

Maidstone Canoe Club

Club Rules and Code of Conduct

The following points are intended as guidance to club members, however, serious or persistent flouting of this code of conduct will be considered as inappropriate behaviour and may lead to the withdrawal of club membership, at the discretion of the club committee and according to the club constitution and rules.

As of 1st April 2005 Membership of the BCU is mandatory for all members of Maidstone Canoe Club who intend to paddle on the Medway.

General Conduct

Maidstone Canoe Club is committed to the Code of Conduct and Child Protection policies and provisions adopted by the British Canoe Union (BCU).

We are a family club so the use of inappropriate language in and around the clubhouse and whilst on the water will not be tolerated.

Any form of discrimination will not be tolerated.

Any form of bullying will not be tolerated.

Offer help to others less able or less experienced than you.

If any member of the club has a grievance concerning the behaviour of another club member they should bring this to the attention of the club committee if it cannot be resolved at the time, or on a one to one basis.

Members wishing to renew their club membership are encouraged to pay their subscriptions and boat storage fees promptly after the start of a new club year (1st April)

Conduct and Safety on the River

The BCU has an access agreement with the Environment Agency (who control licences for the Medway) that allows individual members of the BCU to paddle on the Medway without a river licence. Whilst Maidstone Canoe Club is affiliated to the BCU, your club membership alone does not cover you for this access agreement. If you are not a member of the BCU you will need to obtain a river licence for the Medway from the Environmental Agency (it is, however, far cheaper to join the BCU if paddling regularly). The club is not responsible if you are challenged and found not to have a licence and are not a member of the BCU. You will also be bringing the

Club and other paddlers into disrepute. The BCU access agreement also covers other waterways in the UK so it is well worth becoming a member for this alone.

Inexperienced paddlers must **not** go onto the water without the attendance and guidance of experienced paddlers.

All junior paddlers and inexperienced paddlers **must** wear a buoyancy aid while paddling a boat or swimming. You must make sure that the buoyancy aid fits you properly as there are different sizes, if in doubt ask advice from the coach or other experienced paddlers.

Adult, experienced paddlers can use their own discretion about the wearing of a buoyancy aid whilst paddling on the Medway when it is at its normal flow (accepted risk) but are strongly advised to wear one when the river is in flood, at night, or when near weirs. Crash hats should be used when paddling whitewater but are not normally needed on the Medway, except when it is in flood conditions, however, some members wear them on flat water just to look cool. There are canoeing venues, such as slalom courses, where the use of buoyancy aids and crash hats is compulsory.

Movement on a river is opposite to that on roads, i.e., we paddle on the right. Because paddlers can usually get out of the way of other craft at the sides of the river, we do use both sides of the river, but we do need to keep a sharp lookout for other craft and anglers. Always show consideration to ALL river users, including anglers.

Keep a look out for other boats on the river, particularly the skulls and rowing boats, as they may not see you, they travel quickly and need a very wide path. Warn other paddlers in the group if other boats are coming and remember that novice paddlers will probably need extra time to get to the side of the river. Whenever possible give way to other river craft and to racing kayaks when they are racing or training. If you cannot get out of the way of a rowing boat in time shout the warning 'head skull'.

Experienced paddlers will accompany junior and inexperienced paddlers. When you are paddling with a group remember that there may be others who are slower than you so do not race ahead of the group. If you are tired and want to return to the clubhouse let one of the experienced paddlers know, do not return on your own.

Please try not to bump into moored boats, they are expensive and you may be liable for any damage.

Do not seal launch using club boats unless under supervision of the coach/group leader and using under hull protection to prevent abrasion.

Going to and from the river take care when lifting and carrying a boat, if it is too heavy for you ask for help. Give parked cars a wide berth, take no shortcuts.

Care of Club Boats and Equipment

Some of the club boats have adjustable footrests that will need to be adjusted prior to paddling. It is ok to sit in a general purpose plastic boat when it is on dry land to do

this but **do not** sit in a racing boat on dry land as it may damage the rudder or keel, use the water beside the landing stage for this.

Boats **must never** be dragged. Abrasion will ruin boats quickly.

When you use a club boat/paddle/buoyancy aid it is your responsibility to return them to the store after use. If you cannot manage to carry the boat by yourself ask somebody to help you. Please do not just leave the boat or equipment by the riverbank for other people to return.

Boats **must** be emptied and cleaned, if necessary, there are sponges in the general-purpose boat store for this. After use, boats, buoyancy aids and spray decks must be returned to the racks or pegs provided, ask for help if you cannot manage this alone.

Club boats **must not** be used away from the club, eg on trips, unless permission is given by a committee member.

Private boats that display the 'Private Boat' sticker **must not** be used by other people without the permission of the owner.

Use of the Clubhouse

Try to keep the clubhouse clean and tidy. It is inevitable that mud and dirt will accompany your boots into the changing rooms, please try to keep this to a minimum by removing your muddy boots before entering the changing rooms. Please do not go upstairs in the clubhouse wearing your wet paddling gear and muddy boots.

If you are a key holder and the last to leave after a session make sure that all **lights** and **heaters** are turned **off**, that **taps** or **showers** are not left running and that the upstairs windows are not open. Make sure that **all** doors are **locked** when you are last to leave after a session or when everybody is on the water.

Before locking the clubhouse **check** to ensure that nobody is still inside. If you do find yourself locked inside the clubhouse, then use the upstairs fire escape to exit but remember to close the fire exit door behind you.

Should a safety incident or injury occur whilst engaged in club activities, a club official should be notified and the witness or the injured party should enter details into the Accident Book located on the notice board in the clubhouse kitchen.

Smoking is not allowed in the clubhouse.

If you use the kitchen area do your bit to keep this clean and tidy. Wash up any crockery/cutlery you use or bring it to the sink if somebody else is washing up, take your turn occasionally.

Do your bit for this Club and share the load.

Thanks