

Peterborough City Rowing Club

Water Safety Notes for Rowing On The River Nene – April 2021

In accordance with the constitution of PCRC the club adopts the policies and recommendations of its national governing body - British Rowing. The following are therefore additional guidelines specific to PCRC and should be read in conjunction with *Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing*, the latest versions of which can be found here:

<https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>

Please see amendments to the last notification (March 2021) highlighted in red below.

As you know since January 2019 we have had some safety restrictions in place when using the River Nene around the Fitzwilliam Bridge. As we now begin to re-open the club following the relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions (refer to separately published guidance on how the club will operate in a Covid-secure way) we need to advise members of an additional hazard on the River Nene and the safety measures being put in place to reduce these risks.

Bridge Hazards



Contractors working on repairs to the Parkway Bridge have installed a coffer dam extending someway in to the river below the bridge, substantially reducing both the navigable width of the river and visibility of oncoming river

traffic, see image above – this is expected to remain in place for some months. Whilst there are some buoys in place around the dam they are currently inadequate for preventing collision by rowing boats and hence there is a need for additional safety measures to be put in place.

Different restrictions now apply to these two bridge hazards, so we wish to continue to reduce the risk of collisions involving members of the club by:

- 1) ensuring that all coxes and steers take extra care when passing through both the Fitzwilliam Bridge and the Parkway Bridge on the river – in particular by observing the correct navigation rules and by taking proper care to look ahead, which will be facilitated by:
- 2) at the **Fitzwilliam Bridge** restricting the speed of boats when passing through this bridge on the river – in both directions – to no more than half-pressure; inexperienced crews should proceed at no more than low pressure
- 3) at the **Parkway Bridge** – in accordance with the river navigation rules – because of the reduced visibility caused by the coffer dam and the restriction in the width of the river caused by reed/weed growth, boats rowing upstream (i.e. returning to the club) should give way to any boats rowing downstream (i.e. away from the club) in order to avoid the risk of collision through this section - additional vigilance in looking ahead and taking the appropriate action is required for all boats

The only exception to the last **two** points above would be where a properly marshalled event is being run by the club on the river – during which marshals would be in place in the vicinity of each of the bridges and to assist with the safe passage of crews (who would normally all be travelling in the same direction at any one time) - such as the following:

- Head of The Nene events
- PCRC Club Head events

Coaches should also be aware that access along the towpath in the vicinity of the Parkway Bridge is more restricted because of the contractors' workspace and consequently less experienced crews may require specific instruction to wait for their coach having passed through the bridge before continuing their outing (in either direction).

Decreased Navigable River Width in the vicinity of the Key Theatre

There are boats “double-parked” presently alongside the Key Theatre and in addition, one of the red buoys on the opposite side of the river in front of the Fletton Quays development has been moved further out into the river reducing the navigable width of the river and hence increasing the risk of collision. Members should proceed with extra caution through this part of the river, especially when looking ahead as boats are likely to be much closer together than usual.

Wild Swimmers

We have observed wild swimmers using the river including the Cut onto the river recently and owing to the difficulty being able to see them under certain conditions members are strongly urged to take additional care when looking ahead, especially as warmer weather may cause an increase in their frequency or numbers

Sunken Cruiser

We would also like to remind you that the partially sunken cruiser on the south bank of the river approximately 500m downstream of the Fitzwilliam Bridge remains in place and so crews travelling from the club towards the House should continue to take extra care when passing by. We understand that contractors' have been engaged to remove this hazard and will update our guidance accordingly when this has been completed.

General Points

Other Hazards - As the river has not been in normal use for the last three months there may be additional hazards on the river margins that crews might not expect to see so we would recommend that on the first outings on the river scullers/crews/coxes take extra care whilst familiarising themselves with the river again. If you notice anything significant please advise other crews in the vicinity and the session supervisor.

British Rowing Safety Alerts – if you haven't already done so please have a read of the following recent alert which contains some sensible advice on returning to rowing after a period away: <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Safety-Alert-Be-kind-to-yourself-March-2021-1.pdf>

First Aid Kits – As a reminder of club policy, please note that the first aid kits around the club are intended for dealing with accident and emergency situations only and that you should bring your own supply of plasters for the treatment of blisters rather than “raid” the first aid kits – which may not then contain the necessary items in the event of a genuine first aid situation arising. When first aid kits have been used please notify the Club Rowing Safety Adviser (paulscutts63@gmail.com) so that they can be restocked and the incident appropriately reported.

Everyone involved in rowing has a duty of care to ensure their actions both on and off the water are conducted in a manner which does not compromise the safety of others. To this end should an incident occur then anyone should seek to render assistance to others if it is safe to do so.

These Guidance Notes are intended to ensure that everyone remains safe when afloat. We recognise that it can be frustrating to have any form of restrictions imposed but the Club has a duty of care and a responsibility to operate safely and this includes restricting rowing activities in situations which

could pose an excessive risk to athletes, coxes, coaches, launch drivers, club officers or the general public at large as well as the club as an organisation.

The PCRC Rowing Committee