

BSCC Risk Assessment – Bishops Stortford Hasler & Geoff Sanders Canoe Race 2026

Assessor: Andrew Gurney, Safety Officer, Bishop’s Stortford Canoe Club (07917 062305)

Correspondence Address: BSCC Clubhouse, Southmill Lock, London Road, Bishops Stortford CM23 3DT

Date of Assessment: 22 March, amended 30 April 2026 **Assessment review date:** 31 May 2026

Activity: Hasler marathon canoe race **Location:** River Stort (between the head of navigation in B. Stortford town centre and Sawbridgeworth Lock)

Date of Event 7th June 2026

A structured safety briefing will be given to all participants, covering key hazards (including cold water shock, entanglement in ropes and fishing lines, and emergency procedures) with actions expected to be taken.

First Aid support will be provided by an individual with First Aid training who will have access to First Aid equipment including a Defibrillator located at the Club House. Marshals will carry a First Aid kit, a throw line, a Space Blanket, a rope cutter in case of entanglement and a mobile phone to communicate with the Race Organiser via WhatsApp.

All boats are required to have CRT River Licences.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Hypothermia	Competitors, effects of cold due to rain combined with wind chill and or immersion.	Race taking place in July, briefing pack advises paddlers to wear appropriate clothing. First Aiders to be present and contactable by phone. Mostly experienced competitors who will dress appropriately The youngest competitors will be under the supervision of experienced Team Leaders and/or parents who will advise them on appropriate clothing	If weather conditions are very cold, paddlers will be advised of the need to wear suitable clothing Thermal blankets and warm drinks and showers will be available at the finish.	Race Organiser Event Safety Officer	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Heat stroke / Exhaustion	Competitors, being exposed to excessive sun without appropriate clothing and taking on insufficient fluids.	Mostly experienced competitors For the Geoff Sanders competitors the course is very short, and they will be under the supervision of experienced Team Leaders and/or parents. First Aiders in attendance.	If weather conditions are very hot, paddlers will be reminded of the need to hydrate prior to the race and carry a water bottle during the race Drinking water will be available at the Clubhouse	Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Drowning	Competitors following capsize and unable to self rescue.	All competitors able to swim 50m in canoe clothing. All boats must have adequate buoyancy to float and support crew in the event of a capsize. Less experienced competitors ranked Geoff Sanders and Division 7-9 required to wear buoyancy aids Competitors in other classes are required to render assistance to any paddler in difficulty Marshals on the bank are equipped and trained in the use of throw lines. First Aiders in attendance <i>See also "Locks" below</i>	Team Leaders familiar with competency of individual and will be tasked with ensuring that ISO 12402-5 buoyancy aids are worn by paddlers in Divisions 7 and below. Race Organiser will insist on obligatory use of buoyancy aids if weather/water conditions are deemed adverse or forecast to be adverse. A final inspection of key points the river on the day will result in the race being cancelled if necessary Team Leaders will be encouraged to provide Safety boat(s) to follow the slow/young Geoff Sanders racers. Safety Marshalls boats equipped with throw lines will be stationed at regular intervals along the course as well as at the start/finish and the turn. A safety boat will also be provided on the south side of Twyford Lock.	Event Safety Officer Race Organiser	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Locks	Competitors, immersion in deep water	Canoeists portage around locks rather than pass through. Competitors advised at the briefing not to enter the locks to portage. The briefing will advise race spectators not to congregate at the locks and to ensure the tow path is not obstructed.	Marshals x 2 as a minimum wearing buoyancy aids with safety equipment will be posted at each turn point and at Southmill Lock to assist in the event of capsize. Competitors warned of uneven surfaces around locks to avoid trips and sprains.	Event Safety Officer Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Collision with people on the towpath	Walkers, Spectators and Race staff at risk of collision with portaging paddlers running along the footpath	Signs will be displayed at Southmill, Twyford & Spellbrook locks to inform the general public of the race. Race briefing to warn competitors to keep their distance from members of public on the towpath & to behave with courtesy and consideration.	Marshals will be present at Southmill, Twyford, Spellbrook, & Sawbridgeworth locks to warn the public of approaching competitors. The booking-in desk and refreshment queues will be located to avoid crowding on the towpath	Race Organiser Marshals	7/6/2026	
Collision with other river users	Competitors Damage to boat or capsize	Mostly experienced competitors Other river users to be made aware that race is occurring; Notices will be placed near the river at club house and at Southmill Lock at least two weeks prior to the event. Notices will also be placed at other affected locks and either end of the course in the days immediately prior to the race. CRT will be advised of the race. All competitors will be reminded to keep river right and alerted to the potential hazards presented by powered craft & to behave with courtesy and consideration	For the Geoff Sanders races, safety boats and marshals at both ends of the course will endeavour to alert powered craft to the presence of young paddlers Collisions with third parties will be advised to CRT, PUK and Insurers.	Race Organiser Marshals and Safety Boats	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Collision with other competitors	Competitors Damage to boat or capsize	Mostly experienced competitors Competitors will be advised to maintain river right and an adequate distance between each other's boats to prevent collision	Dynamic risk assessment by all to avoid situation	Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Collision with natural hazards	Competitors Damage to boat or capsize.	Mostly experienced competitors It is expected all paddlers will have received a basic level of training before being permitted by their clubs to compete The course will be inspected in the week leading up to the race to ensure that no trees or other natural hazards are causing an obstruction. Where practicable any obstructions will be removed.	Competitors, Marshals and staff manning safety boats will be warned of the position of any known hazards at the race briefing.	Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Collision with vehicles at road crossings	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General Public at risk of impact injury	Signs will be placed on the road at Pig Lane and Spellbrook to warn approaching vehicles. Road crossings will be manned by marshals in high- vis jackets specifically tasked with managing road crossings	Competitors to be advised at the race briefing that they do not have automatic right of way over vehicles and must listen to advice from marshals	Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Slips, trips, sprains and falls	Competitors, Spectators & Race staff moving along the towpath	Mostly experienced participants, aware of the inherently uneven and potentially slippery conditions on portages and unsurfaced towpaths. Competitors will be advised to wear appropriate footwear for the conditions on the course.	Marshals will be instructed to remain vigilant to ensure that equipment is not left where it will obstruct the towpath. Competitors will be particularly warned in the briefing that the downstream landing stage at Twyford Lock (Pig Lane) can be especially slippery when wet.	Race Organiser Marshals	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Lightning	Competitors' risk of lightning strike when holding carbon paddles over water	Weather forecast is monitored prior and during the race. Where lightning is forecast the race timing may be adjusted or the race cancelled.	For an occurrence of lightning during the race, all paddlers will have been briefed to get off the water as soon as possible until the storm has passed. Marshals will ensure this occurs	Safety Officer Race Organiser Marshals	7/6/2026	
Swans	Competitors Capsize due to aggressive birds	Paddlers will be advised of any known aggressive birds at the briefing	The safety boats will endeavour to guide the Geoff Sanders racers around any known aggressive birds.	Race Organiser Safety boats	7/6/2026	
River debris	Competitors Risk of cutting feet on sharp objects	Low levels of rubbish present in the river	Competitors (and the parents of u12s) will be advised that paddlers should wear foot protection	Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Injury from Lifting / Carrying Equipment and Physical strain	Competitors	Mostly experienced competitors Adults (parents/teamates) will be available to move boats for young paddlers at the start/finish Competitors who require assistance at the portages are invited to contact the Race Organiser in advance to make arrangements for assistance to be provided.	Competitors will be reminded in the briefing of safe lifting techniques and the risks inherent in lifting and handling boats to avoid muscle injury especially when portaging locks during the race. Provision made for competitors to recovered from the course mid-race if have to pullout through injury or exhaustion.	Safety Officer Race Organiser	7/6/2026	
Anglers	Competitors - entanglement and capsize	The club liaises in advance with the local Angling Societies to ensure no conflict Competitors informed at the race briefing to keep clear of the fishing lines.	Any anglers seen along the course on the day of the race by marshals will be advised that the race is taking place.	Race Organiser Marshals	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Waterborne disease	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of infections such as Leptospirosis (Weils) and E.coli	High level of awareness of Weil's disease in canoeing community, competitors will be reminded of the risks at the race briefing. Showers & hand washing available in changing rooms	First aid kit and clean dressings will be available at the clubhouse and carried by Marshals at each Portage.	Safety Officer Race Organiser First aider	7/6/2026	
Food hygiene & Barbeque	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of food poisoning or burns	Competitors Food is pre-prepared. All food handling in the Kitchen and BBQ will follow food hygiene best practice with separation of utensils and chopping boards for uncooked, cooked food and prepared foods. Hand washing facilities available on site. BBQ strictly supervised all those not involved in food preparation kept away from the food preparation area and hot surfaces. Fire extinguisher and fire blanket to be located at the BBQ.	Competitors, Team Leaders and parents will be reminded on the day of the need for hygiene. A meat thermometer will be available for BBQ staff to check core meat temperatures before service. Hand-sanitizer will be provided for those handling food. Customers to be warned if being served hot drinks or food.	Safety Officer Race Organiser Social Committee	7/6/2026	
Injury from moving vehicles in the car park and access route	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of impact injury	The hard-standing car park at the clubhouse is reserved for key staff and visitors with disabilities or towing trailers. Most competitors and spectators arriving by car will park on the adjoining field. Traffic calming measures operating in the lane Plenty of open space for people to congregate away from the car park 5mph speed limit whilst on lane and site – signs clearly displayed	The field will be checked prior to the event and any hazardous areas marked with barrier tape. In the event of the weather making the ground in the field unsuitable for vehicles, it will not be used. Signs will be placed on the Hallingbury Road to clearly mark the turning for the benefit of visiting drivers At the key times for vehicles entering and leaving, the lane entrance and field will be supervised	Safety Officer Race Organiser	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Safeguarding Failure	Young or vulnerable competitors or volunteers	The Safeguarding and Welfare Officer will be present at the event will ensure compliance with Paddle UK's Safeguarding policies and procedures for children (SPC-P1) and adults (SPC-P6): https://paddleuk.org.uk/safeguarding-policies/	Signage to remind lone adults that they should avoid using the changing rooms with young persons. All juniors must be accompanied to the event by an adult who takes responsibility for them. Marshals and helpers will be reminded about appropriate physical contact, especially when assisting with equipment or rescues.	Event Welfare Officer	7/6/2026	
Cross-contamination of waterways with invasive species	Ecosystems / wildlife	Visiting paddlers will be reminded in pre-event documentation and at the briefing to follow Check-Clean-Dry protocol	An external water tap is available for competitors to access clean water to clean boats and equipment.	Safety Officer Race Organiser	7/6/2026	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
General	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Safety Officer will ensure that only CRT licenced craft participate in the race, that all participating craft appear structurally sound and are equipped with sufficient buoyancy. 2. A list of paddlers participating will be published to the Marshals, who will be able to communicate issues and resolutions via a WhatsApp Group. 3. Two internal toilets provided at the club – 1 suitable for disabled visitors, anti-bacterial soap provided in the toilet areas. 4. Doors will be secured if being left permanently open during the event to avoid injury if they swing shut. 5. Club fire plan has been published, most of the activity will take place outside. 	Two external Porta-loos will be provided to mitigate against the risk of congestion at peak periods before and after racing.	Safety Officer Race Organiser	7/6/2026	

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

Checked by:		Position:		Date:	
--------------------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--

Notes:
