

Boatie Blest Rowing Handbook

2022

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Welcome to Boatie Blest!

This handbook is to provide you with useful information about rowing at Port Seton with Boatie Blest. For up-to-date information please check out our website

www.boatieblest.org

Boatie Blest is a community club formed in 2010. We have a constitution available on our website. The club has members and from these members a committee is formed through a vote during the AGM. As well as the normal committee positions we also have a Captain and Vice-Captain and a Bosun.

The current list of committee members can be found on the website.

Our rowing boats are called St.Ayle's skiffs. These are Boatie Blest, Boatie Rows and Boatie Lodge (now known as 'Boatie'). The skiff's are housed in the shed in Port Seton harbour.

Boatie Blest is a member of the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association (SCRA).

Signing up for rows

Our rowing is managed through the Team Up App which can be used on your mobile or on a PC. All rowing and boat maintenance sessions are on the calendar.

Signing up to the Teamup App



- Download the TeamUp App from your App store.
- To request the link for our TeamUp calendar please request this via our Facebook page or by emailing boatieblest1@gmail.com

Our New Members committee member will make sure you have access to this. Days and times for rows are put in the TeamUp App on a weekly basis – normally a Monday. You will receive a notification by email when this happens. New rowers should sign up initially for social rows.

The times available are related to tide times as we need to launch our boats 3 hours either side of high tide as we launch from Port Seton Harbour. You should sign up for a day and time to suit you. This should be considered a commitment by you.

For a row to go ahead there needs to be a cox and in most cases 4 rowers. Sometimes 5 rowers sign up with a reserve who drops out just prior to the session. Exceptionally the boat can take 5 rowers, which means one rower will sit in the bow and swap during the session to allow for rowing.

A row may not take place if:

- There are not sufficient rowers or a cox available. You should check TeamUp to see if there are sufficient rowers and a cox. You may decide to ask on WhatsApp if anyone is willing to join the row so that a session can go ahead. If a boat is not full you do not need to turn up for a session.
- The cox decides to cancel for any reason – including poor weather. However, unless you hear from the cox you should assume a row is going ahead. *Even if you think the weather isn't very nice the cox may still decide to go ahead and run a harbour session so please turn up.*

This information will be sent both on the WhatsApp group and via email. More about information on the role of the coxes in this handbook in Section xx.

If you can no longer make a session

Please only sign up for sessions that you are confident you can attend.

If you are no longer able to make a session please try and find someone to take your place using our shared email and WhatsApp.

Other types of communication

Gagglemail

We will send you emails from our shared Gagglemail mailing list. This information will be about rowing only or other Boatie business. You can also use this mailing list if you need to pull out of a session and find a replacement rower for example.

WhatsApp Group

You will also be invited to join our WhatsApp group. This is for rowing chat but is also used for more general keeping in touch and nonsense! In fact anything at all as long as it's not political or potentially offensive. Not all members are in the WhatsApp group. Or you can of course choose to have this group on mute and pop in and out when it suits you! If you would like to be added to this group you can ask the new Members rep.

We also have a website and a Facebook page.

Types of rowing session and events

At Boatie Blest we have **Training** sessions and **Social** rowing sessions. Once you become a member you are able to sign up for both types of session. However, you should initially sign up for social rows only.

Training sessions – these are primarily for people wanting to improve their rowing and fitness. There will be less opportunity to chat and wildlife spotting and you may do some specific exercises to work on technique and fitness. These sessions are led by the cox. Once you've been coming for a while you might want to chat to a cox to ask if you are ready for a training row. Training sessions may also happen before a Regatta or World Championship and might be for specific teams.

Social sessions – these are more relaxed sessions. These are great when you are learning about rowing and improving your technique. They are also ideal if you enjoy a slower pace of row, like to get a chance to spot wildlife and chat or are returning to rowing after an absence.

Regatta's – there are a series of Regatta's that we attend throughout the year. Everyone has a chance to take part in a Regatta if they like and we will let you know about them via email. There are different teams for Regatta's and you will normally start in a novice category. We hold our own Regatta too.

SkiffieWorlds - World Championship – these normally happen once every two years and are a chance to compete on a world stage. A level of

commitment to your team is required from anyone wanting to take part in the 'World's'.

The cox

The role of the cox is to maintain a safe environment at all times.

- The decision about whether a row happens rests with the cox.
- The cox is responsible for the boat and equipment, lifejackets and the crew.
- They will give clear and concise commands whilst getting the boat ready for launch, whilst crew get in and out of the boat and whilst in the boat.
- All rowers should be respectful of the cox and carry out instructions to the best of their abilities. Ask for clarification on instructions if this is required.

If you notice any defects or damage the skiff whilst you are rowing you should report this to the cox.

If you have any injury or condition which may affect your rowing you are to privately inform the cox, so they are aware of it prior to the row. If you sustain an injury or are involved in a near miss you should inform the cox and follow our Health and Safety procedure – more later.

The Helm

When at sea the Cox is usually in command of the skiff. However, some members are designated as Helm and may take over this position for a portion or all of the row where an experienced Cox is rowing. In this situation the responsibility for the safety of the boat and crew remains with the Cox.

All of our Coxes and Helms have undergone training with trained trainers.

A Rowing Session

Before the row

If you have any of the main symptoms of Covid-19 such as a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste please do not attend a rowing session.

What to wear and bring

Layers to keep warm but also maintain the right temperature once you start rowing. Even on a cold day you might get surprisingly warm during a brisk row! However, always bring enough warm clothing to ensure that, if rowing had to stop due to an unforeseen incident, you can keep warm at sea.

A hat until you've warmed up.

Reasonably tight fitting gloves to protect your hands from blisters.

Due to the need to wade into the sea at the harbour to launch the skiff wellies are recommended or if you don't mind getting your feet wet shoes that won't slip off your feet when rowing.

Sunglasses, cap, suntan lotion are all needed on some rows!

Water bottle

High energy snack for longer rows

When you arrive at the shed

Please arrive in good time at the shed at Port Seton harbour. Please note parking can be difficult during nice weather.

You will be provided with an insured, serviced lifejacket which you must wear during your row. Please make sure this is a snug fit and that the metal buckle and crotch strap are fastened. Please don't be shy - ask for help with your lifejacket until you are confident with it.

Ask the cox how you can help with getting the skiff ready and launched.

Advise the cox of any short or long term injuries or health concerns.

You will need to help with the launch of the skiff. This involves taking it down to the beach on the trailer, taking it off the trailer and launching it in the water. There are loads of hazards during this stage of our row. Follow all instructions carefully. Watch your feet. Watch out for bits of the boat.



Warm up

Before rowing it's a great idea to have a wee bit of a warm up. A good warm up should include practicing a full range of movement followed by some dynamic stretches. These are stretches which involve movement such as swinging your arms, rotating your shoulders, doing some side bends.

The Scottish Coastal Rowing Association has provided a range of short films on rowing technique. These can be found at www.scottishcoastalrowing.org/learning

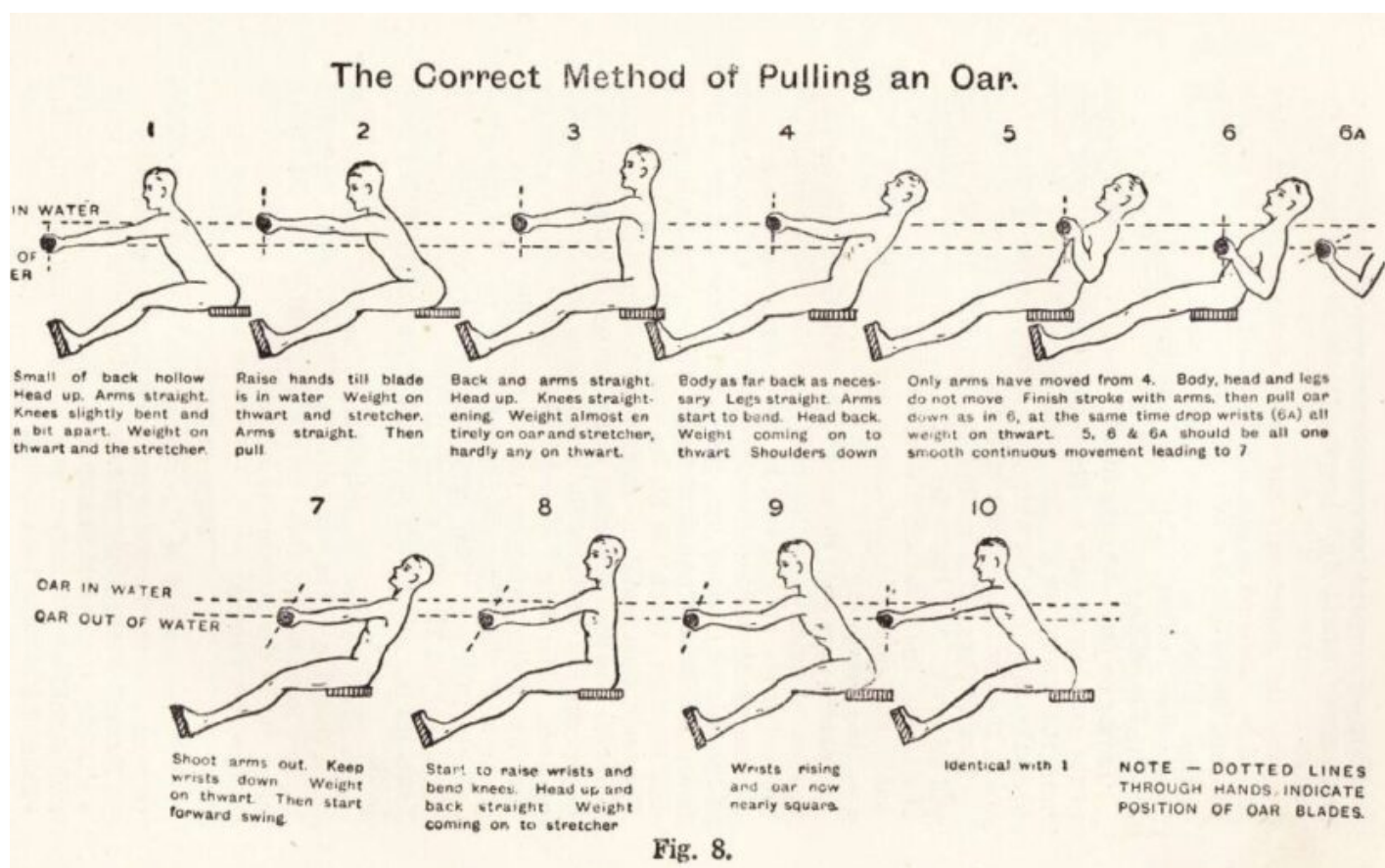
Getting into the Skiff

The cox will decide on the order of the rowers and will instruct rowers when to get in the boat. The cox will normally get into the boat first followed by the stroke (4), then positions 3 and 2. The rower in position 1 will normally be asked to hold the boat whilst people get in one at a time in order.

When instructed to do so you should carefully get in the boat, step over the seats (thwart) and take your seat as quickly as possible. You should get your oar in position (look for the corresponding number) and be ready to listen to instructions from the cox. Sometimes instructions will be given quickly, particularly during poor weather, and you should be ready to react as soon as you can.

Rowing Technique

Having a good fixed seat rowing technique will help reduce the risk or injury



and should make you row easier, more enjoyable and more efficient. You should ensure the footrest is in a good position for you either as soon as you can or when the cox gives you an opportunity to do so. The illustration above

is from the 1937 Edition of the Admiralty Manual of Seamanship and shared on the SCRA website as still being relevant.

A good row will be the result of teamwork and excellent timing. You should follow the lead of rower in the Stroke position in timing of both the oars entering the water and again when the oar leaves the water.

The position of the oar is important. Too deep and you will use more energy than you need, possibly have difficulty with timing and quickly tire.

SCRA have highlighted the following from this illustration too:

- **Straight Back:** Erect but not stiff ... swinging from the loins only at the hips and not from any point in the middle of his back as a secondary pivot. [This] eases the respiratory organs by opening the chest cage.
- **Swing:** The time occupied coming forward should be the body's rest; an erect head and open chest will enable the heart and lungs to work freely and easily. Any tendency to rush the swing must be checked ... As the body swings the hands should be at the same time stretching and reaching out as if constantly striving to touch something which is as constantly evading them.
- **Use of the Arms:** The arms must be straight when swinging back. They must be considered as merely connecting rods between the body and oar. The use of the biceps in rowing should be discouraged, as the [rower] who finishes [their] stroke by the aid of the biceps infallibly dog ears [their] elbows and sticks them out at right angles to [their] ribs, giving a weak as well as a cramped and ugly finish ... It is important that the oar should be pulled into the chest and not the chest up to the oar. This latter will certainly shorten the stroke prematurely, and spoil the rhythm of the swing.
- **Hanging at the Chest:** The oar must not hang at the chest. The hands must come away quickly, otherwise it will be necessary to rush forward in the swing to make up lost ground. This spoils the swing and taxes the endurance of the [rower] ...

As a rower you will need to get familiar with loads of new lingo. About different bits of the boat, commands you might hear during a rowing session and other rowing terms.

Boatie Code of Conduct

Boatie Blest has a Code of Conduct in the members area of our website that you should familiarise yourself with.

The key principle of this document is that all members operate in an environment where people show respect for others and their property. Boatie Blest seeks to operate in an environment which is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation.

Commands you may hear

Listen out to the cox for all commands. The cox is likely to issue a warning prior to a command and may count down strokes until this command should be executed. For example:

'Get ready to hold water in 3 strokes, 2 strokes, 1 stroke and hold'

Listen out to any adjustments made to the countdown by the cox, ie. '3 strokes, 2 strokes, 2 strokes, 1 stroke and hold.'

'Ready to row' – be ready for the command to row – arms forward and blade above the water.

'Row' / 'Forward together' – normal rowing

'Hold water' – put blade vertically in the water and hold it there. This is used when launching and for turns.

'Backwater' – row backwards – ie the blade will go in the water in front of you. This is used for manoeuvring, especially in the harbour area.

'Port side/ Starboard side only' – only the side instructed should row. The others should hold their blades above the water – unless instructed to hold water.

'Hard on starboard/ port side' – rowers with oars on starboard/ port side should row hard.

'Ease off on starboard/ port side' – rowers with oars on starboard/ port side should continue to row but ease off.

'All together' – all rowers come back in together. Usually used after a command where starboard and port side have different instructions.

'Watch your timing' – A reminder from the cox to watch the stroke for timing. Something we all need now and again and nothing to worry about!

'Racing start' – starting rowing during a race. Normally starts with 3 short fast strokes to gain momentum, lengthening out.

'Arms only', 'half stroke', 'three quarter length stroke' – different stroke styles used in training to concentrate on different elements of the stroke.

Important terms

Coxswain/ Cox – Person who steers the boat and provides instruction for rowers. They have overall responsibility and are in charge of the boat. All coxes have undergone rigorous training to carry out this role.

Helm – On occasion a helm will be in charge of the boat rather than a cox. They are able to act as cox for the boat when a fully trained cox is in the boat (or alongside?). They will have started their coxes training.

Port – Left side of the boat, while facing forward to the bow.

Starboard – Right side of the boat, while facing forward to the bow. It might help you remember - If you are sitting on your seat looking towards the cox you will be rowing on **starboard** if you are on the same side as the **steering** – i.e. the tiller.

Stern – the rear of the boat; the direction the rowers are facing. Where the cox sits with the rudder.

Bow – the forward section of the boat.

Stroke (number 4 position) – the rower who is closest to the stern. The stroke sets the rhythm for the boat; others behind must follow this cadence.

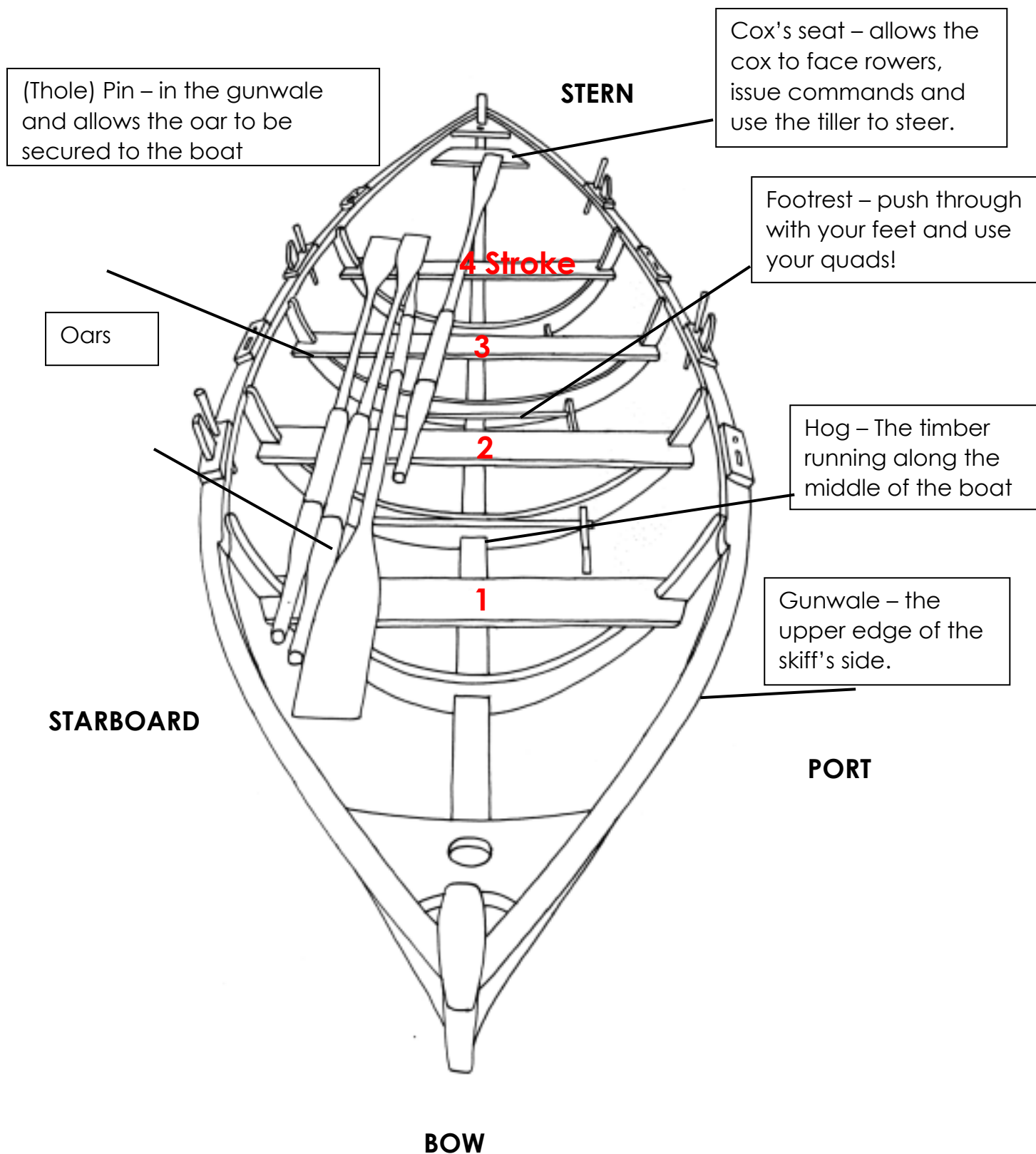
Oar – use to drive the boat forward; rowers don't use paddles. They have a handle, a shaft and a blade.

St.Ayles Skiff – the type of rowing boat we use. A wooden boat with 4 oars and a rudder, designed by Iain Oughtred, and based on historical examples from the Western Isles skiff. (Boatie Rows is made of elm, Boatie Blest of oak and Boatie of larch).

Thwarts – these are the seats.

Tiller – this is the wooden handle used by the Cox to move the rudder to steer the boat.

Positions on the boat – shown in the illustration. Number 4 sits closest to the cox, then 3, then 2 and lastly 1 in the bow. Look for the respective number on the oar for you to use.



Getting out of the skiff

The cox will slow down rowing as you approach the beach. If you are sitting in the bow you might be instructed to jump out of the boat to help bring it in to the beach carefully. If you are first out of the boat you should hold the boat steady to allow everyone to get off the boat. You should get out of the skiff when instructed to do so by the cox.

The end of a rowing session

There are a number of key things that must be done at the end of a rowing session:

- Recover the boat – following the instruction of the cox the boat will need to be lifted and returned to the shed. This is heavy work at the end of what may have been a tiring session but it needs everyone to work together to do this. If you are struggling xx
- Clean the boat, sanitise lifejackets following most recent guidance.
- Cool Down - After rowing (like all exercise) it's a great idea to have a cool down to help develop flexibility. The British Rowing has a useful video you can watch here
<https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/training-advice/cool-down/>
- You might also want to take the opportunity to review what went well and what could be improved from the session.
- Remember to thank the cox!

Health and Safety

We encourage all members to read our Safety Code and associated Appendices. This policy aims to provide members with the means to undertake club activities in a manner that champions the highest levels of safety and competence.

This policy sets out our general approach, namely

- Risk assessments will be carried out for all club activities
- Club rules will safeguard people, property and the environment, and encourage best practice.
- We use a 'competent cox' system whereby a named person will accept overall responsibility for the safety of the boat (s) in any given outing.
- We will provide appropriate and adequate safety equipment for members and non-members.
- Boats and equipment will be maintained to a safe standard.

- We will investigate accidents and near misses to learn from them where possible and reporting them where appropriate.

Accidents and Incidents/ Near Misses

The coastguard may be contacted as follows:

- a) By phone:
 - 999 (emergencies)
 - 01224 592334 (Aberdeen station)
 - 020381 72630 (administrative enquiries)
- b) By VHF radio on Channel 16.