



# MEMBERS HANDBOOK

For New and Existing Members

Revision 7 – December 2020

## Committee Members

Abingdon Rowing Club has an enthusiastic and active Committee which runs the club for the benefit and enjoyment of its members. The key members of the Committee are listed below.

Tony Hughes	<b>President</b>
Andrew Troup	<b>Club Chairman</b>
Nicky Simpson	<b>Club Captain</b>
Lily O'Connor	<b>Women's Vice Captain</b>
<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Men's Vice Captain</b>
Peter Martin	<b>Secretary</b>
Simon Keogh	<b>Treasurer</b>
Eleanor Kilsby	<b>Membership Secretary</b>
Ray Doran &	<b>Social Secretaries</b>
Harriet Alderman	
John Simmons	<b>Head Co-Ordinator</b>
John Fass	<b>Ordinary Member &amp; Water Safety Officer</b>
Kathryn Perkins &	<b>Ordinary Members &amp; Junior Reps</b>
Jason Simon	
Alison Fletcher	<b>Ordinary Member &amp; Welfare Officer</b>
Fiona Mackay Perkins	<b>Ordinary Member &amp; Welfare Officer</b>

### **Additional Roles (Non-Committee Positions)**

<b>VACANT</b>	<b>Club Kit Secretary</b>
Vlad Zmijanovic	<b>Race Entries Secretary</b>

Most of the above can be contacted by email via the contacts page on the ARC website, or in person at the club.

<http://www.abingdonrc.org.uk>

## **Introduction**

This handbook is aimed at all Club members, new and existing, and is intended to give an overview of the club, the stretch of river we row on, and other information you may find useful throughout your membership with Abingdon Rowing Club.

If you feel there is anything else that could be added, please let us know by contacting one of the committee members shown on the previous page, and we will do our best to include it in the next revision.

## **Abingdon Rowing Club**

Abingdon Rowing Club was established in 1958 to exploit one of the best stretches of water on the River Thames. The distance from end-to-end is 3,800 m, which remains relatively free of major river traffic, even during the summer months. The club continues to build on its success, investing in our facilities, equipment and coaching support to provide a unique training environment for everyone from recreational rowers to athletes with ambition.

The Club has several different squads, catering for members of all age groups and abilities. Squads train between 1 and 6 days per week depending upon their aims, aspirations and commitments.

Each year the Club competes at regattas all over the country, and has had medal successes at Henley Masters, National Masters Championships and Vet Fours Head.

We also hold our own Head of the River race each year, in April. This event is very well attended by many clubs from all over the UK – some from as far away as Scotland. Unlike other clubs, we don't compete in our own Head Race.



# Squads

## Beginners

The club runs beginner courses in Spring and Summer to provide people with a taster in rowing and the basic skills required to take part in the sport recreationally or competitively. After completing a course, new members may be invited to join the novice/intermediate squads and progress to racing, or, once assessed as self-sufficient, are able to row recreationally if they wish. For details of upcoming beginner courses, check out our website [www.abingdonrc.org.uk](http://www.abingdonrc.org.uk), or speak to the beginner's coordinator.



## Novice/Intermediate (Men and Women)

The Novice/Intermediate Squads are for those who have progressed from the Beginners squad, and are developing their rowing technique and fitness, or those with previous rowing experience who are coming back into the sport. We have very active men's and women's Novice/Intermediate squads who all train regularly (Around 2-5 days per week, depending on commitment), and aim to compete at local level regattas such as Shrewsbury, Ironbridge, Henley T&V and Oxford City Regatta.

This group gives the first taste of competition and the feeling of being part of a squad. It is a mixed ability group with some members remaining at this level for competition each year as it meets their competition desires and fits with their ability to train. Those who wish to train further are able to join the respective Men or Women's senior squad at the beginning of winter season in September each year.

## Senior (Men and Women)

The Senior squad is for those who have some experience rowing or sculling, and who are willing and able to commit to a full training program six days a week, which is made up of four evening sessions during the week (water-based in the summer, and land based in winter), as well as Saturday and Sunday morning water outings (7am – 12pm) each weekend. Regular assessments are held throughout the season, and all members of this squad are expected to commit fully to the club's senior training plan. This ensures that our Senior squad is as competitive as possible.

The senior squad regularly competes at Henley Women's Regatta, Henley Masters Regatta, and the annual Head of the River Races on London's tideway, and has had good results in these, as well as local Regattas and Head Races. The Senior Squad takes in

experienced new members all the way through the year, and those progressing from the Club's novice/Intermediate squads in September each year.

## **Masters**

Abingdon Rowing Club has a large Masters (formerly known as Veterans) group of rowers. Dedicated to enjoying themselves, the group welcomes rowers with all levels of experience and ability and offers rowing to suit all levels, from recreational / occasional to full competitive racing at international levels. In the last few years, we've had wins at National Masters and Henley Masters regattas (crews have included some members who only learnt to row in the last 5 years) and have had representatives at the World Masters regatta. We also compete regularly at UK regattas in the summer and head races in the winter.

It is just as important to us to support individuals and crews who prefer to stay on our beautiful stretch of water with regular or occasional sessions, not racing but enjoying the activity, the companionship, the (occasional) tranquility and the (lively) wildlife. It keeps us fit, keeps us healthy and keeps the mind working.

So, whatever your ability level and whatever your ambition from rowing, you'll be assured of a very warm and enthusiastic welcome at Abingdon Rowing Club. The Masters row on Saturday and Sunday mornings through the year and add evening rowing in the summer months.

If you are interested in joining the Masters group, please speak to the Men's Vice-Captain.

## **Recreational**

ARC has a group of recreational rowers who boat as and when they are able to do so during the week, and also at weekends occasionally. This group are mainly made up of experienced rowers/scullers whose busy lives only allow them the occasional outing as and when they can fit it in. This group is not coached, and do not follow a regular training plan, so if you are already a competent rower/sculler and able to boat without coaching/launch supervision, and a gentle paddle up and down the river is more your style, then this is the group for you!

## **Juniors**

The ARC Juniors are a great bunch of girls and boys ranging from 13 to 18 years old from many different schools in and around Abingdon. The Juniors are coached by a team of coaches and volunteer parents who between them have considerable experience in competing as rowers and in coaching Juniors in rowing and in other sports. We row on one of the finest stretches of the River Thames in a good fleet of boats: single sculls, doubles, quads, and fours. The clubhouse includes a well-equipped gym with ergos (indoor rowing machines), a weights area, and floor space for circuit training and body conditioning.

The Juniors train four times a week: Saturdays and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm and Wednesdays and Fridays from 5.30pm to 7pm (winter) or 7.30pm (summer). During the summer most of the outings are water based (weather permitting). During the winter months they do land training in our Wednesday and Friday sessions to continue to build fitness and strength. ARC Juniors learn to be responsible for preparing their boats before

going on the water and for conducting themselves safely and courteously in the gym and on the river.

The Junior Squad aim to compete in national, regional, and local competitions about once a month throughout the year. In the winter months they compete in Head of the River races (timed processional racing), in the summer months they compete in regattas (side by side racing), and all are encouraged to compete.

It's not all about training - we also have regular socials organized by the Juniors themselves and an annual Christmas social. We all get on well with each other and make sure that even though we are training hard, we are also having fun.

If you are interested in joining the Abingdon Junior Squad, then please speak to the Junior Coordinator, Kevin Mentzel, or contact him via the website.

## **Our Facilities and Equipment**

The Abingdon Rowing Club boathouse consists of male and female changing rooms, a gym, club room, and three boat bays. We have a range of sculling and sweep oar boats to suit all sizes and abilities.

The boathouse and fleet of boats is maintained by club members, with the help of a part time boatman for one or two hours a week. This means everyone needs to help look after equipment, facilities and the general running of the club. There is always something that needs doing, be it mowing the lawn, washing up cups, fixing or cleaning boats or mending club equipment.

The running of the club is funded entirely by club membership, racking fees, club head income and grants. Our mission is not to make money, but to improve facilities for our members, and any income received is invested straight back into the club to improve equipment and facilities.

Rowing boats are extremely delicate and expensive - It is important they are handled with the proper care they need. Please take care to clean boats after you have used them, and to carry and store them correctly. All of the boats have been carefully rigged and, other than footplates, shouldn't be changed unless under direction from the club captain or coach. Plastic 'C' clips have been placed on all riggers to allow for heights to be adjusted easily. If you notice any problems with any of the boats, please send an email to [arcboatrepairs@gmail.com](mailto:arcboatrepairs@gmail.com), with a full description of the issue, so that repairs can be arranged.

The club has a number of indoor rowing machines (known as ergs), in our new gym. If you are using the ergs, please wipe them clean with the spray and wipes provided after each use. There is also some special oil available to lubricate the chains occasionally.

The club gym also has a selection of free weights available for use by members. Please think about your own and other people's safety when using this equipment and ensure that all weights are returned to their racks after use.

The club has three launches; Speckled Hen, Peta and Fun Boat. These boats are power boats which are normally used by coaches to accompany crews when on the water. The boats are booked using the booking sheet and can only be used by people who have been trained and assessed as competent to do so. If you would like to be trained to use these boats, have a chat to one of the squad vice captains, who will arrange this for you.

## **Booking Boats**

All of the club boats are listed on a public spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is used to book boats, and also contains information on water safety and river conditions. Reserving boats via the booking sheet ensures that club equipment is utilized as efficiently as possible. There are a couple of rules to remember when using the sheet –

- Please do not book boats more than 7 days in advance, unless booking for a specific event
- if you have booked a boat and you are more than 20 minutes late then your booking becomes null and the boat is then available for others to use
- If you no longer need your boat booking, please cancel it as soon as you know it will no longer be needed, to enable others to use the boat instead
- The spreadsheet clearly shows the suggested average crew weight and the suggested ability level or squad that should use that boat. Please take care to read this before booking boats to make sure you reserve a boat that is best suited to you and your crew.

The link to the boat booking spreadsheet can be found on the links page at the back of this handbook.

## **Abingdon Club Head Race**

One of the biggest events of the year at Abingdon Rowing Club is the annual club head race. Crews from all over the country come to compete at Abingdon. It is one of the biggest sources of income to the club and so it is important that all club members help to make the event run as smoothly as possible. As part of membership to the club, all members are expected to make themselves available for the weekend of the Head which is held in the middle of April. It really is a case of more hands making light work! Please take this event seriously, it is very important the ARC membership all pull together to help ensure the continued success of this essential event to the club.

## **Navigation and Safety**

The Thames at Abingdon is enjoyed by many people. As well as Abingdon Rowing Club, local canoe clubs, sailing clubs and leisure boats also take advantage of this stretch of River. To help make the river a safe place to be, all river users should be aware of the following navigational rules:

- Always boat and land with the bows of the boat pointing upstream

- Boats landing have priority over boats going out on the Landing Stage
- Always keep to the right of the river (So the bank should always be on your left (Unless you are the cox, in which case it should always be on your right))
- Crews being overtaken should maintain course and speed. The overtaking crew is responsible for ensuring it is safe to do so before proceeding.
- Rowing boats must give way to sailing boats
- Powered craft (Including launches and pleasure boats) must give way to rowing boats
- Always ensure the river is clear both ways before spinning, and never spin on a bend
- In high stream, spin by the petrol pumps at the town end of the river, and just past the danger sign at the weir end of the river

A map of the river, showing hazards and turning points, can be found on the next page.

Rowing is an extremely safe sport, but as with all river activities, please remember the following guidelines:

- Always bring a spare change of kit and a towel with you to the club if you are planning a water outing – Although rare, capsizes do happen!
- If there are adverse weather conditions, or high stream, please consider the ability of yourself and/or your crew to deal with the conditions, refer to the competency sheets on the boat booking google site, and heed the advice of the Club Safety Officer on all matters to do with Water Safety.
- All members must be able to swim at least 100 meters in light clothing and complete a capsize course as soon as possible after joining the club. All members wishing to use club boats must attend a capsize drill every two years as a minimum requirement. Capsize drills for Junior members are organized by the Junior Coordinator.

## **Social**

We are a very friendly club, with a busy social calendar, which includes our annual Christmas Party, regular organized “Row to Oxford” outings (Via the Isis pub!), Fun Race Days, Barbecues and Halloween/Fireworks parties. Keep an eye out for emails from the club membership secretary for details of any upcoming social events.

## **Club Kit**

Abingdon Rowing Club has a wide range of club kit, for both racing and training. Bulk club kit orders are generally put in two to three times a year, so that we can make the most of large order discounts and pass these savings on to our members. If you are new to the club and need any racing kit before you have had a chance to order any, then our members are always willing to help out by lending kit, so please do ask if you need something.

If you are racing in a competitive British Rowing event, then there is a requirement for you to wear the Abingdon Rowing Club kit.

In addition to club kit, t-shirts, hoodies, tracksuit bottoms as well as various other ARC items are also available for purchase.

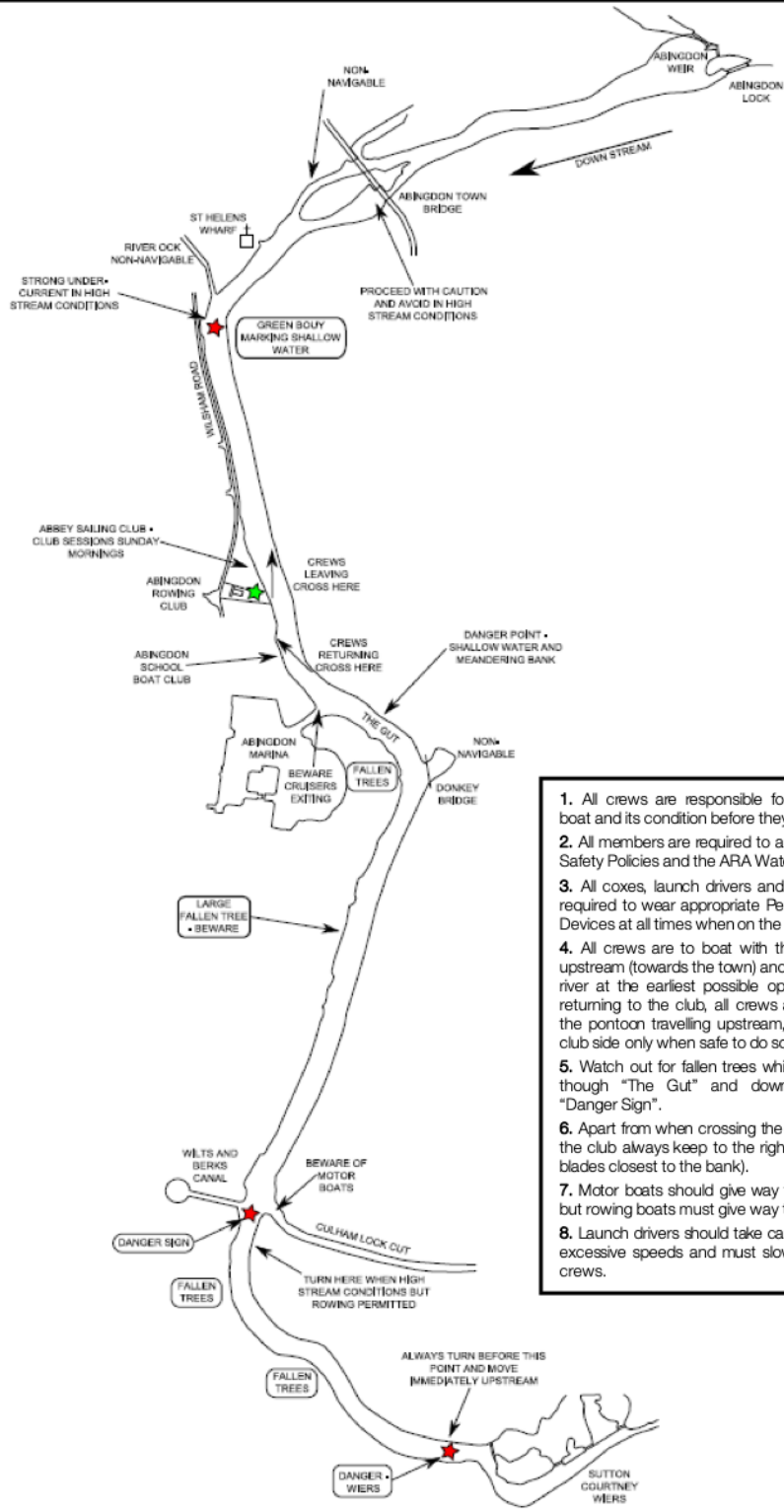


## **Boat Racking**

Members of the club can apply for space to store (rack) their private boats at the club for an annual fee, either inside the boathouse or on the outside racking. There is also space within the far boat-bay for members private blades to be stored. The charging rate for boat storage at the club is dependent upon the boat type (size) and storage location.

On the lawn behind the club, members can also store their kayaks. A fee of £50 per annum is charged for the storage of kayaks.

# Abingdon Rowing Club – River Thames Map



1. All crews are responsible for checking their boat and its condition before they leave.
2. All members are required to abide by the ARC Safety Policies and the ARA Water Safety Guide.
3. All coxes, launch drivers and passengers are required to wear appropriate Personal Flotation Devices at all times when on the water.
4. All crews are to boat with their bows facing upstream (towards the town) and are to cross the river at the earliest possible opportunity. When returning to the club, all crews are to approach the pontoon travelling upstream, crossing to the club side only when safe to do so.
5. Watch out for fallen trees which are common though "The Gut" and downstream of the "Danger Sign".
6. Apart from when crossing the river to, or from, the club always keep to the right (with bow-side blades closest to the bank).
7. Motor boats should give way to rowing boats, but rowing boats must give way to sailing boats.
8. Launch drivers should take care not to drive at excessive speeds and must slow when passing crews.