

# Minutes of the Coaching Development Group Meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020



## ***Present:***

- Catherine Ayling
- John Simmonds
- Mark Corti
- Ian Dann
- Mark Harris
- Jacob Baisley

## ***Apologies***

- Mary Cutts

## ***Minutes of the Meeting***

### ***1. Arising from Previous Minutes***

1. **Paddlesport Instructor Course:** **Lee Horton** has booked a Paddlesport Instructor course for June 2021, which is the earliest date the provider can offer. This is great, but it would be ideal to book it in sooner. **Jacob Baisley** to liaise with **Lee Horton** to try and identify another provider, possibly via **Rob Davis**.
2. **Coach bibs:** **John Simmonds** has found a reasonably-priced option for this. It was noted that these are less useful during lockdown when all intro paddles are organised by an identified person anyway; to be kept on the back burner until needed.

### ***2. Beginner Course Feedback***

Huge thanks to all those who have stepped up and run courses over this difficult season, particularly to **Mike Lambourne**, **Mark Harris** and **John Simmonds** who have run a large number of sessions. Good feedback throughout, and it feels like we've had good retention of members this year.

Total participants: 74, of which approx 42 were female

Noted that the beginner courses are now running at about 50% female participation, and this is starting to be reflected in the make-up of the wider membership, which is

a good thing. Noted that the new female changing rooms will be extremely welcome.

### 3. *Lessons from 2020*

It was again noted how successful the *MCC2020* WhatsApp group was in getting new members involved, and what great job **Geoff Orford** has done in setting this up and administering it. More paddling has been done, in more places, and (importantly) a greater variety of people leading them than in any prior year. The new members have integrated well with each other (and the people leading the paddles) and there was some discussion about how that could be replicated and enhanced. Some discussion that this could lead to some balkanisation of the club, with not everyone being included in the WhatsApp group.

There was some discussion about how this would work next year, as the “new” 2020 paddlers became more experienced and a fresh crop of 2021 new members joined – perhaps starting a new *MCC2021* group and expanding the existing to be *MCC Paddlers*? Since **Geoff Orford** is the one actually running this, **John Simmonds** to chat to him and see what his thoughts are and what he wants to do.

### 4. *Unconscious Paddler Rescue*

**John Simmonds** relayed a recent incident when he rescued an unconscious pedestrian from the water after they had a seizure and fell in. His take-home message was to reiterate advice to *always* carry a phone and first aid kit, even for a short jaunt down the river, and ensure you knew how to perform the rescues.

It transpired that this pedestrian was actually a Club member walking home after a “new member” paddle, and this raised the question “*What would have happened if this person had suffered the seizure 30 minutes earlier, when they were on the water?*” This sparked a wider discussion on who was leading these *MCC2020*-organised paddles and where the duty of care lay. Salient points:

1. It became clear that any Club paddle explicitly aimed at new paddlers was not a “peer paddle” and the group leader therefore had a duty of care. This duty cannot be excused by waivers or disclaimers. Any paddle on the club website, FB page or WhatsApp groups is a “club paddle”.
2. This duty of care flows upwards to the committee; for paddles other than “peer paddles” it is ultimately their responsibility to ensure Club trips are safe.
3. **Mark Corti** relayed that BC are happy for Club paddles to be run by “experienced paddlers” (i.e. people who didn’t have formal qualifications) but these needed to be actual named people, approved in advance by the committee. **John Simmonds** to raise this at committee.
4. Some discussion around what should constitute an “experienced paddler” in this context. Some variety of opinion, but in general it was felt that FSRT skills should be the bare minimum. For trips where paddlers with specific medical issues (e.g. epilepsy) were participating, the trip leader needed to be confident they could deal with any incidents. This requires that the trip leader know about these issues in advance.
5. Specifically triggered by the seizure incident, it was questioned whether all trip leaders were asking their group basic questions like “do you have any medical issues?”
6. BC have had similar discussions at a national level, and are introducing new Paddlesport Leader awards (<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/new-leadership-awards/>) to address this. These are 1-day assessment-only courses (no training required for experienced paddlers) and would provide the committee

with a benchmark to judge what level BC considers an “experienced paddler” should be at, as well as offering a degree of confidence to those leading these trips. **John Simmonds** to raise the possibility of the Club offering one of these courses at committee.

7. Worth noting that the underlying motivation here is to support the proliferation of trip leaders and Club paddles that are occurring, and assist them as much as possible to do them safely.

**UPDATED TO ADD:** the day after this meeting, BC published guidance on exactly this – what standard non-qualified “experienced paddlers” should have when leading trips, and how Club committees should assess and record-keep this: <https://britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/An-update-for-British-Canoeing-affiliated-clubs-in-England.pdf>

## 5. **First Aid Update**

Relayed from **Lee Horton** via email. Current first aid guidance is that

1. you are expected to wear a facemask and gloves while treating
2. when doing a breathing check, you should look for chest rising and not put your face close to the casualty’s mouth
3. when doing mouth-to-mouth, cover the casualty’s face with a mask

## 6. **Coaching Vulnerable Adults**

Lots of discussion around this. This year has been a learning experience. General points to share:

1. Reiterated the importance for coaches to look at beginner course signup forms in advance and contacting participants. **Mark Corti** has enhanced vigilance on this when people sign up in the first instance.
2. An acknowledgment that deciding to accept a vulnerable adult on a beginner course is not a once-off commitment by the Club; they may then need further support when they become members.
3. Acknowledgement that the “reasonable adjustments” that we make as a Club to accommodate vulnerable adults have to take into account what is reasonable *for us as volunteers*; we don’t have unlimited time and energy.
4. **Catherine Ayling** has been liaising with BC and is producing Personal Paddling Frameworks for specific vulnerable adults at the Club. These will be shared in due course with the appropriate people.

## 7. **Kids Club**

Following on from an email discussion, it was noted that the Club’s provision for young people could be improved, particularly during lockdown – it’s been extremely hard! This is a reoccurring topic at the CDG; it was acknowledged that a Kids Club was very desirable but required huge commitment, and without someone prepared to make that commitment it was unlikely to happen. It was noted that we’ve previously run these over the summer – once successfully, and once cancelled due to lack of interest. Salient points:

1. Noted that there’s an enhance duty of care for young people at the Club; leaders would require DBS.
2. Ratios for leaders are 1:6 (TBC), and while that’s not relevant during lockdown, we’d need multiple leaders per session to run a worthwhile kids club.
3. Some progression is necessary for longevity of a kids club; perhaps the Explore

Award, perhaps something MCC-specific. Just “messaging about in boats” is fun but doesn’t have long-term attraction.

4. **Jacob Baisley** was willing to help on some canoe / bushcraft-based session.

5. **Geoff Orford** (via email) offered to organise a rota. It was felt that people were more likely to help out on an occasional basis and so this was more likely to work.

**UPDATED TO ADD:** via email, **Geoff Orford** subsequently clarified he was talking about organising a limited number of sessions to enable current junior members to paddle with members their own age. **Mark Corti** to ask coaches etc. to volunteer to help run a session.

8. **Date of Next Meeting:**

**TBC.** Probably March, but sooner if input is needed on Personal Paddling Frameworks or anything else.