Up the Creek October 2026

Editorial

Paul Hewson

The main thing to talk about this month is what's not in the newsletter.

Ian Brimacombe ("Brim") led his last paddle. We're not allowed to say how many years of service this involves, as he's worried that some of us are good enough at maths to add that number to a number somewhere over 18 and arrive at a very large number indeed. So we'll simply say: thank you, Brim, for all those years of leading paddles. And leave it at that.

Early October also saw the discovery of a fascinating new meteorological phenomenon. At Creek Towers, we're familiar with the Dart Drip Oscillator: the curious way the weather varies during the week so that, by Sunday, there has been either too little rain to paddle a river, or so much rain that it's unsafe to do so. This year, however, we discovered a new phase in the cycle: too little rain to paddle, but enough rain to trigger emergency sewage dumps all over the place. Nature, it seems, has found a way to make the river unappealing even when there's not enough water in it.

Nevertheless, despite a dry start to the month, it appears that at least one club river paddle has managed to take place. We live in hope.

Elsewhere in this issue, Club Leader Adam Coulson explains in detail how the club intends to respond to Paddle UK's latest policy. It's an important read, and by a happy coincidence, the AGM is coming up on 20 November: an excellent opportunity to discuss what the changes mean for the club and its paddlers.

As ever, members are encouraged to contribute stories for future editions. After all, a newsletter without submissions is a bit like a kayak without a paddle: technically possible, but progress may be somewhat limited.

newsletter@ppca.org.uk.

Just saying

Clive Ashford



Photo: Joy Ashford

My paddling log tells me that on the 12 April 2008 there was a cool force 4 NW wind blowing. My paddling log also tells me that the weather produced a mixture of sunshine and showers, and that some of those showers fell as hail. On that day Terry led the Saturday rec paddle. In these slightly challenging conditions 17 paddlers gathered at Dittisham, and launched into the beautiful Dart Estuary. We paddled to Tuckenhay, had lunch and returned. We then went home as a bunch of tired but happy paddlers. Thank you, Terry.

On Sunday 23 August this year I thought that it would be a good idea to replicate this adventure. The weather forecast was far more favourable than it was in 2008, but I had to cancel the trip due to a lack of interest.

Just saying.

Port of Plymouth Canoe Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Paddles, Plans & the Year Ahead

20 November 2026

19:00

The Westward Inn

Lee Mill

All members welcome

Come along, have your say,
and help shape the season ahead.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Adam Coulson (Club Leader)

In Part 1, we explained how PPCA is preparing for the Paddle UK Standards for Deployment Policy, which are due to become mandatory for affiliated clubs at the start of 2027. This article explains what those changes mean in practice: how leaders will be approved, how group sizes will be managed, what different types of club activity mean, and how insurance and club equipment will apply.

Leader ratios and approved helpers

To meet the Standards for Deployment Policy, PPCA now has a new approval system for leaders, including coaches. Leaders will need to meet several requirements, some already familiar and some new. As a result, the club will also need to update many of its current rules, protocols and risk assessments. One key change is that every trip or activity must have a defined maximum ratio of paddlers to leader. Current registration sheets can accommodate more than 20 names, but from next year many activities will need lower limits. For most sea trips, the maximum will normally be 10 paddlers per leader, or 12 if the leader has an approved helper. PPCA's approved helpers are experienced and capable paddlers who can support leaders; the list is split between sea and white-water activity.

The following table gives the proposed maximum numbers for different types of activity.

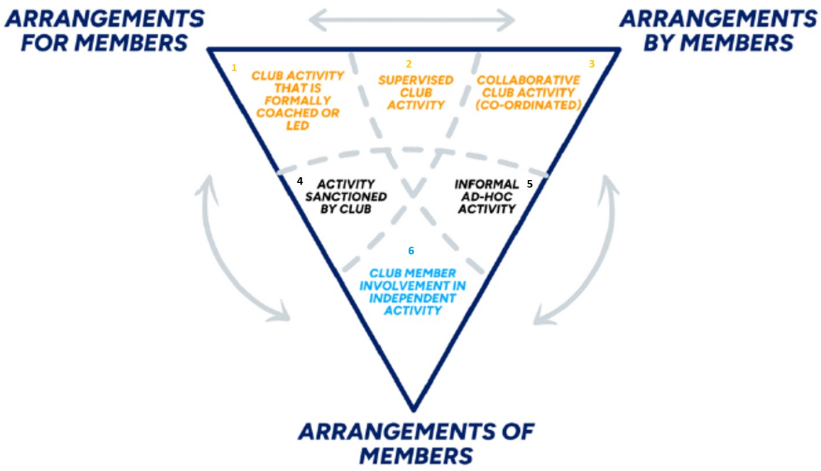
Activity	Maximum without helper	Maximum with helper / helper requirement
Intro Course	10 candidates	2 required
Intro Plus	As above OR coached	
Coached	6	10 with helper
All Rec Paddles	10	12 with helper
Mod WW	8	12 with helper
Adv WW	4	6 with helper

How leaders will decide numbers on the day

These figures are maximum numbers, not automatic entitlements. The leader will decide the actual number on the day using their professional judgement and taking account of the weather, sea conditions, river level, paddlers' experience and ability, and any other relevant safety factors. This may mean that fewer places are available than the maximum shown above. A leader may also decide that a particular trip is not suitable for an individual paddler on that day; where possible, alternatives may be offered.

Types of club activity

At this point, another Paddle UK publication is relevant: Understanding Your Club's Activity. That document includes a helpful diagram, reproduced below:



In summary, the activity categories are:

1. Formally coached or led activity covers most of what PPCA currently does. Each event is organised and led by a decision-making leader or coach.

2. Supervised club activity involves approved supervisors organising an activity for approved paddlers. Supervisors do not have to be leaders. There is no PPCA activity planned within this category at present.

3. Collaborative club activity is where suitably experienced paddlers take part together and share responsibility for the safety and well-being of the group, with no overall leader. This category would apply only to allow an additional "overflow" group to paddle concurrently with a rec paddle where agreed by the rec paddle leader.

4. Activity sanctioned by the club is where the club organises coaching or a trip with an external qualified professional coach or leader with their own insurance.

5. Informal ad-hoc activity is where a member suggests an independent activity that may be suitable for some other club members. In such activity there is no leader and each paddler takes responsibility for the safety of the group.

6. Club member involvement in independent activity has nothing to do with the club.

Insurance, equipment and practical implications

Anyone under the age of 18 must be led. For a fuller explanation of the categories, please read the Paddle UK document. I have deliberately not used the term "peer paddle" because it is not defined and means different things to different people. Only the top row of the Paddle UK model — categories 1, 2 and 3 — is covered by club insurance. PPCA will write protocols for categories 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Collaborative paddles will only be approved by the club-approved leader on the day and will run alongside a led paddle. This may help where there are too many paddlers for one led group, even with a helper. In that situation, club equipment will be available. Members may advertise informal ad-hoc activity using club resources such as Facebook or the forum, but club equipment will not be available and the activity will not be covered by club insurance. For example, a member might practise rolling off Mountbatten for an hour one evening and invite other club members to join them independently.

What happens next

Thank you for reading this update. The changes are detailed, and some of the new systems may need fine-tuning as we put them into practice. The aim is to keep PPCA activity safe, clear and compliant while continuing to support as much paddling as possible. If you have questions, please speak to a member of the PPCA Committee or one of the club's leaders.

Adam (leader@ppca.org.uk)

Creek Chronicle

Bash script

In the absence of the usual human oversight (the human being somewhere in Africa looking at considerably more interesting things), this chronicle has been produced automatically from the club calendar. Any errors will therefore be attributable to one of two highly reliable sources: the calendar or the script. Please direct complaints to whichever is least likely to answer.

Wet Training Events



- Tuesday 2nd September: Terry took the skills group on Tuesday.
- Saturday 6th September: The intro course was lead by Andy



- Tuesday 9th September: Intro to sea kayak Terry took the skills group on Tuesday.



- Tuesday 16th September: Tuesday's skills group was lead by NA

Wet Recreational Events



- Tuesday 2nd September: Tuesday's paddle was led by Clive.
- Tuesday 2nd September: Tuesday's paddle was led by Andy.
- Friday 5th September: Paddle leader for Friday was Brim.
- ~~Saturday 6th September~~: Cancelled
- ~~Saturday 6th September~~: Cancelled



- ~~Tuesday 9th September~~: Cancelled
- Tuesday 9th September: Tuesday's paddle was led by Andy.
- ~~Friday 12th September~~: Cancelled
- ~~Saturday 13th September~~: Cancelled



- Tuesday 16th September: Paddle leader for Tuesday was Nigel.
- Tuesday 16th September: Clive took a happy group out on Tuesday.
- Friday 19th September: Thanks to Brim for leading the paddle on Friday.
- Saturday 20th September: Saturday's paddle was led by Andy.



- Tuesday 23rd September: Adam ran the Tuesday paddle.

- Tuesday 23rd September: Big thanks to Pete for taking the lead on Tuesday.
- Saturday 27th September: Big thanks to Clive for taking the lead on Saturday.

Dry Events

- Wednesday 10th September: Committee Meeting

The PPCA Committee

PPCA is a friendly Club, and we'd love to hear from you! The Club is run by a committee of unpaid volunteers, most of which work full-time. Contact details are listed below. For non-urgent enquiries, please email the person you require rather than telephoning.

If you are new to paddlesport or thinking of taking it up then please contact our Intro Coordinator who can point you in the right direction. Our Intro Coordinator can also answer any questions you may have about our Club, courses on offer etc, drop them an email at intro@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Chair	Mark Perry	chair@ppca.org.uk
Vice-Chair	Anita Maidment	vchair@ppca.org.uk
Club Leader	Adam Coulson	leader@ppca.org.uk
Assistant Club Leader	Vacant	acleader@ppca.org.uk
Club Secretary	Jackie Perry	secretary@ppca.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Helga Pinn	membership@ppca.org.uk
Welfare Officer	Alan Ede	welfare@ppca.org.uk
Intro Course Coordinator	Lesley Hitchen	intro@ppca.org.uk
Treasurer	Julian Miles	treasurer@ppca.org.uk
Equipment Officer	Pete Anderson	equipment@ppca.org.uk
Publicity Officer	Sarah Carlson	publicity@ppca.org.uk
Youth Development Officer	Jane Hitchings	youth@ppca.org.uk
Health and Safety Officer	Damean Miller	safety@ppca.org.uk
Club President	Clive Ashford	president@ppca.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who contributed material, especially the material we just stole from Facebook.
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