



**CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM  
(The Conservancy)  
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**CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION 2025/26**

River Cam Conservancy Act 1922 and byelaws

**1. Definitions**

**Anglian Pass:** An annual pass issued to a power-driven vessel registered under an agreement between the Conservancy, the Environment Agency and the Middle Level Commissioners allowing freedom to navigate all the waters regulated by the three authorities.

**Block Licences:** a Block Licence is a single licence issued to a specific entity such as a club, boating organisation or boathouse under which all vessels described within that licence are registered.

**Cam Conservancy Area:** The River Cam between King's Mill and Newnham Mill Ponds, and Bottisham Lock, including connected backwaters, as more particularly defined in Section 13 of the River Cam Conservancy Act 1922.

**Conservancy Based Vessel:** Any power-driven vessel which is kept in the Cam Conservancy Area when not being used for cruising and shall include:

- (a) any power-driven vessel in respect of which there is a right or licence to moor in the Cam Conservancy Area for a period or periods exceeding ninety days, or
- (b) any power-driven vessel which has been present in the Cam Conservancy Area for a period or periods exceeding ninety days during the twelve months immediately preceding the registration year for which registration is sought except where the owner declares that the vessel is now based elsewhere, and the vessel is in fact so based.

**Houseboats:** A 'houseboat' is defined in the Byelaws as '*a vessel (including any power driven vessel from which the means of propulsion has been removed) which is decked or otherwise structurally covered in and which is primarily intended not as a means of transport but as a place of habitation (whether by day and night or one or the other) or as a place for accommodation or receiving persons for the purpose of shelter, recreation, entertainment, or of witnessing regattas or other events, or as club premises, or as an office or as a kitchen, pantry or store place.*' Therefore, if a boat has an engine, whether or not it is in working order, it is not a houseboat, and the registration category will be that which refers to the length of the boat and the size of the engine.

**Master:** The Byelaws define "Master" as 'any person whether the Owner, Master, or other person lawfully or wrongfully having or taking the command charge or management of the vessel for the time being including the Cox in an eight, four or pair or if no Cox then the stroke oarsman or oarswoman.'

The word "master" shall have that meaning wherever it appears in any Conservancy documents.

**Owner:** The Byelaws define “Owner” as *‘the person whose name appears in the registration records of the Conservators for such craft or should have appeared there had the vessel been registered with the Conservators’*.

The word “owner” shall have that meaning wherever it appears in any Conservancy documents.

**Recognised Member Organisation (RMO)** when applied to a punt, canoe or kayak, means such a vessel which is owned and operated by a 'Recognised Member Organisation' and used exclusively and solely by its members or its or their non-paying guests. 'Recognised Member Organisation' means the University of Cambridge, its colleges, and such clubs or other not-for-profit organisations as the Conservators formally recognise for this purpose.

**Private** when applied to any vessel, means a vessel (other than an RMO vessel) which is not at any time used or operated by the owner, operator or master with a view to profit or other financial gain, either directly or indirectly from such use or operation, or with a view to profit or other financial gain from any related transaction.

**Commercial** when applied to any vessel, means a vessel which is not an RMO or private vessel. Any vessel which is not registered as a commercial vessel and which is at any time used or operated with a view to profit or other financial gain, either directly or indirectly, from such use or operation or from any related transaction shall be considered unregistered under the Byelaws.

**Tender:** a small boat or dinghy (which is not a punt, canoe, kayak or paddle board), towed or carried by another vessel, and, if powered, with an engine of no more than 4 horsepower.

**Vending Punt:** A commercial punt which is used solely for the sale of food and/or beverages, and which does not carry passengers other than the crew engaged in the vending business.

**Visiting Vessel:** Any power-driven vessel which is currently registered with another licensing authority, and which holds an Anglian Pass.

## 2. Registration

- a) **General.** All vessels kept or used in the Cam Conservancy Area must be registered with the Conservators. Registration permits a vessel to be kept or used in the Conservancy Area and is not a charge for services provided. Registration must be obtained before the beginning of the registration year (1<sup>st</sup> April) or before the vessel is brought into the Cam Conservancy Area. Failure to register a vessel while it remains in the Conservancy Area is an offence which may lead to criminal or civil legal action being taken.
- b) **Application for Registration.** Except in the case of block licences, and except in the case of commercial punts and club rowing vessels were agreed by the Control Officer, a separate application form must be completed for each vessel.  
Application forms are available on the Conservancy website. Only one person or organisation may be registered as the owner of a vessel. Applications by boat clubs, societies or limited companies must be signed by a director, secretary or a duly authorised person.  
An application will only be treated as received by the Conservancy when it is:
- fully and properly completed and signed.
  - accompanied by any documents required by these Conditions.
  - accompanied by the correct payment.

Documents to be submitted with an application must include:

- (i) in all cases (other than block licences) a copy insurance certificate evidencing a valid and current insurance policy covering the vessel(s) (see paragraph 4 below).
- (ii) where required, evidence of a current boat safety certificate or valid declaration of conformity (see paragraph 5 b) below).
- (iii) in the case of steamboats, a copy of a valid and current boiler inspection certificate (see paragraph 5 d below).
- (iv) where required, in the case of powered hire craft, a copy of a valid and current MCA passenger certificate (see paragraph 5 e below).

- c) **Registration Numbers.** Every vessel (including vessels covered by Block Licences) must be identified by being marked with its registration number on both sides of the hull so that it is clearly legible at a minimum distance of 15 metres. Failure to comply with this requirement is a breach of the Byelaws making the vessel owner or master liable for prosecution.  
A registration number is one which is issued by the Conservancy (beginning with “CC”) or which is recognised by the Conservancy, such as Rowing Codes, and registration numbers issued by other navigation authorities. A registration number must be unique to the vessel.

### 3. Conditions Applying to Certain Categories of Registration

- a) **Conservancy based vessels.** The owners of all Conservancy based vessels must purchase a full annual licence from the Conservancy.
- b) **Discounted annual licenses:** The following vessels will qualify for a discount of 50% of the annual registration fee:
  - (i) A private powered vessel which becomes a Conservancy based vessel after 1 October in the registration year.
  - (ii) Any other private vessel which has not been used on Conservancy Waters during the registration year before 1<sup>st</sup> October.  
Provided that any such vessel has not been registered with the Conservancy in the registration year preceding that in which the discount is given.

No further other discounts or return of registration fees will be given for lack of use of a vessel or its removal from Conservancy Waters before the end of the registration year.

- c) **Visiting Vessels:** A vessel holding a current and valid Anglian Pass is registered to be used within the Cam Conservancy Area.
- d) **Commercial Vessels.**  
**Commercial punts**, other than vending punts, may only operate from a recognised punt station with the permission of the landowner or occupier.  
All “wide-beam” punts (i.e. punts over 1.0m and under 1.95m in width) must be registered as commercial vessels and will not be accepted for registration as private vessels.  
No punt over 1.95m in beam will be accepted for registration.  
There is a Code of Conduct for Commercial Punt Operators which applies to punts classed as commercial or RMO vessels. Punts shall carry no more persons than specified by the builder, and it shall be the responsibility of the punt operator and vessel master to ensure that any vessel is safely loaded, having regard to the size and design of the vessel, and the prevailing conditions. In no case shall any punt carry more than 13 persons including the chauffeur.

**A Limited Company or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)**, which is the owner of a vessel, may only register such vessel as a commercial vessel notwithstanding that there may be a private tariff for that class of vessel. If a vessel is registered to a Limited Company or a Limited Liability partnership (LLP), and that Company or LLP is dissolved, the vessel shall thereafter be unregistered.

**Vending punts** will only be registered at the absolute discretion of the Conservators, and subject to such conditions as the Conservators may impose, having regard to safety and to the prevention of obstruction to traffic on the river, and any other matters relating to navigation on the river. An applicant registering a vending punt shall submit a business proposal to the Conservancy setting out the manner in which the proposed vending business will be conducted. A guidance note for the preparation of such a business proposal is available on request from the Conservancy's offices. Registration category 51 will apply and the fee to be charged is at the discretion of the Conservators in each particular case.

- e) **Discounts for Electric Engines.** Owners of vessels powered by an electric engine shall receive a 25% discount on the appropriate registration charge, provided that the sole method of propulsion is an electric engine/s and no other propulsion or charging engine is carried.
- f) **Discounts for Tenders (see definition).** Owners of tenders shall receive a 50% discount on the appropriate registration charge provided that the tender is registered at the same time as the parent vessel.
- g) **Prohibited Craft and Activities.** Personal watercraft (water scooter, jet ski, wave runner, water bike, sea doo, or other such devices) are not permitted on the navigation. Water skiing, aquaplaning, kiting or parachute towing are not permitted.

#### 4. Insurance

- a) All vessel owners must hold public/third party liability insurance in respect of their vessels to a limit of not less than £1,000,000 (one million pounds). Owners of commercial vessels must hold public/third party liability cover of not less than £3,000,000 (three million pounds).
- b) All applications for registration must be accompanied by a copy of the insurance certificate evidencing a valid and current insurance policy covering each vessel for which registration is sought and must provide evidence that the required level of public/third party liability insurance is in force at the start of the registration period. The insured party must be the same as the owner. The requirement to produce proof of insurance does not apply to those vessels registered under a block licence or to applicants for annual visitor licences.

#### 5. Construction and safety standards.

- a) Where the size of an engine or its presence is not immediately obvious, the category requiring the higher payment for the size of vessel will apply, unless it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of Conservancy that a lower registration category should apply.
- b) All powered vessels (other than a private, open, outboard powered vessel), and any vessel that has any form of enclosed accommodation or which is decked over the greater part of the hull, or open vessels which carry cooking, heating, lighting or refrigeration appliances, must have a valid Boat Safety Scheme Certificate, or, for vessels less than four years old, a valid Declaration of Conformity

under the Recreational Craft Directive. A vessel will not be registered unless it complies with these requirements.

- c) A private, open, outboard-powered vessel is one that is propelled solely by an outboard engine, without a fixed fuel system. The vessel must not be carrying, or fitted with, domestic cooking, heating, refrigerating, or lighting appliances, or other permanent electrical systems.
- d) Steamboats must have a current inspection certificate, issued by a competent boiler inspector. For open vessels only, this inspection certificate will be accepted in place of a certificate issued by the Boat Safety Scheme.
- e) Powered hire craft operators must provide a copy of a valid passenger certificate issued by the MCA where required.

## 6. Payments

- a) **Methods of Payment:** Payments are accepted by online bank transfer, cash (only via Barclays counter credit), or online via PayPal (including debit / credit card payments). Cheques will not be accepted, and PayPal cannot be used for registration of commercial vessels. A vessel will not be registered unless the registration fee has been paid in full, or, where payment in instalments is permitted as set out below, the first of such instalments has been paid.
- b) **When Payment by Instalments is Available:** The owner of any private powered vessel with an annual registration fee over £300 may, with the written consent of the Chief Executive Officer, pay the fee by standing order in ten equal monthly instalments, from April to January. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange the standing order with their bank.

The owner of any commercial vessel may, with the written consent of the Chief Executive Officer, pay the annual registration fee in four equal instalments. The first instalment will be payable on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. Should any vessel be put on the river after the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, any instalments due on that vessel shall be immediately payable.

- c) **Conditions for Payment by Instalments:** Payment by instalments can only be made with the express written consent of the Chief Executive Officer. The request for consent must be made annually and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer. Consent will not be given if registration fees for any previous year are outstanding or any other monies owing to the Conservators by the vessel owner are unpaid. Where payment is made in instalments, registration of the vessel is conditional on full payment being made, and in the event of default in any payment, the full amount of the outstanding registration fee will become due. Failure to pay the outstanding amount on demand will result in the vessel becoming unregistered and the owner liable to prosecution.

## 7. Failure to Register or Pay

Failure to register a vessel or pay a registration fee is a breach of the Byelaws which may result in a criminal prosecution.

The Conservators will instruct debt collectors to recover unpaid registration fees, or other debts relating to a vessel, which are owing to them. If necessary, civil proceedings for the recovery of the debt will be brought. It is a term of these Conditions that if any such action is taken, the Conservators shall, in addition to the amount owing, be paid the reasonable fees and costs of any debt collector or solicitor employed for the recovery of the debt, and all court fees and costs relating thereto.

## 8. Administration Charges

An administration charge of between £26 and £53 shall be payable to the Conservators where in the discretion of the Control Officer an applicant for registration has engaged in lengthy correspondence.

## 9. Change of Ownership

When ownership in a vessel is transferred, both the former and the new owners must complete the Conservancy Change of Ownership Form which is available on the Conservancy website, providing the date of transfer of ownership and the name and contact details of the new owner. Until such time as a fully completed and signed form is received by the Conservators, the person recorded as owner in the Conservancy records shall be treated for all purposes as the owner, including liability for registration fees or any breach of the byelaws.

## 10. Revocation of Registration

Where there has been a breach of the Byelaws or of these Conditions of Registration, the Control Officer may, at their discretion, revoke the registration issued to the vessel involved in the breach. Such circumstances are not limited to, but may include:

- Use of a private registered vessel as a commercial vessel
- Use of a vending punt for the carriage of passengers for reward
- Failure to maintain payment of instalments.
- Incorrect declaration of the length of a vessel

Where registration has been revoked, the vessel must immediately be removed from the Cam Conservancy Area, unless it is re-registered, in which event full annual registration fees will be payable irrespective of any earlier registration fees which may have been paid.

## 11. Reporting of Accidents

Any accident that occurs during boating or other activities in the Cam Conservancy Area must be reported to the Conservancy if:

- (a) it involves injury to persons, in which case it shall be reported within 24 hours of the occurrence, or
- (b) it involves significant damage to property; in which case it shall be reported with 48 hours of the occurrence. Or
- (c) irrespective of (a) or (b), it is considered reportable by a rowing club to British Rowing, in which case a report shall be made at the same time to the Conservancy or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Damage to rowing craft taking part in Bumping Races that does not result in injuries to persons need not be reported.

## 12. Events and navigational restrictions

When an approved event is taking place, it is the duty of the master of every vessel that is under way to obey the instructions of event marshals as far as is consistent with safe navigation.

In the interests of safety, the Control Officer may, on behalf of the Conservators, make an order designating a certain period or periods when commercial punts may only be hired out under the command and control of a professional chauffeur. Punt operators shall ensure that private hire punts are returned before the start of such a designated period and not hired out before the end of the period. Notice of such orders shall be given by the Control Officer in writing to punt operators and published on the Conservancy website.

### **13. Useless, derelict or abandoned craft**

If a vessel is beyond economic repair, the owner should contact the Conservancy's office to arrange for its removal (charges apply). If a boat sinks at its mooring or is deemed to be a hazard, the full cost of its eventual removal, storage and disposal will be charged to the owner, unless the owner personally arranges for removal.

Vessels found adrift or abandoned by the Conservancy, or deemed derelict, may be recovered, and retained under the byelaws. Craft recovery fees are twice the relevant full annual registration fee with a minimum charge of £58.00 and subsequent storage charge of 25% of the registration fee per week with a minimum of £18.00.

Where a sunken boat is recovered the charge will be 'at cost' with a minimum charge of £295.00.

### **14. Boat Registration Privacy Notice**

The Conservators of the River Cam have responsibility for the registration of vessels in the Cam Conservancy Area. The data provided in the course of the registration process, including the name and address of the owner and particulars of the vessel, will be entered on the Conservancy database and used by the Conservancy and its agents to process the application, to monitor and enforce compliance with the registration conditions and/or byelaws, and to process renewals.

The Conservancy will abide by the six data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act 2018, and in particular, personal data will be held securely and processed in accordance with those principles. The processing of personal data is lawful because it enables the Conservators to perform a public task in the exercise of their statutory powers and duties.

The Conservators' full Privacy Policy is available on the Conservancy website at [www.camconservancy.org](http://www.camconservancy.org)

Where there is a legitimate interest for them to do so, personal data obtained by the Conservancy may be disclosed to the Cambridge City Council, the Environment Agency, the Police or the emergency services. The Conservancy or its agents, may use this information to contact boat owners about registration, safety, navigation, and environmental matters.

### **15. Own Risk**

Persons bringing craft onto the navigation do so at their own risk.