

Swindon and District Canoe Club Risk Assessment Form

Coate Water Country Park	Date	February 2026	Assessed by	Nick (Welfare and Safety Officer) and Louise (Chairperson)
	Review Date	Formal Review Biannually in February and August		
Description of Assessment	<p>Coate Water is assessed for use by Swindon and District Canoe Club as a paddling base as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to craft, equipment and ancillary kit stored in a secure metal shipping container and secured small wooden shed in a shared compound. • Shared use of Coate Water with fishermen, Swindon Rowing Club, Scouts, Sea Cadets, Guides and Model Boat Club. • Social paddling and skill training take place as applicable to weather conditions and need of members. • Club sessions run between 60-150 minutes. • A named Duty Officer who is responsible for opening and closing relevant areas. A paper register is completed, and members are also requested to sign in prior to attendance. 			
Location Details: Address	Coate Water, Marlborough Road, Swindon, SN3 6AA.			
Location Details: What3words	Compound	///bumps.wiping.recent		
	Slipway	///dose.actual.asking		

What are the Hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are we already doing to control the risks?	What further action do we need to take to control the risk?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Drowning	<p>All Paddlers, Volunteers and Participants in any water-based activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning - Small amount of water though nose or mouth which causes spasm in airway, so the airway closes. 	<p>Wearing of personal flotation device (PFD) fitted correctly.</p> <p>Members trained in how to fit PDF correctly both for themselves and others.</p>	<p>All Instructors and Coaches hold current first aid qualifications.</p> <p>Members have declared they have minimum swimming ability of 25m.</p> <p>All members are required to paddle in minimum group of 2 craft.</p>	<p>Secretary checks First Aid and member forms to confirm swimming abilities.</p> <p>Safety Officer to confirm action has been done.</p>	<p>Yearly check of training records.</p> <p>As members join the club and complete paperwork.</p> <p>Before visiting paddlers or</p>	As required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary Drowning - Where a little bit of water gets into the lungs causing inflammation or swelling so transfer of oxygen to body is difficult. 	<p>Training for capsize without and with spray deck.</p> <p>Spray deck can only be worn after training and following confirmation that capsize with spray deck can be done.</p> <p>Annual capsize check for all members carried out in the spring.</p> <p>Knowledge of rescue procedures via Discover Award, FSRT/PSRC.</p> <p>Qualified First Aiders available.</p>	<p>PDFs are tested annually.</p> <p>New Members must be informed of and directed to read the club's policy and risk assessment documents.</p> <p>Visual checks on PDF's are carried out regularly throughout the year.</p> <p>Ensure Duty officer knows location of public defibrillator (Ranger hut in the main carpark - ///eternity.waistcoat.inclined) and has a mobile phone.</p>	<p>Chair to be informed of progress.</p>	<p>guests go on the water.</p>	
Hypothermia (Cold)	<p>All Paddlers, Volunteers and Participants.</p> <p>Through falling into the water either deliberately or accidentally.</p> <p>From the cold weather.</p>	<p>Advise on the correct clothing to wear.</p> <p>Advise all paddlers to bring a towel and complete change of clothing with them.</p>	<p>Make members aware of the appropriate kit available for them to hire.</p> <p>Have foil blankets available in first aid kit, first aid kit to be checked annually.</p> <p>Advise paddlers not to deliberately go into the water</p>	<p>Duty Officer To ensure kit is available if paddlers require it</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of the risks.</p>	<p>Ongoing, throughout cold weather period.</p>	<p>As required.</p>

		<p>Provide an enclosed and safe space for changing.</p> <p>Provide recreational cags and pogies for members to hire for sessions if needed.</p> <p>First Aiders watch for signs and symptoms of hypothermia.</p>	<p>when the water and/or air temperature is cold, usually between the months of October and March</p> <p>Be aware of who the qualified first aiders are, list to be published and put in/on the shed</p>	<p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>		
Hyperthermia/heat exhaustion/Sunstroke	<p>All Paddlers, Volunteers and Participants</p> <p>From the hot weather.</p> <p>Through excessive exposure to the sun and lack of fluids</p>	<p>Advised on correct clothing to wear.</p> <p>Provide regular breaks for paddlers.</p> <p>First Aiders watch for signs and symptoms of hyperthermia.</p>	<p>Reminders to be given to members when required during periods of hot weather.</p> <p>Be aware of who the qualified first aiders are, list to be published and put in/on the shed</p>	<p>Duty Officer To remind paddlers about safety precautions.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of the risks.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing throughout hot weather period.	As required.
Injury from traffic	Club members and members of the public.	Restrict access to the small car park.	Duty Officer and members to ensure vehicle owners are aware of the proximity risks	Duty Officer To advise vehicle owners as required.	Ongoing basis	As required.

	Being hit by members vehicles		to other Coate Water users and equipment.	<p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of the risks.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>		
Manual handling	<p>All Paddlers, Volunteers and Participants</p> <p>Lifting and carrying boats/equipment causing injury.</p>	<p>Demonstrate to new members how to carry kit during initial session.</p> <p>Pair up where required to lift heavy objects.</p>	<p>Minimal heavy lifting, use of appropriate equipment</p> <p>Members given reminders on how to safely handle equipment.</p>	<p>Duty Officer To encourage good manual handling.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of the risks.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.
Pollution and water quality	<p>Paddlers</p> <p>Becoming ill from pollution and poor water quality</p>	<p>Advise paddlers to wash/shower after paddling/water immersion.</p> <p>Advise paddlers not to eat or drink until hands have been washed/sanitised.</p>	<p>Risks are higher during low water conditions - Coate Water has a spill way which controls the level of water in the lake.</p> <p>Social media posts to members.</p> <p>The Duty Officer/Chair to cancel the session if the water is deemed to be too dangerous.</p>	<p>Duty Officer To visually inspect and record the water quality on arriving at the compound and advise the following if there are concerns.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.

		<p>Avoid intentional capsizes in poor water conditions.</p> <p>Awareness of flotsam and bird/animal faeces.</p> <p>Session cancellation due to blue green algae or on Ranger Guidance.</p>		<p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of the need to visually inspect the water quality.</p>		
Weather and environmental conditions	Paddlers	<p>Duty officer to check the weather forecast prior to the sessions.</p> <p>Anyone taking part in the sessions must have appropriate skills for the conditions.</p> <p>Coate Water is classed as sheltered water.</p> <p>Access to the square gives very sheltered water.</p>	<p>Duty Officer/Chair to cancel in adverse weather.</p> <p>Advice to be given to paddlers on ability needed to paddle in the expected conditions.</p> <p>The ability and needs of the paddlers to be taken into consideration when deciding on the activity to do in the session.</p>	<p>Duty Officer To check weather forecast.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of the paddling ability of their group.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required

Other water users	<p>Paddlers</p> <p>Crashing into rowers.</p> <p>Becoming entangled in fishing lines.</p> <p>Getting caught in moving water caused by fire service practices.</p> <p>Being hit by motorised boats.</p>	<p>All paddlers are made aware when rowers are on the lake and are directed to stay out of their way.</p> <p>Paddlers to be on the lookout for fishermen/fishing lines whilst paddling around the lake and communicate their location to ensure the group can stay away from them.</p> <p>New members are made aware of other water users during initial session.</p>	<p>Remind paddlers about the other water users and what is expected of the paddler.</p> <p>If any emergency services are practising (e.g., fire service) at the lake the Duty Officer to speak with the Officer in Charge to find out where they will be operating and where we can/can't go. The same applies if the search and rescue services are called out to the lake for any other reason.</p>	<p>Duty Officer To be aware of any other activities or water users.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of their responsibility.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.
Access Jetties and the Slipway	<p>Paddlers</p> <p>Objects (e.g. screws) can be protruding from the jetties that can cause injury to paddlers and damage to equipment.</p> <p>Flotsam and jetsam can collect around the jetties.</p>	<p>Paddlers having an awareness of the jetties and slipways.</p> <p>Helmets to be always worn by all paddlers when on the slipway.</p>	Following rules and guidance set out by the Rangers and informing them of any damage to jetties.	<p>Duty Officer To be aware of any hazards at the access points</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer is aware of their responsibility.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.

	<p>The slipway can pose a risk of slipping.</p> <p>Being hit by a paddle when on the slipway.</p>	<p>Appropriate footwear to be worn.</p>		<p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>		
Slips, Trips and Falls	<p>Paddlers, Parents, Coaches, and others</p> <p>Slipping/tripping/falling over in the compound.</p> <p>Slipping/tripping/falling over on the slipway</p>	<p>Appropriate cleaning and maintenance equipment available for slipway</p> <p>Slipway to be cleaned of faeces before session begins.</p> <p>A First Aider is available at every session.</p>	<p>To remind paddlers to put equipment on the slipway in an organised way to allow space for people to move around.</p> <p>To remind members on how to safely handle equipment.</p>	<p>Duty Officer To clean the slipway, be aware of the slip hazards.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the Duty Officer responsibility.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.
Sprains, Strains, and soft tissue injuries	<p>Paddlers, Parents, Coaches, leaders, and others</p> <p>Incorrect/bad paddling technique.</p> <p>Not handling/lifting equipment correctly.</p>	<p>Shown and encouraged to paddle correctly.</p> <p>Trained to lift/carry equipment properly.</p> <p>Encouraged to ask for help and guidance.</p> <p>A First Aider is available at every session.</p>	<p>Appropriate checks on storage facilities</p> <p>Ongoing training</p> <p>Appropriate footwear</p>	<p>Duty Officer To make access to equipment as easy and as safe as possible.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure the risks are mitigated as much as possible through ongoing communication.</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.

<p>Overhanging Trees and Bushes, Abandoned Fishing Tackle</p>	<p>Paddlers. Entanglement/entrapment risk Injury from discarded/lost fishing tackle</p>	<p>Paddlers advised on how to navigate around trees, both overhanging and floating. Advised on the correct action in the event of entanglement. First aiders available throughout the session. Do not try to remove any fishing hooks if they have pierced the skin.</p>	<p>Remove small branches that pose a risk, where possible. Report to Rangers any trees/bushes in need of attention. Be aware of the risk of discarded fishing tackle and the difficulty it poses in seeing it.</p>	<p>Duty Officer To note any feedback regarding overhanging trees or bushes and to update the Safety Officer and Chair of any incidents and record as necessary in the incident book. Safety Officer To ensure the risks are mitigated as much as possible. Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	<p>Ongoing basis.</p>	<p>As required.</p>
<p>Gazebo</p>	<p>Paddlers Others Putting up the gazebo. Gazebo collapse.</p>	<p>Minimum 2 people for gazebo erection, 4 is preferable. Follow manufacturer's instructions to erect and collapse. Check gazebo is secured correctly.</p>	<p>Appropriate checks, storage, cleaning, and maintenance. Instruction sheet for gazebo is laminated. Regular checks that the gazebo is secured correctly and in good condition</p>	<p>Duty Officer To check gazebo when erected and to update the Safety Officer and Chair of any problems. Safety Officer To ensure the gazebo has been erected and is being used correctly</p>	<p>Ongoing basis.</p>	<p>As required.</p>

				Chair to be informed of any issues.		
Uneven ground/floors	Paddlers, Participants Danger of tripping, e.g., loose/uneven flooring, protruding obstacles, slippery ground	Use established paths and gateways through the site/compound. Sign advising “use site at own risk”	Monitor the condition of the flooring both in the shed and the container. Undertake any maintenance work as necessary.	Duty Officer To check floor and to update the Safety Officer and Chair of any problems. Safety Officer To ensure awareness of the floor and associated risks. Chair to be informed of any issues.	Ongoing basis.	As required.
Deep Water	Paddlers, Participants Drowning, unable to exit water	Capsize drills taught early on to new paddlers. Annual capsize check for all members carried out in the spring. Paddlers taught different rescue techniques.	Rescue techniques practised at the lake in the summer and throughout the year at pool sessions, so members are confident doing them if needed.	Duty Officer To be aware of the risks. Safety Officer To ensure awareness of deep-water risks is known by all. Chair to be informed of any issues.	Ongoing basis.	As required.
Storage	All	Racking must be capable of supporting intended loads	Checks to be carried out on the condition of the racking/storage yearly.	Duty Officer At the start of the session, to ensure assistance is given	Ongoing basis.	As required.

	<p>Incorrectly stacked goods may fall injuring people below.</p> <p>Overloading shelves/racks may lead to collapse.</p> <p>Persons climbing on racking may fall and injure themselves</p>	<p>and be properly fixed, e.g., bolted to the floor.</p> <p>Goods should be properly stacked with the heaviest at the bottom if possible.</p>	<p>If any damage is noticed it is to be reported to the duty officer immediately.</p> <p>Racking clearly labelled to indicate what is to be stored where on it.</p>	<p>to take equipment off the rack and at the end of the session, to ensure the racking is loaded as labelled.</p> <p>Safety Officer To ensure everyone is aware of the correct way to store equipment</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>		
Safeguarding	<p>Under 18's and vulnerable adult members.</p> <p>Inappropriate conversations or actions from adult members, potentially leading to grooming or abuse.</p>	<p>Ensure when paddling with under 18's and vulnerable members there are always 2 adults present who are club members and at least one of them has current DBS and safeguarding training.</p> <p>Ensure all members are aware of who they can talk to if</p>	<p>Remind adult members about not entering the changing facility on their own if there is an under 18 or vulnerable adult member in there, a minimum of 2 adults must be present.</p>	<p>Welfare Officer To deal with the issue.</p> <p>Chair to support the Welfare Officer.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.

		they have concerns, and ensure all members have access to the contact details. This should be 2 committee members who have attended the Time To Listen training.				
Wildlife	<p>Paddlers on and off the water</p> <p>Swans – Swans may become aggressive if approached as they are protecting their nest or young.</p> <p>Dogs - Dog walkers take dogs of their lead and they may get underfoot when carrying equipment</p>	Remind paddlers of the dynamic risks around them and to be considerate and cautious when moving around on and off the water.	Ongoing awareness for existing paddlers and training for new paddlers.	<p>Duty Officer To be aware of the risks posed by wildlife</p> <p>Chair to be informed of any issues.</p>	Ongoing basis.	As required.