

OPEN CANOE SAILING GROUP CONSTITUTION (21 March 2026)

1. **Name.**

The name of the Group shall be the 'Open Canoe Sailing Group', which may be abbreviated as OCSG.

2. **Aims.**

The aims of the Group shall be:

- a. To raise and maintain a high standard of canoe sailing.
- b. To develop both competitive and non-competitive canoe sailing.
- c. To help and give advice to members and non-members and other organisations.
- d. To promote the sport of canoe sailing.

3. **Membership.**

The OCSG is committed to ensuring equity in all aspects of its activity. Membership shall be open to all persons aged 18 years or over, on payment of appropriate fees and after approval of the Committee (which power they may delegate).

All members will be subject to this Constitution and are assumed to have read and understood the Group's policies as published on the OCSG website, including the [OCSG Safety Policy and Participation Statement](#), and to have accepted the hazards and risks inherent in canoe sailing.

The membership year shall start on March 1st, except that memberships paid after the end of the financial year on November 30th shall not confer voting rights until the following year.

A membership may only be terminated by resignation in writing, non-payment of fees for a period exceeding 3 months, or by decision of a General Meeting.

The list of members shall be the property of the Membership Secretary and members shall inform the Membership Secretary when their contact details change.

Application for membership implies acceptance that personal records may be stored on a computer and members are assumed to accept that contact details may be shared with other members to further the aims of the Group.

4. **Fees.**

A single membership fee shall be paid annually for each individual adult, except for Honorary members who may be elected only by a General Meeting of the Group.

Membership and other fees shall be decided at the Annual General Meeting of the Group.

5. Financial Year.

The financial year shall end on November 30th. Accounts shall be circulated to all members and presented and approved at the Annual General Meeting.

6. Officers and Committee.

The Officers of the Group are:

- a. The Commodore.
- b. The Chair.
- c. The Treasurer.
- d. The Secretary.
- e. The Membership Secretary.

The Committee shall consist of the Officers ex officio, and at least two other members of the Group. The main duties of each Committee member are summarised at Annex A.

Members of the Committee shall be entitled to be indemnified by the Group out of OCSG funds in the event of any legal or monetary claim made against them by third parties in connection with the proper discharge of their duties.

Members of the Committee who incur reasonable costs in the course their duties may reclaim that cost from Group funds with agreement from both the Chair and Treasurer (or Secretary if the claimant is either the Chair or Treasurer).

7. Election of members.

Officers and other Committee members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, shall be members at the time of the election, and shall serve until the following AGM unless they resign or are suspended or replaced at a General Meeting of the Group.

Members standing for election as Officers or Committee members shall declare whether they have any financial interest in the sport of canoe sailing prior to the election.

8. Co-opted individuals.

The Committee may co-opt individuals for such tasks as organising meets and issuing sail numbers. Where these individuals are not Committee members, the Committee remains responsible for actions taken.

The Committee may form sub-committees for specific purposes. Sub-committees may consist of Committee members and co-opted individuals. Sub-committees operate under the overall responsibility of the Group Chair and will be declared to, and may report directly to, the membership at General Meetings of the Group.

9. Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting shall be held within 11 months of the end of the financial accounting year, at some time and venue convenient to the majority of the members.

The business of the AGM shall be:

- a. To receive the reports of the Officers and Verifier.
- b. To approve the accounts.
- c. To set membership fees for the forthcoming year.
- d. To elect Officers and Committee members.
- e. To appoint a Verifier (who shall not be a Committee member, and whose function shall be to scrutinise the financial dealings of the Group, verify them and report to members).
- f. Any Other Business defined in the Final Agenda.

10. Extraordinary General Meeting.

An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called by the Committee at some time and venue convenient to the majority of members within two months of the delivery to the secretary of either:

- a. A request signed by at least six members of the Group, or;
- b. A request signed by the Verifier, where there is concern regarding financial matters.

The business of this meeting shall be defined in the Agenda of the meeting and shall include that stated in the request. Proxy voting may be permitted for specific motions at Extraordinary General Meetings, at the discretion of the Committee.

11. Notice of General Meetings.

The time, venue and Provisional Agenda of the Annual General Meeting shall be notified by email to members at least 4 weeks prior to the AGM. The Final Agenda of the meeting will be notified by email to members at least 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.

The time, venue and Final Agenda of an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be notified by email to members at least 21 days prior to the meeting.

12. Conduct of General Meetings.

All Group members shall be eligible to take part in General Meetings.

At a General Meeting the quorum shall be 12 members or 10% of the membership, whichever is greater.

Some decisions (as defined in this Constitution) can only be made at a General Meeting.

At General Meetings, on request by any two members, a ballot shall be taken on any proposal, for which each member shall have one vote (proxy voting shall not be allowed, save as specified for Extraordinary General Meetings).

13. Governance.

The Open Canoe Sailing Group is run by the members, who delegate their authority to the Committee which they elect at the AGM.

Decisions made by the Committee must be supported by a majority of all Committee members.

The Chair will establish a majority at a Committee Meeting, or by other means such as electronic mail or by telephone.

At the request of any two members, an open meeting to advise the Committee will be held at a Group sailing meeting. All members shall be able to take part in such a meeting, but only the Committee are able to vote on a proposal. Decisions made by the Committee as a result of these open meetings will be reported to members by email.

Committee and General meetings may take place in person or online. All forms of meeting will normally be run by the Chair or their nominee, or failing that by another Committee member.

14. Constitutional Changes.

Changes to the Group's Constitution shall only be made at General Meetings by a 2:1 majority in a ballot of those members represented, excepting that changes to the roles and responsibilities of Committee members (Annex A) may be made at the discretion of the Committee with changes communicated to Members at the next General Meeting.

15. Dissolution of the Group and limit of liability.

The Group may only dissolve at a General Meeting by a 3:1 majority in a ballot of those members represented.

In the event of dissolution of the Group, the net assets of the Group shall be shared evenly between the current members or donated to one or more charities that are connected to canoe sailing, as nominated in the dissolution motion.

In the event of a net deficit, each member shall be liable for the debts of the Group to a maximum limit of £1.00.

16. Rules of safety and conduct.

The Group may approve such rules and guidelines concerning safety, conduct and racing as it sees fit.

Breach of any such rules does not of itself cause termination of membership.

Persons aged under 18 years old are welcome at Group meets but they must be accompanied by, and remain at all times the direct responsibility of, an adult member who is their parent or family member or legally responsible guardian as the club is not able to provide supervision for unaccompanied minors.

Annexes:

A. Duties of the Committee members.

DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Commodore

The principal duties of the Commodore are to:

- be a leadership figurehead for the OCSG, mindful of its values, standards, history and traditions
- assist the Chair with publicly representing the OCSG, including to other organisations
- provide advice to the Chair and other Committee members on matters relating to the OCSG.

Chair

The principal duties of the Chair are to:

- provide active leadership of the Group, ensuring that it is efficient and well managed
- chair the Annual General Meetings and other general meetings of the OCSG
- chair OCSG Committee meetings
- receive, and where necessary act upon, communications from the OCSG Secretary, other Committee members, and members.

Secretary

The principal duties of the Secretary are to:

- support the Commodore and Chair with leadership and administration of the OCSG, including production and distribution of agendas and records of actions and decisions for General and Committee meetings
- manage the OCSG's affiliation with Paddle UK, and lead on liaison with them
- act as Data Controller for the OCSG, assuring compliance with relevant legislation and regulations
- coordinate, deconflict and publicise the annual programme of events
- lead on administration and moderation of the members only Facebook group, and on management of the info@ocsg.org.uk and gossip@ocsg.org.uk emails and elements of OCSG website including the Events Calendar, Meet Reports and Marketplace.

Treasurer

The principal duties of the Treasurer are to:

- Assist the Commodore, Chair and members with the administration of the OCSG finances to ensure the club remains solvent
- Manage the OCSG banking requirements
- Produce accounts and communicate any necessary reports on the state of the OCSG finances to the Committee as and when required or requested
- Advise on any mandatory or desirable changes to operational structure and procedures regarding the OCSG finances.

Membership Secretary

The principal duties of the Membership Secretary are to:

- manage and keep secure the OCSG membership records
- remind members to renew their subscriptions and assist the Treasurer in keeping track of members' membership status
- respond to new membership enquiries
- distribute a contact list to Members, updated annually
- lead on management of the membership@ocsg.org.uk email.

Safety lead

The principal duties of the Safety lead are to:

- ensure the Committee is aware of its collective role and legal responsibilities with respect to managing safety across the Group's activities
- manage and promote the safety systems that the Group puts in place, and support OCSG Meet organisers and safety advisors to assure the safe conduct of Group events
- communicate safety advice to Group members, such as Paddle UK Safety Alerts
- report any safety incidents that occur during Group activities through the Paddle UK Incident Reporting System.

Safeguarding lead

The principal duties of the Safeguarding lead are to:

- ensure the Committee is aware of its collective role and legal responsibilities with respect to safeguarding across the Group's activities
- promote an inclusive environment and demonstrate commitment to safeguarding through their own practice and behaviours
- manage and promote the safeguarding systems that the Group puts in place, and support OCSG Meet organisers and other volunteers to assure adequate safeguarding at Group events
- be the first point of contact with primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children, young people, and adults at risk within the Group
- have an awareness of appropriate welfare, mental health and emotional wellbeing support to signpost members to
- ensure appropriate confidentiality is maintained regarding any safeguarding or welfare concerns
- escalate safeguarding or welfare concerns (using Paddle UK tiering guidance) ensuring that all concerns, even low-level ones managed by the Group, are reported to the Paddle UK safeguarding team.