



Club Handbook

Introduction & Welcome to GGBC

Welcome to Goring Gap Boat Club, a recreational rowing club dedicated to promoting rowing as an activity to everyone, regardless of age, ability or availability. GGBC is committed to providing a friendly, safe and inclusive environment for all members so they can train in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. If you see something that makes you uncomfortable, you can speak to the **Club Welfare Officer (CWO)** in confidence by emailing welfare@goringgapbc.org.uk.

This handbook contains essential information and protocols that all members must follow to ensure we enjoy rowing on our beautiful stretch of the river, safely and responsibly. It covers [Communications](#), [Rowing at GGBC](#), [GGBC Boats](#), [Navigation](#), [Safety](#), and [Key membership information](#). Please take the time to read it thoroughly: compliance with the guidelines is expected.

Communications within the Club

The Club uses a variety of channels to keep everyone up to date. For this to work effectively, your contact information must be up to date. Please send updates to membership@goringgapbc.org.uk.



www.fitclub.site – an online platform used for managing sessions and boat bookings. Sign up and add yourself to Goring Gap Boat Club. to provide your weekly availability and to receive emails about Club Session Lineups.



WhatsApp ([QR Code](#) on final page) – **Announcements**. Important announcements and committee requests are also sent via the Goring Gap Boat Club Community. In addition, there are several subgroups which you can join. Please use the correct subgroup and keep chatter at a manageable level! The main subgroups are:

- **GGBC Rowing Hub**. Notices and Questions related specifically to rowing.
- **GGBC Social**. Notices and comments about social activities and events.
- **GGBC Session Mgrs/Coaches**. For organising and managing sessions (only join this group if you have agreed to volunteer as Session Manager or Coach).



Newsletters –the latest news for members is emailed monthly.



AGM – Held every November to hear about key events over the preceding year, discuss proposed changes for the following year, and elect the Club's Officers for the next twelve months.



Ad-hoc Members' Forums. If you have something you would like discussed, please send requests to the secretary@goringgapbc.org.uk.



Website – www.goringgapbc.org.uk has a wealth of information on the club, how to join, safety, and how non-members can use our facilities.



Facebook – facebook.com/groups/GGBoatClub, aimed at potential members and non-members interested in what the club gets up to.



Rowing at GGBC

Organised Club Sessions

GGBC offers the following training sessions to members.

	Summer (BST)		Winter (GMT)	
Saturday	0900	On the water	0900	On the water
Sunday	1000 1200	On the water Juniors	1000	On the water
Tuesday †	1800	On the water	1900	Land training
Wednesday	0930	On the water	0930	On the water
Thursday †	1800	On the water	1900	Land training

† Times may vary, depending on volunteer session lead availability

How to Join: To join a session, please **mark yourself as 'available' on FitClub** (www.fitclub.site) by midday the day before the session.

What to Expect: **Suggested lineups will be emailed prior to the outing.** Our goal is to create crews that are enjoyable and safe, while providing opportunities for everyone to grow their rowing, coxing and steering skills. Experienced members are expected to take a share of enabling beginners to learn the ropes.

Preferences: When indicating your availability, **you can also state your preferences** (eg for a specific boat) which will be considered but not guaranteed. Final lineups depend on boat availability and crew balance.

On the day: Members should **arrive 15 minutes before the session time** to get out and check equipment and be present for any briefing. The meeting point for on the water sessions is in front of the boathouse, while land training is accessed by the rear door on the first floor.

Every crew should **record the boat name and outing time** on the session notice board and **take a mobile phone** with the Session Manager's number noted.

Session Support: Check in with the volunteer **Session Manager** (SM) upon arrival. They open the facilities, set up safety equipment, and help with boating, following the Session Manager Check List available within the WhatsApp sub-group. We invite all members to shadow an SM and then to manage 2-3 sessions a year to keep the club running smoothly.

Coaching is provided by qualified coaches and other nominated experienced members when available, either from a launch (approved drivers only) or from within the boat.

A safety launch is available for emergencies. **If your crew requires assistance, contact the Session Manager or Session Coach** to deploy.

Note:

- Please drive and park considerately. The speed limit on the track to the boathouse is 10mph
- Take care not to disturb wildlife or damage the habitat
- Take care on the pontoons – they can be slippery when wet



Rowing outside of Club Sessions (Out of Hours)

Club Sessions provide a level of supervision and protocols aimed at ensuring enjoyable and safe rowing for all Participants. **Please note that access to the boat club is strictly limited to between 6:00 am and 10:00 pm daily for all members, including private boat owners.**

Any member wanting to use Club equipment to row or scull outside of Club Sessions must be approved as an Out of Hours (OoH) Rower by the Captain of Rowing (captainofrowing@goringgapbc.org.uk). **There are three levels of approval:**

- **Out of Hours Crew Boats (OoH-CB):** Crew Boats defined as Quad, Fours, Eights and Octuples.
- **Out of Hours Small Boats (OoH-SB):** Small Boats defined as Singles, Doubles and Pairs.
- **Out of Hours Small Boats Winter (OoH-SBW).** From the months of November to March (or when otherwise directed by The Captain of Rowing) only OoH-SBW approved members are allowed out in Small Boats.

All approved OoH-SB and OoH-SBW members must be able to demonstrate their proficiency in a Small Boat, be self-sufficient, capable of carrying out their own risk assessment, and should have completed a capsizing drill. They must assume responsibility for any non-OoH-SB approved crew members.

No Novice or non-OoH approved members should go out unaccompanied at any time.

Boats must be booked in advance using FitClub and other crew members should be named. The Captain of Rowing, or one of his/her Deputies, will review the request and either approve, deny, or suggest an alternative boat. Do not take to the water without the request having been approved.

Before taking to the water, all OoH rowers should check that the conditions are suitable for the outing and **must** observe any temporary [boating restrictions](#) that may be imposed by the Captain of Rowing, or one of the Deputy Captains, due to adverse conditions.

Guest Rowers

Experienced friends and family of members are allowed four outings a year in either a club or private boat, at a charge of £10 per outing. To request a guest visit, complete the application form on the [Club's website](#) at least a week in advance of the proposed visit.

GGBC also hosts other clubs for [training camps](#). We ask members to be welcoming to our visitors and to be efficient when launching and landing so others can use the pontoon, ensuring the river remains accessible and enjoyable for everyone during busy periods.

Rowing Events

GGBC is part of the Thames Valley Recreational Rowing League, and aims to attend events with other local clubs, which may include racing or touring. GGBC sometimes attends or organises events elsewhere in the UK and occasionally abroad. The focus is always on enjoyment, although there may also be a competitive element.

Events will be communicated to members through Newsletters, WhatsApp and FitClub.



Joining British Rowing

GGBC is affiliated to British Rowing, and this provides liability insurance for our club members and guests when they are involved in training, racing, coaching or supporting rowing and land-based activities, and when organising and running the club. This does not provide cover for personal accident or liability in competitive environments and does not cover use of our Funboats.

Individual [British Rowing Race](#) and **Row** membership provides public liability insurance and personal accident cover. Coach / Umpire membership also includes professional indemnity insurance. GGBC does not mandate British Rowing membership, but it will usually be required to take part in events at other Clubs.

- **Race** For those who want to race at regattas and head races affiliated to British Rowing
- **Row** For those who want to row without racing at affiliated competitions (this covers recreational races)

GGBC Boats

Boat Handling

All boats should be treated with care and respect. Poor handling can cause expensive damage to the equipment, make boats unusable for long periods, and may result in injury

- **When moving a boat** into or out of the boathouse, avoid contact with riggers of other boats to avoid damaging the hull. Boats should not be carried by their riggers.
- **When launching or landing**, make sure there is space on the pontoon and then carry out your action promptly to avoid holding up other crews.
- **After use**, wash boats and check for damage. Place boats carefully on slings while cleaning.
- **Tying down boats racked outside** prevents them from being damaged by wind or weather, which also protects our insurance coverage.

Boat equipment

All crews should check the equipment below and report any issues within the repair log or to the Captain of Boats, located on the notice board. This is regularly checked by the Captain of Boats (captainofboats@goringgapbc.org.uk). No boat with repairs outstanding should be used without permission of the Captain of Boats.

- **Bow ball** – securely fitted, no cracks or splits. The bow ball prevents serious injury in the event of a collision.
- **Heel restraints** – in good condition, not frayed and restricted to a maximum of 5cm of movement above the stretcher. Heel restraints ensure your feet come out if you capsize.
- **Footboard** – securely fastened.
- **Seat** – moves freely and is clipped to the runners.
- **Runners** – secured such that rowers do not hit front or back stops.
- **Bungs, corks and hatch covers** – in place and secure.



- **Steering equipment** – rudder cables are free and not frayed; rudder and fins are secure, not bent and have full movement.
- **Riggers** – check for broken, missing or loose fixings.
- **Hull and the canvas** – no damage, holes or breakages.

Aside from adjusting shoe stretcher positions within a boat to suit the user, no adjustments or repairs to any Club boats, blades or other equipment should be carried out without the express permission of one of the Club Captains.

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE EQUIPMENT FROM ONE BOAT TO REMEDY A DEFICIENCY OR DAMAGE IN ANOTHER! PLEASE REPORT IT SO THAT IT CAN BE FIXED.

“Fun boats”

Members have access to a diverse “fun boat” fleet, including two punts (max 5 people), two Canadian canoes, two paddleboards, “Snuffy” (a fixed-seat coxed pair) and a stable single Tub. Note that our insurance does not cover use of our Funboats. Members use them at their own risk and must take responsibility for their own safety.

Poles, paddles, bailers, lifejackets and cushions are located in the Boathouse: a paddle should always be taken even if the punt pole is being used. **Fun boat bookings** are managed via **FitClub**. Guests, who must be accompanied by a club member, do not have to pay a fee to use a Funboat.

Prior to launch, users must log their trip on the clubhouse board, check and adhere to the [Boating Restriction Guidelines](#), and ensure all non-swimmers or children under 12 wear buoyancy aids. Normal river navigation rules must be followed.

After returning, members should clean the “fun boat”, return the equipment used and ensure the site is secure.

Private Boat Racking

Members can rent space at the boathouse subject to availability.

How to Apply: Contact the **Racking Manager** (racking@goringgapbc.org.uk) to check availability or join the waiting list. You must complete a [rental form](#) before moving a boat in.

Fees & Payment: Racking fees are paid annually in advance via **Direct Debit**. Current rates are outlined on the [Club Website](#).

EA Registration: All boats must be registered with the **Environment Agency**. The Club registers GGBC and private boats each Spring and recharges the fee to your account.

Liability: Owners are responsible for their own equipment. The Club accepts no liability for loss or damage; **private insurance is essential**.



Navigation

Coxing and Steering

We encourage all members to learn how to cox and steer a coxless boat. Novice coxes and steerspersons will be allocated an experienced crew who will provide advice. As a cox you must:

- **Wear a lifejacket**, with layers, hat and gloves in cold weather.
- **Take responsibility for the crew** when boating, rowing, and taking the boat out of the water. Ensure the rowers know the basic commands, how to enter and leave a boat, and what to do in the event of an accident or capsized.
- **Use the stream** to help turn quickly – point the bows into the stream when turning upstream
- Understand the [Routes to take on the river](#) and [Traffic Rules](#)
- Be aware of [Hazards](#)

Traffic Rules

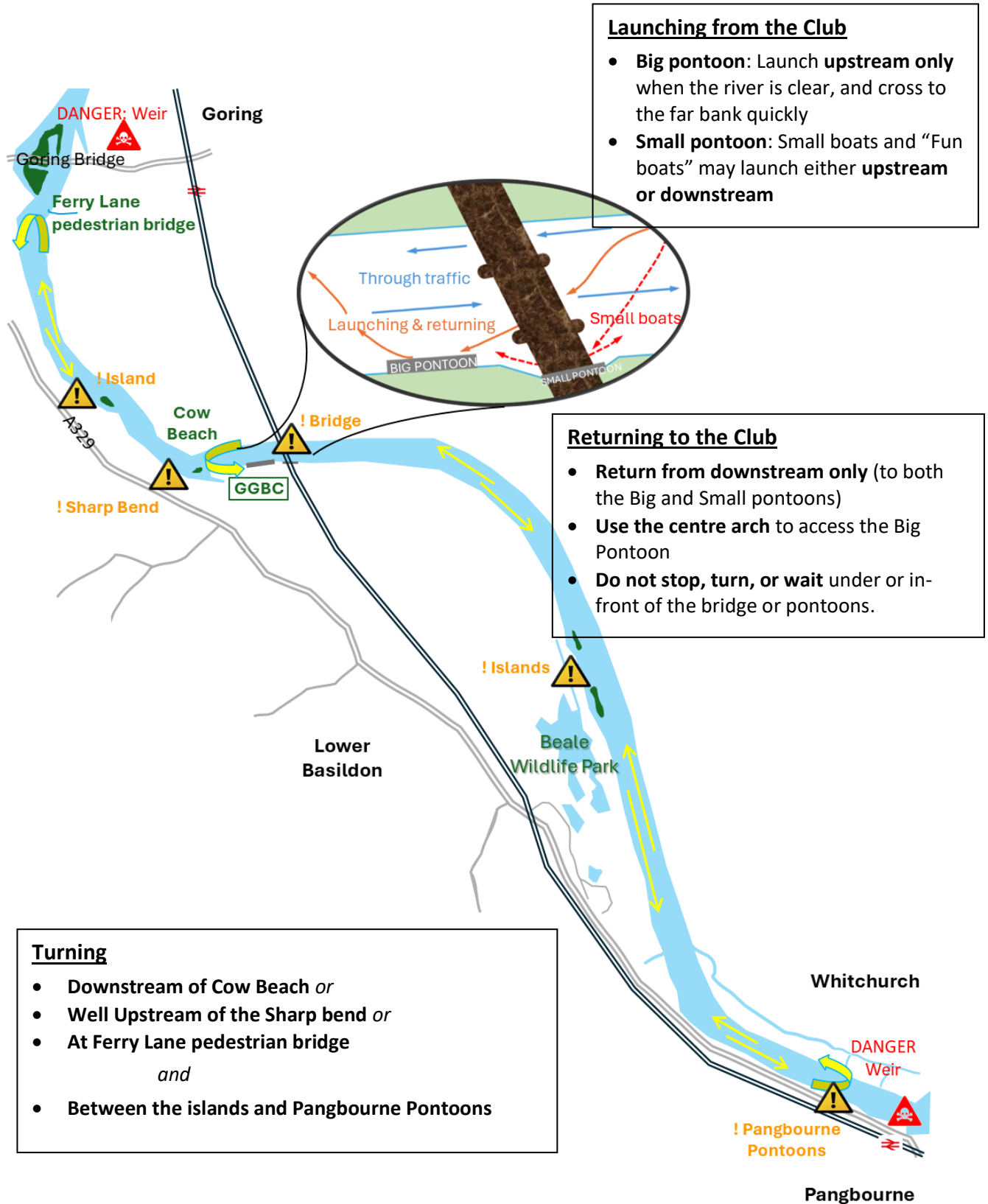
- **Keep right:** Stay on the right-hand side of the river and do not cut corners
- **Downstream Priority:** Watercraft travelling downstream have the right of way
- **Overtaking:** Pass slower craft in the centre of the river when safe.
- **Passing Islands:** Do not row down the narrow channels between the islands and the bank.

General Hazards

- **River Traffic:** Stay alert for boats exiting **Goring or Whitchurch Locks**, craft moving to/from moorings, and activity around **GGBC** and **Pangbourne College Boat Club**.
- **Water Awareness:** Keep an eye out for other watercraft, swimmers, dogs and floating debris.



Routes to take on the River





Keeping safe

Safety Rules

All members are expected to:

- **Take responsibility** for their own safety and the safety of those around you.
- Be familiar with and uphold the [Boating Restriction Guidelines](#).
- **Be able to swim 50m** in light clothing OR to wear a suitable buoyancy aid / lifejacket.
- **Be in good health** with no medical condition preventing heavy exercise.
- **Dress appropriately** – layers in winter and light clothes in summer. No Jeans or clothing that is heavy when wet. **Bring spare clothes** just in case you get very cold and/or wet.
- Always follow instructions from the cox or steersperson.
- Wear a lifejacket when in a **coaching or safety launch**.
- **Prevent waterborne infections** by washing hands, wearing suitable footwear when wading, showering after rowing and never swallowing river water.
- **Notify a doctor** and the committee of potential infections.
- [Report all incidents](#) that occur both on and off the water, irrespective of the level of personal injury or damage to equipment.

All members are encouraged to challenge any member who is seen to be non-compliant with Club Guidelines, and to bring continued non-compliance to the attention of the committee.

Boating Restriction Guidelines

The complete [Boating Restriction Guidelines](#) are displayed on the Club's Safety Board on the front of the Boathouse. This table summarises the guidelines. They indicate which boat and rowers are allowed out in given conditions. However, combinations of conditions need to be assessed as a whole and may lead to higher restrictions. Whilst all rowers are encouraged to assess conditions for themselves and interpret how the guidelines may apply to them, the final decision on the Status in force at any point of time rests with the Captain of Rowing in consultation with the Safety Advisor. Any change in status will be notified to members by both email and the WhatsApp Rowing Hub sub-group.

BLACK No rowing whatsoever	RED Experienced rowers only. No unaccompanied small boats	AMBER Experienced rowers or less experienced if accompanied and in a suitable boat	GREEN Rowing permitted for all members
• Flow > 100m³/sec • Water over banks • White horses visible • Within 30 mins of observed lightning • Visibility <200m • After Dark *	• Flow 75-100 m³/sec • <5°C water temp • <0°C air temp • High cross winds • Low light †	• Flow 50-75 m³/sec • 5°-15°C water temp • >25°C air temp • High /blustery winds	• Flow < 50 m³/sec • >15°C water temp • 5°C-15°C air temp

* Captain of Rowing must give permission for rowing after dark

† White lights must be used on both bow and stern if low light conditions are expected during the outing.



What to do if you Capsize

The Reach on which the club rows, whilst beautiful, is difficult to access and exit from for much of its length. All members are expected to familiarise themselves with the [British Rowing Capsize Guidelines](#) and take part in a capsize practise, organised at regular intervals.



ONLY LEAVE THE BOAT IF YOU ARE VERY CLOSE TO A CLEAR POINT OF EXIT OR STAYING WITH IT INCREASES DANGER.

What to do in the event of an Accident or Incident

In a life-threatening emergency, always **call 999 first**.

Boathouse Location: Opposite Hook End Lane on the A329 Reading Road, Lower Basildon, RG8 9ND.

what3words: jungle.bounded.trinkets

- **Severe bleeding, chest pain, loss of consciousness?** Call **999** or go to **24/7 A&E:** Royal Berkshire Hospital (Reading ~ 30 mins) or John Radcliffe Hospital (Oxford ~ 45 mins). There is a defibrillator in Bay1 should 999 instruct you to use it. Ask a club official to provide the member's emergency contact details when safe to do so.
- **Minor breaks, sprains, stings, or burns?** Call **NHS 111** or use the **NHS online service**. They can direct you to the best local facility and can even book you into the **Thatcham Minor Injuries Unit** to save long waits (8am-10pm daily ~ 45 mins).
- **Minor scrape?** Use the **Club First Aid Kit**.
- **River & Navigation Emergencies?** If an incident occurs near a lock contact the Lock Keeper (Goring 01491 872687; Whitchurch 01189 842448; Cleeve Lock 01491 872608)
- **Other incidents:** Call the non-emergency police on **101**

Incident Reporting

All incidents and "near incidents" (e.g., collisions, capsizes, rule violations, injuries) **must be reported to British Rowing within 24 hours**. Separate reports should be made by anyone involved, and by any witnesses. British Rowing will contact the Club's Safety Adviser for comments.

- **How to Report:** Submit details via the [Online Incident Reporting System](#).
- **What to Include:** Provide as much detail as possible, including date, time, location, boat types, clubs and crews involved, weather conditions and any injuries or damage.

Incident Reports are intended to be educational rather than apportion blame.



Other Important Membership Information

Membership renewal

Membership renews automatically. The annual fee - determined by the club at the AGM – is collected from your bank via the GoCardless **Direct Debit** mandate set up upon joining.

Changing or Cancelling your membership

Thinking of leaving or changing your membership? Please email our **Membership Secretary** (membership@goringgapbc.org.uk) at least **28 days in advance** to process the request. Whilst you can also cancel your **Direct Debit** directly with your bank, the club asks that you still contact the Membership Secretary to formalise the change and update our records.

Club Governance: What you need to know

Goring Gap Boat Club Limited is a company limited by guarantee registered with Companies House in England. All Club Members are formally “Members” of GGBC Limited and are bound by the provisions in the Articles of Association (available from [Companies House](#)). Every member is a guarantor, and their names are recorded in the Company’s statutory register of Members. Members’ financial liability is strictly limited to £1 in the unlikely event the Company is wound up while an active member and for a period of 12 months after membership ends. Full GGBC Ltd Rules can be found on the [website](#).

GGBC Ltd Officers delegate the day to day running of the club to the Rowing Committee. Under this delegated authority, the Committee manages the club following 3 principles in line with British Rowing best practice:

- **Values:** Prioritising high ethical standards and the integrity and interests of the club: All members should enjoy a safe environment free from discrimination, harassment and pressure.
- **Leadership and Supervision:** Engaging volunteers who have the right skills for their roles and take decisions in the best interests of the club and its members.
- **Policies and Procedures:** Maintaining frameworks and rules in line with British Rowing Regulations. These are laid out in this handbook, with more details of [Safety](#), and [Welfare and Safeguarding](#) policies on our website.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need to raise an issue, please reach out to the relevant committee member:

- **Grievances:** Any member with a complaint about their treatment should submit their grievance to the **Chair**.
- **Welfare:** Concerns about someone else can be discussed in confidence with the **Welfare Officer**.
- **Safety:** Safety concerns can be discussed with the Safety Officer.
- **Rowing:** Any questions about rowing should be directed to the Rowing Captain.

Committee meetings are held monthly online or in person. These meetings are open to all members, and out of courtesy you are asked to notify the secretary of your intention to attend.



Committee role	Name	Email address
Honorary life president	John Wills	jawills46@btinternet.com
Chair	Susannah Wood	chairman@goringgapbc.org.uk
Welfare Officer	Gail Rainsden	welfare@goringgapbc.org.uk
Safety Advisor	Tom Robinson	safety@goringgapbc.org.uk
Captain of Rowing	Richard Berkley	captainofrowing@goringgapbc.org.uk
Captain of Boats	Richard Berkley	captainofboats@goringgapbc.org.uk
Racking Manager	Richard Berkley	racking@goringgapbc.org.uk
Secretary	Vacant	secretary@goringgapbc.org.uk
Treasurer	Andrew Ward	treasurer@goringgapbc.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Susan Knowles	membership@goringgapbc.org.uk
Communications	Debra Hutchings	communications@goringgapbc.org.uk
Boathouse Liaison	Lorraine Slade	boathouse@goringgapbc.org.uk
Site Manager	Anthony Jordan	sitemanager@goringgapbc.org.uk

Data Retention policy

The Club will only collect and use personal information for legitimate membership and administrative purposes, will keep it secure, and will not share it with third parties without consent unless required by law. We collect, use and retain personal data as follows:

Use	Data	Retention period
To comply with legal requirements: Companies House Register of Members	Name and Address	10 years after leaving
	Date of joining and leaving	
To manage membership and deal with queries, complaints or claims	Contact details	2 years after leaving
	Membership Type	
	Renewal dates and Payment details	
To administer rowing sessions and competitions	Date of birth	Only while a member
	Swimming competency	
	Emergency Contact	
To manage guest rower rules	Temporary member details	1 year after guest session

WhatsApp QR Code

Scan the QR Code to join our WhatsApp Community





Document History

Version	Date	Author / editor	Summary of Changes
1.0	2 August 2026	Sue Knowles / Richard Berkley	New, lean, handbook updated for 2026,
1.1	10 August 2026	Sue Knowles	Correction to navigation section