

Marlow Rowing Club: Membership

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Scope

This document explains MRC's policy on membership.

This document then details the mechanisms by which the Trustees have implemented that policy, including the categories of membership that exist, the processes for managing membership and the discount schemes that apply.

Policy

Objectives

1. To promote participation in amateur (as in "unpaid", not as in "unskilled") rowing by as many people as possible on a non discriminatory basis. Provision is for all ages and to include the disabled (i.e. adaptive) but full provision to children and the disabled may be limited in particular by facilities, health and safety or coaching restrictions. Those with genuinely reduced financial circumstances should not be excluded.
2. To encourage continued participation in, and interest in, rowing.
3. To encourage as much participation in rowing from each individual as they are able (within the physical, time and other constraints they have).
4. To preserve rowing as the primary focus of MRC members.

Notes & underlying principles

- Objective 1: Promotion of rowing
 - As a charity, one of MRC's objectives is: "*the promotion of community participation in healthy recreation in particular by the provision of facilities for rowing, sculling and other sports*" and MRC must pursue that for "public benefit" i.e. on an open and non-discriminatory basis available to the public.
 - In order to support the first objective MRC runs an open entrance regime and provides membership discounts on a non-means tested (e.g. age groups) and means tested (i.e. to those with reduced financial circumstances).
- Objective 2 : Continued participation
 - Rather than just putting a large number of people through a few hours of Learn to Row (LTR), it is the continued participation in rowing that is the focus of the club (and central to ongoing health and fitness). What MRC can offer is the sustained participation available via a club. MRC will offer LTR, but as part of a pathway. The Trustees will monitor the conversion from LTR to full membership to determine the effectiveness of this objective.
- Objective 3: Maximum participation
 - The view of the Trustees is that participation in rowing is encouraged and reinforced by being in squads or groups (for most people) and that this is self perpetuating i.e. being in a squad or group – particularly being in a crew boat – provides a strong incentive to exercise.
 - Equally, for most squads/crewboats the focus is competition (at some level, whether it be Explore Rowing, Marlow Spring or Marlow Regatta at Dorney) and for many being competitive is what drives them to exercise. The example of others around them achieving success can lead those who have not previously tried to do so.
 - Devoting the time required to a full training regime is hard: where people are prepared to make that commitment it should be supported by access to necessary equipment. This will mean less access to others at this time, but MRC has a lot of equipment and boats and the Trustees' view is that they are not materially disadvantaged.
 - Therefore the third policy objective, and the procedures that support it, underlie the squad structure and give those squads priority on equipment.
 - The Trustees' view is that a vibrant social life is important to the club and social events, and the retention of members who have had to leave or take a break from actual participation is useful to the overall policy objectives.
- Objective 4: Rowing as the primary focus

- MRC's objectives encompass all sport, and MRC as a charity will support wider sporting objectives. However, it is the Trustees' s view that it is in the interests of the charity's interests to focus on rowing and they will take that into account when exercising their rights under the Articles to reject membership applications.

Implementation

Membership Categories

MRC has two key membership categories: Rowing and Non-Rowing members. Within those categories, MRC provides some subdivisions which have different rights over equipment and provide part of the non-means tested pricing discounts. The categories (with their letter identification codes, to allow mapping from club to MRC status) are:

Type	Qualification	Notes/Justification	Cost of membership
Rowing			
A: Adult	Open category. Default if no other category qualified for.	Standard membership. Can use all club equipment (see Equipment policy for details).	Published rate
A1: Adult under 23 in full time education	18-23 and in full time education	Standard membership. Can use all club equipment (see Equipment policy for details).	Published rate
Y: Para-rowing	Equivalent to A but for those who are legally "disabled"	Para-rowing members. Equipment eligibility as per "A". Definition of "Disability" as per legislation (Equality Act)	Published rate
B: Junior	Must be either aged 18 or less	A non-means tested category to encourage youth rowing.	Published rate
B1: Junior	Must be in J14 or WJ14 squad	As B	Published rate
Z: Para-rowing (Junior)	Equivalent to B, for those who are legally "disabled".	As per B, for para-rowing	Published rate
C: Junior Development Squad	Must be a member of the Junior Development Squad	The JDS is a specific learn to row scheme for juniors. The JDS membership category provides a non-means tested discounted joining rate.	Published rate

F: Temporary / Course Membership	Temporary discretion of trustees at the	To allow temporary membership for those for whom pro-rata membership is inappropriate for some reason. (eg short term memberships for university students wanting to use club during holiday periods) NB LTR course fees will include 4 months of temporary membership but on cessation of the course LTR graduates must take out an appropriate full membership to continue using club facilities	Fee agreed by trustees
G: Family	Category closed to new entries from 1/10/18. Formerly for up to 2 people who would qualify for category A, I, J or H and all children who would qualify for category B, B1, C, I or J. Must all be part of a “family group”	Family memberships which commenced prior to 30/9/18 will be reallocated to appropriate categories. For so long as the qualification criteria are met the cost of membership for these families will be capped at 2 x Cat A	2 x Cat A
H: Veteran	Must be aged 70 or greater on 1 Oct if renewing or on date of joining PLUS existing Cat H members who were over 65 on 1/10/17	A non-means tested discount category for older members.	Published rate
L: Lifetime Member	For those entitled to veteran membership who have been a full rowing member for a minimum of 5 years.	A non-means tested discount category for older members which offers, in return for a lump sum payment, discounted membership rate up to age 80 and free membership thereafter.	(80-Age on joining) X 70% X Cat H rate
Non-Rowing			
D: Gym	Gym member	Use of the gym. No “on water” activity.	Published rate

E: Supporter	Anyone who wishes to support the club but not row	There will be those who wish to have an association with the club but who are currently unable or unwilling to row because of family commitments, medical conditions, age, infirmity or because they have moved away. This wider support network is helpful to the club and such members are encouraged: however, if there is any concern that such members are not primarily supporters of rowing (e.g. merely wish access to the bar, or to take over the club for other purposes), then membership may be denied at the discretion of the Trustees	Published rate
I: Coxes	For coxes.	Coxes are an essential part of enabling rowing to continue, and so those who are only coxing receive a discount.	Published rate
J: Coaches	For coaches.	Coaches are essential volunteers within the club. They receive a discount if only coaching.	Published rate

Note that in all cases use of club equipment is subject to a club equipment policy which provides restrictions on use of equipment on various grounds for the benefit of the charity as a whole.

'Second Club' & Overseas Discounts

Some members require rowing memberships (i.e. A (Adult), Y (Adult Para-rowing), B (Child/Student), Z (Child/Student Para-rowing) and H (Vet)) or a gym membership (D), but will be physically present at the club only very infrequently, for example because:

- they train with the GB rowing squads
- they are at University and primarily train with their University team
- they live/work overseas and only row on occasional visits to the UK

Discounts on membership fees will be given at the discretion of the Trustees cases to reflect the reduced access required.

Partner Clubs: Corporate Membership

Sporting organisations involved with water based activities can apply to be a Corporate Member of Marlow Rowing Club. This Corporate Membership is a status for the undertaking comprising that club and not for individuals. Payment of the appropriate membership fee will entitle their members to access selected sporting facilities, which will be set out in the specific agreement with each club based on their needs and will also specify the membership fees due from that club and allow for usage and conduct rules to apply to that club's members. For clarity, Corporate Membership does not entitle the Corporate Member or individual members of that Corporate Member to vote on any matters affecting Marlow Rowing Club. Individual members of that other club remain members of the Corporate Member. The decision to admit a corporate member will be a case by case decision for the trustees.

Switching Membership Classes

Once you are a member, you may switch membership classes by making a written application to the Trustees (or their appointed representative – in practice this means the membership secretary or club secretary). The Trustees will generally approve such applications provided that you qualify for the category you wish to move to, and it is not full.

Juniors who no longer qualify for a membership category (e.g. having moved from Junior Development Squad, or on reaching the age of 18) must automatically transfer "up" to the relevant category (i.e. C to B1, B1 to B). Equally seniors who qualify for veteran status shall transfer "up" to vet membership status (i.e. A to H) at the next membership renewal date.

Members under the age of 18 and/or all those in categories B, C, F, or Z have no voting rights (in person or by proxy) at general meetings of the company.

Supporter Members

In order that Supporter members do not have a disproportionate control over the club, this membership category may not exceed 25% of the overall membership entitled to vote.

Honorary Posts and Memberships

By resolution at a general meeting, a person may be appointed an honorary member (in most cases, honorary life memberships), and exempted from payment of membership fees. They will have the rights and obligations of the category of membership they are elected to (which is Category A, Full, unless otherwise specified or Category Y, Para-rowing Full for those who were previously members in Category Y). Life Memberships are generally awarded to recognise extensive contribution to the club and rowing, either via competitive success (or coaching competitive success) or practical or financial support.

By resolution at a general meeting, a person may be given the honorary title of "Vice President". A club Vice President is not an officer of the club and has no powers.

Durations of Memberships

Administering membership is a significant administrative burden, even with online systems. Therefore memberships are therefore generally annual. Course memberships are for a fixed period of 4 months or the length of the course (whichever is longer) in order to assist integration into the club.

Timings and methods of payment

The membership year runs from 1st October to 30 September. Membership payments become due on 1st October for renewing members and for new members on the first of the month in which they join. Fees for members joining during the year are calculated on a pro-rata basis in which part-months are treated as full months.

Membership payments can be made as follows:

- 1) A single payment made within 30 days of the membership becoming due
- 2) 3 stage payments of equal amount at monthly intervals the final payment being made within 90 days of the membership becoming due. (If the payments are by cheques then all cheques are to be presented within 30 days of payment becoming due)
- 3) Monthly payments made by direct debit spread across the membership year (maximum 12), the first of which is to be received within 30 days of the amount becoming due. This method of payment will attract a premium (to be set by the Trustees) over methods 1 and 2

Similar arrangements apply for racking fees.

Means Tested Support

The various schemes above will cover many normal situations where the cost of full membership might otherwise be a barrier to entry. However, the Trustees appreciate that they will not cover all situations and that there will be cases where reduced financial circumstances might prevent participation in rowing.

Accordingly the Trustees either directly or via the membership secretary will:

- consider any requests for a different payment scheme for membership fees to deal with cashflow concerns; and
- consider any requests for a reduction or waiver of membership fees where they are satisfied that a person's personal circumstances would mean that they were not reasonably able to pay the membership fee otherwise due.

Joining Criteria

Membership of the club is open to anyone who wishes to join provided that they (a) apply in the correct format and (b) are accepted by the directors (MRC Articles of Association, 11.2) The directors may only refuse membership where (acting reasonably and properly), they consider it to be in the best interest of the charity to refuse the application (11.3). Those rejected will be informed in writing within 21 days (11.3.2) and have a right of appeal to the directors (11.3.3.).

Members may apply to join by (a) signing up for a LTR course (b) completing the paper membership form and submitting it to the Membership Secretary, Marlow Rowing Club, Marlow Bridge Lane, Marlow, SL7 1RH or (c) using the online form.

The Trustees will act reasonably and properly in considering any application, but in particular concerned to ensure that:

1. No-one who may represent a risk to other members (in particular, to children or vulnerable adults) is a member;
2. That no-one who has previously been expelled from the club, or membership of British Rowing joins the club unless the ban or expulsion was for a defined period that has expired.
3. That members wish to participate in rowing (or, in the case of supporter members) support rowing, and are not part of a group seeking to “carpetbag” or capture the club for other purposes. Supporter members should not be dominant in the membership, so if the supporter membership is exceeding 25% of the overall membership, the Trustees may decline further supporter members until the balance is restored.

Leaving the Club

MRC Articles of Association (Art. 13) deal with ceasing to be a member. Memberships are not transferrable, and end automatically:

1. on death of the member
2. the member fails to comply with any conditions of memberships set out in the rules or the Articles of Association
3. the member resigns in writing
4. the member is removed by a resolution of the Trustees who believe that it is in the best interests of the charity that the member’s membership is terminated. The member has to be given notice of this in advance and has the opportunity to make representations. The Trustees have created a Disciplinary Policy which deals with this in more detail.
5. The member fails to pay their membership fees within 30 days of the fee becoming due.

On ceasing to be a member, the former member (a) ceases to have any rights or claims upon the charity and (b) has no absolute right to a refund of their subscription (although the Trustees may do so if they consider it appropriate) and (c) continue to have a liability to pay the £10 guarantee on winding up of the company for a period of 1 year (see Art. 3).

Rules for Members

There are a number of rules/policies that members must agree to comply with when they join, and which can result in expulsion from membership if they are rejected or broken. These are listed on the website. (*Check they are on the new version*)

Rights of Members

The rights of members are primarily set out in the Articles of Association and this covers things like voting rights.

In addition, rowing members can use the club equipment, in accordance with the Equipment Use policy and the Safety Policy (which includes the Proficiency Scheme).

Certain activities/equipment is reserved to coaches and coxes.

Version Control

This document is version 5 of the Policy, adopted on 22nd August 2018 and supersedes any previous policies, including of the (unincorporated) Marlow Rowing Club. This document is a Rule of MRC created under Article 65 of the Articles of Association and is binding on members.