



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 associated 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.

1.2 Juniors (under 18 yrs old).

We aim to guide juniors through a set of paddling skills. As you progress 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 the 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.

1.3 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.

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 to talk to you about it.

3. 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 May. Payment of a membership fee will provide you with membership of the club until the following April.



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;
- Access to the Cheltenham Canoe Club Community Facebook group. Here you will find conversations about paddling trips and other events. It is a very useful way of keeping informed about what's going on;
- Club newsletter which is published about 4 times a year.

4. Club activities

Pool sessions

The club has the use of Sandford Parks Lido in Cheltenham on a Thursday evening from early May – end August, 7.30pm – 9.00 pm 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 the 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.

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 bibble but you can push yourself to more challenging 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/activities that run about twice a month. Full details are posted on the Club's [Facebook group](#). In the autumn/winter months, come along to the House in the Tree pub, Withybridge Lane, Cheltenham GL51 0TQ



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on Thursdays from 9pm where we finalise trip details and you can ask advice about the suitability of a trip for you. When we run Thursday lido sessions, we meet afterwards at the Exmouth Arms on Bath Road.

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 Canoe Slalom Interclubs Championships.

Polo

The club has an adult and also a junior polo team who compete in the South West region canoe polo tournaments. There is also a friendly (yet fiercely competitive) game of polo at one end of the Lido pool that runs from 7.30pm – 9pm every Thursday in the summer months.

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 is usually a weekend trip 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.



5. 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, in the autumn/winter months, at The House in The Tree, Withybridge Lane, Cheltenham GL51 0TQ each Thursday night from 9pm onwards. This is where

- ❖ the final decision on that weekend's trip is made;
- ❖ travel arrangements are finalised
- ❖ 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 pub if you can. If you can't make it then check final plans on the Club's [Facebook group](#). 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 when car sharing.

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.

6. 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 British Canoeing and the Club's Welfare Officer is able to verify the necessary paperwork before forwarding to BC.



7. Equipment

The Club has a selection of river running and slalom boats, and even a couple of Canadian canoes, that you can try before making 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.

8. Behaviour

The Club expects its members to comply with the BC 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

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/> our governing body websites.

<http://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.

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

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