The Return to Paddling for Minima Yacht Club Members – 12 May 2020

# Minima remains closed

This stage of the return to paddling only allows households to paddle together or for up to 2 paddlers who are not from the same household to paddle together. The club house is closed and there is no group paddling or club activity at this time. We will share further information as it becomes available.

These notes are to assist any Minima member who wishes to paddle independently and are based on the guidance published today at <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2020/a-return-to-paddling-in-england/>.

# Paddling only with household members or up to one other person

Paddling can take place with others from the same household, or providing you practice social distancing with no more than one other person from outside of the household.

# Social distancing

Paddlers must practice social distancing at all times and maintain a distance apart of at least 2 metres. People from different households should not travel in the same car. Paddlers should aim to avoid busy areas and take great care to maintain social distancing at access and egress points. As you will be paddling well within your capabilities (see point 7 below) the possibility of a capsize is remote but in the event that an assisted recovery is required then unless there is danger of hypothermia the most suitable method is likely to be a tow to the bank.

Anyone intending to start and/or finish their paddling on Barge Walk should coordinate this within the Minima Kayak Group to ensure that groups are not in the boat park or on the landing stage at the same time, and start and finish times should be adhered to. If you arrive at the boat park or landing stage and find that another group is there you must wait well away until it is clear.

To be clear, there is no access to the club house or launches at present and you should arrive at Barge Walk changed and ready to paddle. No toilet facilities are available.

# Club equipment

We appreciate that many members do not own all their own equipment. For hygiene reasons the personal floatation devices (buoyancy aids), spraydecks and waterproofs owned by the Club are not currently available for use. In addition, our club boats are only licensed for use on the Thames and insured for use in an activity organised by the Club and so are also not available for use. We hope that those of you who rely on Club equipment for your participation will be able to return to the water as soon as possible, but regret that this is unlikely to be before June at the earliest.

# British Canoeing membership and Environment Agency

Paddlers are reminded that an Environment Agency licence is required to paddle on the Thames and other licensed waterways. Members are only covered by Minima’s license and insurance when taking part in organised club activities and there are no club activities at this time.

If paddlers want to ensure they are insured and licensed they can take out full British Canoeing membership here: https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/membership/join-us-online-here.

# Travel

These notes only apply to those living and planning to paddle locally. For more general guidance refer to British Canoeing.

# Safety and paddling well within capabilities

You are responsible for ensuring that you are competent and experienced to undertake the activity you plan to undertake. Paddlers are reminded that they are entirely responsible for their own safety at all times and that currently the resources of the waterways authorities and the emergency services are very limited. Paddlers should take care to make responsible decisions, paddle in familiar locations, and favourable conditions.

# Activity must respect local restrictions

We are currently awaiting confirmation from the Environment Agency the position at Teddington Lock. Until this is clear we recommend that Minima paddlers stay between Hampton Court Bridge and The Boaters, and in any event keeping within an area they know well.

All paddlers should be particularly mindful of social distancing with other waterway users and especially those who are living aboard their boats and who may be vulnerable or self-isolating.

# Sensitivity to the environment

A prolonged cessation in boating activity on all waterways has allowed nature to reclaim habitats. Paddlers must take care to avoid the disturbance of nesting birds and other wildlife that may have returned to the water and are reminded that it is an offence to disturb rare birds when they are nesting.

# Respect other users

Paddlers should be aware and respect that other water users such as anglers may also be returning to the water after a prolonged spell away and should actively demonstrate a willingness to share the space

# Green and Clean

It is more critical than ever for paddlers to thoroughly wash their hands and equipment before and after activity. Paddlers should make every effort to avoid the ingestion of water, so as to minimise the potential for water borne illness from such as Weils Disease and from undetected pollution incidents. This behaviour is also encouraged to help to stop the spread of invasive non-native species – <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>.

**Minima Yacht Club**12 May 2020