

## Coquet Canoe Club – Peer paddle Policy

**“A peer paddle / trip means you paddle at your own risk.”**

Peer group paddling is very distinct from a Club Paddle. On a peer paddle, **no one takes overall responsibility for the safety or wellbeing of the group.**

This means:

- **There is no designated leader or river leadership** (assumed or otherwise) although a peer paddle trip ‘organiser’ may co-ordinate the logistics. The role of the organiser is to co-ordinate the trip to help get everyone in the right place at the right time, suggest the route and so on.
- However, organisers have no more authority over the group, or responsibility for the group, than any other participant. Everyone takes full responsibility for themselves, their safety and their kit, whilst behaving in a responsible way that does not put any other member of the group at risk.
- Group members are expected to look out for each other, whilst staying well within their own limitations.
- There is no onus on anyone to support anyone else if they do not feel confident doing so in any given situation.

### Advertising a Peer Paddle:

When advertising a peer group paddle the organiser should include:

“This is a peer paddle, please refer to the club Peer Paddle Policy”

This should help your decision whether to join the paddle.

A peer paddle can be posted in Spond as that is where we communicate with other club members and they are the people we generally prefer to go paddling with. When posting it is important to make it clear that it is a peer paddle. Make sure you are paddling well within your capabilities, planning the trip as you would any other time. Anyone paddling in the group who isn't a member of our club, should inform the rest of the group before leaving Shorebase, and be familiarised with our peer paddle policy. Remember you are representing Coquet Canoe Club, your actions should be reflecting this.

### Insurance:

On a peer paddle **you are not covered by the club insurance**, nor are you covered by the club's Waterways Licence. If you want to take part in peer paddles (ie canoe or kayak activities outside of those organised by the club) it is recommended to purchase your own 'On the Water' membership from British Canoeing.

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/membership/join-us-online-here>

## **Planning**

Participants should play their part in planning for the trip. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure they have considered all relevant factors for themselves, and do not rely on others to do this for them. Factors can include recent rainfall/river levels, emergency get outs, weather forecast, tides, available daylight, sunset etc. Those going on trips must expect to take part in making it happen and contribute to the decisions that need to be made (eg route, section of river/sea, risk assessment, is it ok to continue? Etc)

## **Juniors**

A junior member cannot attend a peer paddle on their own, a parent/guardian must accompany the junior or make their own arrangements to appoint a responsible/competent adult (someone who can act in lieu of parents) who will accompany the junior.

## **Group Skills/Experience**

Skills other than paddling may be useful. Depending on the trip, the group may need to ensure that someone in the group has additional skills. These may include First Aid, Foundation Safety and Rescue Training(FSRT), basic/advanced white water safety and rescue(WWSR), leader training, VHF Radio training, BC Coastal Navigation knowledge, relevant paddling experience.

## **Kit and Safety Equipment**

Individuals are responsible for their own kit, (clothing/BA/boat/paddle etc) but the group needs to ensure they have the appropriate set of group kit between them. Group kit could include: First Aid kit, tow line, pump, spare set of split paddles, group shelter, spare clothing, etc.

## **Emergency Contact Details/Medical Conditions**

Members should exchange mobile numbers and emergency contact details. Anyone with a medical condition that might affect them should inform the group prior to the trip explaining any actions / assistance they may need from others in the case of an emergency. It is always a good idea to inform someone land based the plans of the group, to act as a call out if an emergency arises.

## **Group Size**

A minimum would be 3, 4 is better to ensure there is someone to stay with an injured / sick paddler and someone else to accompany the other person going for help.

Read this British Canoeing Paddlesafer Document it gives clear advice in there:

<https://clubhouse.britishcanoeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Paddlesafer-V3.pdf>

**Appendix 1:**

**Coquet Island circumnavigation:**

Participants should be at least sea kayak award standard with knowledge of paddling as part of a group, able to rescue, self rescue and be of assistance if an incident arises. Detailed planning will be agreed by the group taking into consideration the size of any breaking waves in the harbour entrance, this usually determines the sea state outside the harbour. Wind speed, direction, tidal flow and swell height all need to be considered.

Good practice would include a sea kayak leader or an equivalent experienced paddler who is familiar with the area. Know your limitations, stay within them and don't hesitate to turn back if the conditions prove challenging. You are still representing the club, don't be another RNLI call out.