



Risk Assessment

Grade Two Whitewater Trips: River Barle, Exe and Usk, Lower Dart, Lower Tryweryn (walking around Bala Mill Falls) other Dorset Rivers. Persons Undertaking Event: River Leader and trip participants. Required Competence: SVCC Nominated River Leader/s will be experienced Grade Three paddlers who have completed a Whitewater Safety and Rescue Course. Participants will have at least some experience of paddling on moving water- Hammoon and Blandford Weirs, CIWWC- and will have previously demonstrated the ability to break in and out of moving water and to confidently and competently undertake a 'Wet Exit'. It will be up to the discretion of the 'Leader' to determine who is competent enough to undertake such descents. Under 18's will either be accompanied by a parent or will have arranged to paddle with a 'Responsible Adult'- and necessary paperwork undertaken. Access Points: Put ins and take outs will be agreed in advance Accident and Emergency Departments: Dartmoor Rivers- Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. South Brecon Beacons- Prince Charles Hospital North Brecon Beacons- Breconshire War Memorial Hospital North Wales/Bala- Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Paddling Ratio: In line with PUK Deployment standards. Assessment completed by: Neil Haggar (Club Safety Officer) of the management committee of the Stour Valley Canoe Club Date Assessment Created/Completed: 3 rd October 2025 Date of Next Review: see below	River Leader: Nominated by SVCC Management Committee.	
	Emergency contacts: Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Dartmoor Rivers) 01392 411611 Prince Charles Hospital (South Brecon Beacons) 01685 721721 Breconshire War Memorial Hospital (North Brecon) 01874 622443 Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital (North Wales/Bala) 01766 831281 Royal Bournemouth Hospital 01202 303626 Christchurch Hospital 01202486361 Dorset County Hospital (Dorchester) 01305 251150 All under 18's are to have a "Tyvek" Band with Parent/carers contact details. This is to be attached to the outside of their Buoyancy Aid.	

HAZARD	RISK BEFORE CONTROL MEASURES	PERSONS AT RISK	CONTROL MEASURES	COMMENTS ACTIONS	RESIDUAL RISK RATING
Accidental capsizes of Kayak or Canoe	Drowning, Cold Water Shock, Hypothermia, Exhaustion and Physical Injury- head injury, broken bones, lacerations, sprains and strains	River Leader and trip participants	River Leader and participants to wear Buoyancy Aids and Helmets The River Leader will provide a safety briefing prior to the river descent. The briefing will include a brief description to the main characteristics of the river, approximate time it will take to complete the descent, identification of hazards- stoppers, overhanging trees, tight bends, etc. During the safety briefing the River Leader will also determine how the descent will be undertaken- buddying-	The River Leader will check that all novice paddlers have appropriately secured Buoyancy Aids and Helmets prior to the river	Low

			up novices with more experienced paddlers or descending as a group with experienced paddlers taking it turns to lead and a 'Tail End Charlie' identified. Additionally, the 'Leader' will determine the 'Signs' used to communicate during the descent. Prior to the river descent being undertaken the River Leader will ensure that all Novices' Kayaks have adequate inherent buoyancy to prevent sinking and to provide a floating object for the participants to hold on to in the event of a wet exit.	descent.	
Overhanging trees and branches hidden under the surface of the water causing capsize and/or entrapment	Drowning, Cold Water Shock, Hypothermia, Exhaustion and Physical Injury- head injury, broken bones, lacerations, sprains and strains	River Leader and trip participants	During the safety briefing the River Leader will make Novices aware of the nature of the river being paddled and the dangers that trees present. The River Leader will also ensure that participants eddy above rapids and before blind bends and then inspect or ask another experienced paddler to do so before the paddle continues. Where necessary inspections from the river bank will be undertaken.		Low
Collision with other participants boats and/or paddlers causing capsize	Drowning, Cold Water Shock, Hypothermia, Exhaustion and Physical Injury- head injury, broken bones, lacerations, sprains and strains	River Leader and trip participants	During the safety briefing participants will be reminded of their responsibilities to look out for the welfare of both themselves and other participants- calling out 'Capsize' when necessary and eddying out at nearest convenient point along the bank whilst rescues are being undertaken. Additionally, the River Leader will ensure appropriate spacing is maintained between craft as the river is being descended.		Low
Slips and trips when portaging	Drowning, Cold Water Shock, Hypothermia, and Physical Injury- head injury, broken bones, lacerations, sprains and strains	River Leader and trip participants	River Leader to prompt Novices to lift correctly and when necessary to ask for help carrying craft to and from the river bank.		Low
Being caught in a 'stopper' after shooting a weir	Drowning, Cold Water Shock, Hypothermia, Exhaustion and Physical Injury- head injury, broken bones, dislocations, lacerations, sprains and strains	River Leader and trip participants	River Leader will ensure that participants eddy above rapids and before blind bends and then inspect for stoppers or ask another experienced paddler to do so before the paddle continues. Where necessary inspections from the river bank will be undertaken. The River Leader will direct the setting up of safety where they deem necessary- both river based and bankside.		Low
High water levels- increasing risk of capsize in fast flowing	Drowning, Cold Water Shock, Hypothermia,	River Leader and trip	The River Leader will determine in advance who possesses the requisite stamina and paddling ability to undertake descents.		Medium

water and entrapment in stoppers and under bridges.	Exhaustion and Physical Injury- head injury, broken bones, lacerations, sprains and strains	participants	The River Leader will ensure that all rapids and blind bends are rigorously inspected before participants' descent and where they deem appropriate direct Novice paddlers to walk around rapids, drops and stoppers.		
Exacerbation or triggering of pre-existing Medical Conditions- Diabetes, Angina, Epilepsy, asthma, etc	Allergic reaction, Seizure, Asthma attack, Hypoglycaemia	Participants and Marshalls	During the safety briefing the River Leader will ask Novice paddlers to make known any pre-existing medical conditions. Participants will be instructed to carry in their Kayaks any necessary medications- Inhalers, Epi-pens, etc.		Low
Over-exertion and difficulty controlling body temperature	Hypo/Hyperthermia, Dehydration, Heat exhaustion, Sprains and Strains	Participants	During the safety briefing the River leader will remind participants of their responsibilities to look out for their own welfare- ensuring they are dressed appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions and the tasks they are to undertake, and carry sufficient food and fluid to sustain them for the duration of the paddle.		Low
Infection from water born diseases	Weil's disease, stomach upsets	River Leader and trip participants	During the safety briefing the River Leader will remind participants of the dangers of water born diseases and recommend that they avoid swallowing river water and use common sense when consuming food and drink.		Low
Abuse of minors or vulnerable persons.	Abuse of minors or vulnerable persons.	Minors and vulnerable persons.	Any concerns about any club member should be mentioned discretely to the Welfare Officer and raised by the Welfare Officer with the committee or with a suitable sub-group of the committee or with some other suitable forum or external group (e.g. Police) if the committee is not thought a suitable forum, e.g. if a committee member is the subject of the concern.	Session Leader to ensure compliance	Low

Date Reviewed: 3/10/2025 Next Review Date: 31/10/2026	Person Reviewing: Neil Haggar
Position in Stour Valley Canoe Club Committee: Club Safety Officer	Signature of Reviewer: <i>Neil Haggar</i>