# Liverpool Canoe Club

Minutes of Stewardship Meeting Thursday 6th February 2020

Liverpool Marina

**Present:**

Keith Steer - **KS**

Ian Bell - **IB**

Dave Reynolds - **DR**

Roger Colman – **RCo**

Craig Ellingham - **CE**

John Fay - **JF**

Sharon Watters - **SW**

Julie Brookes - **JB**

Martin Sinnott - **MS**

Mark Benson - **MB**

Richard Clews - **RCl**

Steve Alcock - **SA**

**Apologies:**

Pete and Carol Thomas, John Cooke, Paul Harwood, John Allerton, Dom Fahey, Dave & Fi Gentle, Fiona Barry, Alex Peacock

**ONE ADGENDA ITEM**

**Definition of a Peer Group Trip and its role within LCC**

**KS** Welcomed all present, gave apologies and then explained the club had a large Stewardship Group which had in the past worked well through discussion and feedback via e-mail, however, occasionally on important matters meetings were called. Definition of ‘Club Trips’ was an important matter. The club is affiliated to the British Canoeing and needs to follow BC guidelines, particularly relating to safety.

Discussion was had on ‘Coach Led’ trips, ‘Leader Led’ trips and club member ‘Peer’ trips. Also, the definition of a ‘Peer Group’ and ‘Club Trips’ taking guidelines into account. **MB** stated that the guidelines should help influence decisions and be appropriately referenced. **KS** stated that the Guidelines on coordinating or running a club trip on the club website needed amending.

**Action: KS** to amend Trip Guidelines.

Various paddling environments were discussed, Sheltered Water; Moderate Water Grade A & B and Advanced Water Grade C. Also, if Leaders & Assistant Leaders had recognised qualifications by British Canoeing or if they are recognised by the club and the club process for this. On sheltered water almost anyone, except beginners, could arrange, i.e. Runcorn or Leeds Liverpool Canal; Chester Weir; JJ’s (opposite shop); Surf Beach with onshore wind and no rip tide such as Crosby or Rhosneigr and the Docks. These environments are containable if things go wrong. The club encourages these types of trips, however, even at these controlled environments paddles should be shown as ‘Led’ not ‘Peer’. The club needs to move away from the term ‘Peer’ or ‘Not Coach Led’.

On Moderate and Advanced waters or where a journey is undertaken on the sea there is greater risk of problems. These must be ‘Led’ by club approved leaders and remain a small group of paddlers.

The example of **SA** putting on a playboating trip - *‘I’m going, join me if you want’* - was given as a club member ‘Peer’ trip. These paddles are often done at short notice. **MB** explained that even a ‘Peer’ trip is often ‘Led’. With over 700 members there is a need to ask questions about experience/equipment of members they do not know or have not paddled with, which is acting as a ‘Leader’.

**JF** stated that his trips are not ‘Led’ which is why he uses ‘Peer’. **SA** added that he has no qualifications, while aware of dynamic risk assessment etc. when doing a quick paddle on a Sunday morning at JJ’s *responsibility* is not what he wants, just paddle buddies.

**IB** explained that BC changed the Awards, broke leadership / coaching - still very confusing. Leaders can be approved / unqualified. It is when there is no ‘controlling mind’ that things go wrong. Following BC guidance, every trip needs a leader irrespective of the type of trip.

**RCl** raised the concern that there may be less trips as members may not be ready to take on the onus of responsibility. While **MB** thought this may benefit members on trips if the club had a working framework and proper process which could give confidence.

Further discussed that the paddles both **JF** and **SA** do are exactly what the club needs for less experienced paddlers to progress in controlled environments. The club supports these being on the calendar, so club equipment will be available for rent by all members on these trips.

Further discussion was had on responsibilities of individual members and the club in planning and advertising trips. **SW** spoke of the comprehensive guidance by Bath Canoe Club to its members. Risk assessments were discussed. There is currently no BC standard.

Rhos-on Sea incident and the cumulative failings discussed, including, change of location, lack of control of numbers so experience / less experience ratio changed, no identified person in charge and confusion over coaching qualifications. **MB** asked what the club had done to prevent this from happening again. The Stewardship Group had held an enquiry with all concerned and **RCo** explained that **IB** and **KS** had updated the Coaches / Leaders list, introduced a process allowing the control of numbers attending any given paddle and more Sea Kayak trips were being arranged by the club.

It was agreed that paddle sports do have inherent dangers that could result in death or injury and acknowledged that the club has a duty of care and must promote safe practice. That all paddles, club trips or otherwise, need to be safe.

Discussion was held on terminology i.e. Club Event; Club Session or Club Trip i.e. Sheltered water - Club Session, Moderate (and above) - Club Trip and if one or two templates should be used.

It was agreed that just one ‘Template’ was needed. **KS** produced a Template (attached) which was accepted. In future this should be used by all members putting on a trip. This will be moderated by the club before being placed on the club calendar. Members unknown to the coordinator will need to make prior contact and use of this template will ensure control of numbers, either through ‘Bookwhen’ or personal contact. Only the accepted participants will be given final details of start time and meeting place. (Google Groups / Facebook are club vehicles so use of these means it is an official club trip.)

**Action: KS** to ensure Template available to all members for immediate use.

**MS** raised the question of non-fee and fee payments when using ‘Bookwhen’ asking if this went to coaches and requesting consistency. It was explained that no money went to the Coaches / Leaders who are all volunteers. That large, structured trips requiring time consuming admin input or coach led trips were charged. The £5.00 ‘Booking Fee’ was a proven deterrent to cancellation or failure to turn up by members. The money was ‘ring fenced’ as a bursary to develop current and new Coach/Leader volunteers.

**KS** reminded all present that use of club equipment was available to any member attending a professional personal development course.

**IB** reminded all present that if a trip is arranged at a venue which on the day is found to be unsuitable the trip is cancelled. If members go elsewhere to paddle this is a new venue, a new trip and will not be covered by the club.

**Meeting closed.**

