

Agenda – CUCBC Captains Start of Michaelmas Term meeting 2026
Tuesday 13th October 7pm

1. Apologies – Please inform CUCBC Committee if you cannot attend

(committee@cucbc.org)

- Some proxies nominated, no apologies received.

Attendance list is generated by from those who either identified themselves to our website or in the chat. This list may be incomplete.

angliaruskim.men

angliaruskim.women

caius.men

caius.women

christs.men

christs.women

churchill.captain

churchill.women

clare.men

clare.women

clarehall.men

clarehall.women

corpus.captain

corpus.men

corpus.women

darwin.women

darwin.men

downing.captain

downing.men

emmanuel.men

firstandthird.women

fitzwilliam.men

fitzwilliam.women

girton.men

girton.women

homerton.captain

homerton.men

homerton.women

hughes.men

hughes.women

jesus.men

jesus.women

kings.men

kings.women

lmbc.men

lmbc.women

lucycav.men

lucycav.women

magdalene.men

magdalene.women

murrayedwards.women

newnham.women

pembroke.men

pembroke.women

peterhouse.captain

peterhouse.men

queens.men

queens.women

robinson.men

robinson.women

selwyn.women

sidney.men

sidney.women

stcatharines.men

stcatharines.women

stedmunds.men

stedmunds.women

trinityhall.men

trinityhall.women

wolfson.men

wolfson.women

Unrepresented clubs: Vet School, Addenbrokes, Theological Colleges.

2. Intro to CUCBC Presentation – Hon Sec

See slides attached to the same email as these minutes.

3. Ratification of Senior Committee by Captains - For Vote

57 for, 0 against. 56 via website, one via DM.

Note: Dr David Gisbourne (né O'Loughlin) has changed his name and email address since last year.

4. Update on CUCBC Finances – Update from CUCBC Senior Treasurer

Conor speaks to this.

Last years account not yet finished. Should be done in a week or two. We are in an acceptable shape. We are not anticipating changing race fees this year except for a potential ~£10 per boat temporary increase for funding 200th anniversary stuff. When asked if they would support this temporary increase, numerous captains expressed support.

5. Camcon Fee Increase Consultation

Sent info to Captains, Senior Treasurers, Bursars, Heads of Houses and University Press Office.

Darwin - meeting in Waterbeach on [5th November](#). Should we turn up?

Conor - We understand this meeting is intended to be linked to consultation. It will not accept questions on the day. Questions must be submitted in advance before 19th October. Couldn't hurt to turn up.

Darwin - Our college provides one of the conservators but not linked to the boat club. We shouldn't be penalised for this. Supposedly CRA want to up race entry fees on Darwin.

Conor - Ignore that, it will not happen.

Peterhouse in chat: Our Boatman mentioned the option of having the EA (i think). take over responsibility for the river - and dissolving CamCon.

Apparently the parliamentary bit is overblown

Peterhouse speaking - We don't think this is a complicated situation.

Sounds like the EA exists and should take over.

Conor - It is not simple, their dissolution is not simple. They are not a company or a charity and are setup by acts of Parliament. There was an act from 1992 to allow DEFRA & Secretary of State to issue an Order which could be used to transfer their responsibility to the EA.

LMBC Men - What is the enforcement action if we all boycott?

Conor - They have the legal power to charge registration fees and could take you to court (though this would not be without expense). This is not legal advice: supposedly better to continue paying the old rate than boycotting entirely.

LMBC Men - Where does their authority come from for such an action?

Conor - 1851 & 1922 acts of parliament - linked from the Conservators about page.

LMBC Men - Why now and where is the money going. They have been neglecting their job what are they even spending money on.

Conor - Great question. They have not justified these costs and are planning to also up fees massively on punts. You can guess they want money to fix the locks but have not said this. They have spent £1.5million on Baitsbite in the last year.

LMBC Men - Given that there is no real enforcement action. Given that there has been no justification. Maggie has loads of money, but there would still be a lot of strain on a club of our size.

Conor - The best way to communicate this is via you as the clubs and via your members. Especially, if you pass these costs directly onto students. Speak to county and city council and your MPs.

LMBC Women - What can colleges do.

Conor - My ideal outcome would be EA takes over. Camcon says £1600 a day for weedcutting, EA registration is £35 - we currently pay £167. The savings would easily pay for plenty of weed cutting etc. We could have the best maintained river in the country for what we currently pay.

Corpus - MPs might not be useful. Do we contact council too?

Conor - Yes. Vice Chancellor of the University as well, Uni provides 3 of the board.

Wolfson men via chat - commonwealth citizens can also vote!

Selwyn via chat - Small typo (suggests the boats getting the least use WILL be registered): Some of the college clubs receive little to no funding from their college, and they would almost certainly be forced to register a much smaller part of their fleets, starting with the boats that see less use.

Vote to send proposed CUCBC response

48 in favour. 47 via website, 1 via DM.

6. Proposal from First and Third – early morning restrictions – for vote

Pembroke propose a modification. Conor provides wording

"That this rule will apply to all boats with the exception of tub pairs. Additionally, tub IVs will be exempted from rule 8.b.ii provided they

remain upstream of the Green Dragon footbridge."
FaT accept this modification.

Clare Hall via chat - Sorry, don't remember last year's discussions/implementation - in what situation would CUCBC choose to introduce the 3-2-2 rule instead of the 2-boat rule? Would this be used instead of the 2-boat rule or instead of introducing no rule at all?

Conor - Less blunt instrument.

Kieran - We will set the flag the day before. 95% of the time this will not change.

Caius - Have concerns. Good 7-8 colleges sent out 1 boat. Will this not disproportionately affect big boats.

Conor - Generally we have always attempted to keep the rules as uniform across the colleges as possible.

Luke - Nearly every Mich 2 boat rule is introduced, this is a new mechanism for controlling traffic.

Caius - Could this not be implemented until after Uni IVs.

Conor - This would not introduce it today, it just gives CUCBC the power to introduce it. Generally we look at 65-70 boats in the morning as the threshold for imposing restrictions. Likely not until week 4/5.

Andrew - Last year restrictions came into force 20-something-th of October.

Conor - If you don't ratify this the only options we have are to either activate the 15 minute rule or the two boat rule, and the former doesn't work well in Michaelmas.

LMBC - Why doesn't the 15 minute rule work?

Conor - Generally more useful when there is a larger difference between when novice and first boats can go out. If imposed it is hard for lower boats to get back before lectures after the clocks change.

Luke - There aren't really any lower boats in Michaelmas.

Caius - When would the rule come into force?

Conor - Currently, we do not need to consult captains for the two boat rule. The proposal simply adds the rule to CUCBC's toolbelt of possible rules. The 3-2-2 rule was a one year trial last year.

You are not voting to bring it in today - simply to give CUCBC the option to bring it in when traffic gets really bad.

Clare via chat - I am speaking on behalf on my captain so can't discuss too much but he discussed a separate novice and senior days. 2 mornings each then friday as mixed.

Sidney via chat - The separate novice and senior days did not work well 2 years ago

Selwyn via chat - Can we count senior crews with novice coxes (ie major traffic-jam causers) as novice crews for the purposes of 3-2-2?

Kieran - Novice coxes should never go out before 7:30am.

Conor- Novice cox MUST have someone on the bank.

Kieran - Their very first outing must be with senior rowers.

Voting change to 8.b

47 for, 6 against (all via website)

Voting change to 8.c

42 for, 11 against, 1 abstain (all via website)

7. Novice cox presentation information - Conor

Last year Alex (coxing rep) ran a presentation for novice coxes. He has offered to run that again this year. Venue and date tbd.

Clare/Jesus one is compulsory. CUCBC one is optional.

Clare/Jesus to be held on Thursday 26th November in the Riley Auditorium, Memorial Court, Clare College. (Awaiting final confirmation)

8. Insurance – you’ll be banned if you don’t update! - Kieran

We require public liability to be in excess of £1million.

In date: ARU, Downing, Clare Hall, FaT, Pembroke, St Catz, St Eddies. Everyone else will be banned from the river soon. Please update ASAP.

If you are registered with British Rowing and you are shamed in December for failing to complete an audit you will also be banned from boating.

9. College-run events – public notices

See slides.

10. Cox recruitment and training – NOW is the time! – Conor

Rules do not permit you to have more than one cox from another college per side of your club in Bumps. You need to start recruiting & training coxes now.

11. Uni IVs - Date, entries, eligibility - Zara

Most likely [Tuesday](#), [Wednesday](#), [Friday](#) but dependent on entry numbers.

Second division has restrictions, at most one Mays' colour rowing. No blues/half-blues/trial caps etc. Colleges whose first boat is below the second division may enter their first four into the second division of Uni IVs.

Earliest race start is [2pm](#), get in contact if you have restrictions.

12. Reminders for all captains and coaches:

Ensure lights are white, continuous, visible (new term, new batteries!), and attached to both the bow and stern of the boat (not people or riggers)

Lights should be on no matter the time if the flag is yellow due to fog. This makes it even more important that they be bright enough!

Noise regulations

You MUST be quiet before 7:30am. The council is an existential threat to college rowing if they find against us in an investigation. We will be heavily fining clubs for failure to comply.

Flag reminders

You MUST obey the flag. Zara has made a nice chart. (Handbook is the source of truth.)

	Who can boat? A reminder that license to boat does not mean that you should, crews and coaches should always assess the conditions themselves to decide if they think an outing would be safe and productive for them. It is ok to miss an outing!									
	In a tub pair				In any other boat class (4+, 8+ etc...)					
Flag	Novice rowers	Novice cox	Senior rowers	Senior cox	Novice rowers	Novice cox	Senior rowers (M1/W1)**	Senior cox (M1/W1)**	Senior rowers (other)	Senior cox (others)
Green 'everyone'	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Yellow/Green 'no novices'*	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Yellow 'no lower boats'	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Red/Yellow 'tubs only'	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Red 'nobody'	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	* tubs excepted		** or boats in the top two divisions of that term's Bumps. In Michaelmas this means only first boats							

ARU have lost a coxbox. It is entirely black, get in contact if you have seen it.

13. AOB

None raised.

Appendix A - Camcon

Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs: response to the 2027/28 Fee Review

Draft for the CUCBC to approve. Square brackets mark details the CUCBC must supply.
Send to info@camconservators.org.uk before midnight on 30 October 2026.

To: The Conservators of the River Cam, info@camconservators.org.uk **From:** Conor Burgess, Senior Committee, Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs **Subject:** Response to 2027/28 Fee Review Consultation: Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs

Dear Conservators,

Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs (CUCBC) oversees the 33 college boat clubs of the University of Cambridge, and organises the Lent and May Bumps. Between them, our clubs register about [number] boats with the Conservancy and give around [number] students a year the chance to row and/or cox, most of them learning the sport for the first time when they join.

We support a well-funded, safe navigation. We recognise that the Conservancy faces real financial difficulty, and that Jesus Green and Baits Bite locks present costs it has no reserves to meet. We object to the proposed 200% increase for rowing clubs, for the reasons below.

We also believe the proposals show that the Conservancy is no longer viable in its current form. The cost of maintaining public infrastructure, above all the locks, falls on registration fees paid in large part by pleasure craft. Most of those are rowing boats, canoes, kayaks and paddleboards. For many students, college rowing is their main source of exercise and one of the most important parts of their social life and wellbeing. Raising rowing fees to fund the locks is, in effect, a tax on students keeping physically and mentally healthy.

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposed changes to registration fees?

No. The increase falls on rowing clubs while canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, sailing craft and private powered boats rise by CPI alone.

The proposed fees are far out of line with other navigations. Rowing on the Cam is charged per boat, by class:

Boat	2026/27	Proposed 2027/28	Environment Agency, British Rowing rate
Eight	£167	£501	£35.44
Four	£127	£381	£35.44
Pair or double	£94	£282	£35.44
Single or tub pair	£80	£240	£35.44

On the proposals, a college eight would pay 14 times the British Rowing club rate charged by the Environment Agency on the Great Ouse, which the Cam joins.

The rowing rationale is not evidenced. The consultation cites £1,600 a day for weed-cutting and £80,000 per 100m of revetment. It does not say how many days of cutting, or how much bank work, is caused by rowing rather than by general navigation, weed growth in warm summers, or silting. A 200% rise for rowing needs a costed justification.

There is no weed-cutting cost in the accounts. The Conservators operate, by their own account, on a cost-recovery basis. Yet no set of audited accounts from 2020/21 to 2024/25 contains any line for weed cutting, weed clearance or vegetation management. Weed cutting sits inside a single annual maintenance contract covering the whole river and every user: £72,000 (2021/22), £147,312 (2022/23), £167,940 (2023/24) and £176,836 (2024/25). The Conservators propose to treble one group's fees for a cost they have never separately recorded or published.

Weed-cutting and dredging are not mainly for rowing. Weed is a major problem for narrowboats and cruisers: it wraps around rudders and propellers and blocks engine cooling intakes, causing engines to overheat. Silting affects deeper-draughted powered craft far more than rowing boats. Yet private powered vessels, the craft that most need a clear, deep channel, face a CPI-only increase.

Rowing boats do not use the locks. The largest cost pressure the Conservators face is the repair of Jesus Green and Baits Bite locks. Rowing boats never pass through either:

they are carried around them. Whatever the locks cost, it is not a cost caused by rowing. The auditors' going-concern warning in the 2024/25 accounts is likewise about the locks: it cites the cost of repairing Jesus Green Lock and the Conservators' longer-term commitments at both locks, not weed cutting or rowing.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposed changes to event fees?

No. Racing event fees were increased for 2026/27, and future rises are proposed at CPI. We note that Byelaw 7 requires the Conservators' consent for regattas and similar events, but we can find no provision in the 1851 or 1922 Acts, or in the 1996 Byelaws, allowing a charge for that consent. The towpath from Fen Road to Clayhithe is also covered by a Permissive Path Agreement under which Cambridgeshire County Council pays a licence fee for public use of the towpath. We ask the Conservators to state the legal basis for the racing event fees, the £830 per day river event fee and the £1,010 per day towpath fee.

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed changes to Section 15 application fees?

Yes. A CPI-linked increase is fair, and is within the "fair and reasonable consideration" allowed by section 15 of the 1922 Act.

Question 4: Do you agree with discontinuing PayPal?

Yes, provided the replacement is simple, such as an invoice requesting payment by bank transfer by a reasonable date. This would avoid card processing costs altogether.

Question 5: Is the rationale clearly explained?

No. The consultation gives no figures for current costs, the income the changes would raise, or what it would be spent on. On the Conservators' own figures, rowing is about 13% and commercial vessels about 56% of registration income. Tripling both would raise roughly £1 million more a year before any loss of users, taking total income from about £912,000 in 2024/25 to nearly £1.9 million. The consultation states no target for what the Conservators actually need to raise. Respondents cannot judge proportionality without:

1. The projected income from each proposal, allowing for users leaving the river.

2. A budget showing what the extra income would fund, including any share for the locks.
3. The cost of weed and bank work attributable to rowing, and how it was calculated.

Question 6: How would the proposed changes affect you or your organisation?

The impact would vary between colleges. Some of the larger and wealthier colleges may be able to absorb the increase. Many smaller college boat clubs cannot: they are funded purely by their members, who are full-time students, many of them on bursaries and scholarships. For those clubs, every pound of a registration increase comes directly from students' pockets. Typical college fleets illustrate the scale of the increase:

College club	Typical registered fleet	Current bill	Proposed bill	Increase
Large	10 eights, 4 fours, 2 doubles, 4 singles	£2,686	£8,058	£5,372
Medium	7 eights, 2 fours, 2 singles	£1,583	£4,749	£3,166
Small	4 eights, 1 four, 1 single	£875	£2,625	£1,750

[Add what this means per member per year for a typical small club, if known.]

Some of the college clubs receive little to no funding from their college, and they would almost certainly be forced to register a much smaller part of their fleets, starting with the boats that see less use. They may be forced to cut novice places and raise subscriptions for students, which would force some of those students out of the sport entirely. That would make rowing least accessible to exactly the students the University and colleges most want to include.

As a result, the income the proposals assume will not materialise. Fewer registered boats means less revenue from the largest group of registrations. The proposals therefore risk putting the Conservators in an even more perilous financial position than they are now.

Question 7: Are there alternative approaches the Conservators should consider?

Yes.

1. **Collect what is already owed before raising fees.** The Conservators' June 2025 circular records 72 unregistered powered vessels owing £59,689.72 for the 2025/26

year alone. That is roughly two-thirds of what all rowing registrations bring in. Yet the 2024/25 accounts show bad debts written off of £19,910 and only £1,800 spent on debt collection. Trebling fees for clubs that pay, while that sum goes uncollected, cannot be justified.

2. **Recognise British Rowing membership**, as the Environment Agency does, through a negotiated joint registration. This could provide income from British Rowing with a significant reduction in administration of rowing vessel registrations.
3. **Ask Cambridge City Council to use its existing power.** Section 12 of the Cambridge City Council Act 1985 allows the Council to pay the Conservators the amount of any revenue shortfall, up to the product of a 0.5p rate. Please say whether the Conservators have ever asked for a payment under section 12.
4. **Seek capital contributions from the University of Cambridge and the colleges** towards the lock repairs, rather than recovering capital costs from annual fees paid by student clubs. The University appoints three of the Conservators.
5. **Seek a transfer of the navigation to the Environment Agency.** Under the 1922 Act the Conservators can borrow no more than £50,000. Wider borrowing powers would not solve the problem: any debt would have to be repaid from registration fees, which only defers it. The only lasting solution is to place the locks and the navigation with a national body. The Environment Agency already runs the Great Ouse and Nene, and has the economies of scale, in-house staff and equipment for weed cutting and bank maintenance. It also has the enforcement and legal capacity to collect unpaid registrations, and the experience of managing locks.
6. **Fill the five vacant Conservator seats** before deciding on fee changes of this scale.

Question 8: Any other comments?

Rowing fees have already risen far faster than those of the craft now offered a CPI increase. Comparing the Conservators' own published schedules:

Boat	2013/14	2026/27	Increase
Eight	£61	£167	+174%
Four	£52	£127	+144%
Double scull or pair	£48	£94	+96%
Single scull or tub pair	£41	£80	+95%
Canoe up to 5m	£41	£52	+27%

Trebling the eight would take it to £501, a 721% rise in fourteen years, against 27% for a canoe. Both are manually propelled. The Conservators' own historic practice, recorded in their January 2025 committee notes, is to increase fees by CPI plus 2.5%. Singling out rowing for a 200% increase departs from that practice.

The Conservators' Business Plan 2023–2028 says that a disproportionate part of the burden of financing the Conservancy already falls on those who pay registration fees, and that the cost of maintaining the river weighs unfairly on those who use it while many others benefit without contributing (p. 35). It found little room for increasing income from existing sources (p. 40), and planned to fund capital works from General Fund surpluses, investment income and new moorings. It forecast operational income of £983,944 for 2027/28, or £1,105,537 with new moorings (p. 41). The proposals would take income to nearly £1.9 million, close to double that forecast, with no explanation of what has changed.

The same plan acknowledged that "asset maintenance in the past has been inadequate" and that "the failure to do lock inspections regularly increases the risk of a lock failure" (p. 39). We ask what became of the moorings proposals, and why the cost of past under-investment in the locks should now fall on rowing.

The consultation has also had little publicity. It initially only appeared under the "More" menu item, was unavailable for some of the consultation period, and was only added to the Notice Board on the website upon prompting.

More fundamentally, the locks are public infrastructure, and the people who row, paddle and sail on the Cam should not be expected to fund them. We ask the Conservators to acknowledge that the current model is not sustainable, and to open discussions with Defra and the Environment Agency on a transfer of the navigation.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the Conservators.

Yours faithfully,

Conor Burgess, Senior Committee, on behalf of Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs - seniorcommittee@cucbc.org

Appendix B – Proposal from First and Third

NOTE: This is the proposal submitted by First and Third, this is not what passed, see above.

Explanation

Currently the only early morning traffic restriction that can be unilaterally imposed by CUCBC is the two boat rule. I propose a change to the handbook to allow them to impose the 3-2-2 rule trialled last Michaelmas as a less blunt method of controlling traffic.

They would retain the ability to impose the harsher two boat rule if the 3-2-2 rule is deemed insufficient.

The 3-2-2 rule as approved by vote of captains last year was:

Each club is limited to having on the water at any given time before 08:30 on weekdays:

1. A maximum of three crews, and
2. A maximum of two senior crews, and
3. A maximum of two novice crews.

This was then amended at the EGM held on 25/10 last Michaelmas to exempt tub IVs from the 3-2-2 rule.

Existing rule 8.a-c of the Restrictions on Use of the River section of the handbook

8.a: That the CUCBC Executive Committee shall introduce restrictions on the number of boats that may be on the water between Lighting Down and 0830hrs on Mondays to Fridays in Full Michaelmas and Lent Terms as necessary. These restrictions will be enforced by the Early Morning Marshals.

8.b: That on the date from which restrictions are introduced until further notice, each College Club will only be permitted to have two boats on the river at any one time in the restricted period.

8.c: That this rule will apply to IVs and VIIIs but not to singles, pairs or tub pairs and will only apply during the hours stated above.

I propose 8.b is changed to the below:

“That on the date from which restrictions are introduced until further notice, each College Club will only be permitted to have either:

- i. two boats on the river at any one time in the restricted period; or
 - ii. three boats on the river at any one time including a maximum of two senior crews and a maximum of two novice crews in the restricted period.
- as chosen by the CUCBC Executive Committee.”

Additionally I propose 8.c is changed to the below:

"That this rule will apply to all boats with the exception of tub pairs. Additionally, tub IVs will be exempted from rule 8.b.ii."

This updated wording would lead to three changes in meaning:

- 1) Maintaining the exemption of tubs IVs from the 3-2-2 rule as voted on by captains last year.
- 2) Doubles, quads and octos are not mentioned as either allowed or disallowed in the original rule. New wording would ensure it is clear that they count towards a club's quota.
- 3) Additionally, it would remove the exemption single sculls and fine pairs had. While they rarely go out in the morning their slow speed and lack of cox can lead to traffic jams.