a parent or guardian.

HAZARD	PERSONS AT RISK	LEVEL OF RISK	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS
Drowning	Paddlers following capsize and unable to self rescue.	**Low - Moderate** Shallow river generally no wider than 20 metres All Club boats have adequate buoyancy to float and support crew in the event of a capsize. Less experienced paddlers ranked below Division 7 and all under-12s required to wear buoyancy aids Paddlers are requested to render assistance to any person in difficulty on the water.	All but the most experienced paddlers will usually be wearing Buoyancy Aids – see the Buoyancy Aid Policy for details. Group Leaders will insist on obligatory use of buoyancy aids if weather/water conditions are deemed adverse or forecast to be adverse. First Aiders in attendance. Group Leaders will be made aware of any paddlers who had stated that they cannot swim 50m in canoe clothing.

HAZARD	PERSONS AT RISK	LEVEL OF RISK	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS
Hypothermia	Paddlers effects of cold due to rain combined with wind chill and or immersion.	**Low – Moderate** - Dependent upon weather conditions The youngest and or inexperienced paddlers will be under the supervision of experienced Group Leaders and/or parents who will advise them on appropriate clothing.	New paddlers are given printed advice on suitable clothing. The group leader will ensure that all paddlers are wearing clothing suitable for the prevailing weather conditions. In cold weather, paddlers will return as soon as practicable to the clubhouse, where hot showers, dry clothing, and warm drinks will be available. First Aiders in attendance.
Sunburn/ Sunstroke	Paddlers being exposed to excessive sun without appropriate clothing and taking on insufficient fluids.	**Low – Moderate** - Dependent upon weather conditions The youngest and or inexperienced paddlers will be under the supervision of experienced Group Leaders and/or parents who will advise them on appropriate clothing and to hydrate prior to a paddling session.	The group leader will remind paddlers that they should be wearing sunscreen, hats and suitable clothing. For longer journeys in hot weather paddlers will be advised to carry drinking water. First Aiders in attendance.
Capsize	Junior or less experienced paddlers in windy or congested conditions	**Moderate** Inexperienced or novice paddlers are trained in capsize routines and self rescue. All paddlers are required to assist another paddler in difficulty.	Group leaders are required to remind paddlers of the Clubs Buoyancy Aid policy. Group Leaders risk assess weather and river conditions prior to paddling sessions to minimise risk to paddlers.
Collision with other river users	Paddlers and other river users – damage to boat or capsize.	**Low** Mostly experienced or inexperienced paddlers who will be supervised by experienced paddler(s), the group leader will advise paddlers to maintain adequate distance between each other's boats to prevent collision. All paddlers will be reminded to keep river right and avid oncoming or passing traffic.	All paddlers will be alerted by the group leader to the potential hazards presented by powered craft. Where possible oncoming skippers will be alerted to the presence of canoeists by the group leader. Where necessary the group leader will ask paddlers to move to the side of the river and hold station until the craft has passed.

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Collision with natural hazards or river debris	Paddlers causing damage to boats or capsize	**Low** Mostly experienced or supervised by experienced paddler(s) All paddlers will have received a basic level of training on natural hazards	Group leaders will make forward observation of the river to ensure no trees or other hazards are causing an obstruction. Where practicable any obstructions will be removed. If it is not possible to remove any obstruction paddlers will be warned by the group leader of the position of the hazard. Paddlers will be advised to wear foot protection.
Swans	Paddlers resulting in capsize and or injury	**Low – Moderate** Aggressive behaviour is generally seasonal	Paddlers will be advised of any known swans resident or nesting in the vicinity of the day's trip, how to recognise aggressive behaviour and appropriate evasive action to be taken. A dynamic risk assessment will be made by group leaders based upon the circumstances encountered.
Trip hazards on towpath	Paddlers, Spectators and Walkers	**Moderate** There is sufficient BSCC land adjacent to the clubhouse for canoeists' equipment to be placed without impinging on the towpath	All paddlers and spectators will be reminded that the towpath is a right of way and must be kept clear at all times. Periodic checks will be made to ensure that no boats, paddles or other equipment are causing an obstruction.
Anglers	Paddlers entanglement and capsize.	**Low** Closed season on R Stort 15 March-15 June	If any anglers are fishing, paddlers will be warned and asked to ensure that they keep clear of the lines. All Club events to be advised in advance to the local Angling Societies to ensure there is no conflict over access to the river.
Waterborne disease	Paddlers, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of infections such as Leptospirosis (Weils) and E.coli	**Low** High level of awareness of Weil's disease in canoeing community, new members are advised of the risks at their initial visit. Showers & hand washing available in changing rooms	First aid kit and clean dressings are kept at the club house in the event of injury. All those attending the club will be reminded of the need for hygiene when taking part in water based activities. New members and guests are given written information about the disease and posters are prominently displayed at the club.
Lightning	Paddlers risk of lightning strike when holding carbon paddles over water	**Low** Weather forecasts are monitored prior Club sessions. Where lightning is forecast the on water time may be adjusted or cancelled.	In the event of lightning, the session will be brought to a close and the group leader will ensure all paddlers get off the water as soon as possible.

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Injury from Lifting/Carrying Equipment	Paddlers	**Low – Moderate** Adults (parents/Members) will be available to move boats for young or inexperienced paddlers.	Group leaders will ensure that all new paddlers are alerted to the risks inherent in lifting and handling boats. They will also instruct new paddlers how to lift and carry their boats whilst minimising the risk of injury.
Canoes and equipment	Paddlers	**Low** Paddlers are advised to report all defects to their Group Leader and record any loss or damage in the Damage Book	Equipment owned by BSCC is regularly checked to ensure it is in safe condition. Any equipment not found to be safe will be taken out of service for repair or replacement.
Locks	Paddlers immersion in deep water	**Low – Moderate** Canoeists portage around locks rather than pass through. Inexperienced paddlers advised not to enter the locks to portage.	Experienced Paddlers only may enter the lock to disembark but must not enter the lock with powered craft.
Paddling in low light or after dark	Paddlers at risk of collision or capsize	**Low – Moderate** Experienced paddlers only on evening training sessions Powered craft do not operate after dark	Paddling after dark is recommended to take place only in structured training groups of 3 or more. Paddlers should not paddle alone.
Compound/Fitness room Doors	All from crush injury or entrapment	**Low** Keys for the doors and access controlled by a Group Leader	Doors will be hooked back when open to prevent injury.
Exercise equipment	All fitness room users	**High risk** of crush injury	The fitness room must not be used by under-18s except under the supervision of an approved person. The fitness room should not be used by anyone alone.
Road crossings	Paddlers from collision with moving vehicles	**Moderate** Road crossings are unmanned and all paddlers to be aware of approaching vehicles.	Paddlers will be made aware of the dangers crossing Pig Lane or Spellbrook Lane Coaches will be reminded of their duty of care when escorting paddlers down river. Juniors are not permitted to travel below Pig Lane lock without the supervision of a coach

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Club hygiene	All	**Low** Anti-bacterial soap is provided at all sinks, paddlers are encouraged to shower after paddling.	All paddlers and guests using the club facilities are reminded of the need to wash hands before handling food or drink. All washing and toilet facilities should be left at an acceptable standard after use.
Fire	All	**Low** Fire exits are clearly marked Fire fighting equipment is deployed for use after the premises are cleared of all members and guests.	Club fire plan has been published All reminded of the need to not keep flammable materials in the main clubhouse
Injury from moving vehicles in the car park and access route	All	**Low** The grassed areas surrounding the clubhouse provide plenty of open space for people to congregate away from the car park	5mph speed limit whilst on lane and club site Traffic calming measure exist on the access lane All drivers reminded of the speed limit – signs clearly displayed
Toilets	All	**Low**	2 internal toilets provided at the club – 1 accessible to disabled visitors Disinfectant and anti-bacterial soap in the toilet areas
Catering	All	**Low** Hand washing facilities available on site and hand-sanitizer will be provided for those handling food.	Food preparation supervised by a member with a food hygiene certificate or is aware of food hygiene regulations. All food is stored and prepared in clean conditions Customers to be warned if being served hot drinks or food.
Barbecue	All at risk of food poisoning or burns	**Low** Fire extinguisher and fire blanket to be located at the BBQ.	BBQ strictly supervised all those not involved in food preparation kept away from the food preparation area. Hand-sanitizer will be provided for those handling food.

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Inappropriate behaviour between members, for example: verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment or bullying.	Children, young people and any other club member.	**Low** Club coaches have all taken safeguarding course as part of their qualification.	Code of Conduct made available to all members during induction. Policy documents available on club website and displayed in public areas.
Inappropriate behaviour between adults and children or young people.	Club members under the age of 18.	**Moderate** Coach qualification includes safeguarding course which requires regular renewal. DBS checks required for all coaches, which also require regular renewal.	Contact information for WO and AWO displayed in club house. Notices on changing room entrances warning adults about entering if children are present. Safeguarding documents available to club members on club website.
On-line issues: grooming behaviour or bullying.	Any club member, particularly those under 18.	**High** The club has a Social Media and Communications Policy which is accessible to all members and which gives guidance on electronic communications between members.	Adult members are discouraged from using social media to contact under 18s to whom they are not related.
Emphasising performance over welfare.	Any club member or guest participating in club training sessions, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.	**Low** Coaching sessions always taken or supervised by suitably qualified paddlers. Coach qualification includes safeguarding course which requires regular renewal. DBS checks required for all coaches. Welfare Officer and AWO additionally take the Time to Listen course provided by CPSU.	Club Safeguarding Policy documents readily available to all club members. Contact information where help in welfare matters can be found is displayed in club house.
Neglect - e.g. not monitoring welfare during session.	As above	**Low** As above	As above

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Accidents arising from damaged, unsuitable or inadequate equipment.	Club members & guests. Particularly important where children and young people are involved.	**Low** Club equipment such as buoyancy aids are regularly inspected and changed. Boats and paddles inspected regularly.	All under 18s are required to wear buoyancy aids while on the water, unless coach approval and written permission has been obtained from parents or guardians
Travelling with junior members	Members under 18	**Moderate** Coaches and leaders are discouraged from travelling alone in their cars with children.	Where travel involves juniors, none should travel alone, except in special circumstances when appropriate arrangements can be made with the young person, their parents/ carers, travel companies and airlines concerned.

Office use only (to be completed by a risk assessment checker if selected for sampling)

Checked by:		**Position:**		**Date:**	

Notes: