

A Review of Shrewsbury Canoe Club's operating procedures following the Anglesey tragedy

1. This review document was prepared by a Steering Group and then endorsed by the Club Committee after amendment. It was then presented to the full Club membership and a representative of Canoe Wales for comments. These comments have been taken into consideration by the Committee. The following document is now adopted as the policy of Shrewsbury Canoe Club.

10th December 2010

2. This document does not set out to make findings of fact about the chain of events which culminated in the sad death of Elizabeth, nor to determine conclusive causes of her death. The Committee felt that these were issues for the Coroner and should not be pre-empted by the Club. Nonetheless a full review of the Club's operating procedures must be an appropriate response to this tragedy and this is what the Committee has attempted by drawing on the accounts of the event. In particular we have considered the way that the trip was advertised, the location chosen for the trip to begin from and the prevailing weather and sea conditions, the make up of the group, the preparation for the group to set out from the bay, the route planning process, the way in which the incident developed and how the club was able to respond at the time.
3. The Club exists to promote paddle sport in all its forms and within that objective all members must acknowledge their moral obligation to follow good practice in their preparation for and participation in all activities organised by or through the Club. This report is intended by the Committee to equip members with tools and information to paddle in a safe and responsible manner.
4. The Club has a long standing tradition of peer group paddling trips which can be organised by any member using the Club email facility to propose a paddling trip and to attract like minded Members to join him/her on the water. In addition the Club also runs a programme of explicitly coached/led activities (Frankwell/Pool sessions/ Llangollen intro to WW evenings being the most obvious examples).
5. The Club recognises the importance of preserving both strands of activity in the Club but also the need to clarify the distinction between them and to ensure that coached/led trips are in future clearly recognised as distinct from peer group paddles and are delivered by members approved by the Club working within a remit approved by the Club and in accordance with the principles of good practice within the sport.

6. The Club has adopted the following definitions:
- ❖ “Club Activity” shall be any paddle sport activity involving coaching or leadership on the water. Club activities are offered expressly by or on behalf of the Committee or by any “Paddle Leader” working within his/her remit. All Club Activities shall be delivered by or under the supervision of Paddle Leader(s) working within their remit. In Club Activities all Paddle Leaders will be expected to follow good practice as recognised in the sport.
 - ❖ “Paddle Leaders” Holders of a current BCU/UKCC Coaching or leadership award (including current First Aid) shall automatically be Paddle Leaders in accordance with the remit of their award. Other Club members may be approved by the Committee as Paddle Leaders for a period of up to three years with authority to deliver/supervise Club Activities in accordance with the remit of such level of BCU/UKCC Coach or leader as the Committee shall think fit. In all cases, the Paddle Leader status is subject to being terminable or modifiable by the Committee for cause. Paddle Leaders will be required to hold a current First Aid certificate and an appropriate safety and rescue qualification.
 - ❖ “Peer Group Activity” Any paddle sport activity promoted by members via the club website or the club email facility and not offering coaching or leadership on the water beyond that found in a peer group situation. A Peer Group activity is very distinct from a Club Activity.
7. It is the Club’s policy that in future all members promoting paddle sport activities via Club facilities such as the club website or the club email facility or any other official club be required to state whether those are being offered as “Club Activities” or as “Peer Group Activities”. In this way the proposed definitions will become part of the daily culture of the Club.
8. It is the Club’s policy that to assist Members to act in accordance with good practice the following documents should be adopted by the Club and placed on the Club website for reference/use and that their existence should be regularly drawn to the attention of the membership as a whole:

Appendix 1: Pro forma document to promote a paddle sport activity*

Appendix 2: Recommended kit lists for personal & group kit for placid water/white water& surf/sea

Appendix 3: Generic Risk Assessment Form*

Appendix 4: Check list of members attending paddle sport activity including details of safety kit carried, identification details, mobile phones carried and emergency contact details for a family member.* /**

Appendix 5: Trip/Activity Planning and Briefing sheets- Sea and Inland* /**

Appendix 6: Feedback Form* <http://feedback.shrewsburycanoecub.org>

Appendix 7: Glossary of terms (to be posted on the club website)

*** Signifies mandatory for Paddle Leaders on any Club Activity.**

**** To be completed with the involvement of group members**

9. It is the Club's policy to require the Feedback Form to be completed after any club activity so that the committee can pass on relevant information to the wider membership. The form is recommended to be completed after a peer group activity in the event of an incident or near miss, and should also be available for any club member to complete after club activity, on an anonymous basis if desired. Feedback also provides a channel of communication for information on good practice and successful events and positive feedback should be encouraged. The committee should diarise for regular review any feedback received. If an incident or near miss was reported, trip plans and group detail sheets would be retained for use during review, and afterwards be kept as part of the club's archive for a minimum of 3 years.
10. It is the Club's policy to recommend that all promoters of paddle sport activities consider giving guidance in their e mails etc. as to the minimum standard of skill/experience which is, in their opinion, needed for joining the activity and that this be a requirement for all Club Activities
11. It is the Club's policy that all members should remain free to promote Peer Group Activities for Club members. These should specifically refer to the proposed paddle as a peer group activity.
12. Duty of care. Even though paddle sport is an assumed risk sport all Club members must recognise that they will owe a duty of care to their fellow paddlers on all trips or activities in which they participate (consistent with their skill/experience/qualifications) regardless of how the trip is defined. This will include a duty to speak out clearly if a member feels that a trip which is proposed is beyond his/her skills or strength or acceptable level of risk or beyond the abilities of another member of the party. All members should promote a Club ethos which encourages and welcomes such openness.

13. It is agreed that the Club's Committee will consider the purchase of a range of safety equipment especially to include tow lines pump and equipment to summon assistance for use by members on a hire basis.

14. It is the Club's policy to establish an emergency response system which can be activated by the paddle leader calling the Club Emergency Contact.

The Club offers its sincerest condolences to Elizabeth's family. Our thoughts are also with the other participants of the Anglesey trip. We hope that in time they will be ready to continue paddling and be able again to enjoy our amazing sport in the years to come.