



WARGRAVE BOATING CLUB

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1. Overview

This document provides answers to the most commonly asked questions we know of. Please refer to these answers as needed, and raise any additional questions with a member of the Committee for possible inclusion in future versions.

2. Club facilities

When can members use the Club BBQ?

As with all Club equipment, the BBQ can be used by adult members whenever the Club is open for General Boating, or by arrangement outside of those hours. The BBQ must be shared if more than one member wants to use it at a time.

The BBQ is gas fired, and the gas canister is stored in (and must be returned to) the locked cage by the fence. Notify a Committee member if the gas is running low.

The BBQ and utensils must be left in a state of readiness for the next user, though a deep clean is not required after every use.

The Club showers don't seem to be working, do I need to turn them on?

The hot water works on a timer and should be available during General Boating hours. If it is not on when it should be then please contact a member of the General Committee.

What food and drinks are available for club members, and how much do they cost?

The Boat Club has tea, coffee, squash and hot chocolate available for free. Members are expected to wash up and put away any items they have used, and take their rubbish and recycling home with them as we don't have a rubbish collection from the club.

We no longer operate a snack cupboard, though members are welcome to use the refrigerator to store their own snacks while using the Club.

We will also generally have food available to purchase on special occasions such as Open Days.

Should the Duty Member bring in fresh milk?

There is powdered milk in the cupboard. If the Duty Member wishes to bring in fresh milk that is generally much appreciated, and it can be kept in the fridge.

3. Memberships and discounts

Does the club offer discounted membership for people who join late in the season, or for those who can only join for a limited time?

No, the membership fees are not discounted for people who join later in the season.

Our fees are highly competitive compared to other boating options even for people joining late in the season; see the WBC website for details.

Members who wish to use fine boats (rowing shells, skiffs, and punts) are asked to pay an additional fee to cover the higher costs associated with maintaining these boats.

For any queries about membership please contact the Membership Secretary.

4. Children

Can a child take out a boat alone?

A child of any age may be alone in a boat if she is part of a group of boats which includes an adult member supervising them.

If a child (defined as under the age of 18) wishes to take a boat out by herself and unaccompanied by other craft, she can do so subject to the following conditions:

- She must be over the age of 12 to take out open canoes (Canadian canoes), sit-on kayaks and dinghies alone (e.g. not accompanied by other boats.)
- She must have passed the Swim Test
- She must have the permission of a parent or guardian who is also a member of the Club, or of a member of the General Committee
- She may not take out a Stand Up Paddleboard. The minimum age to go out alone on a paddleboard is 18
- All other boat rules still apply and take precedence, e.g. restrictions around the use of closed cockpit kayaks, fine boats and coracles; see the Boat Types and Rules document for specific details.

Duty Members may request that children be accompanied on the water by a parent or guardian if they are not comfortable that risks are being effectively managed.

Can a group of children take out boats without adult supervision?

Members who are under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult Member when on Club premises, and will need an adult Member's permission to take a boat out on the water. The responsible adult may accompany them or stay on Club premises while they are out on a boat.

The normal rules will still apply for every type of boat, e.g. restrictions around the use of closed cockpit kayaks, fine boats and coracles, and requirements for buoyancy aids and life jackets; see the Boat Types and Rules document for specific details.

As with all Club activities that take place during General Boating, the Duty Member may restrict these activities if they feel that there are risks involved which are not being managed adequately.

When must children wear lifejackets and/ or buoyancy aids?

Please be aware of the difference between a life jacket and a buoyancy aid. A life jacket is bulkier, and is designed to keep a person's face above water even when they are unconscious. Buoyancy aids are typically a smaller profile with less neck-level protection.

All children (defined as under the age of 18) must wear lifejackets when on Club premises or when using Club boats unless they have passed the Swim Test. The names of all children who have passed the Swim Test are listed in the Swim Test List in the Duty Folder. For insurance reasons there are no exceptions for children who have not passed the Swim Test, even if they are strong swimmers.

In addition, all club members must observe the specific rules for each boat category around who must wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid, and even adults who are swimmers are expected to wear buoyancy aids for many boat types; see the Boat Types and Rules document for specific details.

5. Duty Members, visitors and guests

Can the Club be opened if only one Duty Member is on duty?

No, General Boating sessions require two Duty Members to be available. During the duty session both Duty Members should be in attendance at the Club unless responding to a request for assistance. If only one Duty Member is available please notify a General Committee member as the club will have to be closed for General Boating.

What are the rules around boat club members bringing guests to the club?

Adult Members may bring up to three guests to the Club (or one family unit) at a time, though this is expected to be no more than a few times per year. Guests will be the responsibility of the adult Member that invited them, and must be accompanied by a Member at all times (including if they take out a boat.) All guests must be signed in for insurance purposes and follow Club rules.

Please note that although members who are aged 16 and 17 years can come to the club without an adult member, they cannot bring guests.

At busy times priority will be given to members waiting to take craft out over members taking guests out.

Can a Duty Member bring family and friends to the club to keep them company while on duty?

Regrettably, a Duty Member cannot be entertaining guests at the same time as performing their duty. In addition, we request that members should not be on duty with a member of their own household as the second Duty Member.

Being a Duty Member is an opportunity to meet other club members and learn from them the best way to handle boats and share experiences of the river. There is a danger that Duty Members may be distracted when entertaining guests and safety standards may not be enforced as diligently if both Duty Members are from the same household.

Are dogs allowed on Club premises?

Well behaved dogs are welcome at the club. They must remain on a short leash, always be with an adult, and cannot go inside the buildings or on WBC craft. Please clear up after your dog and take any waste home with you (we do not have a rubbish collection from the club) and be considerate to members who may be frightened of dogs.

6. Members launching their own boats

What boats can members bring to launch from the Club?

Members may bring their own non-motorised boats to be launched from the Club, however no car or motor vehicle may be brought down the Boat Club Lane in order to do so. Members may not store their own boats on site at the Club. All Club rules must be observed when on Club premises and when using all boats, whether owned by the Club or by members.

Please note that only WBC craft are covered by the WBC licences and insurance policies. You should purchase your own River Thames unpowered open boat licence from the gov.uk website or join Paddle UK (formerly British Canoeing). Either of these entitles you to paddle on the non-tidal section of the Thames.

When are members allowed to launch their own boats from the Club?

Members may launch their own boats during General Boating hours, or outside of these hours with the agreement of a member of the General Committee. No members' boats may be launched from the Club outside of the boating season which typically runs from the end of April until late September.

7. Vehicles

Are members allowed to drive to the Club?

Vehicles can be taken onto Club premises only in an emergency or with the permission of a member of the General Committee for the purpose of loading/unloading supplies or equipment for the Club.

8. Club buoyancy aids

Does the Club have buoyancy aids that can be borrowed?

Members are required to bring their own buoyancy aids, including life jackets, to the Club, and are responsible for ensuring that they and their guests wear them appropriately.

The Club does have its own buoyancy aids, which are intended to be used by non-members on Open Days as required. These may be borrowed by Members in exceptional circumstances, but are no substitute for Members owning their own.

All users of buoyancy aids and life jackets are responsible for ensuring:

- They know what kind of buoyancy aid they should be wearing according to the club rules
- They have conducted a visual check that the buoyancy aid is fit to use (e.g. no tears in the fabric, no straps or buckles are missing)
- They have a buoyancy aid that is the right size for them
- They have fitted the buoyancy aid correctly.

If a buoyancy aid is damaged a member of the committee should be notified so it can be removed from use immediately.

9. Club opening hours and the boating season

Can boats be taken out during the summer outside of General Boating hours?

Fine Boat users regularly take out boats outside of the General Boating hours; training in these boats includes instruction in using them safely and independently.

During the boating season Club facilities and boats may be used outside of the General Boating hours, but must always be approved in advance by a member of the committee who may require the member to receive additional instruction in safe use of the Club out of General Boating hours.

When does the club open and close for the boating season?

The General Boating season typically runs from the end of April until the end of September, dependent on river conditions.

10. Boat-specific questions

How should Fine Boats be signed out?

A blackboard is available on the door of the Fine Boat shed which can be used for signing out these boats.

Can you take a fine boat out if you haven't done the course?

Fine Boats (rowing shells, skiffs and punts) can only be taken out by members who have been approved to do so and have paid an additional 'Fine Boat Supplement' fee, unless they are under the supervision of an instructor.

The list of Fine Boat users should give details of who is eligible, and for any questions please contact the Membership Secretary.

Can I take someone out on a Stand-Up Paddleboard?

SUPs can only be taken out by Members who are on the approved SUP list. This is true even of experienced SUP users in order to comply with our insurance. To be approved you need to complete a one-off introduction course (please see the course section of WBC website for details). Note that junior members must be in school Y7 or above and have passed the WBC swim test. Paddlers under 18 cannot go out alone and must be accompanied by another craft. Guests cannot use the club SUPs. Everyone using a SUP has to wear a buoyancy aid.

You may also bring your own SUPs down to the club to use. This is done at your own risk as you will not be covered by the WBC river licences or insurance policies (you should purchase your own River Thames unpowered open boat licence from the gov.uk website or join Paddle UK – formerly British Canoeing). Your guests can use your own SUPs. We still ask that everyone wears buoyancy aids and you supervise children (under the age of 18) on the water to ensure safety.

Who can take out a closed cockpit kayak?

Closed cockpit kayaks can only be taken out by Members who are on the 'Approved Paddlers' list. They must be in a group of a minimum of three Approved Paddlers. This is because Approved Paddlers have been trained in how to assist another paddler who is in trouble.

Some Approved Paddlers are allowed to take out kayaks by themselves. These 'Solo Paddlers' are identified as such on the Approved Paddlers list, and have satisfied the WBC instructors that they are competent in self recovery using an eskimo roll.

Members who have completed the kayak training course do not automatically become Approved Paddlers; typically a couple of years' paddling experience is required before approval is given.

Members who have passed a kayak instruction course but who are not yet Approved Paddlers may take out a closed cockpit kayak only under the supervision of an Instructor.

If in doubt ask the kayak lead on the committee.

Do adults need a buoyancy aid in a Canadian canoe?

Yes. Anyone who takes out a Canadian canoe must be wearing a buoyancy aid as minimum, and children who have not passed their swim test should wear a life jacket. This rule applies whether the Canadian canoe is being paddled or poled.

For a summary of the requirements for each boat type refer to the Boat Category Guide which is on display in the Club.

Do adults need a buoyancy aid on a SUP or sit-on kayak?

Yes.

For a summary of the requirements for each boat type refer to the Boat Category Guide which is on display in the Club.

If a child has passed the swim test, do they have to wear a buoyancy aid in a Canadian canoe?

Yes.

For a summary of the requirements for each boat type refer to the Boat Category Guide which is on display in the Club.

How long can members take boats out for during General Boating sessions?

There is no official limit on how long Members may take boats out for.

During busy periods the Duty Member may place restrictions on the duration of each session so as to ensure that as many members get out on the water as possible, which could be as little as half an hour. When taking out any boat Members should indicate in the sign-out sheet where they will be taking the boat and when they expect to be back, and if plans change and they stay out longer they should notify the Duty Member. Failure to do so may cause inconvenience and distress to other members of the Club.

Why can't we swim from the Club on a hot day?

Swimming from the Club is not allowed under any circumstances. The Boat Club is located by the entrance to Bushnell's boatyard next door, and motor boats pass nearby regularly; because of this our bylaws have to be very strict. The Club Swim tests are an exception to this, and take place only under supervision and after our neighbours have been informed.