



www.opencanoe.info – e-newsletter from the Open Canoe Association

March 2022

From the Chair:

The OCA has weathered many challenges in the past and whether the pandemics of Foot and Mouth or Covid-19 we recognise that the glue that holds us together as an association is friendship, regular communication, and a love of open canoes!!

Welcome to the OCA's latest e-newsletter and for those of us that have been around a while you will remember that we used to have the printed Journal landing on our doormats, then we switched our focus over to social media and the website to keep in touch with members and then we set up an open Facebook Group which we had a few challenges with. So more recently, we set up the OCA's Facebook lounge for members only. We recently decided to give an e-mailed member's newsletter a go – let us know what you think by emailing chair@opencanoe.info

We have done well to weather the challenges of the last few years and Alison Green and Richard Wright recently notified us that they want to step back from Committee responsibilities, and we will be looking for a replacement for Allison as she has been in the Secretary's role for a few years and done a first-class job for us all. Richard has also beavered away in the background, holding the Treasurers role in the past and was able to help the current committee on track with his sage words and steady approach. We are grateful to both of them for going the extra mile through quite a challenging period.

As we see faint glimmers of optimism and are starting to return to face-to-face meetings and events where we can, we want everybody to feel part of the association, because after all, it is all of ours and has been since it was set up in 1956.

For me, I have really enjoyed paddling with members recently at the Okehampton and Brecon weekends and it was a real treat to get together with friends old and new and go paddling. There are a lot of other opportunities emerging and hopefully we will get out for a paddle soon.

On my horizon I have the Petrified weekend, the Broads meet at Easter and Canoe fest, which is looking great. The regions are also getting busier too.

The OCA's Annual General Meeting:

If you were unable to take part, you will have hopefully seen the recording of the 2021 AGM, which was held on-line, and it was a success, with lots of people engaging in the meeting at the heart of the Associations democratic structure.

The committee have been working hard to deliver the outcomes that we were tasked to carry forwards and we look forward to telling you more about progress and the direction of travel for the next few years when we get together for the 2022 AGM being held at Canoeifest alongside Poole Harbour on Friday 3rd June.

At the AGM we will reflect on the last year, the coming few years and hear from John Coyne, the President of British Canoeing about how we can work closer together in the future. We will be joined by a number of other guests including Ray Goodwin, our President.

We have adopted "Teams around Tasks" and If you are interested in getting involved in the work of the committee please contact me via chair@opencanoe.info, particularly if you have an interest in: Welfare and Safeguarding, Training and Personal Development, Events, Communication and some of the other desk based functions we need to undertake such as the role of Secretary.

Around the Regions:

Paulette has been speaking to Sue Tadman about the West Midlands region model and others are getting involved in the debate – we are keen to help the paddlers in each of the regions come together with other members, but we need your help to move this forward.

Within the OCA we have always offered a range of paddling opportunities both locally and across the country. Our residential events are always well supported with events such as Brecon, Barton Turf and Okehampton leading the way. These are always well supported, and coaches and leaders receive support for helping at these events. We would like to increase what we offer on a more local basis across the regions and the central events committee are happy to support any coaches and leaders who are willing to put on an event.

Some years ago, a regional structure was developed, the idea being that opening up the regions would provide local paddles for local paddlers. Unfortunately, due to changes in personnel, limited support from the central committee, kind volunteers moving on and of course Covid, the regions have struggled of late. With the exception that is of the West Midlands Region, which thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Sue Tadman, has gone from strength to strength.

We would like to see all regions flourish in the same way as the West Midlands and to that end we need your help. The events team are trying to reengage with the Regions, the table below shows how the regions have been created, take a look to see how the regions are distributed.

Region	Area Covered
OCA Southwest	Cornwall Devon Somerset Dorset Wiltshire
OCA Southeast	Kent East Sussex West Sussex Surrey Hampshire London (South of Thames)
OCA East	Norfolk Suffolk Essex Cambridgeshire
OCA Central Region	London (north of the Thames) Oxfordshire Hertfordshire Bedfordshire Buckinghamshire Berkshire
OCA East Midlands	Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire Northamptonshire Rutland Leicestershire
OCA West Midlands	Staffordshire Shropshire Birmingham Worcestershire Gloucestershire Herefordshire
OCA Yorkshire and Northeast	Yorkshire Durham Northumberland Tyne and Wear
OCA Northwest	Cheshire Merseyside Greater Manchester Lancashire
OCA Cumbria	Cumbria
OCA Scotland	Scotland
OCA Wales	Wales

So how can you help? Do you have a favourite trip or activity in your local area that you would like to share with your local fellow paddlers? Are you able to lead this trip or do you know someone who might? Are you able to offer a trip or event in your region either monthly or perhaps just a one off? If you do then the events team are here to help advertise your event and manage the bookings on web collect? If you are a coach or leader that would like to get involved, then please get in touch with the events team on the e mail below. We can advertise your event, add it to web collect, all you have to do is paddle!

We recognise that becoming a qualified coach or leader has become increasingly challenging and costly. The OCA are looking at how we can better support our volunteer coaches and leaders beyond the support offered on residential visits, more information will be circulated about this shortly.

In the meantime, if you can help, please get in touch on the e mail events@opencanoe.info

Events:

The end of lockdown is signalling us all getting back on the water!! We want to make sure that the activities are as safe as we can as Canoeing is an assumed risk sport. We would love to develop the Team around events further and if you are interested, please get in touch with Paulette Hills events@opencanoe.info to discuss how you can become involved.

What events would you like us to organise – both on and off the water? Can you help us to organise events?

We are starting to put together the 2023 programme and there will be some evergreen things on offer such as.

- The 2023 OCA Keith Thompson Memorial Bivvy on the River Torridge
- The John Pearton paddle on the River Nene, downstream on the river to Peterborough then back upstream on the Nene Valley steam Railway with your boats loaded in a goods van to avoid a shuttle!!
- Okehampton weekends – 9th -11th December 2022 and 20th- 22nd January 2023 paddling on a selection of rivers including the Teign, Tavy, Tamar and Walkham.
- Dart Weekend – February/March 2023 – venue to be finalised.
- Brecon weekend paddling on the Usk, Wye and other classic rivers
- The Paddling for the Petrified weekend
- Trips to the Norfolk Broads
- Cleavel Point, Poole Harbour, Dorset 16th – 19th June 2023
- The 2023 Canoeifest – Venue to be finalised.

We will also share information about other international paddling opportunities from time to time.

Canoe fest 2022:

One of the cornerstones of the OCA's Calendar is the annual Canoe fest and we are lucky to have had a great team working on the 2022 event which will be at Cleavel Point, on the shores of Poole Harbour in Dorset. Further information can be found at <https://www.opencanoe.info/our-events/canoe-fest-2022/> where you can also buy tickets. You can also use this link to order your food for the event if you haven't already done so. But don't leave it too long, there aren't many places left, the Early Bird offer has ended and there are only a few tickets left, we are nearly sold out!!

Learning and Personal Development opportunities:

In the past we have delivered a full range of opportunities to develop your skills and leadership, we will be doing the same again soon, so watch this space.

As mentioned earlier we have adopted Teams around Tasks and If you are interested in getting involved in Paddler Learning and Personal Development work with the OCA please contact me via chair@opencanoe.info, particularly if you have already got BC Qualifications or want to develop them.

There is likely to be an announcement about a Bursary Scheme soon.

Coaching:

We value our volunteers, and many are developing their skills and qualifications – if you contact me via chair@opencanoe.info I am happy to add you to a coaching register.

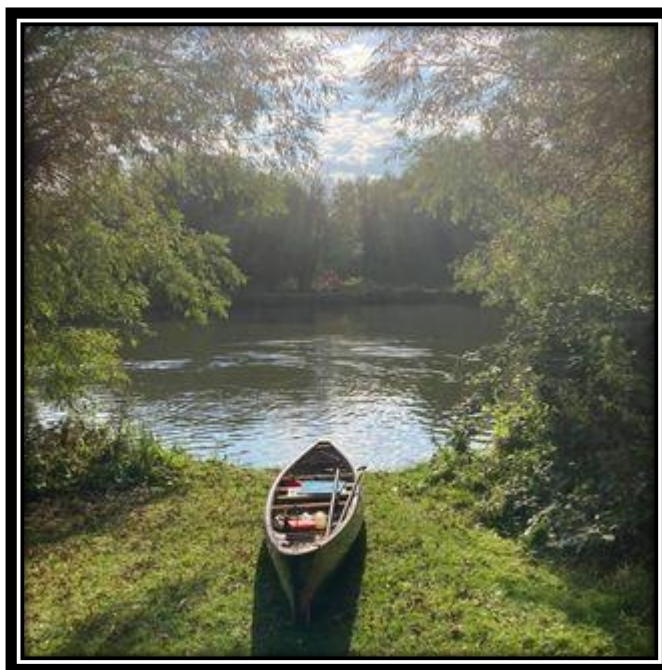
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Regalia:

Ahead of the Canoe fest we are about to order some regalia for the OCA – so watch this space!!

Getting in touch:

If you like what we do tell others, if there are things you think we can do better or differently let us know!! But don't forget, we are all volunteers so if you are interested in getting more involved in the OCA or have anything to share in the next newsletter which will be shared in April please let me know your news and comments by emailing chair@opencanoe.info or give me a call on 07531 503533. You can also visit our website <https://opencanoe.info>



If you want to discuss Canoeifest, events and regions, contact events@opencanoe.info

With regards to Welfare and safeguarding, Training and Personal Development, Communication, Website contact chair@opencanoe.info or call on 07531 503533 and please have a conversation with me.

With regards to Finance please contact Gary via treasurer@opencanoe.info