



Vesta Rowing Club

Welcome to Vesta

In order to make you feel part of the club as soon as possible we have prepared the following welcome pack. This should hopefully tell you most of what you need to know as a member of Vesta. If you have any questions please feel free to ask any member of the committee or the coaches. This is not a list of the club rules, which are available from the office or on the website, but more as helpful information.

General

Membership:

You will be expected to fill in a membership form before boating from the club. This covers the club for a number of issues including insurance. For the first calendar month after filling in the form, you may row for free. At the end of the calendar month you will be expected to pay your annual subscription. This can be paid by a single cheque, or by filling in a direct debit form.

Anyone intending to row or scull from Vesta must be a full member. Currently the fees are:

- Full £360
- Student £100
- Honorary £50
- Racking £125

If you join after the Men's Head the subs are half-price, and if you join after Henley Royal Regatta, you pay the full subs but these will cover you for the following year too!

- Coxes and coaches are eligible for honorary membership.
- Students must be in a full time course for the duration of that year (the Vesta membership runs from 1st October to 30th September so it's pretty close to the academic year).
- Anyone with a boat racked at Vesta is liable for subscriptions at the full member rates and rack rent.

There is a waiting list of members wishing to rack their boats at the club. This list is with the captain and ONLY the captain may add you to it or issue you with a boat rack. As the club is a small building available boat racks tend to go to new club boats first, but don't despair, racks do regularly become available.

Social:

Vesta is a welcoming and social club. Our members are our club and we like them to all take part in all club activities as much as possible. Our bar is well

known and liked in rowing communities because of its friendly atmosphere and we'd like to keep it that way. Alcoholic and soft drinks, snacks and sweets are also available behind the bar. The bars opening hours are:

- Monday – Thursday from approximately 7:30pm
- Closed on Fridays
- Open on Saturdays and Sundays from around 10:00pm

The club is available to hire, to members only, for private parties. However the club is never shut to members, so keep this in mind if planning an event. The only time members are not permitted access to the club is on the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race day. During the Boat race the club is open to ticket holders only (notices will go up informing you when and where to purchase tickets). This is to prevent overcrowding in the club.

Food is provided on most Saturday and Sunday lunch times and on Thursday evenings. Please turn up and support the volunteers who make the food. All proceeds from food sales go directly to the boat-buying fund. Most of our new equipment and club maintenance is bought and paid for via the profit made over the bar. So instead of complaining that you want to row in a newer boat, pop up to the bar and buy a drink to ensure there's money to pay for one. We regularly hold parties and these are big fundraisers for the club. Watch the website and notice boards for details.

Coaching:

All our coaches and the members of the committee are volunteers. They give up their free time to the club because they love Vesta and the sport of rowing. Please treat them with respect and consideration. Your membership fees only cover the cost of insuring the boathouse and the fleet. Paying membership doesn't entitle you to coaching nor does it guarantee an outing in a boat. All that said, if you do have an issue or a complaint please pass it on to your coach or a member of the committee. If people are unaware of issues, nothing will ever be done about them.

Racing

Vesta Kit:

If you wish to race for Vesta at all you will need to buy a club one-piece. You may be able to borrow one from another member of your squad, but it will be your responsibility to have one. Regattas have been known to disqualify crews (and entire clubs) from events for athletes not turning up in matching club kit. Although it might sound petty, its something we have to adhere to if we want our results to count. Kit is available via the [website](#) or the kit committee on kit@vrc.org.uk.

ARA Membership:

Almost all races insist that athletes are members of the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA). This is the governing body for the sport of rowing. It is your responsibility to ensure you are a member. Forms for this are available in the bar or from their website www.ara-rowing.org. Some regattas allow athletes to buy day tickets, which allow you to be a member for the day. These cost £16 so it is worth becoming a full member.

Remenham:

Vesta is a founder member of the Remenham club. The Remenham club is a private, members-only club on the banks of the Thames, halfway down the Henley Royal Regatta course. Many Vesta members are also members of Remenham and will be able to get you day or weekly guest tickets if you wish to attend the Royal Regatta.

Website and Mailing lists

Everything you need to know about the running of the club tends to be on our very well maintained website at www.vrc.org.uk

This will have a list of all recent Vesta news items with detailed links if necessary. Also there is a little diary of club events and upcoming Regattas or Head Races that we are planning to attend.

Mailing lists:

We maintain two mailing lists for active members, one for the women's squad and one for the men's. If you want to receive news on outings, training, events, tests and general squad information, please email our webmaster, Chris, at chris@vrc.org.uk, to get added to the list. We do use this extensively and strongly suggest you get onto it.

Rowing Details:

There is a [members only section](#) on the website. Please get a logon for this and enter you details. This is where we'd like you to give us your availability. It's very important for us to know who is not available on a weekend day so that we can plan the crews we intend to boat. Please enter your availability by Thursday to give your coaches time to make arrangements. If you do not give us your availability you may not find yourself in a boat come the weekend.

The Club House

House Officer:

There is a house officer responsible for the care of the buildings. This includes light bulbs, broken locks, windows, doors etc. all the way down to running out of toilet paper etc. (Toilet paper is stored at the top of the stairs in the men's changing room. Ladies, if you require some, please knock on the men's change room door and request some). Please contact the house officer if you notice anything that requires attention dick@vrc.org.uk

Security and locking up:

There are lockers for members' use in the both changing rooms. Please keep your valuables safely locked up, as we have been prey to thieves in the past. There are also security codes on the doors to the changing rooms. Your coach will make sure you have access to these.

Similarly if you bring your bicycle to the club, please make sure it is locked up, as we cannot guarantee its security.

If you know, or vaguely suspect, that you are the last person at the club in the evening or on the weekend, please ensure that you shut and lock all the boat house doors, switch off all the lights and fans and exit the club by the bar door upstairs. It's better to lock up than not – nobody can get stuck inside!

Safety on the Water

The club's Safety Officer is Paul Musgrave (the Deputy Captain), paulm@vrc.org.uk.

As with all water sports, there are a few risks associated with the sport. At Vesta, there are a few simple rules and practices that everyone needs to be aware of and adhere to, to ensure both individual safety and the safety of other water users. These are listed below along with a few brief notes on how things work at Vesta.

In the boathouse –

- **First aid kits** are located: behind the bar, in the women's changing room (on red lockers), and gents' changing room (under the stairs to the loft).
- A **phone with emergency phone numbers** can be found: behind the bar, and upstairs on the wall between the bar and the front room.
- All **damage to club property** must be recorded on the white board in the crew room, so it can be fixed.
- Be careful walking around in the boathouse as there are many sharp bits of boat sticking out.
- Do not use the **gym** until you have been shown what to do. We would prefer members not to do weights alone.
- Beware of the bar. It is not known as the best one around for nothing!!!!

Before rowing –

- You should acquaint yourself with the **local navigation rules** on the Thames, details of which are posted around the club. The **Water Safety Code** is also on the board in the gym and is worth a read.
- We have a list of [approved coxswains and steerspersons](#). If you are not on this list you must not steer a boat, unless you have a coach teaching you alongside. Please contact [Paul Musgrave](#) if you want to be added to this list.
- When new to the club **do not go out alone**. To start with, rowers should have a coach alongside.
- Do not take a boat without **permission** from a coach or a committee member. The exception to this is that there is a list of coxes and steersmen who are approved by the committee and that list is published on the club notice board in the bar.
- Before an outing **check your boat is safe**. Check the boat is in a fit condition, paying particular attention to heel restraints, buoyancy bags, and bow balls. If you are new to the sport and this means nothing to you, do not go onto the water until you are aware of what these are and why they are important.
- **Life jackets** must be worn by anyone coxing or in a launch.
- If you are **going out alone** or in a crew without a coach, especially at off peak times, sign out on the board at the top of the rear stairs, and remember to sign in again!

- We do not recommend **rowing at night**. If you must, make sure your boat has a bright white light fore and aft. Lights must be displayed an hour before and after sunrise and sunset.
- All persons participating in rowing, including coxes must be able to **swim** (50m in light clothing is considered a minimum).

Whilst rowing -

- We row all year round, in all conditions. If you are ever in a situation you are not happy with or feel you cannot cope with, you must say so.
- XXXXXX **If you fall in DO NOT leave your boat.** XXXXXXXX

This very rarely happens, but if it does hold on to your boat and swim WITH the stream of the river towards the bank.

- Should you be involved in an **accident** tell someone about it. We need to know and we are not in the habit of blaming people for mistakes. There are **3 things that need doing**: An incident form needs to be filled in, the date, place, time etc needs to be logged on the incident log (both of which are on the safety board) and any damage needs to be logged on the white board in the crew room.

Finally, if you are not sure about anything here or at any time do not hesitate to **ask**.

Putney and the Thames

A map of the river, covering the championship course is included. Please always be aware of the river, it can have a very, very strong current and the conditions can change very rapidly. Also different sections of the river can be under different conditions due to wind and tide. Please familiarise yourself with landmarks on the river as this makes following coaching instructions a great deal easier. Please avoid the shallows at all times as detritus from shopping trolleys to scooters are often imbedded in the mud and can easily rip holes in the bottom of a passing boat.

Always boat and land with your bows pointing into the stream. This is not only easier but great deal safer. As a quick check, make sure your bows are pointing in the same direction as the bows of the moored boats.

Try not to boat during or just after the turn of the tide. The tide generally takes longer to turn higher up the river than it takes you to row there so other river users will still be adhering to the channel rules of the tide before you boated. Take particular care to look out for other crews when boating after the tide has turned.

Be aware at low tide when passing through Hammersmith Bridge as sometimes the inner arch, through which you should pass, is too shallow, in which case you need to go through the centre arch (keeping as close to the buttress on your right as possible). When coming down the river at low tide avoid the racing line through the bridge and go wide as crews coming up will need that space.

Know where the crossover points are. When crossing over (even while doing a piece) you will need to stop and wait until it is safe to cross. When rowing with the tide, look out for other boats at the cross over points in case they have timed it wrong. Never stop in the middle of the river at a crossover point. It is your responsibility to be in the right place on the river. Make sure you know where that is before boating and ask someone if you are unsure.

ALWAYS call out to another craft in good time to avoid a collision.

Sailing boats have the right of way over rowing boats. They also tack (change direction) suddenly and are at the mercy of the wind and tide, so be aware and cautious of them.

Motor vessels should give way to rowing boats, however it takes a lot longer for a larger vessel to change direction than it takes for rowing boat to get out of the way. Remember that at low tide, larger vessels have to stay in the stream because of their depth. Another river user is the canoeist. These seem to have no idea of the rules, boat speeds, or relative manoeuvrability.

There are fish in the Thames and that means there are fishermen. Please be aware of their lines and show a degree of courtesy towards them. They have a right to enjoy the river as well.

Lastly, a word about other rowing boats and their coaching launches. When rowing into the tide, try to overtake slower vessels on the outside. Always be polite to other people.

Be considerate of everyone else on or using the river – let's ensure the club has a good name