

# HXCC Home Water Risk Assessment

**Date of Assessment**  
**Signed**

27 March 2023  
L Ford

**Assessment Review Date**

March 2024

**Activity:** Club coached sessions on 'Home Waters' - all year round

**Home Waters are defined as:** the stretch of the river Calder from below the Double Weir down to the egress steps at the bottom of the white water course and the canal between Luddendenfoot and Salterhebble locks (**see note below re circular trips**). *A map of the club's 'home waters' is attached.*

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Is the risk adequately controlled	What further action is necessary to control the risk
<b>Water levels / River Conditions</b>	All paddlers	Sessions to be led by appropriately qualified Coaches/ Leaders approved by Committee – <b>see below for rules applying to the approved list</b> . All club activities to be run in accordance with River Conditions Policy for the prevailing water conditions. Coaches must be familiar with <b>River Conditions Policy</b> and <b>must</b> check river levels prior to sessions starting. Recent / forecast weather and river levels to be monitored and sessions shortened / amended as required	Coach Induction and annually policy updates. Leader judgement calls to be upheld.
<b>Manual Handling</b>	All paddlers and parents/ volunteers	All paddlers to be taught good lifting techniques and used throughout activities. Particular advice and care needed lifting around access to wooden bridge and on egress steps. Young people to carry kayaks in pairs (with other paddlers / parents). Team lifts to be used for open canoes.	Good practice to be reinforced by coaches throughout all activities
<b>Accessing boats at height</b>	Paddlers, parents & volunteers	Tall steps to be used to access boats stored at high level. Members should not climb on the boat racking	Reminders to use steps to access boats stored at high level
<b>Equipment</b>	All paddlers and parents/ volunteers	All equipment to be checked regularly by Equipment Officer as per Equipment Policy. Coaches to visually inspect equipment prior to use. Any defective equipment to be clearly marked and put out of use and reported to Equipment Officer for repair / replacement. Coaches to check and replace defective airbags in kayaks.	Ongoing inspection and removal/reporting of defective equipment
<b>Drowning</b>	All paddlers	Participants should be able to swim in canoeing clothing (inc Buoyancy Aid) Buoyancy Aids complying with CE standards to be worn at all times. BAs to be sized and fitted for individuals. Checks are made by leaders. BAs undergo flotation checks annually as laid out in BCU guidelines. Sessions to be led by appropriately qualified Coaches/ Leaders approved by Committee – see below for rules applying to the approved list.	Ongoing inspection and removal/reporting of defective equipment

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Is the risk adequately controlled	What further action is necessary to control the risk
<b>Hypothermia / Hyperthermia</b>	All paddlers	All to wear warm clothing as appropriate to the weather conditions – coaches to advise paddlers accordingly. Beginners course information to be clear on equipment required. Waterproof tops are available at the club for paddlers to use. Leader to make a judgement on shortening / cancelling sessions.	Coach advice and judgement calls to be upheld.
<b>Head / Spinal injuries</b>	All paddlers	<b>Kayaking</b> - Helmets to be worn at all times. <b>Open Canoe</b> – helmets to worn at all times on white water and at all times by juniors. Coach judgement call on adults wearing helmets on flat water depending on experience of paddlers and nature of activity. Coach / leader to ensure helmets are correctly fitted. Helmets comply with BC guidelines, are in good condition, to be checked by Equipment Officer annually.	Coach judgement calls to be upheld.
<b>Entrapments</b>	All paddlers	Tree debris removed from main flow of river. Group briefed on avoiding overhanging branches, and 'feet up' defensive swimming. Coach and assistants positioning should take account of potential pins across drops on the course	Visual inspection by coaches, avoidance or removal as required. Coaches taking appropriate positions to deal with pins
<b>Foot Injury</b>	All paddlers	Suitable shoes to be worn at all times to protect feet from broken glass / sharp debris on the river / river bank. Beginners course information to be clear on equipment required.	Coaches to reinforce to all paddlers
<b>Slips, Trips &amp; Falls</b>	All paddlers and spectators	Wooden bridge deck to be monitored for a skid risk and maintained as appropriate. Advice to be given by coaches on potential hazards of walking over rocks, especially when wet or icy – including to spectators where relevant	Ongoing monitoring and reporting issues to Building officer
<b>Water Quality</b>	All paddlers	All groups (and parents) to be made aware of risk of water-borne diseases and encouraged to shower / wash after paddling. Cuts to be covered while paddling in accordance with BC guidance. Any obvious signs of water pollution should be reported to the Environment Agency whose number is displayed on the club notice board and to club Access and Environment Officer.	Coaches to cancel / run session away from pollution as appropriate.
<b>White Water course</b>	All paddlers	Spray decks should be worn in kayaks and slalom canoes - all paddlers in the group to have at least done a full capsized drill with spray deck prior to paddling the white water course. Paddlers should be capable of maintaining a straight course before progressing to white water to ensure that they can line up for drops. Sessions to be led by appropriately qualified Coaches / Leaders approved by Committee (see below for rules applying to approved leaders). <b>Also see water levels for appropriate activities at different river levels.</b>	Coaches to check river levels and run sessions in accordance with River Conditions Policy. Positioning of coaches and assistants should consider the potential for responding to capsize in their group

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<b>Unintentional overtaken by darkness</b>	All paddlers	Ensure adequate daylight for the proposed activity (particularly round trips) and ensure return to below County Bridge at dusk. Use river lights for slalom course after dusk. River lights to be properly maintained.	See below for intentional after dark paddling
<b>Intentional Paddling after dusk</b>	All paddlers	Paddling after dark should only be done by experienced paddlers. Coaches must know where each paddler is at all times and be aware of the additional risks arising from reduced visibility. <b>Paddling above County Bridge:</b> Coaches should make an assessment whether there is sufficient ambient light to safely run the session. <b>Paddling on the white water course:</b> River lights to be on after dusk. River lights to be properly maintained.	Coach judgement on the suitability of paddlers for sessions in the dark
<b>Intentional Swimming</b>	All paddlers	Coaches ensure the activity is appropriate to the experience of the group, river conditions, prevailing weather and participants clothing. Coaches to ensure adequate boat or bank based safety is in place for the activity. Prior to activity groups to be properly briefed (potential entrapment hazards, safe swimming, water quality issues etc). Spray decks to be remove to reduce snagging risk.	Coach judgement on the suitability of the condition and participants for the activity.
<b>Canal Hazards</b>	All paddlers	Coaches to brief paddlers on the dangers posed by operating locks and ensure all keep away from and not passage through locks. Coaches to be aware of other craft using the canal and ensure paddlers know what to do when other craft are approaching.	
<b>Rapid below Puzzle Weir</b>	All paddlers	Potential entrapment hazard from debris lodged on bridge pillars below the rapid – coaches to inspect and avoid/provide safety as appropriate.	Coach to inspect and respond accordingly
<b>Bridge below puzzle weir</b>	All paddlers	Trees lodge on upstream side of the bridge pillar present an entrapment hazard. Trees lodge on bridge beams/railings may fall on paddlers	Appropriate briefing of groups to as required and coach positioning
<b>Club Weir</b>	All paddlers	The weir is undercut so there is a potential that in lower water levels a paddler capsizing right in the stopper may become disorientated and swim under the undercut weir. At higher flows the weir forms a green wave that will flush swimmer out	Coaches to make paddlers playing in the weir aware of the risk and remain vigilant and ready to rescue swimmers that do not reappear.
<b>Middle (3rd) drop on white water</b>	Inexperienced paddlers	The slabs forming the left of the drop have shifted, creating the potential for paddlers to pin against the slab and at 90 degrees to the flow. It is now recommended to run this drop fairly straight to avoid this and any potential to pin on the rocks below the drop. Coaches to brief groups about the hazard and protect appropriate through appropriate positioning	Coaches to adopt position of maximum usefulness to prevent or quickly release a pin
<b>Specific Hazard - Puzzle Weir</b>	All paddlers	The collapsed section of the weir face has now widened and previous debris has cleared allow a good clear line for competent paddlers to run.	<b>Coaches / Leaders to inspect to prior to running weir.</b>

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		The weir does still have the potential to hold debris coming down the river and will continue to collapse further over time and therefore must be inspected on each occasion.	Monitor for potential further collapse and potential hazards

### **Approved list of coaches, leaders and helpers on Home Waters**

The white water sections (slalom course and between Puzzle weir and foot bridge) on the home waters are classified as Grade 2 (in Green or Amber conditions).

The Club Committee recognises that there are members of the club who are familiar with the white water sections of Home Waters, and have skills and experience to lead and assist on club sessions on Home Waters, even though they do not have the coaching/leading qualification that provide a remit in this environment.

Therefore the club committee (Coaching Officer) maintains a list of coaches and Club Activity Assistants who can operate within certain limits on Home Waters. See the **HXCC Coach and Leader Policy** for full details.

### **Circular trips from the club**

Within the provision of this risk assessment it is possible for coaches to undertake a circular trip from the club up the canal and back down the river Calder from **below the double weir**. (Egress the canal immediately before bridge 4, follow the footpath across the field and bridge to access the river below the double weir.) Before undertaking a circular trip coaches must be familiar with the crossing point between the canal and river and seek advice from the club's Coaching Officer if required.

Other club trips on the Calder either **above or running the double weir or on the river downstream of the white water course** are outside of Home Waters and must be under the supervision of a suitable qualified BC coach (BC L3, UKCC L3 or UKCC L2 with moderate water endorsement. Or a White Water Leader) with an appropriate trip risk assessment.

### **Bank-based Coaching**

*This is particularly pertinent to slalom coaching, but also applies to general white water or freestyle coaching on home waters.*

Coaches may undertake bank based coaching of their group on the flat or white water based on the above remits and coaching ratios. Coaches who hold BC Slalom Coach qualifications or have attended the Slalom Discipline Modules may coach from the bank under the remit or their qualification.

When undertaking bank-based coaching the coach must undertake a dynamic risk assessment of the activity (based on the ability level of paddlers in the group and the prevailing conditions/water level) and ensure that adequate safety cover is in place for the duration of the activity, briefing the paddlers accordingly. This safety cover could range from additional competent paddlers acting as safety boats, the coach on bank with a throw line, or competent paddlers within the group providing safety cover for each other.

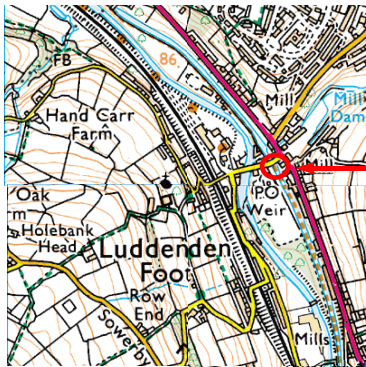
# Halifax Canoe Club Home Waters Map

**Halifax Canoe Club Home Waters are defined as:**

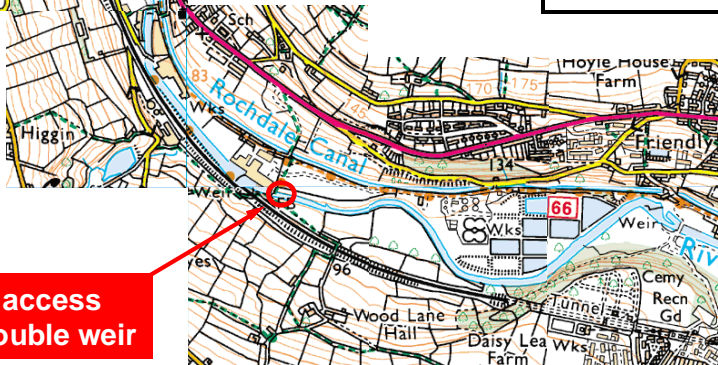
- the stretch of the river Calder from below the Double Weir down to the egress steps at the bottom of the white water course

and

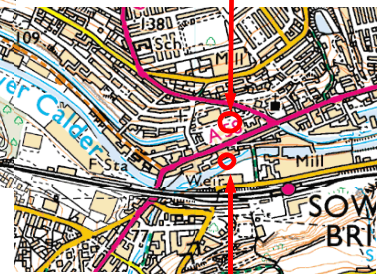
- the canal between Luddendenfoot and Salterhebble locks (canal locks must be portaged)



**Canal at Luddendenfoot**



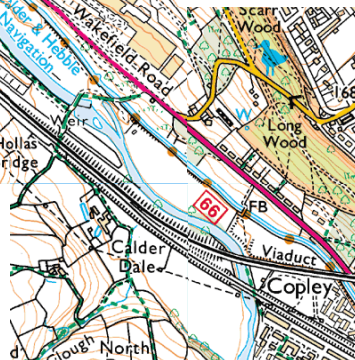
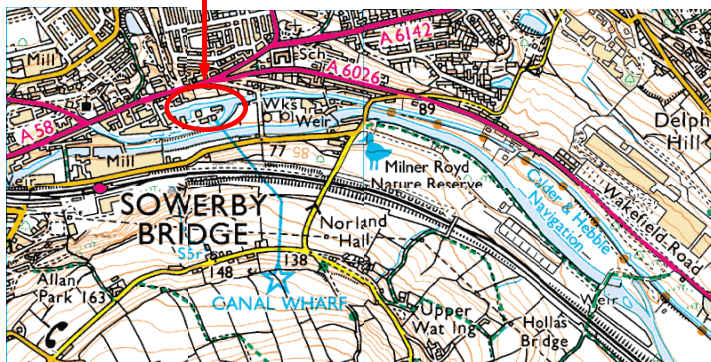
**River access below double weir**



**Canal access Market car park**

**River egress white water course steps**

**Canal access Sowerby Bridge Marina**



**Salter Hebble Locks**

