

# Club Operating and Safety Procedures

Version 4 : June 2020



## **Intro**

This short document provides everything you need to know to be a safe and active member of the CKC. We've tried to put everything together to make it easy. It is best read alongside the club Risk Register, and the Thames / Non-Thames Leader rules.

## **About the Club**

Chelsea Kayak Club was formed by a small group of enthusiastic London paddlers to get like-minded paddlers together to enjoy the health and social benefits of paddling, to engage in safe river and sea trips at the same time as encouraging people to learn about and develop within the sport.

The Club is classed as a not-for-profit "Unincorporated Association" run on a volunteer basis by members for members and is governed by a Club Constitution and the rules of British Canoeing (the National Governing Body for canoeing and kayaking).

Its main base is Brentford Boating Arches (BBA), under Kew Bridge. The Club runs a weekly Thames paddling session (usually on a Thursday evening), runs trips (including overseas) and social events. It also provides safety, coaching and leadership training opportunities for its members.

As a community orientated Club, membership is open to anyone over the age of 18 who is able to swim 50m in light clothing. Thames sessions are open to anyone at British Canoeing "Discover" standard or above, due to the tides and currents in the Thames, it can be a bit challenging for a total beginner – but we regularly run the 1-day British Canoeing "Discover" foundation training sessions at weekends to get you up to speed quickly. To find out more contact [info@chelseakayakclub.co.uk](mailto:info@chelseakayakclub.co.uk). The Club promotes and practices a positive health and safety culture at all times and wants to be seen as leading the way in safe tideway paddling.

## **Communicating**

Most of the club communication comes by email. To join our email list you will have to have agreed to this piece of data being shared when you joined. (If you tick 'no' the membership secretary will confirm that was intentional.) We also use web-based 'sign up sheets' and a facebook group to share pictures.

## **Club Sessions at Brentford Boating Arch**

You can sign up for a Thames session on the Website, and a reminder email usually goes out too. A maximum of 5 people will be able to paddle with each Leader (Ratio is at discretion of leader, in non-Covid times max ratio is 1 leader: 8). Non-members (Guests) can come for a maximum of three sessions, at a cost of £10 each session, to try out the club.

At the beginning of each session the Arches are unlocked by the Trip Leader (a key holder). If the Rowing machines are in use, we will use the East doors for access to the changing facilities.

**Changing Arch :** The changing facilities are separated into male and female changing rooms. The Club is not responsible for any personal belongings. During the session the changing rooms are locked, but other clubs do use the Arches and can access these facilities. There are toilet facilities near the changing rooms. Once the changing rooms and toilets are finished with the Arch is locked. Changing

rooms and toilets should be tidy and clear of rubbish – any issues should be noted and reported to BBA Manager. Take rubbish home. No Rubbish is collected from the arches. We leave the centre at least as tidy as we found it. [NOTE: Currently changing facilities are not available as a result of COVID]

The Kayak Arch : All Kayaks sit on the racks and should be neat and orderly. Kayaking equipment such as paddles, buoyancy aids, cags all have their own racks/ hangers; there should be no trip hazards. The club has its own 'cage' and cupboard in which the Tow Lines, First Aid Kits, Sea-Cags, Helmets and Incident Book are stored.

Water Access : The Kayaks should be adjusted – so the foot pegs are correctly positioned. Be mindful of people using the Thames Tow Path when moving Kayaks. Kayaks will need to be carried, using a two-person lift, down the slip way to the water. The slipway is muddy/uneven at low tide, the algae can be slippery and can contain litter/glass. Suitable footwear is required. Nettles/stinging plants may present a minor nuisance and can easily be avoided. When 360 (A paddle board business who share the arches with us) is operating watch out for the fins on their boards – they can be sharp.

**IMPORTANT: No-one should launch until the Trip Leader has asked them too – this will be after a short chat on the trip plan and safety.** The Trip Leader will probably ask a strong paddler to launch first and keep the group together on the water in accordance with the PLA Paddlers Code ([www.pla.co.uk/assets/paddlingcodeonlinepages.pdf](http://www.pla.co.uk/assets/paddlingcodeonlinepages.pdf)). It is preferable for competent paddlers to launch backwards to protect the Skeg (back of the kayak); less confident paddlers can launch forwards, but will get wet feet doing so.

Where we paddle : The local paddling area for Chelsea Kayak Club is down stream to Putney Bridge, and Upstream to Richmond. Groups generally paddle against the tide outbound, and return back to the BBA at the end of the session with the tide. Leaders are responsible for checking the tide times prior to the session to determine the most appropriate outbound route. They should also take the weather into account in their planning. The trip leader will decide on the direction and how far the group goes. The Leader, and all club members will be happy to explain the 'rules of the Thames', and the local knowledge that makes paddling here safe. **Everyone needs to stay together, listen to the Trip Leader and watch out for other boats / hazards.**

All session leaders will let the Port of London Authority know the group is out paddling (and that we have returned), and carry spare paddle, Tow line, First Aid Kit etc. When calling into the PLA the Club's call sign is "Chelsea Kayak".

Be aware that the Club's Thames Leaders will have access to all members Next of Kin, emergency contact and medical information provided when you join the club.

The rules for Leading a Thames sessions, and becoming a Thames Leader are available in "Thames Leader Rules – May 2018".

General Paddler Qualifications : All paddlers must be:

- Over the age of 18
- Able to swim 50m in light clothing; and
- Be at or around British Canoeing 1 Star Award level / Kayak Foundations (formal qualifications are not required)

Any guest or new paddlers must be able to demonstrate that they are at least at this level before being allowed to paddle with the Club on the Thames.

All paddlers must read and understand the generic risk assessment; trip leaders, and participants, are encouraged to do a 'dynamic risk assessment' as the conditions on the Thames, Energy level of group... change throughout the trip.

Session Management : All paddlers are responsible for:

- arrive at the Centre promptly; or inform the leader if you are unable to participate

- Ensuring that they are appropriately dressed and equipped, including having a full change of clothes with them and a hat/water bottle / snacks if required.
- For wearing a buoyancy aid at all times when on the river
- For wearing appropriate footwear which gives good protection to feet. Loose fitting footwear (e.g. Flip-flops), open toed sandals and footwear with long laces are not advisable. (Laces could get stuck round a footpeg – laces that are tucked in are OK; sandals do not protect your toes from glass in the river bank; loose fitting footwear comes off if you take a swim)
- For advising the session leader of any medical or other condition which may be relevant to the safety and enjoyment of the session
- Lifting and carrying kayaks correctly - kayaks should be carried between 2 people. It is up to pairs of participants to decide if they can carry one or 2 boats dependent on loading, energy, strength and terrain; if in doubt go for one boat at a time.
- Being vigilant for trip hazards that may exist both on the foreshore or slip way.
- Washing their hands, and covering any small cuts when on the water to avoid any water-borne disease (eg Weils Disease)
- Letting the session leader know of any 'near misses' or incidents (however minor) and recording them in the incident book (so everyone can learn).

Leaders are able to deal with immersion and operate safely outside a kayak if needed. Towlines and first aid kits must be carried at all times on the water.

Group kayaking ratios will be:

- Max: 1 leader to 8 paddlers [6 is the total group size under COVID rules]
- Min: 1 leader to 1 paddler (minimum group size of two experienced paddlers, OR a qualified coach, working within remit, and a novice) otherwise minimum group size of three.)

If a Level 1 or Level 2 coach is present they can bring the above ratio up by a maximum of 4 additional paddlers (i.e. a maximum group size of 12 plus the leader).

**Note:** Lone paddling is not permitted under any circumstances.

Multiple groups should be staggered slightly when paddling away from the Centre. Groups must stay together at all times.

### Paddling in the Dark

When paddling in the dusk / darkness all paddlers must have lights that are visible to other river users – one on each end of each boat. A small number of Club lights are available (£1 per session), but all members are encouraged to bring their own lights. All paddlers must be highly visible at all times – all club paddles and Buoyancy Aids have reflective strips for this reason. When paddling in hours of darkness the session leader must keep the group tightly together.

### Guest Paddlers

Assuming they meet the minimum qualifications (see above) guest paddlers are permitted to participate in no more than three Club sessions, after which time if they wish to continue they must join the Club. Guest paddlers are required to sign the register as a prerequisite for participating in the session. The register is kept in the Club's 'cage'. Session leaders are responsible for collecting the requisite fees and paying into the Club account either directly or via the Treasurer.

### Equipment [Refer to annex for additional COVID procedures]

All equipment should be inspected prior to use. If a boat is defective it is/should be marked with safety "Do Not Use tag" (in the cage) until repaired. All kayaks need sufficient floatation (provided by bulkheads and secure / water-tight hatches) and must have secure toggles. Buoyancy aids are

visually inspected and adjusted before launching, and defective buoyancy aids are removed from use. All issues with Club equipment should be reported to the Club Kit Officer as soon as possible.

Paddles need to be treated with respect both to minimise injury to others and also to preserve the life of the equipment. When kayaks are in transit paddles should be secured in the kayak for ease of transport. Paddlers will either keep their paddle in the boat or firmly in their hands when on the slip way, mainly to avoid trip hazards.

Club members will be liable for any damage or loss to Club boats and equipment which the Club Committee considers has been caused by negligence on the part of the user.

First Aid / Reporting Of Incidents / Fire : In the event of a fire the muster area is outside the Arches.

The Club has its own first aid kits located in the Club Cage. First Aid kits are replenished when needed and is the responsibility of the Club Safety Co-Ordinator. All Trip leaders hold first aid Certificates.

Any accidents, incidents and near misses should be recorded in the Incident book (in the Club Cage) and reported to the Club Safety Co-Ordinator. Significant accidents, incidents and near misses should also be reported to the Centre Manager and/or British Canoeing at the earliest possibility. The Incident Procedure is on the website, and in the cage.

#### Insurance

By joining the club you become an “associate” member of English region of British Canoeing (all the home nations have their own Regional bodies due to different water access rights).

The insurance (Combined Liability Insurance to a limit of £10 million in case of an incident resulting in damage to property or another person) provided by Associate membership means you are insured for recognised CLUB sessions and activities (with Club Recognised Thames Leaders or British Canoeing qualified Leaders). It also provides you with access to the Clubs Waterways Licence.

You are NOT insured and have NO waterways licence for any paddling activity outside of recognised Club lead sessions and activities. This meant you are NOT covered for any Peer Paddles (even if advertised via club email or Facebook)

To be insured for Peer or Independent paddles you need to become an individual member of British Canoeing. This has the advantage of giving you this combined liability insurance WORLDWIDE and access to discounts on BC Qualification Certs etc. You will also have you own Waterways licence. See the BC website for full list of benefits

(<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/membership/why-join-british-canoeing/special-offers-discounts>).

If you become a coach or British Canoeing qualified leader you will need this level of membership and Insurance.

Cleaning and tidying : At the end of the session the Arches should be tidy with nothing lying around or causing a trip hazard and ready for the next user. All paddlers should help in this task.

#### **Club Trips/Training away from Kew [Not currently Possible - COVID]**

Club trips and training courses away from Kew run along similar lines. The trip will be graded (See Trip Grading) – so it easy to see if it will be suitable for beginners, or one for experienced paddlers only. All Trips/ training will be advertised by email and the trip leader will manage the ‘sign –up’ determine if everyone has the relevant experience to safely participate. The trip leader will send out details of what experience, and equipment is needed in advance. Everyone should make an effort to look at the tides, maps / charts and forecasts to help plan the trip – and keep together.

Trips away from Kew often involve moving kayaks on roof racks, or on the club trailer – care is required to ensure all boats are adequately fastened on, and that drivers are appropriately rested

(after a long day at work/paddling). The Trailer has strict rules about who can use it. Accommodation can vary from a guest house to camping – open fires and alcohol add to the risks. No-one should paddle under the influence of Alcohol.

### **Peer Paddling**

Occasionally the club email is used to advertise 'Peer Paddles'. These are opportunities to get out on the water, with a group of peers from the club – but a not led. Everyone must make their own assessment of the conditions, plan and decide for themselves if they participate. Someone from the club, not a qualified leader, may co-ordinate the logistics of the day. **These trips are very different from a led club trip. To join a peer paddle we highly recommend everyone is a full member of British canoeing – as you will need personal membership to give you licence to use the waterways and liability insurance if something was to go wrong. British Canoeing recommends carrying membership cards when paddling.** (The link to get a membership is on the website)

(Note Thames Leaders are only certified by the club to lead on a specific section of the Thames.)

**Social Events.** Not only do we like paddling, we like talking about paddling (and other things too). There is usually social in a central London pub every couple of months, and in the winter talks about paddling / paddle planning.... **[Zoom only socials during Covid!]**

**Kit Days.** Every few months the Kit Officer will organise a Kit Day to service / test / repair the club equipment. We ask all members to help, then more members will know how to fix a problem if needed on a trip. Occasionally power tools and knives are in use and these are only to be used by appropriately skilled individuals.

## **APPENDIX COVID-19 PANDEMIC 2020 FIRST DRAFT - 06/06/20**

**OUR PRIORITY AS A CLUB IS TO MAINTAIN THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF OUR MEMBERS, GUESTS AND THE PUBLIC WHILST PARTICIPATING IN CLUB ACTIVITIES, TO MINIMIZE THE SPREAD WE SET OUT ADDITIONAL / VARIED OPERATING PROCEDURES WHICH NOW FORM PART OF OUR GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES. THESE WILL BE UPDATED FROM TIME TO TIME AS GUIDANCE CHANGES FROM GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNING BODIES (BC and PLA / EA)**

### **Stay Informed**

It is the individual member or guest's responsibility to stay informed about what the current advice and rules are, and at all times to follow the rules whilst taking part in club activities, using the Club's equipment or premises. The 5 agreed tests for CKC activities to resume during the Pandemic are:

1. Government guidance, as applicable to Kew, allows it. (Current groups of 6 may meet at a social distance)
2. British Canoeing, our governing body, allows it. (Now permitted - Maximum group size of 6, Provided the Club has carried out a risk assessment and adapted existed Operating Procedures where necessary / Sharing of kit to be avoided wherever possible / Shared kit to be properly cleaned after use / Strong recommendation to stay within our local area - no one to paddle within 21 days of having symptoms)
3. Port of London Authority allows it (currently they allow activity compliant with Government and the sport's governing body guidance).
4. Brentford Boating Arch allow it. (We have an agreed Method Statement to access Arch-2 & toilet facilities with BBA)

5. The CKC Committee all agree we have a safe system of operation in place. (set out here.)

### **Method Statement for Accessing CKC Equipment at Brentford Boating Arch**

#### **GENERAL**

1. Members and guests must NOT join in with any paddling trip if they have had within the past previous TWENTY-ONE days any symptoms of respiratory illness or other symptoms listed by the NHS guidance that could relate to a Covid infection. Also if any member of your household has these symptoms currently within the last 14 days. (You should be in a quarantine period) We know this is longer than Government Guidance, but it is consistent with the more conservative BC recommendation.
2. Members and guests are responsible for making their own choices and decisions about participating in Club activities in the current climate, provided they remain within club rules.
3. We will only paddle when we have exclusive use of the Arches, and only from Kew.
4. Leaders must wipe down the locks / handles before opening the Arches, AND brief all participants on the safe operating procedures.
5. Sharing of cagoules will not be allowed (leaders will have a single cagoules for emergency use only);
6. BAs and Spraydecks will be marked into sets A and B and each set will only be used at minimum weekly intervals, and thoroughly cleaned in soapy/foamy water after each use.
7. Club tow-lines, pump (also to be cleaned in soapy water after use), single XL cag and a first aid kit (to be disinfected with spray after each use) will be separated into Set A & B, as needed by Thames Leaders.
8. Boats and Paddles will be cleaned after each use, and will only be used at minimum intervals of ~72 hours. If muddy, Boats will be first hosed down and cleaned with a dirty brush. Then each paddler will further disinfect / clean all touch points on the boat (cockpit rim, day hatch cover, toggles etc.) using a disinfectant spray and rag which they must bring themselves. Paddle shafts will also be cleaned by each paddler using their disinfectant spray and rag.
9. 2 metre Social Distancing rules apply at all times (inc getting kit out, briefing, no rafting, rescue to the bank). Clear the pathway outside the club to avoid getting too close to the public.
10. Hand hygiene measures continue to be very important. Wash your hands thoroughly, and frequently, &/or use hand sanitiser gel (inc before entering and on leaving the arches).
11. All paddles must be conservative – well within the capabilities of the group. In the event of a rescue being required tow to the bank and allow the individual to resolve the situation themselves. In the event of first aid being needed share the first aid kit and allow the individual to resolve themselves – or call for emergency support.
12. Be particularly careful when crossing the Thames – boats spread out 2m apart form a longer – and slower – line than usual. Cross with the boats parallel where possible.

#### **ARRIVE WELL PREPARED**

1. Members should arrive at the arches dressed and ready to paddle. (or be prepared to change, discreetly, outside)
2. Use YOUR OWN cagoule or equivalent wind protection jacket. In the summer it is more important that the jacket is windproof (rather than water proof). For example a walking waterproof or shell jacket.

#### **MEMBERS SHOULD PLEASE BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO A PADDLE:**

1. Disinfectant Spray (non bleach) and 2 wash rags / cloths and washable bag to contain them in - and put them in to take home wash at 60 degrees so can be reused (OR disinfectant wipes & a rubbish bag – but these are worse for the environment)
2. Hand sanitiser gel
3. Dry bag with change of clothes. And valuables.

Members should consider buying their own equipment at this time, in order to assist in minimising the risk of spreading the infection; such as buoyancy aid, spray deck, paddle, & paddle float; particularly items that go near the face e.g. Buoyancy Aid.

#### LOGISTICS FOR ACCESSING BOATS AND EQUIPMENT AT THE CLUB

- ARCH 1 (Changing facilities and toilets). There will be no access to Arch 1 changing rooms and kitchen. Time indoors has to be minimised. We will be allowed to use the loo. We will be responsible for cleaning them at the end of each session, & obviously between users! CKC will have bleach in/near the club cage for this purpose. Members will need to wipe down the seat, flush handle, sink taps before & after use.
- ARCH 2 (Boats and Equipment) The Thames leader will put into place a system of collecting equipment (boat, spraydeck, BA, Paddle) that prevents more than two people being in Arch 2 at any one time.
- The kayaks, with equipment loaded, will be taken straight to the foreshore to be set up there and in places more than 2 metres apart. It is here that the equipment will be needed to be cleaned down before and after trip. (We will produce a video to show you what we need to do.)
- Kayaks will be stored with hatchcovers on. (Since we want to reduce touching kayaks. Only hatches that are used will be cleaned.)
- Paddlers will only be going out on the water when there is a socially distant rescue plan for each individual – and low enough tide to launch/recover and clean boats on the foreshore/beach.
- The Thames leader on the day will be giving a clear briefing on new systems and new rescue procedures.
- If any paddler develops any symptoms of ill health in the days after paddling with the group they should immediately contact the club (and we will let everyone who has recently paddled with the individual know – whilst respecting the privacy of the individual). The individual should also contact 111 so that they can get tested and formal Government contact tracing can take place.

#### LOANING OF EQUIPMENT

Individual Club members, who are also current members of British Canoeing, may access and borrow equipment for personnel paddling in accordance with the club loan policy, provided they observe all of the relevant procedures above whilst taking or returning equipment.