



Activity: Club Paddles principally Saturday Mornings		Location/Site: River Stour on river either south from Quay to Henny or north to Brundon		This is a Coach Led Club Activity, to be organised and led by Coaches/Instructors but see notes at the end re the application of this RA to supervised club activity and collaborative club activity on the same river section		
Notes		This RA assumes that there is a designated leader (“Leader”) of the paddle working with others (“Assistants”) as needed depending on size of the group				
Hazard	Who might be harmed?	What are we doing about the risk to control it?	What further action is necessary to control the risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done?
General risks	All	Safety briefing at start on risk of drowning, etc. Activities supervised by trained coaches/instructors, DBS checked. See safety briefing notes at end of this RA. Consider ratios at start of paddle depending on number of participants and their experience	NA	Leader	At start of paddle	
Car park	All, esp children	Encourage care around vehicles.	Parents to be asked to supervise children if necessary	Leader/Assistants	As appropriate	

Slips and trips, manual handling issues	All	Cover in safety briefing, encourage care esp at portages and use of safe manual handling techniques	Safety briefing and general encouragement of safe practice	Leader/Assistants	At start of paddle and as appropriate during paddle	
Entering and leaving the water	All	Take care that seal launches will not damage river banks and flora. Coaches/participants to help one another with launch and landing.	Covered in pre session briefing, so NA although observation and encouragement of good practice needed throughout session	Leader/Assistants	DRA portages as safe and free from obstacles (check before landing).	
Carrying/handling boats	All	All boat manoeuvres off or from the water including emptying after capsize and completion of sessions are overlooked by coaches who have been trained to PUK standards for carrying (within reason).	Covered in pre session briefing, and encouragement of good practice needed throughout session	Leader/Assistants	On-going observation and encouragement	
Pollution	All	All boats checked and or cleaned before entry into the river and where possible adjustments to be made to foot rests.	Good practice shared in safety briefing, and encouragement of good practice needed throughout session	Leader/Assistants	On-going observation and encouragement	
Drowning	All	Buoyancy aids to be worn at all times during the sessions Free swimmers are allowed at discretion of coaches but coaches keep a lookout for	Covered in pre session briefing and encouragement of good practice needed throughout session When river flowing strongly,	Leader/Assistants	On-going observation and encouragement	

		issues i.e. bank or water support	increase safety margin to be given to dangers such as trees, weirs and esp RH side of Cornard Weir.			
Entrapment	All	Dynamic assessment from bank or river and appropriate action taken.	Covered in pre session briefing. Observation by coaches and encouragement of good practice needed throughout session	Leader/Assistants	On-going observation	
Weirs (Brundon, Salmon Steps, Cornard, Henny)	All	Helmets mandatory, DRA weirs before running, prohibit those without appropriate skill, safety cover at top and bottom for less experienced paddlers (depending on flow). When Cornard being used as a slide, at least two adults to supervise children. Safety briefing dangers of sluice gate at Cornard and need to avoid it.	Covered in pre session briefing. Observation by coaches and encouragement of good practice needed throughout session. DRA before running any weir	Leader	As weirs approached	
Head Injury	all	Helmets mandatory when paddling near or over weirs or other obstacles	Encouragement of good practice needed throughout session	Leader/Assistants	On-going observation	
Child Protection/Safeguarding	Participants	Normal club good practice adhered to e.g all coaches DBS checked, no adult left	Guidelines for SCC child protection and vulnerable adult policy followed.	Leader/Assistants	On-going observation	

		alone with juniors or vulnerable adults. Parents or family members take responsibility for overnight safety of juniors.	Encouragement of good practice needed throughout session			
Collision with other river users	Participants	Warnings/etc given to participants esp as to dangers of fast moving skulls. When on water, any novices or junior participants supervised by experienced members	Pre session briefing and encouragement of good practice throughout session	Leader/Assistants	DRA during paddle	
Equipment failure	Participants	Equipment officer to annually check all equipment (e.g. BA tests).	For each paddle, Leader/Assistants in charge of handing out equipment to check in working order and appropriate for size of paddler i.e. BA and paddle, boat. Issues to be updated as appropriate.	Leader/Assistants	Annually and at start of paddle	
Hypothermia/dehydration/sunburn	Participants	Leader/Assistants to check participants appropriately attired, have drinks and snacks, sunscreen applied				
Emergency points/communications	NA	Emergency vehicles can access the Quay car park, the road next to Cornard Weir, the Henny Swan and at Brundon. A mobile	Leader to check mobile(s) available	Leader	At start of paddle	

		phone needs to be taken on the water by each group leader and emergency numbers kept accessible at Quay car park to support any emergency.				
When part of a Saturday Paddle is not formally led – e.g. Cornard to Henny	Participants	There will be times when the formal club Saturday paddle is e.g. from the Quay to Cornard from where more experienced club members may wish to proceed to Henny and back (a “break away group”). A break away group is not a formal club coached activity but instead is a “supervised club activity” under Paddle UK guidelines. Participation in a break away group is only permitted at the discretion of the Leader of the club paddle who will appoint an “Organiser” to lead the break away group and be responsible for managing safety and making informed decisions in response to changing conditions or emergencies.	Leader on the day to assess competency of those going on supervised club activity. Organiser to meet requirements of Requirements of ‘Club Trip Organisers, Team Leaders’ Paddle UK definition. Organiser to take on role described above for Leader of Club paddle. Weirs not to be run.	Leader on day to assess if breakaway group is appropriate. Organiser then to lead the break away group and follow RA requirements and recommendations above, e.g. break away group to have suitable emergency equipment, means of communication	At start of break away	

<p>When a Saturday Paddle is not led at all – e.g. no qualified leader available, river conditions unsuitable</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<p>Participants must be experienced paddlers, over 18 and are ALL responsible for managing safety, and making informed decisions in response to changing conditions or emergencies.</p>	<p>Participants to follow applicable RA requirements above (e.g. as to helmets, BAs, emergency equipment, means of communication). In addition participants DRA river conditions and agree “float plan” before setting off (e.g. what to do in emergency, where to paddle, whether to run weirs). Good practice would be to discuss at the start of the paddle the points in the addendum to this RA</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<p>At start of paddle</p>	
<p>Night paddling – general increase in risks owing to reduced visibility</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<p>Normally night paddles (e.g. “full moon paddles”) would be coordinated club activity (“peer paddles”) with no designated person in charge- in which case participants must be experienced paddlers, over 18 and are ALL responsible for</p>	<p>Participants to follow applicable RA requirements above (e.g. as to helmets, BAs, emergency equipment, means of communication). In addition participants DRA river conditions</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<p>At start of paddle</p>	

		managing safety, and making informed decisions in response to changing conditions or emergencies.	and agree “float plan” before setting off (e.g. what to do in emergency, where to paddle, whether to run weirs). Good practice would be to discuss at the start of the paddle the points in the addendum to this RA. Participants to consider visibility issues and take precautions such as staying closer together than in usual conditions, carrying lights, regular checks on participants, extra care to establish at start and end of paddle who is there.			
Night paddling – general increase in risks owing to reduced visibility	Participants	Where exceptionally a paddle after dark is a supervised club activity (e.g. “Halloween paddle”, “Christmas paddle”) the organiser needs to meet the PUK requirements for “Formal, Instructing, Coaching or Leadership” and to	Leader to consider visibility issues and take precautions such as reduced ratios, staying closer together than in usual conditions, carrying lights, regular checks on participants, extra	Leader	Before and during paddle	

		consider what extra precautions are necessary depending on the participant make up	care to establish at start and end of paddle who is there, younger paddlers to be put into canoes with adult supervisor – NB bear in mind child protection issues during darkness and consider insisting on parents accompanying children/designated chaperones.			
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Addendum - notes to accompany risk assessment

Safety briefing

Leader on the day to give a clear safety briefing before every club paddle even if the group is largely or entirely experienced paddlers.

Use MYABCDE approach. Briefing points to cover include

- who leader is so everyone is clear - who is leading the group(s)
- intros to any new paddlers and double check everyone is signed on
- where we are going (and where we are not going)
- check boats and kit incl each group has throw line, First aid kit, mobile and other emergency kit depending on the conditions
- communications
- any medical conditions leader needs to be aware of
- what to do in an emergency (e.g. group to gather safely while designated paddlers effect rescue)
- Emphasise that if anyone wants to leave the main group(s) then they need to tell the group leader. If anyone is to leave the group(s) then unless an exception is agreed by the group leader, those leaving need to be led by a suitable leader (either PUK qualified or club assessed), and the sub group must have phone, first aid kit and throw line.
- Ask before we set off if anyone might wish to come back early or paddle independently and dynamically assess and agree a plan for that (eg might be acceptable for an experienced paddler to return early on their own on a warm summer day when there is minimum flow but not in all conditions).
- Ask if there is anything the leader(s) needs to know and discuss conditions, any particular risks, etc, e.g. if river flowing more strongly than usual, need to leave a wider margin around hazards than usual

Return to Quay

Leader on the day to ensure steps are going to be taken to check people back in, esp if more than one group is out. Agree before a group breaks off who the group leader is, which paddlers they are going to paddle and that they take responsibility for check in of those paddlers. That way we can make sure we always know everyone is back.

When the river is flowing more strongly than usual

All of the above would apply regardless of river conditions but if the river is flowing more strongly than usual, in addition we should do the following before we set off.

- o Put off newcomers
- o Be ready to put off other paddlers depending on their level of skill
- o Decide if we should stay as a single group or if splitting make sure there are enough strong paddlers for any emergency.
- o If there are paddlers present who have a lower skill level, overall paddle leader to dynamically assess who is to lead the group they will be in and what other paddlers should be in that group, bearing in mind that emergencies might arise.
- o Ensure that in any sub group there are enough throw lines and other emergency kit.
- o Double check that among the whole group we have adequate kit.

Contact details in case of an emergency.

Overall paddle leader to system in place (depends on the number of paddlers and groups exactly what this is) so that there is availability of contact details to river leaders

Clothing

Advice should always be given on appropriate clothing and paddlers turned away if not suitably dressed. But in addition, make sure spare clothing is readily available in case of emergency. This is relevant esp for kids who will not have left a vehicle in the car park. In appropriate cases insist on spare clothes being brought and put in the store for changing after the session.

In summer do not forget need for sunscreen and hydration

Signed DH and NMcM

Date 7 December 2024 Next review December 2025

Reviewed by Safety officer and Chair December 2024 – to be reconsidered December 2025