Worcester Rowing Club Safety Plan

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Introduction

Worcester Rowing Club (WRC) is committed to the safety of its members and guests. Safety should always be the number one priority for everyone whilst engaging in activities around the boathouse, rowing or travelling with the club to/from events.

The aim of this plan is to ensure care for the club members, other water users and the public at large by identifying potential risks and to ensure plans are in place to limit those risks.

Responsibilities

All members are personally responsible for and have a duty of care to ensure that their actions, both on and off the water, are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the safety of themselves or others.

All members are expected to comply with the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide, this Safety Plan and any other instructions issued by the Club, in respect of safety.

The complete British Rowing RowSafe guide can be found here:

http://www.britishrowing.org/upload/files/RowSafe/Complete-v1.pdf

All members are expected to clear the landing stage of silt following the river being in flood and ensure launches are moored back up correctly, no members are permitted to row until this is done.

River Safety

All members should familiarise themselves with the maps extracted from safety on severn document which we as a club have agreed to abiding by (appendix B) this highlights the stretch of river we row on as well as the circulation pattern for al river users and advises on the hazards to watch out for when rowing.

The local navigation rules apply, so all boats should **proceed down the right** side of the river (left for non-coxswain) in the direction of travel. No one boat has the right of way, so be aware and be prepared to give way or stop suddenly. If you see an oncoming boat straying into your path – shout out to make them aware.

It is recommended not to row alone - always have a rowing buddy with you.

Never stop on a bend or busy parts of the river.

Always make sure it is safe to turn and then do so as quickly as possible.

Rowing and Sculling at Night

In accordance with the EA rules and the club “red book”, all rowing/sculling boats must show lights after sunset and before sunrise as well as high visibility jackets/ vests to be worn by bowmen. A white light, mounted on the bow rigger/Backstay and a red light to the stern rigger / front stay must be shown. LED lights are permitted. Flashing lights should not to be used as main lights.

Rowing at night whilst the river is above the concrete apron or in “flood conditions” is strictly forbidden.

In the dark mornings of the winter period, crews should wait until the streetlights have been turned off for sufficient light to enable steersman to see and or be seen.

Coxswains and Steersman

In all coxed boats, the coxswain is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and crew.

In coxless boats, the person occupying the bow seat or the person controlling the rudder (when fitted) is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and the crew.

The only exception to the above being when the coxswain, or the steersman, is a beginner, in which case responsibility will be transferred to the coach or to the person providing the direct instruction and supervision.

Coaches

All coaches are to be British Rowing qualified with Instructor Award (IA), UKCC Level 2, or deemed suitable to coach by Worcester Rowing Club Management Committee as the minimum standard.

All Coaches/ WRC Approved Adult helpers of Junior Athletes hold a current up to date DBS Check and conform with the clubs safeguarding policy.

Coaches should be aware that: -

- Crews are aware of the appropriate safety procedures outlined by RowSafe and this document.
- Crews are using safe and not damaged/ broken rowing /sculling equipment.
- Outings are conducted appropriate to the prevailing weather and water conditions. Colder conditions and river heights need more consideration if Go Row athletes are planning outings.
- Consideration is shown to other water users i.e launch wash and stopping positions.
- Particular attention is paid to the coaching of coxes as their competence is essential to water safety as well as the crew's success.
- When coaching from the bank a throw line and megaphone is taken when appropriate.
- The advisory coach/athlete ratio for **Junior** athletes should be one coach/ WRC approved adult helper to no more than 15 junior athletes. Furthermore, on the water each coach/ WRC approved adult helper should only look after a maximum of 4 boats, which should not contain more than 15 junior athletes e.g. 3 coxed quads or 2 coxed quads and 2 doubles, 4 singles etc.

Junior athletes under the age of 18 are not allowed on the water unless under supervision or special permission from the captain.

Safety Equipment

WRC provides the following safety equipment: -

Life Jackets / Buoyancy Aids: -

- The wearing of a lifejacket or buoyancy aid is **compulsory for all coxswains**. Manual inflating jackets **must only** be used by coxswains using front loading/bow coxed boats.
- The wearing of a lifejacket or buoyancy aid is **compulsory for all drivers and passengers** of the launches.
- Where participants are not members and so have not declared they can swim to the sufficient standard on their membership forms when joining the club, lifejackets/buoyancy aids should be offered.
- The life jackets are stored on hooks on the left-hand side of the boathouse as you enter through the left-hand door.

Throw Lines (bags): -

Any person providing coaching or safety cover from the bank **should carry a throw line**. The throw lines are stored on hooks on the left-hand side of the boathouse as you enter through the left-hand door. There is also a throwline in each of the coaching launches.

A really good demonstration on deploying, re-packing (very important to do this correctly) and other info can be found here: -

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zJOL40GOtc

Thermal Exposure Blankets: -

Any person providing coaching or safety cover from the bank should carry sufficient thermal exposure blankets. The thermal exposure blankets are stored in both junior and main boathouses with the first aid box and on launches.

First Aid Boxes

First Aid boxes are located in both the junior and main boat house next to the shutter doors on the ground floor as well as the kitchen and lobby on the first floor in the clubhouse.

River Conditions

As per the rules / guidance in the red book the captain will have the final say on whether rowing/sculling on the river is permitted during flood conditions or high raised river levels.

Under no circumstances should any boat/ crew or member row over the camp or Diglis weirs.

No Junior rowers under 15 years of age or over 60 years of age are permitted to row on a rising flood stream whilst the river is above the largest lower concrete step adjacent to boathouse.

Only coxed fours, coxless fours with experienced steersmen deemed capable by the captain and eights (excluding juniors under 15 years of age and novice/ Go row) shall row on the river when above the second large step adjacent to the boathouse.

Fishermen fish along the river at all times of year. Be aware of any lines out in the river and try to steer around them if it is safe to do so otherwise stop and wait. Do not enter into any dialogue with angry fishermen. Report any issues encountered to the Club Captain.

Some swans can be very aggressive during nesting and when the young are on the river. Try to steer around aggressive swans if it is safe to do so. Report any incidents to the Club Captain, so other river users can be made aware.

Weather

All members should be aware of the local weather forecast when planning outings, particularly when thunderstorms have been predicted.

Thunder

If **thunder** is heard and/or lightning observed before the outing has commenced, individuals and crews must remain at the club.

Rowers already out on the water, coaches/helpers on the bank or coaches planning on putting crews out should use the **'30 - 30 Rule'**. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear the thunder.

- If it is 30 seconds (approx. 10 km away) or less, seek 'proper shelter' – see below.
- If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule for it being time to seek 'proper shelter' – see below.
- Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

On average a typical storm moves at about 40 km/h giving approx. 15 minutes to seek 'proper shelter'. This is a long enough time for any crew to get from the furthest part of our river back to the boathouse.

Proper shelter for us means back at the boathouse

Proper shelter **IS NOT: -**

- Open spaces - field, lake or river.
- Underneath any of the bridges.
- Underneath canopies, small rain shelters, trees, umbrellas, tents & marquees.
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in an area.
- Near metal or carbon objects - riggers, boats, blades, trailers, launches, etc.
- Using electrical appliances or plumbing such as water taps, sinks etc.

Fog

Fog can sit over the river at certain times of the year. **When these conditions exist, only crews supervised buy a coach on a launch should go out until the fog has lifted** however this should be determined by the coach and the safety officer. **Visibility needs to be at least 100m,** you should be able to stand by the ramp at the end of boathouse and clearly be able to see the grantee of Sabrina bridge, **high visibility clothing for bowmen and coxes as well as lights need to be used.**

Equipment

Prior to use, **all equipment** is to be checked to ensure that it is serviceable and appropriate for the purpose for which it is intended. Do not use a boat that is marked as not for use on the damaged board or has a tag on it, consult the boatman if it not clear what the problem is. If a boat is not fit for use after an outing, register the issue on the damage board located to the right-hand side of the boathouse doors.

Always ensure that hatches are fitted and sealed properly before an outing. The boat will not be buoyant if they are missing. This means the boat could sink if it was to capsize.

Fig 1: Fitting buoyancy hatch.

In the unlikely event of your boat capsizing NEVER leave the boat – use it as your buoyancy and wait for help to arrive. If passing crews see a capsize it is their responsibility to contact the nearest coaching launch or persons at club for assistance in rescue.

Always remove hatches after an outing when the boat is placed on the rack. This allows any moisture to dry out when the boat is on the rack, on Filippi's and Empacher these have clips to keep hatches in place all other hatches should have string, if not please inform the boatman.

Always check the bow ball before an outing. Never use a boat that has a missing or damaged bow ball.

- Bowballs must fit properly - the round part of the bow-ball should fit snugly against the sharp end of the bows (or it will deflect too easily)
- It must be securely fitted - preferably glued and screwed, not just taped (be careful that the fixing screws or bolts do not protrude excessively though
- It must not be cracked, torn or perished.

Fig 2: Checking the bow ball is secure.

Remember to check before every outing

- Visual check - looking for obvious cracks or tears; be suspicious if there are layers and layers of tape,
- Test the bow ball to ensure its firmly attached,
- With the heel of your hand, apply firm sideways pressure to the bow ball to ensure it doesn't deflect excessively.

Always check the shoes and heel restraints, these should not raise more than 7cm as per British Rowing Rules of Racing 2018. Never use a boat that has faulty heel restraints.

Fig 3: Checking that the heal restraints are connected.

Always check the boat over for any damage e.g. the shell for holes, make sure the fin is not bent. Never use a boat that shows any signs of damage.

Report any damage you find in the launch booking out book that is located by the front roller doors at the main boathouse as well as squad captain and coach who intern will need to inform captain and boatman. Do NOT borrow parts from one boat to repair another. If the boat is not marked as not for use

Launches

Launches are to be used **only** by drivers with a minimum RYA Level 2 Powerboat certificate or WRC approved qualification. The Safety Adviser maintains the list of current approved drivers. **All drivers are to wear a lifejacket and have the kill cord connected at all times.** The driver is responsible for ensuring that the launch rescue kit has the required items and that a paddle and ring are present. Any items used or missing are to be notified to the Safety Adviser as soon as possible.

Launches are to be logged in and out so that their usage can be monitored and enable regular servicing but also to help identify who is using if an incident occurs. This log book is located by the roller shutter doors of the main boathouse

All launch drivers are to ensure that the launches are handled with consideration to other river users and in accordance with the British Rowing RowSafe Guide and the Environment Agency Regulations.

All launch drivers to carry a mobile phone.

Incident Reporting

All members are responsible for reporting all accidents, incidents and near incidents that they have knowledge of or witness within 24 hours of the event, via the British Rowing online incident reporting system to satisfy the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide.

A link to the incident reporting system can be found here: -

http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/?q=incidentreporting

In addition to the online system, members are to bring the incident to the attention of the Water Safety Advisor, their coach or squad/club captain.

All accidents and incidents will be reviewed by the Water Safety Adviser, and these will be discussed at committee level, along with any additional control measures that are deemed necessary to avoid any future repetition.

Emergency Services are to be contacted by the best means possible as appropriate to any accident or emergency situation.

Off Water Safety

Boat care and handling

Rowing boats are delicate pieces of equipment and must be treated as such.

When lifting a boat that is upside down e.g. Off a rack, always hold the sax boards. Never use the riggers or any other part of the boat.

Fig 4: Lifting a boat using the sax board.

When lifting a boat that is the right way up e.g. Off the water, always hold an internal structural part of the boat with one hand and support the shell of the boat with the other. Never hold the seat, seat rails or any other part of the boat.

Fig 5: Lifting the boat using a structural component

When carrying the boat watch the riggers. Be aware of where the bow and stern are too, especially when turning.

When carrying the boat down or up the steps to/from the stage, make sure the boat is parallel to the steps and that you take steps in time with each other.

Be aware of slippery conditions on the steps, ramp and stage, particularly in winter when they can be icy. A bag of sand/ballast is available in the boat house (on the left-hand side of the boathouse as you enter through the left-hand door) for use in such conditions

Never drop or throw anything into a boat e.g. drinks bottle. This could easily punch a hole into the shell.

When getting into or out of a boat, always stand on the part designed to be stood on (structural). Never stand on the shell of the boat as you are likely to damage it.

Fig 6: Getting into the boat

Never leave a boat that is on the water at the stage unattended as it could be easily carried away by the river's current.

Always ensure that if the boat is placed on trestles/slings, it is placed correctly.

Be aware that in windy conditions, boats can get blown off trestles/slings – so make sure that they are secured.

Gym

All members are responsible for keeping the gym clean and tidy. After use, every member is responsible for returning all equipment that they have used to its proper location and for cleaning down all items of the equipment that they have used.

All members shall be deemed responsible for their own safety whilst using any of the Club's gym equipment. Should any member have any doubt concerning how to use any item of equipment, or correct technique, they should seek guidance from the Captain or a coach.

Junior members are **NOT permitted** to use any of the gym equipment (rowing machines, weights machines or free weights) unless accompanied by **a qualified coach or supervised by a person deemed responsible by the committee.**

The use of any gym equipment by social members and by guests is prohibited.

Boat Transportation

Drivers

Only individuals authorised by the Club are to drive and tow the trailer. All drivers are to be conversant with the British Rowing code for the Towing of Boat Trailers, a copy of which can be found here: -

http://www.britishrowing.org/sites/default/files/rowsafe/2-5-Transport%26Trailers-v1.pdf

Boat Loading

When boats are being taken to events on the trailer, the Captain/ Entries Secretary will detail the trailer loading plan and communicate that to the participants via social media and or email. Loading is to be strictly in accordance with this plan and the driver is to check compliance with the plan prior to departure. The driver is to ensure that all boats and equipment are safely secured prior to departure and that the necessary requirements for front/rear projections and lighting are observed.

Appendix A: Emergency Action Plan

In The Event of A Serious Incident

- IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, INCLUDING A CREW MEMBER BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY ILL OR BECOMING UNRESPONSIVE, IMMEDIATELY: -
  o Use a mobile phone to dial 999 for emergency assistance.
  o Raise the alarm with a launch or with other boats if available.

Capsize

The following guidelines should be followed if a capsize occurs: -

- If out of your depth and unable to wade ashore, **stay with the boat** and use it to keep you afloat.
- If the water is cold, get as much of your body out of the water as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull and try to attract attention immediately.
- If you have to stay in the water, retain warmth by keeping arms and knees tucked into the body.
- Stay calm and breathe deeply.
- Other boats in the vicinity should fetch help or a launch if one is available. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM ANOTHER ROWING SCULL - you are likely to capsize too, putting more people in the water with no one to get help.

Cold Water Immersion

Cold water immersion is the result of entering cold water from a capsize or fall from the bank etc. It should not be underestimated – **IT CAN KILL** as breathing and circulation are immediately affected before hypothermia sets in. The effects of the cold water mean that even healthy individuals, who are good swimmers, can still drown within a short period of time, often only a few feet from the bank.

Any of the following may occur after immersion: -

- Cold shock response (the effects of this will pass, so stay calm!!).
- Dry drowning. Cold incapacitation and swim failure.
- Circum-rescue collapse after immersion.

Adopt the “1 minute, 1 degree rule” so you know and can plan a rescue time. **Our river averages around 4°C through winter**, which means you have 4 minutes of useful time to get out of the water.

Hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia depend on how cold the environment is and how long you are exposed for. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital. Shivering is a good guide to how severe the condition is. If the person can stop shivering on their own, the hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

Although hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C, mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures.

Treating hypothermia

As hypothermia can be a life-threatening condition, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Hypothermia is treated by preventing further heat being lost and by gently warming the patient.

If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia, or waiting for medical treatment to arrive, follow the advice below to prevent further loss of heat.

Things to do for hypothermia: -

- Move the person indoors, or somewhere warm, as soon as possible.

- Once sheltered, gently remove any wet clothing and dry the person.
- Wrap them in blankets, towels, coats (whatever you have), protecting the head and torso first.
- Your own body heat can help someone with hypothermia. Hug them gently.
- Increase activity if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, as that cools the skin down again.
- If possible, give the person warm drinks (but not alcohol) or high energy foods, such as chocolate, to help warm them up.
- Once body temperature has increased, keep the person warm and dry.

It is important to handle anyone that has hypothermia very gently and carefully.

Things you should ***NOT*** do: -

- Don't warm up an elderly person using a bath, as this may send cold blood from the body's surfaces to the heart or brain too suddenly, causing a stroke or heart attack.
- Don't apply direct heat (hot water or a heating pad, for example) to the arms and legs, as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse
- Don't give the person alcohol to drink, as this will decrease the body's ability to retain heat.
- Don't rub or massage the person's skin, as this can cause the blood vessels to widen and decrease the body's ability to retain heat. In severe cases of hypothermia there is also a risk of heart attack.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do not go out alone in cold (hypothermia is deadly quick at lower temperatures) or poor conditions – always have a rowing buddy.
- Spin after the last rower has gone past so you're always in the sight of someone else.
- No rowing in the dark without supervision.
- Carry a mobile phone in a tethered waterproof bag/container.

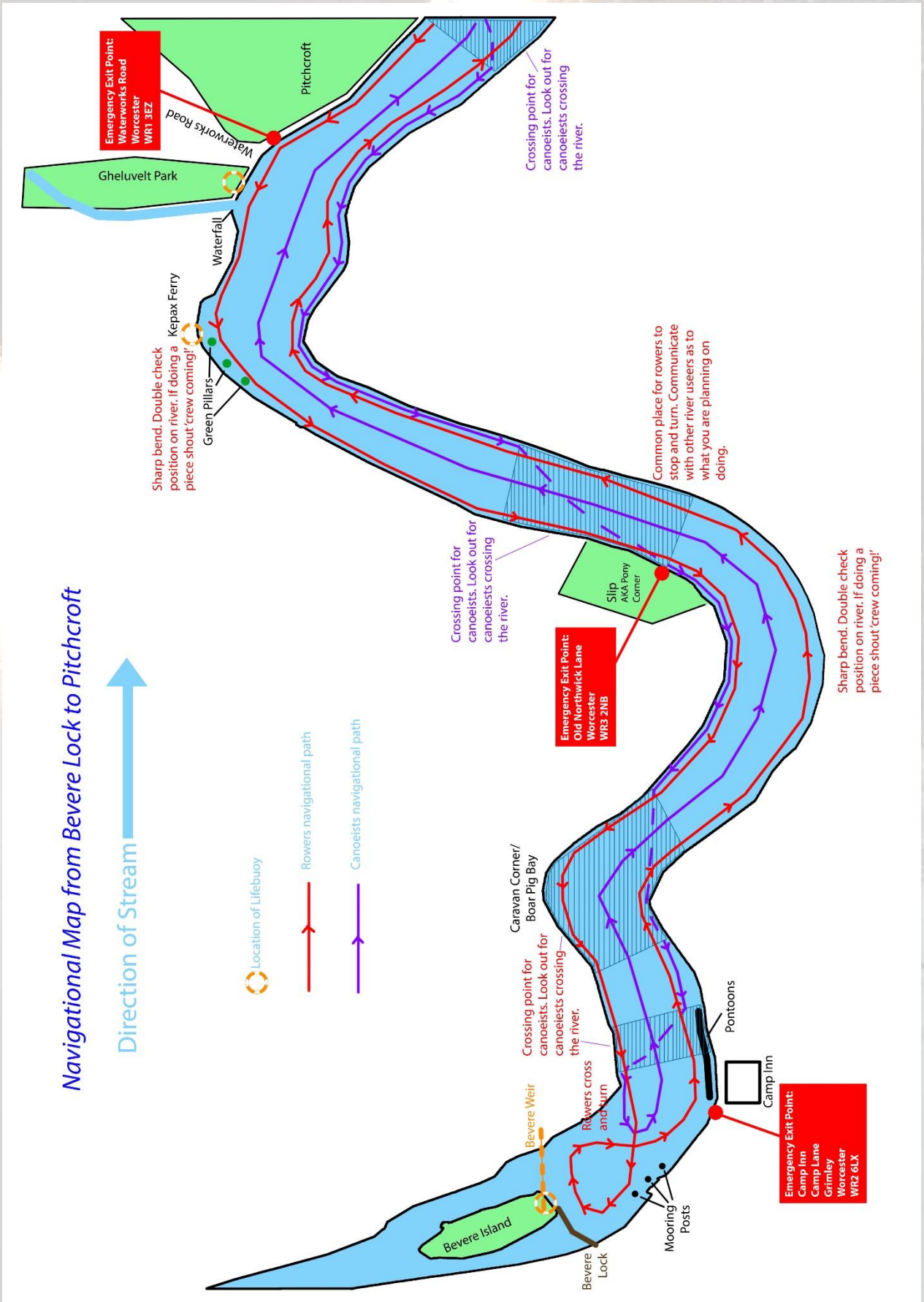
Unsupervised rowers should plan their rescue before going afloat and be confident it will work. Other considerations include: -

- Do you need to wear a life jacket?
- How are you going to summon help?

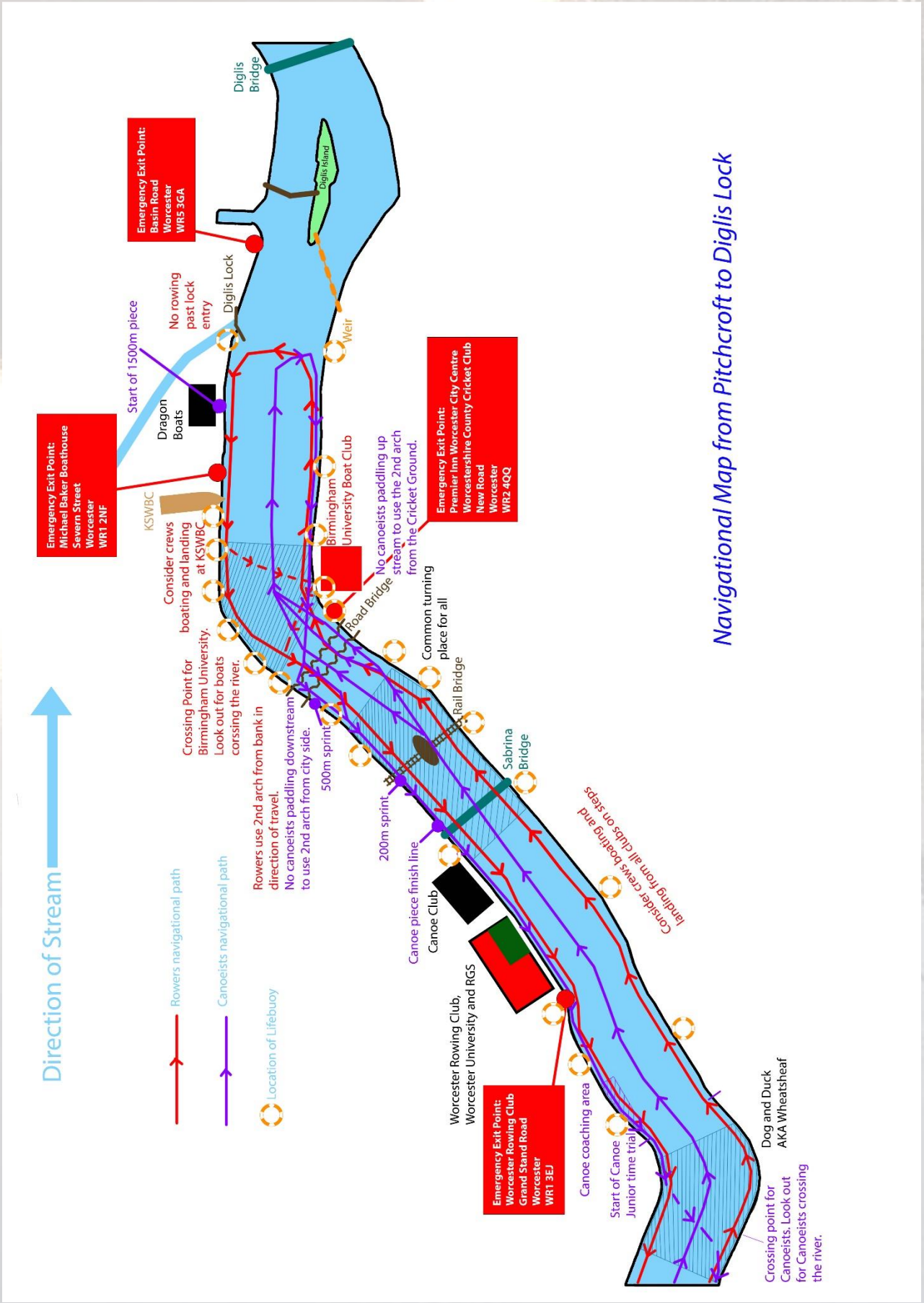
Contact/Telephone Numbers

All crews are advised to ensure they carry a mobile phone when alone on the water.
In an emergency, call 999.
Worcester Royal Hospital has A&E facilities and is 3.8 minutes away: -
Worcester Royal Hospital,
Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester
WR5 1DD

Appendix B: Map of River Camp to Waterfall



Appendix C: Map of river Dog and Duck to Diglis



Appendix D: Safety on the Severn Document