

SAFETY PLAN

LEIGHTON BUZZARD WINTER SERIES MARATHON 25TH JANUARY 2026

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Date: 9th January 2026

1. AUTHORISATION

The event is being run by Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club as part of the FRA Winter Series, authorised by the Paddle UK Marathon Racing Committee (MRC)

2. RACE ORGANISING TEAM – KEY PERSONNEL

The club will appoint

1. Race Organiser	Bethany Goodlad and Elaine Aldis
2. Safety Officer	Steve Oxtoby
3. First Aid Coordinator	Charlotte Ellis
4. Welfare Officer	Fiona Barber

The Race Organiser will appoint

- Marshals at key points on the bank at the start finish points, the town bridge and portages
- Safety boats (canoes/kayaks) a race sweeper and a race sweeper on a bike.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment has been prepared which covers activities on land and water and the impact on other river users and members of the public.

4. WELFARE

The club has a Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy overseen by the club Welfare Officer. If the Club Welfare Officer is not available to be the Welfare representative on the day, another club member who has received safeguarding training will act as Welfare Officer for the event. Their contact details will be published as part of the race details.

Any safeguarding issues will be dealt with by the club/event Welfare Officer following Paddle UK policies at <https://paddleuk.org.uk/safeguarding-policies/>

The nature of the race means that no individuals (other than their own family members) should need to be alone with children or vulnerable adults.

5. INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

PARTICIPANTS

- Risk Assessment and Safety Plan to be
 - submitted to Canal River Trust
 - published on the event page the Flatwater Racing Association website
 - available for inspection by anyone on the day
- Safety packs and written instructions will be prepared for the marshals and safety boats.
- A race briefing will be held on the day to highlight the key points for competitors including any last-minute issues.
- A marshals' briefing will be held on the day to highlight the key points for marshals and safety boats including any last-minute issues.

- All marshals will be a point of contact with race organiser.

PUBLIC

- Warning notices will be sent electronically to all known stakeholders operating on this stretch of river: canal river trust, fishing clubs, boating clubs, local residents.
- Marshals will alert public during event.
- Warning notices placed in vicinity 2 weeks in advance.

6. RACE ENTRIES

A sheet of race details are distributed to racing clubs across the region by direct mail and by submission to the Marathon Racing Committee. These details include deadlines for race entry. Late bookings are permitted on the day (up to a specified cut off) where individuals are additional members of a team who have already pre-booked, or are able to demonstrate membership of Paddle UK.

Participants are registered onto the official Paddle UK Marathon Race Entry and Management system. The race rules require that all participants can swim 50m in canoe clothing. Most entrants do so as part of a team and train under a coach who will advise on their competence to participate.

Data will be held in line with the Flatwater Racing Association Privacy Policy.

7. VEHICLE AND TRAILER ACCESS ROUTES

There is a designated parking area at the rear of school/ club which is suitable for cars, and trailers. There is a barrier which will be opened prior to and after the event. Parking marshals will indicate where to park.

8. BOAT STORAGE ARRANGEMENTS

There is ample open space on which boats can be placed safely on the ground.

9. BOAT CHECKING & LICENCING

Standard marathon committee rules require all boats to have sufficient buoyancy to remain afloat and support the crew in the event of a capsize, and this must be provided by fixed flotation material or sealed bulkheads. Random spot checks of boats will be undertaken as the paddlers get onto the water and any unsafe craft discovered will be disqualified.

All competitors are required to use boats licenced for use on CRT water.

10. LAUNCHING AND LANDING PROVISION

There are adequate landing stages at the start and finish, and at the portages along the route.

11. CIRCULATION PATTERNS TO BE FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES DURING THE PERIOD OF RACING AND WARM-UP, WARM-DOWN

While racing, warming up and cooling down, paddlers will be advised at the briefing to keep river right and all turns are anti-clockwise.

12. WHEN AND WHERE PADDLERS / TEAMS CAN PRACTICE, WARM UP AND COOL DOWN ON THE WATER

Paddlers on the water south of the start/finish area.

13. BUOYS

Turn buoys which are chained and weighted will be placed at each turn before the Race Start and collected in immediately after the Race. Buoys will also be put out for the sunken boats on the course.

14. ANY SPECIAL POINTS OF DANGER ON OR NEAR THE COURSE

Locks/portages are the greatest points of risk.

- Competitors will be advised not to enter the locks to portage their boats.
- Competitors and Marshalls to be advised of holes in the bank on the north side of Leighton lock beyond the concrete.

There are also two sunken boats, one on the course and one in the warmup area. These will be marked with buoys and instructions provided at the race briefing.

15. MARSHALLING INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTROL

Marshals are stationed at turns and locks/portages, with additional marshals specifically to supervise town bridge as this is a narrow passing point, with a blind bend before hand. If there are particular hazards on the day (trees down or other obstructions) the organiser will consider marking and/or stationing an additional marshal. Marshalls will be provided with the What3Words code for their location on the race course to for the purpose of directing assistance if there is a casualty in a remote section of the course.

Marshals will be in touch with Race Control by mobile phone and WhatsApp.

Everyone will be reminded at the race briefing of their obligation to show courtesy and consideration towards other users of the river and towpath, and Marshals on the bank and in safety boats along the course will be tasked with avoiding any conflict by reminding paddlers of their obligations and warning competitors, spectators, leisure boaters, cyclists, anglers and walkers of each other's presence wherever possible. Any incidents will be reported to the Organiser and if competitors are found to have acted badly, sanctions will be considered.

16. SAFETY BOAT TYPE, NUMBERS AND LOCATIONS

Safety boats will be unpowered, stable craft suitable for performing rescues from. This necessarily makes them slow-moving. They will be manned by experienced paddlers who, where possible, have completed a Foundation Safety & Rescue course or by those with special training.

At least one safety boat will follow the least experienced paddlers around the short course and a person on a bike with a throw line.

As part of the standard race rules, all competitors must stop to help another competitor who is in distress.

17. SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR THE COMPETITION

The on-water safety marshals and marshals stationed at locks will use safety equipment (including buoyancy aids if required) and have access to first aid kits and space blankets. The club will supply high visibility bibs to the bank marshals and throw lines for the marshals at locks and the bike support.

18. FIRST AID POSITIONS

There will be a first aid point in the clubhouse and a nominated first aider will be available. This will be notified at the briefing and a sign will be placed in a prominent position. Small first aid kits will be issued to marshals along the course. Casualties requiring further attention should attend one of the local Accident and Emergency Departments listed below.

- Milton Keynes University Hospital, Standing Way, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD
- Luton and Dunstable University Hospital, Lewsey Road, Luton, LU4 0DZ

- Stoke Mandeville hospital, Mandeville Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 8AL

19. MEDICAL SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS & EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS

If medical support is required, we shall call 999. Marshalls will be provided with the What3Words code for their location on the race course to for the purpose of directing assistance if there is a casualty in a remote section of the course.

20. SUMMONING HELP

There is no on-site telephone. Minor injuries will be dealt with by the designated first aider based at the clubhouse. For major/Emergency injuries/incidents, marshals will have mobile phones which can be used to dial 999 for Emergency Assistance.

21. CANCELLING OR SUSPENSION OF THE COMPETITION

If the course is suspected to be in an unsafe condition due to prevailing or recent weather, the Race Organiser will need to view the conditions at key points along the course on the previous day and consider whether the race should be cancelled or modified.

If the competition is cancelled or suspended, this information will be distributed as soon as possible to all pre-booked Team Leaders via the contact details they have given, and an announcement made on the club website where the original race details appeared.

22. EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN WITH DETAILS OF IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

See the Club Accident and Emergency Action Plan.

23. INCIDENT REPORTING

Competitors and Team Leaders will be reminded at the briefing of their responsibility to report incidents to the Race Organiser. In turn The Race Organiser will report river-related incidents to Canal Rivers Trust, and all incidents to Paddle UK and their insurers.

The Welfare Officer will report any Safeguarding incidents to Canal Rivers Trust, and to Paddle UK and their insurers.

24. POST-EVENT REVIEW

After the event, all those involved especially organisers and marshals will be invited to contribute their thoughts about problems encountered and suggested improvements. The Risk Assessment, Safety Plan and any other procedures will be revised in the light of this learning.