**Minutes of covid sub-committee 15 September 2020**

Present: Kenny Park, Norrie Brown, Tricia Rothwell, Ben McAllister, Jamie Brown, John Storr

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the arrangement for club paddling in the light of the covid pandemic, in particular as to paddling over the winter after the clocks go back (25 October 2020, so the first winter Saturday session will be 31 October). The current arrangements will continue in place until then.

1. Ben reported that he had learned that Trinity Leisure Centre was to open for “private groups” with effect from 21 September 2020, but no information is available as to the re-opening on their website and it was though unlikely that Carlisle Canoe Club would be one of the private groups included in the re-opening plans. They do not answer their telephone, and until the Centre opens it is impossible to find out any more information. Ben will make enquiries after 21 September and report back. However, it is thought that, even if in theory we could use the pool, it is likely that the limits on numbers would be such that it would not be possible to bring in enough income each session to cover the cost of hiring the pool, especially bearing in mind the cost of the lifeguard. It might be possible to consider subsidising some session using existing Club funds.
2. Ben has looked again at the updated BC guidance today. The general understanding was that the Club could arrange “organised events” involving up to 30 people, so long as the 30 people were in groups of not more than 6 and everyone remained 2 metres apart at all times if possible; the only circumstances when it was foreseeable that that would not be possible was in a rescue. It was felt that Club sessions would come within the definition of “organised events”.

With regard to the changing rooms, Ben’s assessment is that the 2 metre distance can be maintained provided there are no more than two people changing in each changing room, that is to say, 4 in total at any one time. If people are changing on the bank, then there is plenty of room for the 2 metre distance to be achieved, and there is no need to limit numbers changing at the same time. Anyone who can change on the bank is encouraged to do so, rather than using the changing rooms

1. The general feeling was that it would be good if we could achieve greater flexibility than the current system of paddling in fixed groups of 6, so long as that can be achieved without breaching government guidelines. It was felt that greater flexibility can be achieved, by paddlers attending for a session being divided into groups of no more than 6. The groups would remain separate, but that did not mean that it would not be possible for more than one group to paddle on the rapid at the same time. So long as no more than 30 attended for a session, no-one would have to be turned away. Members would not need to pre-book a slot, but could just turn up on Saturday morning by no later than 9.45am, to be on the water by 10.00am. If only 6 members attended, all could paddle as one group, but if 7 attended there could be two groups of 3 and 4, if 13 attended there could be two groups of 4 and one of 5 etc.
2. There was discussion about the standard of paddlers who will be able to participate in the Saturday sessions. There is currently a shortage of coaches willing and/or able to participate in Club sessions. John Storr does not feel able to undertake the level of commitment in personally attending as many Saturday sessions as he did last year, and in current circumstances it is just not feasible for him to ensure that a qualified coach is present every Saturday. He will be down on some Saturdays, and Norrie also expects to attend regularly, but, as there can be no guarantee that a coach will be down, it will be necessary for the club sessions to be treated in the same way as “peer paddles”, that is to say, everyone who paddles must be reasonably competent and able to paddle to a standard where it is not expected that they will need to be rescued. If anyone would like to paddle but they are not certain that they are sufficiently competent, they should speak to John Storr or Norrie, who will report their decision to all members of the sub-committee by email. It is also important for paddlers to take into account the conditions and height of the water, and they should not paddle if the conditions are not suitable for their level of competence, particularly if a coach is not present.

Although it is not thought feasible to return to any Club coaching at this stage, it is hoped that there may be a return to some coaching in the spring, even if some covid restrictions are still in place then; though outside the remit of this sub-committee, we need to look closely at who is willing to coach and what is their level of qualification, whether it is up to date etc., as part of that process.

1. Consideration was given to whether under 18s should be allowed to paddle. It was decided that they should not automatically be disqualified because of their age, but the same level of competence will be required of them as of adults, and a parent or guardian must be present at the river at all times while an under 18 is on the water.
2. Ben will re-visit his covid risk assessment and produce a new covid action plan, which he will send to the sub-committee for approval. Once the sub-committee has adopted it members will be required to sign up to it before participating in Saturday Club sessions.
3. Each Saturday someone must take responsibility for keeping a record of members attending and of how they are divided into groups, and of anyone having been closer than 2 metres to any other member (which should only be in a rescue situation), to be sent to Ben immediately after the session. Ben will then be responsible for any “track and trace” action required as a result of anyone subsequently experiencing covid symptoms or getting a positive test etc. Any member who paddles at a Club session will have to inform Ben if, within 14 days of a session, they develop covid symptoms, get a positive test, or are required to self-isolate. It is understood that, even if someone does subsequently develop covid, no other member will have to self-isolate unless they have come closer than 2 metres to any other member. It was also thought that even most rescues should generally be possible without coming closer than 2 metres, provided that the person in the water is able to swim to safety, even if that involves holding on to the back of someone else’s kayak.

Tricia Rothwell said that she expects to be down most Saturdays, and is willing to prepare the register etc. Norrie is also expecting to be down regularly. If neither of them is down, or some reason it has not been possible for them to arrange for someone else to take responsibility for the register, the paddlers attending must nominate someone from among their number to assume responsibility for the register and ensuring that it gets to Ben.

1. The sub-committee has received a proposal from John McAllister that he will post on Facebook about a Jim Wilson paddle from Glencoyne carpark on 4 October for up to 30 people. He offered to take the Club trailer if needed and to load any boats and kit from the Club, which he will disinfect as necessary. The sub-committee were grateful to John, and thought this an excellent idea, provided the 30 people paddle in groups of not more than 6, and paddlers observe social distancing within the groups, and a register of attendees is kept.

Tricia Rothwell 17/09/20