

Salisbury Canoe Club Introductory Course

Our introduction to paddlesport course is based on the Paddle UK Discover Award but it is extended to enable you to paddle effectively and safely with Salisbury Canoe Club. This course can be taken in any craft you would like to paddle; kayak, canoe, sit-on-top¹ or SUP.

“The Discover Award allows you to develop your decision making and practical skills for a fun and safe time on the water, taking you on the next steps towards becoming a proficient and independent paddler. Learn how to choose and effectively use equipment, whilst developing an understanding of the factors which affect your paddling; giving you the confidence to progress to making your own choices with the Explore Award.” (Paddle UK)

Salisbury Canoe Club's introductory course extends the Paddle UK Discover Award to focus what you need to know to have a fun, effective and safe introduction to paddlesport at the club and on the club's local waters, the river Nadder and the Avon.



Here is a simple outline of our course:

Before getting on the water

You will be advised on what to wear and what kit to use (we can supply all necessary kit), how to select a boat and where everything is kept in our clubhouse. Your coaches will make sure that you are briefed on all safety aspects of getting ready to get on the water and you will practise a “dry capsize drill” if you are paddling a closed cockpit kayak or be told how to manage a capsize/swim if using other craft.

On the water

Salisbury Canoe Club is situated on the banks of the river Nadder. This can be a challenging place to learn to paddle because of the flow, so we give you more practice on the water than you might get with a standard Discover Award.

You will learn how to control and manoeuvre your craft on the river and how to work with the current. You will get instruction and demonstrations from

¹ SCC do not currently have sit-on-top kayaks for club use, you would need to supply your own if you wanted to complete the course using a sit-on-top.



coaches and plenty of time for practice on short journeys and whilst playing fun paddling games.

Throughout these sessions coaches will continually reinforce safety practice and develop your knowledge of local hazards and how to manage them. Do be prepared to get wet at some point during these sessions as we do want you to be able to experience and demonstrate a capsize/swim and self-rescue as this is a key safety skill when paddling any craft.

Off the water

At the end of your sessions, your coach will give you a de-brief to reinforce what you have learnt and to prepare for the next session. Your coaches will also ask you what your paddling interests and aspirations are and will explain what options are available at Salisbury Canoe Club.

Please also feel free to give your coaches feedback at any time, we like it as it means we can improve our coaching and better tailor it to your needs.



At the end of the course our aim is that:

you will independently get ready to be on the water for club sessions and you will be able to select, check and look after the club equipment that is central to your safety.

you will be competent and safe to paddle in a led group as part of our normal Tuesday evening club sessions. You will also be able to paddle safely as part of a group on journeys around the Salisbury Loop and take part in club paddles on quiet waters on club weekend trips.

you will understand what your next steps are on your paddling journey and how Salisbury Canoe Club can support you with these.