WARRINGTON ROWING CLUB
SAFETY PLAN

This safety plan identifies the risks involved in rowing at Warrington Rowing Club (WTN) and outlines the procedures to be adopted by club members and visitors to limit those risks. The directors have appointed a Club Safety Adviser (CSA) to oversee the club's safety policy, and a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) to oversee the club's welfare policy. A copy of the Safety Policy and Safety Plan are displayed on the club safety notice board along with the waterway plan. Details are provided to all new members. WTN operates to the British Rowing **RowSafe** Guidelines. These are updated annually and can be found at the following web address: https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/ .

WARRINGTON ROWING CLUB COMMITTEE

The Committee has overall responsibility for safety & welfare standards and is assisted by the CSA and CWO who attend the monthly committee meetings.

Competency. The Committee reserves the right to stop any member from training if they feel that they are not competent, or they have contravened the club safety procedures.

Club Safety Policy has been agreed by the committee and signed by the Chairman.

Committee Members have their photographs and names posted in the Clubhouse lobby.

SAFETY AND WELFARE

This Safety Plan, and associated assessments, are produced by the CSA, who is responsible for modifications to them and carries out regular reviews. Similarly, the CSA is responsible for producing the appropriate safety documentation related to the Head of the Mersey, Warrington Regatta and any other events organised by the Club.

Safety Inspections are undertaken at regular intervals by the CSA and the results reported at the committee meetings. The CSA holds a record of all the boats capsizing and other incidents that have been reported.

Checks for CRC are co-ordinated by the CWO, who advises members when their clearance needs reviewing. The CWO is responsible for producing, and regularly reviewing, welfare policy documents.

First Aid Boxes are provided in the Clubhouse & the gym and maintained by the CWO.

A Defribulator is located in the lobby of the clubhouse.

Contact details for the CSA & CWO can be found on the safety noticeboard in the clubhouse lobby.

THE CLUBHOUSE

A smoke detection and alarm system is installed in the clubhouse and is tested regularly.

Emergency Lighting is installed throughout the clubhouse and boathouse which is also regularly tested.

In Case of Fire. In the event of the Club House being evacuated due to fire or other major incident, all members and visitors will make their way to the assembly point on the far side of the slipway. Club members will ensure the access road is clear for emergency vehicles. Crews on the water will muster near Kingsway Bridge and await clearance before proceeding to disembark at the landing stage.

Security. The last person to leave the site must ensure that all the fire doors, shutters, slipway gate and carpark gate are secured and locked. The clubhouse, boathouse and slipway gate should also be

secured if left unattended while boats are out on the river.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL CLUB MEMBERS

Duty of Care. Every club member has a duty of care to ensure that their actions both on and off water do not compromise the safety of others.

A membership form must be completed, and a copy of the Safety Plan signed, by all new members before they are allowed to take part in regular club activities, after which club fees will become due.

Swimming Skills. Club members should be able to float unaided for at least 5min and ideally be able to swim at least 50m in rowing kit, tread water for at least 2min and swim underwater for at least 5m.

Capsize Procedure. Adult members must make themselves aware of the current capsize considerations. A towel and change of clothing should always be brought in case of a capsize. Rowers are recommended to wash hands and face after rowing and before eating or drinking (to minimise risk from Weil's Disease or other river contaminants); hot showers are available. If feeling unwell after rowing, members should seek medical advice. It is a myth that drinking a can of coke will counter a case of gastro-enteritis.

Clothing. The wearing of multiple layers, hats, and pogies is encouraged during winter conditions, but hoodies or garments with open pockets are prohibited on the water. In summer members should also take precautions against sunburn & dehydration. Long hair should be tied in a bun and the wearing of jewellery is discouraged, particularly rings and bracelets. Earphones (including bone conduction devices) must not be worn when afloat.

High visibility tops are to be worn by ALL rowers during water training sessions.

Incidents. All members are encouraged to report collisions, capsizing and other safety incidents by logging on to the BR website https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org or by reporting to the CSA, who will log the events on the BR website. This is encouraged by the committee to help improve safety practices, and thereby reduce harm to members.

Lifting Frame for stable boats. This equipment is located in the shipping container for raising and lowering stable boats and can only be operated by adults who have been trained in its use. The operating procedure can be found in the container and on the club website.

Lone rowing. A lone single or a lone double/pair is not permitted when no other boats or launches are on the river. Permission is required from vice-captains who will decide whether rowers are competent to row in a single, double or pair at any time. If a few singles, doubles or pairs are on the water, outside the squad water session and without a launch, the buddy system should be operated. A document on the website details issues to be considered when rowing in singles, doubles or pairs, without launch cover.

Boat Inspections. Before and after each outing, a safety inspection of the equipment should be carried out by the embarking crews. This includes checking that the shell of the boat is not damage, that heel restraints are correct length, bow balls are fixed, buoyancy compartments are sealed, rudder lines and general fixings are in good order.

Fault identified. In the first instant, an attempt should be made to fix the fault; if this is not possible, the boat should be returned to the rack, a red tag attached, and the captain or appropriate vice-captain notified. The fault should also be reported on the "Equipment Damage" WhatsApp.

Coxswains must wear an approved buoyancy aid, properly fitted and adjusted - these are provided and maintained by the club. Personal lifejackets can also be worn, but the individual is responsible for its maintenance. Coxswains should only boat if they have sufficient warm clothing.

THE RIVER MERSEY

Position on River. After boating, cross quickly to the Victoria Park side of the river and, after passing under Kingsway Bridge, proceed upstream on that side of the river. It is acceptable to row on the "wrong" side of the river in order to steer clear of fishermen on the riverbanks – but this should be done with caution. On returning downstream, proceed on the club house side of the river.

While on the water, give a shout to any crew within 2 boat lengths and avoid stopping in the bends of

the river. Crews should not row at full pressure past the landing stage or through the arches of Kingsway Bridge, unless prior notice has been given.

Navigating bends. All crews are expected to navigate bends on the correct side of the river. However, if a crew finds itself on the wrong side of the river, with no clear view around the bend, they should hold up the boat and proceed with caution. Any member of the crew can alert the cox or person at bow, if they realise that the boat is on the wrong side.

Limits of River. Under NO circumstances must crews venture further downstream than the black and white footbridge (Howley Suspension Footbridge) as this is the limit of our permitted water and there is a weir downstream. Any equipment swept below the footbridge must be abandoned. Upstream, crews should not row closer than 100m to the Woolston Weir, and the "side braid" downstream of Woolston Weir is not part of our permitted water.

High winds can cause standing waves to form – particularly under Kingsway Bridge, which can increase the risk of capsize, swamping or damage to boats. When rounding bends, crosswinds acting against the full length of the boat, can affect steering. The risk of boats being blown off trestles can be minimised by angling the trestles.

Minimising Infection Risk. Use waterproof dressings on cuts, abrasions or blisters; use a water bottle with a closed top; wear enclosed footwear, particularly if the landing stage is flooded and after outings, wash down boats and blades with tap water.

Waterfowl on the River. There may be times when wildfowl may appear to impede the progress of your boat, but remember, this is their home and we are guests. All crews should be alert to the presence of wildfowl and attempt to avoid contact with them, as all wild birds are legally protected from harm.

TO ROW OR NOT TO ROW

Weather forecasts should always be consulted at least a day before an outing, paying particularly attention to forecasts of thunder/lightning. The following weather and/or river conditions would be of concern, i.e. wind >15mph: air temperature <5ºC or >30ºC. If Kingsway Bridge cannot be seen from the landing stage due to mist/fog, water activities should be halted, prior to an improvement in visibility.

When launch jetty adjacent to the slipway is submerged, then NO boats or launches are allowed onto the river. This equates to a depth of 4.25m measured at "Westy".

Pipe Bridge. If the landing stage is fully submerged, the head room under the pipe bridge for launches may be restricted. In these circumstances, extreme care must be taken when launches return downstream, as the river level may have increase under the pipe bridge.

During high tides (which come over the Howley Weir) large amounts of debris can litter the river. If possible, large debris should be removed or pushed to the river side using the launch.

Heavy rain can increase the river flow to the point where the less fit, younger or inexperienced crew may find it difficult to make any headway. The stream can be particularly strong on the far side of the river opposite the clubhouse and through the far arch of the Kingsway Bridge. There is also more risk from floating debris coming over Woolston weir during or following heavy rain.

Decision to row. On the day, coaches and/or vice-captains will review weather and river conditions before deciding whether crews can boat, taking account of the boats to be used and the experience of the crew. Other options could include reducing the distance of travel from club house or the duration of the outing. Individual members are not free to make their own decisions as to whether to boat, as the club cannot abrogate its responsibility.

In the event of lightning use the Row Safe '30-30' guidance rule. If the time between seeing lightning and hearing thunder is less than 30 seconds and reducing, then terminate the session and return to the clubhouse to seek shelter or to enter a fully closed vehicle. Only resume outdoor activity 30min after last lightning/thunder.

Rowing after dark. This is not possible as there is little artificial lighting along the river, and neither boats nor launches are equipped with appropriate lighting.

COACHING OF JUNIORS

A capsize drill will be arranged by the club as soon as possible after the juniors have joined the club. A record will be kept of their attendance.

While on the water, coaches should aim to maintain sight of all the juniors under their control as far as is practicable.

At the end of the session, coaches are to ensure that all the juniors are returned to their parents/carers. Coaches of junior squads must also have contact details for the parents/carers of their squad.

Incidents. Coaches are responsible for reporting any rowing incident involving a junior, either to the CSA or directly on the BR incident website.

During gym sessions, a second adult should always be present.

Weights in the gym. Juniors can only use weights with adult supervision.

LAUNCHES FOR COACHING

Qualifications. All launch drivers must hold a minimum of RYA Level II certificates and have been trained in basic first aid.

Buoyancy aids/lifejackets must be worn by all launch crew members and passengers.

Launch condition, equipment and safety bag should be checked before an outing. In addition, the contents of the safety bags are checked on a regular basis by the CSA.

A kill-cord is to be secured to the driver's leg prior to departing from the landing stage.

Manning of Catamarans. Personnel on catamarans must not exceed three when coaching. The third person must sit on the deck and hold on securely.

A mobile phone must be carried by coaches. The club provides walkie-talkies which should be carried when there is more than one launch on the water. Guidance on use of walkie-talkies and radio protocol are detailed in a separate document.

Slipway Gate. Once all launches are in the water, the slipway gate must be locked.

THE CLUB GYM

The Fire Exit at the end of the gym must be freely accessible at all times.

Free Weights. The general use of free weights is restricted to those weights which can be easily controlled by the rower alone. Rowers wanting to use heavier weights should discuss with club coaching staff and follow their advice. Loose weights must be tidied away after use.

Ergs. After use, the running track of an erg should be wiped as well as the handle.

Tidiness. After use, the gym and equipment should be left clean and orderly.

TOWERS OF TRAILERS

Insurance Policy. Potential towers need to check that their policy allows for towing.

Prior to departure, check the weather forecast for the whole of the route. Strong winds in particular have been known to blow trailers over.

Fully secured. Towers should only proceed if they are fully satisfied that all boats and equipment have been adequately secured on the trailer. A cargo net, or similar, is required to keep blades, riggers, etc. captive.

En route. Towers are advised to have an assistant accompany them during their journey to help with navigation, manoeuvring and emergencies. Regular breaks are recommended, particularly if the journey exceeds two hours. The following equipment is recommended: a torch; hi-vis waistcoat;

robust warning triangle and means to lift trailer to change a wheel.

BR Guidance. To help understand the factors in towing a trailer, see guidance https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingGuidance.pdf

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