



# **Canoe Avon Development Plan**

**July 2023**

**Version 1.1**

**Published – Action Review**

## Contents

Purpose and Scope .....	3
Where We Are Now .....	3
Where We Want to Get To .....	3
Our Vision.....	3
Our Objectives .....	3
Our Goals .....	4
Our Commitment to Safeguarding.....	4
Our Commitment to Sports Equity.....	4
The Development Plan.....	5
Management .....	5
Community .....	6
Paddler Development.....	7
Workforce (Coach/Volunteer) Development .....	9
Health and Safety.....	11
Welfare.....	12
Equipment .....	14
Technology and Communication .....	15
APPENDIX: SWOT Analysis .....	16

## Document Review

Draft Date:	March-23
Published Date:	April-23
Action Review Date:	July-23
Overall plan review Date:	November-23

## Distribution

Committee:	March-23
Membership	April-23

## Purpose and Scope

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to outline the actions that Canoe Avon as a club intends to take in order to deliver on its objectives as stated in the Constitution. However just writing the plan is the easy bit. The membership needs to agree with the stated aims and buy into the plans. And then be part of the change in taking on roles, helping out, supporting activities and being active members of Canoe Avon.

**Scope:** This development plan covers the club as it exists as bounded by the Agreed Constitution and Code of Conduct. This plan will be reviewed regularly by the committee, along with the Constitution and Code of Conduct. Progress made will be included in the Annual Report presented at the AGM. This Development Plan contains a mixture of short-term, medium term and longer-term aims to get us where we want to be in 3 years' time.

## Where We Are Now

Prior to the pandemic, Canoe Avon as a club was struggling to attract and retain members, at one point dropping to a membership of 37. Over the course of the last 3 years membership is now consistently over 100, capitalising on the growing interest in paddlesport nationally. This has put the club in a relatively stable financial position.

Canoe Avon is in a great location with excellent facilities, accessible changing area, with good privacy, showers and level access. We have a good range of kit including soft kit for all sizes and shapes. There is a safe, positive and equitable feel to the club and the potential to be a thriving club that offers a place to paddle for everyone. The club has a strong racing heritage with our longer-standing members. Included in the membership is access to a regular pool session, the use of club equipment and facilities, such as the clubhouse gym and excellent parking. Upstream we have the Brunel strait – a clear section of the Avon. Downstream we have Saltford weir with its potential for introduction to moving water.

## Where We Want to Get To

### Our Vision

To be a **thriving, active community-centred club, rich in opportunity and participation.**

### Our Objectives

The aims and objectives of the club as stated in our constitution are:

- To provide coaching, competitive, and recreational opportunities across a range of paddlesport disciplines
- To promote the club within the local community and paddlesport
- To ensure a duty of care to all members of the club
- To offer its services in a way that is fair to everyone.

## Our Goals

There needs to be a retained number of experienced paddlers in the disciplines that the club supports.

We need to have the commitment, the ability, and the empowerment to be able to run regular paddle activities, not just from the club, but further afield.

Those who want to compete at or on behalf of the club should be supported to do so, with access to training and equipment.

Members should be able to articulate their aims and pathways in coaching and personal development.

The club should feel equitable, a place for everyone and part of the community.

## Our Commitment to Safeguarding

This Club believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, marital status, or socio-economic background.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

We acknowledge that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and are committed to preventing abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all children and adults involved in club activities.

## Our Commitment to Sports Equity

This club is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following Sport England definition of sports equity:

- Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.
- The club respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.
- The club is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- All club members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.
- The club will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to club disciplinary procedures and code of conduct.

## The Development Plan

### Management

We have BC-affiliate insurance and contents insurance in place, alongside coach and club specific activity insurance. As an unincorporated association there may be potential challenges with liability and the club will need to resolve these or mitigate against them.

What we need to do is ensure budget is there for equipment refresh in the medium and longer term/provision/allowance. Financial reporting at committee level and allowing annual budget for equipment to be agreed at AGM.

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/Priority	Action Update Jul23
M1	Check Club status protects membership appropriately for our operation, and investigate CIC or correct insurance for liability	Chair/treasurer	May-23	Insurance cover is in place. However, there may be benefits from charitable status. Ongoing action
M2	Statement and control of equipment budget. Tracked and agreed at AGM.	Treasurer, committee, QM team.	Nov-23. review Nov-24	Not Started

## Community

We have a good working relationship with Avon County rowing club, Saltford wombles, Bathampton angling association, Saltford marina. What we could do is develop closer ties with Northavon canoe club. We have been trying to establish a channel of communication to the canals and rivers trust for weir/lock safety (pontoons). We have been trying to establish a channel of communication with Wessex water on the back of the flood/CSO issues.

We have worked with community groups (including youth groups, sports groups, DofE groups, church groups) for taster sessions and to support school and scout Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. The club currently provides a facilities-only schools' membership where the school provides their instructors and insurance. We will continue to offer one offs and tasters for community groups when approached and could leverage locally community events.

Amongst the national and local Paddlesport community, club participation in K1 and SUP racing is pretty-well established. We have good relationships with Frome for slalom. We have good links with southwest paddling community. Some of our members are also members at AOAC, Bristol, Bath. We could run joint trips or tag along to trips organised by other clubs. What we could do is link with rowing/dragon boating to have more friendly intro competitions? We could also form connections with other organisations in Saltford. What else should we aim for?

Each member of the club is also a part of many communities. What we could do is have friendly 'family sessions' and other 'bring a friend' initiatives to get more people out on the water in a non-formal way.

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/ Priority	Action Update Jul23
C1	Family fun taster sessions.			Community group taster sessions have kept us busy
C2	Community links for environment (canal and rivers trust, Wessex water) Specifically, around lock access/pontoons	Racing officer, H&S officer	June-24	
C2	Groups (dragon boating, friendly competitions, Saltford festival)	TBC	TBC	
C4	Joint #ShePaddles summer evening paddle events with North Avon.	Chair, training officer, #ShePaddles club rep	Sep-23	Ongoing as informal tasters have taken time

## Paddler Development

For a thriving, active club there is a balance to be struck between the development of existing members' skills and the encouragement of new paddlers. The club's focus will continue to be to offer courses and development to anyone who wants to play an active part of the club, rather than as a public service outside of our membership. We will continue to ensure our club and its courses are open to all who want to join.

For new joiners we have the induction pack that paints the art of the possible around the club. The club has a great stretch of river that has quiet times. We have access to a regular pool session. Like many clubs we experience a drop-off after Discover courses as we only have limited opportunities to progress as this relies on a limited number of volunteers. BC pathways aren't always clear to the uninitiated. What we need is to show the pathways and opportunities linked to individual aims.

In competition, the club will continue to build on the success of the test and Hasler event run at the club. Club participation was relatively low, but volunteer support and involvement in running the events was great, including event safety training. The annual Hasler will be treated as a measure of the K1 levels of participation. We will also consider a SUP class in the Hasler to gauge interest, if calendars allow.

Away from competition we need to ensure that recreational paddling is not marginalised and that members are canvassed on the disciplines and aspects they would like to see developed.

Specifically in the area of SUP, we will work to understand how to develop the SUP capability with the focus on racing. We should use external resources where necessary, but be ready to 'start from scratch' and encourage youth development.

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/ Priority	Action Update Jul23
P1	Encourage 'try it' for novice competitions such as open slalom, river race, marathon, friendly polo. Dates in the calendar and intro to be circulated. Club-based taster and intro to slalom/polo/racing. Maybe challenge other clubs.	Racing officer, chair	May-23	Slalom and river race advertised. No take up. Novice at hasler in oct.
P2	Annual survey will explore views on fairness/inclusion and balance of recreation and competition and barriers to participation and engagement/volunteering	Membership secretary	Nov-23	
P3	Ensure that access to and clarity of information around paddler development and opportunities for competition is accessible	Membership secretary, chair training officer racing officer	Nov-23	

P4	SUP development strategy from youth/beginner to race development	SUP representative	Nov-23	
P5	Rename induction pack to information pack and promote its use as single source, linking to others and set up annual review cycle of the document	Membership , Training	Nov-23	Done



## Workforce (Coach/Volunteer) Development

The club has a clear definition of coach-led and club activities, as well as providing access to competent keyholders outside of club sessions. We have a maintained list of coaches and volunteers, and safeguarding/DBS status. The club has a bursary scheme in place to pay back coaching course fees over a set period for active volunteers. The club funds first aid and safeguarding training. Development opportunities are open to all.

We have worked with visiting coaches, other clubs, British Canoeing, ShePaddles community to start to develop the training plans. The core committee is in place and some initial interest has been expressed from volunteer/coaches.

We were awarded a ShePaddles bursary to increase the number of female coaches – specifically in racing where we don't have any qualified coaches. We have some experienced sea, touring, white water, K1 and SUP racing paddlers with the club who are supportive and encouraging of novices, but not enough to go around.

We have run some sample river/sea trips. We need to plan more river /sea trips, get people interested in the trips, teach people what it entails to organise river trips and sea trips and work with more experienced and qualified paddlers to run them.

We could look to get qualified to run the SUP safer courses and get additional SUP coach development.

The biggest challenge is driving up interest in coaching and volunteering when the majority of our membership are busy with work, family and other commitments.

What is needed is short term - engage current and lapsed coaches, medium term - develop pathways with potential coach/volunteers and provide opportunities to help out. What we could do is manage the pathways, options, bookings, track qualifications.

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/ Priority	Action Update Jul23
V1	Communication sessions/socials about the coaching pathways and development for all members using BC pathways resources.	Training Officer, Welfare Officer, workforce	May-23	Not started
V2	Revalidate lapsed coaches, plan and book for identified coaches (spend #ShePaddles bursary)	Training officer, Treasurer, Coaches	Nov-23	Ongoing.
V3	Address touring leader development for river trips	Training officer	Sep-23	Touring leader training booked.

V4	SUP safer training/investigate SUP coach qualifications	SUP rep	June-23	Closed. BC very heavy-weight.
V5	Identify coach/volunteer pipeline from current and new members	Training officer, committee	Mar-24	
V6	Once the volunteer base grows a measure would be the need and the appointment of a volunteer co-ordinator.	Training officer, committee	Mar-25	

## Health and Safety

What we have is some good policies, practices and people in place. We have risk assessments for regular club activities, the SOP covers several good safety practices and we track first aider credentials. British Canoeing safety alerts are circulated to members when they align with their interests. We have a clubhouse noticeboard and boat-store whiteboard and doors where we display information such as committee, safety officer contact details and safety information.

What we want to do is ensure for our volunteers that they are clear in their obligations. Additional training may be required. Make sure information is readily available. use of the noticeboards at the club as well as access to better online information when needed. This includes the privacy policy, and first aiders contact information. We need to standardise our health and safety policy in line with BC policies. The club should have a first aid kit on site. We need to have a risk assessment in place for sea and river trips.

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/ Priority	Action Update Jul23
S1	First aid - (Near) Club first aid kit and first-aider list	H&S officer	May-23	Done
S2	H&S policy published	H&S officer	June-23	In progress
S3	Risk assessments published for seatrips	H&S officer, committee	April-23	In progress
S4	Risk assessments published for river trips	H&S officer, committee	May-23	In progress

## Welfare

The SOP sets down expectations that everyone should feel safe to enjoy their sport, should be treated with respect and should give respect to others.

We proactively track the safeguarding training status of our workforce and the DBS checks for anyone involved in club activities who meets the eligibility criteria. We have a clubhouse noticeboard and boat-store whiteboard and doors, where we display committee and Welfare Officer contact information and details of how to report concerns. We have a published Showers & Changing Room policy.

We need clear Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Policies and procedures, to meet our duty of care and statutory responsibilities. They should be published in a way that ensures they are distributed to relevant audiences. We should then provide appropriate learning opportunities to ensure that everyone involved with the club is aware of them and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a child or adult.

The Hasler event carries additional safeguarding responsibilities that need to be in place for the next event.

We have a male Club Welfare Officer and should secure a deputy – preferably female/non-binary, to better reflect the diversity of the club and reduce the possibility that safeguarding concerns are not raised.

The club does not have a publicised Equality Policy and one should be prepared. Plans and actions to promote, monitor and evaluate its effectiveness should then follow.

Welfare considerations should also extend to our volunteers and those involved in the running of the club. That can take its toll, it can be forgotten that it is volunteer-led and we all need to ensure that we take time to remember what we enjoyed about paddling for ourselves!

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/ Priority	Action Update Jul23
W1	Prepare, adopt and publicise a Safeguarding Children Policy.	Welfare Officer	June 23	Done
W2	Appoint a Deputy Welfare Officer (female/non-binary).	Welfare Officer	May-23	In progress
W3	Offer safeguarding training to any member or associate who is interested in doing it.	Welfare Officer	June 23	Several have already been completed
W4	Club Welfare Officer to undertake "Introduction to Safeguarding Adults" training.	Welfare Officer	May 23	Done
W5	Club Welfare Officer to undertake "Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity -	Welfare Officer	July 23	

	Essential Training for Club Welfare/Safeguarding Officers” training.			
W6	Prepare, adopt and publicise a Safeguarding Adults Policy.	Welfare Officer	Sept 23	In Progress
W7	Prepare and implement a Safeguarding Plan for the Hasler event.	Welfare Officer	Sept 23	In Progress
W8	Prepare, adopt and publicise an Equality Policy.	Welfare Officer	Nov 23	In Progress
W9	Identify procedures and other actions required to ensure good safeguarding and equality behaviours and practices are embedded in the club’s activities. Formulate them into an action plan.	Welfare Officer	Jan 24	

## Equipment

The Quartermaster team continue to keep and maintain a good range of equipment. We are able to run club sessions with a good range of kit, and keyholder charter for access outside of that time. We maintain an equipment log book, damage book to ensure QMs can keep equipment safe. We perform regular equipment audit and testing and refresh of old and unsafe kit. The club kit could be more clearly marked – for example helmet sizes and deck compatibility with boats.

We do have some gaps in our K1 club boat range to encourage progression. The club owns one ergo but we could make more use of it in technique training and we could borrow additional units from a nearby club. We have a growing SUP cohort and recreational boards. We could invest in some lighter, buoyant paddles for introduction to racing.

<b>ID</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timelin e/Priorit y</b>	<b>Action Update Jul23</b>
E1	Ensure Equipment is relevant, safe and appropriate for club needs. One more K1 stab 4-6. 8. Better SUP buoyant paddles Potential modern slalom boats/borrow from Frome? SUP racing board/s Spraydecks to fit the boats we have. Remove any that are redundant	QM team.	Various timescales	SUP racing board and K1 8+ purchased. Ongoing
E2	Clearer store and labelling of kit - sizing of helmets, deck size/compatibility. Rationalise the paddle store, and clear marking of different paddle sizes, left-handed, racing paddles.	QM Team with volunteer helpers	Sep-23	Timeline moved back as flood recovery required additional effort.

## Technology and Communication

We have the public Facebook site, slightly outdated public website and shop and BC portal presence for members. We have ad-hoc promotion of events via the members emailed newsletter, BC portal and WhatsApp chats. For public events we post on Facebook.

What we need to do is deliver the website revamp so that the public-facing part of the website reflects our diversity and values. We should continue to use the Facebook page for public messaging. We should have the calendar and events laid out, with contacts for more info - links to how-to/intro. The club website revamp will cover that, including promotion of our equity statement, and ShePaddles platform will help. We need to consider the social media platforms our members view and also where we want to have a public profile.

ID	Action	Who	Timeline/ Priority	Action Update Jul23
T1	website relaunch: - check balance and relevance of images - check content refreshed and appropriate - ensure equity statement clear - outline club kit and disciplines available including SUP racing	Tech team. Committee to review.	July-23	Done
T2	Members area for chat/discussion/event planning and calendar of events	Tech team Committee to review	Sep-23	In progress
T3	Consider approach to social media platforms and ensure we have content on the ones we settle on. This includes whether we keep FB page and use of other socials. Consider using a #canoeavon tag across all social media presence.	Committee	Nov-23	Proposal s review for AGM

## APPENDIX: SWOT Analysis

Prior to writing a development plan, a SWOT analysis was undertaken to understand our club's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is included here for information.

Strengths: what we do, or are perceived to do well	Weaknesses: what could we improve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fantastic facilities, accessible changing area, with good privacy, showers and level access</li> <li>• Good range of kit including soft kit for all sizes and shapes</li> <li>• Safe, positive and equitable feel to the club - a place for everyone</li> <li>• Racing heritage of the club and with our longer-standing members</li> <li>• Access to a regular pool session</li> <li>• Relatively stable financial position</li> <li>• Moving water (jolly sailor weir/wave) just downstream - good for intro to moving water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited club time opportunities</li> <li>• Lack of committed volunteers coming forward for welfare, shepaddles, pool co-ordination, trips, socials, etc. feeling of busy or lack of empowerment?</li> <li>• Youth policy only accepts juniors if they join with parents. So if teenagers want to join they would need to do so with their parents. This is down to the limit on coaching resource</li> <li>• No formally adopted Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Adults and Equality Policies</li> <li>• Insufficient river trips for members to move on to after gaining quals</li> </ul>
Opportunities: what trends, strengths to convert	Threats: what could harm us or be exposed via weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Avon club is just down the road. Potential to run combined events in the summer to pool our resources.</li> <li>• We now have a SUP discipline rep, some of the coaches are trained in SUP, the club has at present 5 SUPs in club kit. These could be used in the summer months to deliver SUP tasters with a focus on youth/female market. SUP has seen massive growth in female market with strong female role models and this could be capitalised on to introduce more people to paddling.</li> <li>• AOAC trips. Sharing some coaches, we could piggyback on AOAC trips</li> <li>• The Hasler event can be used to grow our reputation and establish us as a racing club again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial - our rent has stayed the same for the last 3 years, but that may change.</li> <li>• Water quality - downstream of Bath and water events are frequent</li> <li>• Floods - a repeat of the winter floods could have more significant damage</li> <li>• Lack of paddler development/standard of skills</li> <li>• Majority of the club workforce work and have limited bandwidth</li> <li>• A safeguarding or equality concern could be overlooked or badly handled.</li> <li>• A safety risk mitigation measure could be overlooked during a club trip.</li> </ul>