

Cheltenham Canoe Club



Introduction to Cheltenham Canoe Club

The club started in 1983 as a group of friends who liked to paddle together and has developed over the years into a very active club; some of those original paddlers are still paddling with us today.

Everyone is welcome whatever your age, background or paddling ability. [Please be aware though that canoeing and kayaking are “Assumed risk” and “Water Contact Sports” that may carry attendant risks.](#)

1. *Participation in paddling*

1.1 Induction (*If you are new to the sport*)

For an introduction to kayak paddling it is advisable to start at a pool session. The pool is a contained environment where we can introduce you to paddling kit, paddling skills, including safety and rescue skills before we move you on to sheltered and moving water. You'll meet many of the club's members here too.

Juniors (under 18 yrs old)

We aim to guide juniors through the Paddlepower program (created by our governing body the British Canoe Union). Paddling and knowledge are built up over completion of 5 levels. As you progress through the levels you will be assessed to determine when you have the skills and ability to join the club on suitable river trips and/ or take part in slalom training.

For under 18 year olds, the Club requires a parent or responsible adult to be present at pool side or on the river bank for all activities. Better still, why not give it a go yourself. Paddling is a great family activity.

Adults

We aim to coach you through a set of paddling skills and provide encouragement to get you out onto moving water: river trips and/or slalom training. As you progress you will be assessed to determine when you have the skills and ability to join the club on suitable paddling trips and/ or take part in slalom training.

If you are interested in gaining paddling qualifications we can coach and assess paddlers for their BCU 1, 2 and 3 star kayak awards. For qualifications at higher levels or in other craft we will refer you to assessors outside the club.

1.2 For paddlers with paddling experience

We look forward to you joining us. We offer a friendly group of people who love to paddle, with river paddling trips to suit different abilities and preferences. We have a full program of paddling that runs through the whole year. If there is an area of the sport that particularly interests you we would be happy talk to you about it.

2. Membership Fees

Your first fee is due after you have completed 3 events and/or pool sessions with the Club. After this, membership is renewed, and fees paid annually, in January immediately after the Club AGM. Payment of a membership fee will provide you with membership of the club until the date of the following AGM.

The following are included as part of your membership

- participation in paddling events with the club;
- use of club equipment;
- coaching and encouragement to achieve your paddling goals;
- a like-minded group of people to go paddling with;
- full access to the Club website www.cheltenhamcanoeclub.co.uk. Once you have paid your membership go to the website and click on register to register as a member. Once registration is confirmed you will have access to the Forum where you'll find conversations about paddling trips and other events. It is a very useful way of keeping informed about what's going on;
- twice yearly newsletter which includes the club program for the next half year

Club activities

Pool sessions

The club has the use of the Lido on a Thursday evening from early May – end August, 7.30 – 9.00 depending on availability of light.

It's a great venue

- if you are new to paddling. The Lido is often the first introduction to Cheltenham Canoe Club. It's a safe environment to find out if kayaking is for you. We aim to provide coaching to get those river running and slalom skills started. There is normally a coach on hand at the Lido on Thursday nights. Coaching starts here but the aim is to get you onto moving water so that you can join club members on river trips and/or move on to slalom based training
- for experienced paddlers to grab a bit of warm and sheltered space to learn or practice rolling and other skills. We usually keep one corner free so that you can nail that bombproof role, with some help on hand if you're just learning.
- to meet other club members
- for the Thursday night polo game.

During the autumn and spring we aim to offer sessions at an indoor pool venue. See the club website for details.

The pool sessions are only suitable for kayak paddling. Larger craft ie open canoe, sit on top kayak or SUP can be paddled on river and sea trips. Talk to us, we can suggest venues and events that will suit your paddling needs.

River running

The club has a very active group that focuses on running rivers; some are a gentle bimbble but you can push yourself to more interesting white water if that's your thing. The rivers are graded according to difficulty – see www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk Anyone can join us on a grade 1 or 2. You might like to push your limits at a higher grade. Work your way up at your own pace or just stick with the easier grades.

The club has a full program of river trips that run every weekend. Come along to Dowty's Sports and Social club on Thursday where we finalise trip details and you can ask advice about the suitability of a trip for you.

There will always be more experienced paddlers on the river trip who will offer advice, encouragement, explain the best route to take or whether to walk around a river feature.

Slalom

The club also has a group involved in competitive slalom with regular slalom training sessions throughout the year and enthusiastic coaches to help you improve.

Competition takes place on weekends between March and November and there are generally Cheltenham CC paddlers taking part in all divisions. We also take part in the annual Interclubs event.

Polo

The club doesn't currently compete against other clubs. There is however a friendly (yet fiercely competitive) game of polo at one end of the Lido pool that runs from 8 – 9pm every Thursday on the summer months. There are also occasional friendlies against other clubs.

If you are keen to develop a competitive team we would be happy to support you making it possible. Talk to a committee member.

Sea paddling

There are 2 weekend trips included in the program each year to allow us to indulge in a bit of sea surfing and coastal paddling. You are welcome to organise further trips.

4. The paddling program and how to get involved

The weekend paddle trips are listed in the program BUT the program is only a guideline. Many rivers are dependent on rainfall in the few days before. If we have plenty of rain leading up to a weekend trip we may alter the venue.

The club meets socially at Dowty's Sports and Social club each Thursday night from 9pm onwards. This is where

- the final decision on that weekend's trip is made;
- travel arrangements are finalised and
- you can talk to other paddlers if you need to understand whether the trip is suitable for you.

Please try to make it to the club if you can.

If you can't make it to Dowty's you can go to the club website, <http://cheltenhamcanoecub.co.uk>

You will find the program there and also the Forum. This is where discussions of up and coming trips take place and where you will find details of any impromptu trips organised by individual members.

The Club organises its river programme to reflect the paddling wanted by its members. In order to spread the workload, all members are encouraged to organise, although not necessarily lead, river trips. Those wishing to take part in a trip are expected to inform the organiser by the preceding Thursday evening. Everyone taking part in a Club trip shares the petrol costs.

Once a place has been booked on a Club activity that individual must make payment where the club has incurred a cost (eg accommodation costs) even if you subsequently cancel.

For safety reasons no Club trip will go ahead with less than three paddlers.

5. Coaches and volunteers

The club is managed by a committee of volunteers. Events, trips, pool sessions are all provided and managed on a voluntary basis. The coaches receive no payment for their input to the club. If you are able to help in any way we would be pleased to receive any help you can give.

If you are a qualified paddling coach and you can spare the club some time we would also be very pleased to hear from you. Coaches need to be DBS checked but this is paid for by the BCU and we have a person available to vet the paperwork before forwarding to the BCU.

6. Equipment

The Club has a selection of river running and slalom boats, and even a couple of Canadian canoes, that you can try before you make a decision about buying your own boat. We also have paddles, helmets, buoyancy aids and spray decks that we can lend to you.

As a member you are welcome to borrow kit at the Lido or from the club shed. Equipment can only be used on club trips or slalom. [It is not available for use or hire on private trips.](#)

Equipment is the responsibility of the individual who books it out. Individuals may be asked to contribute to costs if equipment is lost or damaged beyond general wear.

It isn't easy to keep up with equipment that is loaned out so please

- use the booking out system at the Lido or at the club shed so that we can keep track of each item – ask the trip organiser how this works;
- bring equipment back promptly after you have used it so that it is available for others to use – again, ask the trip organiser how and when items should be returned.

Whilst we can lend you equipment we can't transport it for you so the first item of kit that you need to acquire is a roof rack.

7. Behaviour

The Club expects its members to comply with the BCU Code of Conduct and to be well-behaved both at pool sessions and on Club trips.

At each pool session, a Club member will be appointed as organiser to ensure that pool facilities and Club equipment are not abused, and to stop any unacceptable behaviour that threatens safety or may offend others.

Welcome to the club.

Captain

Other useful websites

www.bcu.org.uk or www.canoe-england.co.uk our governing body websites.

www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk detailed info on rivers and the features to expect on a river trip. Also a place where you can buy and sell kit.

www.magicseaweed.com for surf reports.

rainchasers.com for up to date info on river levels.

www.riversaccess.org for info on the rivers access campaign.