

Tonbridge Canoe Club Rules - Revised March 2021

1. All full members should have some proof of ability to swim, e.g. a recognised swimming test certificate. Members not fulfilling that requirement may be asked to show their ability to swim 50 metres wearing light clothing.
2. Members are expected to follow the guidelines and rules laid down by British Canoeing (BC).
3. Members must obtain the permission of the Committee if they wish to represent a canoeing organisation other than Tonbridge Canoe Club.
4. Do not light any fires or matches (e.g. no smoking) in the Clubhouse.
5. Requests for the allocation of clubhouse keys must be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee and are subject to the conditions laid out in rule 21. Keys are not normally issued to junior members or to senior members with less than one full year of membership. All club members who have been allocated a clubhouse key are responsible for ensuring that the clubhouse is locked when unoccupied, even for a very short time. Keys must not be loaned to other members who are not themselves approved key holders unless the keyholder is present. The club reserves the right to request the return of an allocated clubhouse key at any time. Juniors who have exceptionally been allocated a key must accept that the key is for their sole use and must not be used to admit other members.
6. No parking in front of the Clubhouse. We suggest you park in the Lower Castle Field car park and walk across the bridge.
7. Keep noise to a minimum so as not to disturb our neighbours.
8. Members may, at the committee's discretion, be allocated racks for the storage of their canoes which will be their responsibility to maintain. Members requiring a rack space should make a request to the membership secretary. All private boats stored in the clubhouse buildings must be licensed for use on the River Medway by means of BC membership boat licence or an Environment Agency river licence. Racks will be allocated based on frequency of use of the boat concerned. Members who have allocated rack spaces will be asked to vacate them to make room for other boats if the boat being stored is not used at least on average once per month. Any such decisions will be taken by the full committee, after which the member will be given one month to remove their boat from the clubhouse, and a proportional refund of their rack fee will be made. Members must not use other people's racks without permission. Private boats and equipment stored in the clubhouse must be clearly marked with the member's name. Private boats must be removed from the premises within one month of a member not renewing their membership. If the boat is not removed in this time the club will make two reasonable attempts to contact the ex-member by post and by email to the last known address held in the club membership records requesting formally that the boat be removed within a further one month. If the boat is still not removed after this time the club will place it up for sale at its approximate market value and sell it for the best offer received. As the intention is to dispose of the boat quickly to release its rack space for existing members the club cannot guarantee achieving what the ex-member might consider a reasonable sale price. Pro rata rack fees for the period the boat has been left in the clubhouse and any costs involved in arranging the sale will be deducted from the sale proceeds, any remaining funds will be retained by the club. The ex-member may apply to the committee for the return of the remaining funds until the end of the membership year in which they did not renew after which the remaining funds are considered a donation to the club and will be non-returnable. The club also reserves the right not to sell or otherwise dispose of the boat or any other discarded equipment which has been left in the clubhouse by an ex-member but shall instead be entitled to use the boat and/or equipment without the ex-member's permission and without restriction. The club shall not be liable for any loss or damage in these circumstances.
9. Keep the Clubhouse tidy and leave it as you would like to find it (see footnote below).
10. Equipment must be booked in advance for use at races and other Club events.
11. Club boats may only be used for the purpose and under the conditions for which they have been designed and as directed by the club e.g. only plastic boats may be taken down the canoe passes; designated sprint boats must not be taken downstream or used for marathon racing or training without the express permission of the Racing Secretary. If in any doubt consult the relevant section head for advice before proceeding.
12. Canoes must be emptied of water and equipment after use, i.e. sponged dry.
13. Canoes and equipment must be put away and racked in the allotted places after use.
14. Life jackets/buoyancy aids and spray decks must be hung up to dry after use.
15. Any damage to canoes and equipment must be reported to the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible.
16. Club members must not borrow equipment belonging to others without first obtaining the permission of the owner of such equipment.
17. The wearing of buoyancy aids is compulsory for all paddlers under the age of 18. Paddlers under 18 may, with parental consent, apply to the full committee for exemption from this rule for racing and race training during

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daylight hours in calm river conditions.

18. Bicycles and motorcycles are not allowed in the main Clubhouse or secondary boat store.
19. All members (except Associate, Cadet and Child members) must be able to prove that they are at least of BC Discover standard of proficiency (previously 1 star) or that they will attend Club training sessions to achieve that standard. Members and guest paddlers who are unable to prove their proficiency to this standard must be accompanied on the water by a current BC qualified instructor at all times.
20. Junior members (those under the age of 18) will only be permitted to paddle when supervised by a suitably qualified/experienced adult.
21. All key holders are expected to be able to demonstrate paddling ability and safety knowledge to BC Explore standard of proficiency (previously 2 star). Any member submitting a new key application will be expected to include proof of this ability with their application before it can be considered for approval by the committee. Applicants must also have been a member for at least one full year and be able to demonstrate that they play an active part in the club (see footnote to Rule 9 below).
22. Any member introducing a guest paddler must provide evidence to a committee member that the guest is suitably qualified before taking them on the water. A BC Discover award (previously 1 star) or equivalent would be acceptable proof. If documentary evidence cannot be provided the guest must be assessed as competent by a qualified club instructor before being allowed to paddle. If the guest is not of the required standard then either the introducing member or another member of the same paddling group must be a BC qualified coach. Members must also adhere strictly to the guidance given in the 'Guest Paddlers - Guidelines' document on display in the clubhouse when introducing a guest.
23. Members may paddle in the winter (1st November to 31st March) during the hours of darkness subject to the following conditions:
 - They must wear a buoyancy aid.
 - River status must be green. No paddling in the dark is permitted on amber, red or black river status.
 - They must be over 16 years of age and must either currently be ranked or have been previously ranked at Division 6 or above or must have a minimum of two full years regular paddling experience including at least one full winter season paddling in daylight hours.

Members who do not meet these criteria must paddle with a suitably experienced adult member, either in a crew boat or being accompanied on a 1 to 1 basis from another boat. The accompanying boat must remain within visibility distance at all times (i.e. next to or immediately behind the accompanied member's boat if paddling in complete darkness). In the event that there are no suitably experienced adult members willing to take responsibility for junior or under-qualified members on the water, those junior/under-qualified members must accept that they will not be able to paddle. Where there is any doubt about the ability of a member to paddle under winter night conditions the decision of the most experienced paddler at the session will be final.
 - All juniors (regardless of age or ability) must paddle in a group of at least 2 boats within visibility distance at all times. It is also strongly recommended that adult members do not paddle alone.
 - All paddlers must have a forward facing red light on the shoulder of their buoyancy aid which means they can be seen whilst in the boat and also if swimming. All paddlers in a crew boat must have a light.
 - Paddlers should adhere to the 'Winter Night Paddling Best Practice' requirements displayed in the clubhouse and on the club website.
24. Members asking to borrow club equipment for use on a privately arranged activity must demonstrate to the authorising committee member that all participants are qualified or experienced to a standard appropriate to the activity. If the committee member is not satisfied that competence has been proven then permission will be denied or withheld until satisfactory proof has been provided. A minimum of BC Explore standard (previously 2 star) for sheltered conditions, or ability at the level of the BC Performance Award for the activity being undertaken in moderate water conditions if not part of a coach-led group, would be considered suitable. Club equipment may not be used for advanced water conditions.

Footnote to Rule 9:

To keep membership fees low the club does not employ people to undertake cleaning, gardening, coaching or maintenance activities and, rather than operating a rota system, relies on its members to undertake these tasks as necessary. General day-to-day tasks include cleaning of the kitchen, showers, toilets, changing rooms and floors. Please help to keep your club clean by using the cleaning products under the sink in the kitchen and the brushes and vacuum cleaner in the gent's toilet. Other occasional tasks include decorating, boat store cleaning, gardening.