



AXE VALE CANOE CLUB AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



Photograph: Gill Hamlett & Bev

PADDLING AHEAD: WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

Hi All,

I hope you have had a lovely summer, the weather this year has been great! As usual, a lot has been happening at the club, here are just a few highlights:

- **Beginner Courses:** Well done to all our new members who have completed their Discovery and Explore qualifications. This year we offered courses that allowed people to just get a taste for canoeing and, if they wanted, to take formal Paddle UK qualifications. Thank you to all the coaches, in particular Carl, Karen, and Debbie who ran their first formal sessions this year!
- **School Sessions:** We again welcomed a number of local schools to spend a day with us on the water – or should I say in the water! A great deal of fun was had by all, despite having to cancel or reschedule a few sessions on account of poor weather. A very big thank you to Geoff Hunt for organising the school days.
- **Safaris:** Working with the East Devon Rangers, we take members of the public onto the estuary to experience canoeing and learn about the local environment. These events were fully booked within weeks! Well done Chris Cullen for organising.
- **Club Nights:** This year we have been blessed with warm evening weather and the turnouts have been great. The tides have been interesting though – unusually we have had to launch from the beach on at least two occasions.

There have been many more things taking place which you can read about in this newsletter including; the Open Canoe Weekend, the Wayfarers group event, and the Beer Regatta. Look out for the Autumn and Winter programme, which will be available soon. Please talk to any of the committee, coaches or leaders to find out what we typically offer.

We would love to know what members think and welcome any feedback from this summer's activities!

Best wishes,

Tash





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WINTER 2025/26 – ESTUARY AND WHITE WATER TRIPS

Join us for our upcoming club paddles, led by trained volunteer trip leaders and run under our club risk assessments and coaching remit.

To join a trip, please either book on WebCollect or text the trip coordinator by 6pm Friday before, as stated in the details on Facebook or the website. Regular trips are planned, but ad-hoc paddles or location changes may occur—keep an eye on our website and Facebook for updates. Casual paddles organised by members are welcome but are not covered by club insurance. We encourage all members to paddle year-round, explore new waters, and build skills.

Feeling rusty? Try the River Axe (Whitford) or Lower Dart trips. If you're new or haven't paddled white water with us, please start with a lower-graded trip so leaders can assess your ability. Visit: <http://www.axevalecc.co.uk/AVCC-Winter-Prog-2025-26-v2.pdf>

WANT TO REP THE CLUB IN STYLE? HOODIES & TEES – ARE YOU IN?

Love the idea of club hoodies or t-shirts? We're gauging interest before placing an order!

We're looking into creating club-branded hoodies and t-shirts so members can show their pride on and off the water! Before we go ahead, we'd love to know how many of you would be interested – this will help us decide on quantities, styles, and pricing.

If you'd be keen to buy one, please take a moment to register your interest using the form below before 15 December. This isn't a commitment to purchase – just a way for us to gauge demand. We are exploring the possibility of both adult and child hoodies. If you are a parent of one of our younger paddlers, please do speak to them about this opportunity! <https://bit.ly/47hdDE8>

MAKING A SPLASH AT BEER REGATTA

For the 4th (or maybe 5th!) year running, our club took to the water at the Beer Regatta with open boats, big smiles, and plenty of enthusiasm. 10 of our members joined in to give the community a taste of paddling fun – and what a session it turned out to be!

There was no shortage of splashes, laughter, and smiles during this hour-long session which featured a paddle around the bay as well as some exciting seal launches, proving just as enjoyable for the adults as it was for the youngsters.

The club's involvement in Beer Regatta has become a much-loved annual tradition (weather permitting, of course), and this year was no different. We're already looking forward to next year's Beer Regatta, when we'll be ready to paddle, play, and laugh all over again!



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WAVES OF FUN WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

A summer highlight: welcoming local schools for taster sessions!

Over the summer months we had roughly 60 children take to the water, with groups of 12–20 at a time heading out to discover the joys of paddling. As well as plenty of splashing, laughter, and the inevitable “very wet” moments, the youngsters also learned about the estuary and the importance of staying safe on the water. A paddle up to Axmouth gave them a taste of adventure, and it’s safe to say the smiles were as big as the splashes. Unfortunately we had fewer schools taking part and some sessions were cancelled because of poor weather.

We’ve been running these school days for many years now, and they’ve become a firm favourite – a fun, active way to inspire the next generation of paddlers while building awareness of our beautiful but challenging estuary.

PADDLESport GUINEA PIGS – GET INVOLVED!

Looking to improve your paddling skills, try new techniques, or explore different coaching styles and locations? Becoming a paddlesport guinea pig is a great way to do just that!

Local paddlesport coaches regularly run training sessions and assessments as part of their qualifications. To make these happen, they need volunteers – that's where you come in! You’ll get the chance to paddle in new settings, experience different coaching methods, and support the development of future coaches.

What you need & how it works:

You’ll need your own craft (kayak, canoe, SUP, etc.). The type of craft needed will depend on the specific session or qualification being assessed. Coaches post requests for guinea pigs on their Facebook pages or in dedicated groups. You simply contact them directly if you're available and keen to help.

Coaches to follow:

Keep an eye on the following Facebook pages for upcoming opportunities:

- Lyndsay McPhee – LM Coaching
- Darren – Fluid Skills
- Ian Dovey – Dovey Coaching

You can also join one of the many "Paddlesport Guinea Pig" Facebook groups to find even more sessions to get involved with. If you’re not sure where to start, speak to a member of the committee – many of us have volunteered as guinea pigs and can help point you in the right direction.

Get involved, give back, and grow your paddling!

– Karen Shaw

BOB'S OPEN CANOE WEEKEND – TALES FROM THE RIVER

AVCC held its annual Open Canoe event, based at Axmouth Campsite, over the weekend of 4 – 6 July 2025. The event was first held 39 years ago with the purpose of supporting the safe use of the open canoes on the sea. It is currently known as Bob's Open Canoe Weekend, after one of the founders of the event, Bob Ottley.

Many of the participants arrived on Friday afternoon and evening after a long drive and set up camp, whilst AVCC members erected the marquee and prepared for the weekend.

Saturday started with an assessment of the conditions by the leaders and a decision was made as to the safest option for the day's paddling. Normally trips to Lyme Regis and Beer would be organised but on this occasion, due to the weather, it was decided to have a trip to Beer and a trip up the estuary and river. 10 paddlers in five canoes set off to Beer in challenging conditions, but this was soon enhanced by an accompanying dolphin who played around the boats. They then enjoyed exploring arches and indulging in crab sandwiches. The other participants, comprising of families and paddlers (some with dogs), enjoyed a paddle up the river with a pack lunch.



Photograph: Donna Vincent

On Saturday evening, the club organised a BBQ for event participants and club members. This was enjoyed with the BBQ being provided for those who had food to cook, whilst salads were provided. Beer, Cider, and Pimms were also available to enjoy with the food, and afterwards, around the fire pit – where friendships were made and memories of previous paddles and experiences were recalled.

On the Sunday, again weather conditions were considered prior to a morning briefing on the trips. At this time, it was also an opportunity to thank everybody for coming, and those running the event, especially as those who had a distance to go were leaving early. Participants then decided on what they wanted to do to maximise their time on the water, be it a trip to Beer or go up the river.

Despite the wind curtailing the opportunities, it remained dry and was a successful event with many regulars and new participants expressing an intention to return on 3 July 2026! More details on next years event can be found on the AVCC homepage.

– Chris Robin



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SUNSHINE, SMILES, AND A SPLASH OF ADVENTURE ON THE RIVER AXE

On Sunday 20 July, the Axe Vale Canoe Club (AVCC) welcomed the Wayfarers Club and residents from The Old Rectory for an unforgettable day of paddling and laughter on the River Axe.

Now in its fourth year, this joyful collaboration saw 30 young people and adults with learning disabilities and complex needs take to the water in open canoes, alongside the skilled and supportive hands of the AVCC's experienced paddlers. The launch point? The scenic Axmouth Harbour, where excitement and anticipation filled the air.

Safety and smiles went hand in hand, and with buoyancy aids fastened and helmets secured, the group set off on a gentle, confidence-building journey upstream, before paddling back to the AVCC clubhouse. Thanks to a well-timed high tide, the trip back was able to include a quick paddle through a tunnel into the harbour, which brought with it plenty of excitement!

But the magic didn't end on the water.

Back on dry land, the AVCC clubhouse was transformed into a celebration space, where an enthusiastic team of shore-based volunteers hosted a fantastic tea party. With plates piled high with wonderful sandwiches and cakes, proud faces lit up as each participant received a commemorative medal from the day.

The event was a shining example of community, inclusivity, and the simple joy of shared experiences. For both the Wayfarers and Old Rectory groups and the AVCC team, the day was a moving reminder of the power of connection.

– Charlotte Bailey

Photograph: Tash Khan-Davis





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THE TEAM AT THE HELM

In April 2025, the Annual General Meeting brought members together to reflect on the past year and chart a course for the future. A huge thank you to the 2024 Committee for a successful year – and now, please meet the new crew taking the helm for 2025! Check out our meet the committee board in the clubhouse to put faces to the names!

Meet the Committee			
Chair	<i>Tash Khan-Davis</i>	Premise Officer	<i>Graham Baker</i>
Vice Chair	<i>Karen Shaw</i>	Safeguarding Officer	<i>Clare Herbert</i>
Treasurer	<i>Carl Strotton</i>	Safety Officer	<i>Ross Dell</i>
Secretary	<i>Colin Schofield</i>	Publicity Officer	<i>Charlotte Bailey</i>
Coaching Support Team	<i>Tash Khan-Davis Donna Vincent</i>	Premise Support	<i>Laurent Duverge Richard Denton</i>
Equipment	<i>Adrian Logan</i>		

STEERING SUCCESS: INTRODUCING OUR COACHING TEAM

Please feel free to approach any of the coaches about club activities and advice about Paddle UK qualifications.

<i>Geoff Hunt</i>	<i>Ross Dell</i>	<i>Richard Denton</i>	<i>Gill Hamlett</i>	<i>Carl Strotton</i>	<i>Debbie Rogers</i>
<i>Karen Shaw</i>	<i>Donna Vincent</i>	<i>Graham Baker</i>	<i>Colin Schofield</i>	<i>Deborah Stamp</i>	<i>Tash Khan-Davis</i>
<i>Chris Cullen</i>	<i>Angela Quick</i>	<i>Iain Hynds</i>	<i>Chris Robin</i>		