

**Blackwater Valley Canoe Club  
Polo Meeting – 17 November 2015**

1. Attendees

Sophie Austin      Richard Squire      Paul Rose      Gemma Clements  
Michael Hennessy   Tim Blyth      Neil Owens

2. Apologies

None recorded

3. General Training Sessions

We all agreed that training sessions could become a little more focused and structured. To improve this we agreed that we will ask for a volunteer to run the session each week before the session. Hopefully this will mean that it is not always the same people running the sessions, and giving the session leader time to think about planning the session. Hopefully this will make things more structured and varied. Also, it doesn't have to be the best polo players running the sessions either, the role is more to organise than to coach.

Watch out of Facebook for requests on the Facebook Group at the start of each week!

Mike also suggested that we could try to do run sessions in blocks of three, focusing on a similar theme within each block in order to provide opportunity for development and progression. We'll give this a go and see how we get on.

4. Lake Sessions

Everyone agreed that Hawley isn't being used as much as it could be (although its use will now be limited over the winter).

We have much more space and better goals at Hawley, so we discussed moving our summer training sessions there. The reason for us having Wednesday sessions at the lido was to be visible to the rest of the club and to try to attract more members. Although we have been more visible, and had successful taster sessions, they haven't converted into regular players. I therefore proposed that we move our main session to Hawley next summer, rather than at the lido. I do, however, think that we should have a beginner session or youth session at the lido once a month to maintain our presence and relationship with the rest of the club.

People said it is easier to commit to one specific day a week (regardless of which that was). Having our main session on a Thursday may mean people are more likely to play on a Tuesday too. I am going to get in touch with the people at Hawley to see if there is any possibility of having use of the lake on Wednesday evenings. Richard shall update everyone on this next year.

## 5. Pool Sessions

In the past, Tim had been speaking to some people at Farnborough pool to investigate the possibility of us using their pool (bigger and closer than Alton) for training and hosting tournaments. Hosting tournaments would bring in more money for the club (and would mean we would have to travel less). We would, however, need to get some goals which are tournament standard. Tim suggested buying some more floating goals. We may be able to get this 50% funded by the BCU. Paul and I will follow this on.

## 6. Equipment

A lot of the club kit we have was bought with lottery funding in early 2000s and is therefore now depleted, old or unusable. We will be discussing our kit needs with the club committee as they plan their spending. Our list of kit we think we need at the moment is:

- Polo decks - enough to fit the carbon boats we have
- BAs - a complete new set (8-10)
- Better paddles - 5/6
- Helmets - enough for 10, so we need 2 more (for large heads)
- Large carbon boats - 1 or 2 (maybe a *good* plastic boat)

Tim has looked into buying a pontoon for Hawley. It would cost around £7.5k. Obviously we would need some funding for this and will continue to look at options and this as our long term goal.

We would like the garage to be completed before the winter hits hard. Tim is looking into options for the doors and will let us know when he needs help to put them up.

## 7. General Development

We have gained some new players this year, but also lost some committed ones.

Although taster sessions have been well attended and we have had good feedback, this hasn't brought us many new players. We will continue to host these once a quarter. We will also look to target attracting members of other nearby Canoe Clubs.

It was suggested that we invite local scout groups/sea cadets/army cadets to Hawley when it is warmer (perhaps Saturday mornings) to do taster sessions. This may bring some new players in the 16-18 age range. It was also noted that the people we want to attract should already have some paddling experience. As we don't have enough commitment/time to run two sessions a week (one beginner, one training), it is difficult to teach people how to paddle as well as developing A team players' game play.

Gemma is producing some posters for Hawley/Alton/Lido to advertise us.

A local inter-club tournament was proposed (although noted that this was tried last year), and also some kind of fun day at Hawley (Sophie is already thinking about such an event for summer).

We are in the process of drawing up an affiliation agreement with Surrey for polo sessions, meaning that we will have access to some of their Sunday sessions as well as them coming to our sessions without having to be members of both clubs.

8. Subs and Fees

Subs are remaining the same for now and we will review this again before the summer season.