

The Shropshire Paddlesport Blog

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) v1.0

1 What is a blog?

A “blog” (short for “web log”) is an online diary or journal. While it looks like and is presented as a series of web pages it behaves differently from a ‘normal’ web site and has a different purpose. Traditional web sites tend to be fairly well structured and exist to display quite a lot of relatively static information to a wide audience.

Blogs are much more informal, are made up of a larger number of small chunks of information (known as ‘posts’ or ‘postings’) and have a very simple structure. The blog exists to pass on information about what is happening NOW (or at least very recently or in the very near future) and so the whole structure is designed to make sure that the latest postings appear at the top where you will see them first.

Older postings get pushed down the page as newer ones are created and, in most cases, will eventually get (automatically) moved off into an archive when the page starts getting too long. The result of this is that blogs read backwards in time – as you read down the page you are going from newer to older. Anything more than a few weeks old is probably not very important any longer in a blog, and so most blogs have an automatic archive so that postings get moved from the front page and stored away by month and/ or by year.

2 Why do we have one?

When the club first created its website there was a concern that we should be careful with what information we put up there because it tends to go out of date. There are a large number of clubs and other small organisations whose websites are worse than useless because they were created in a burst of enthusiasm and then were never updated.

Keeping the carefully designed pages of a website up to date does take time and effort, and as a club we don’t have someone who is going to be responsible for updating the site every few days – we’d rather be out paddling! Since the main website was created however, blogs have become very popular and easy to build and so it seemed that the time was right to add the blog to our online presence.

The two things have different purposes. The website is our “shop front” – it’s our main showcase to the world. If you want to know something about the club, who we are, the kinds of activities we offer, how to join, where to find us etc then all that information is on the website and you’ll find it fairly easily through Google (or whatever your favourite search engine is). If you’re *already* a member and you just want to keep an eye on what’s going on, then the blog exists as a way of passing information out to people very quickly, easily and without a lot of fuss. The website will probably be updated every couple of months whereas the blog gets updated every couple of days.

3 What do I need to know about the blog?

If you just want to be kept informed about stuff that's happening in the club then all you have to do is read it occasionally. If you go to the main club website <http://www.shropshirepaddlesport.org> and follow the link to the blog from the front page you'll be taken to the blog and be able to read the latest happenings.

That's it, and the rest of this document probably isn't very interesting or relevant to you.

If, however, you want to contribute to the blog in some way, then read on...

4 What do all these things do...?

1 — **Shropshire Paddlesport Blog**

3 — **Calendar of events**
Posted on November 21st, 2008 by Andy May

The observant among you may have noticed that over there on the right in the section marked "pages" there is a new link to the calendar of events. It's a new thing I've just discovered that the blog can do - as well as having these short postings which gradually get pushed down the page as new ones appear on top (and eventually get pushed into the month archive) I can also write pages which stay around.

2 — Compared to the main website it's really easy to edit these "pages" so for things which change quite a lot (like "up and coming events" I'm going to start keeping them up to date here. We're just beginning to see the beginnings of the race calendar for next year appearing, but I'll be adding more things as I hear about them. If there are other important dates I should publicise (slalom races or anything from other disciplines) then let me know.

Some stuff, of course, I'll always post about on the main blog page as well (or anyone else can if they like - you only have to ask), so if you've got something you want brought to people's attention then just let Deb or I know. I'm quite happy to do the "donkey work" but I'd hate to suppress any budding authors.

I mean, how long can it be before a very excited Ellie feels the need to tell us all about her new boat...

4 — Categories: [Blog Stuff](#), [Club Admin](#), [Publicity](#) | [No comments yet](#)

5 — **Safety & Rescue Course THIS Saturday**
Posted on November 21st, 2008 by Andy May

I know it's a bit short notice but I've just seen that Phil is running a Foundation Safety and Rescue course THIS Saturday (i.e. tomorrow Sat 22nd). It's a course he is doing principally for Oswestry School and

Pages

- » [Calendar of events](#)
- » [Hello and welcome](#)
- » [Using the blog](#)

Login

Username:

Password:

Remember me

» [Lost your password?](#)

Useful Links

- » [BCU main site](#)
- » [BCU West Midlands forum](#)
- » [Canoe England](#)
- » [Shropshire Paddlesport](#)
- » [UK Rivers forum](#)

Archives

- » [November 2008](#)
- » [October 2008](#)
- » [September 2008](#)
- » [August 2008](#)
- » [July 2008](#)

Categories

- » [Blog Stuff](#)
- » [Club Admin](#)
- » [Coaching](#)
- » [Flatwater Racing](#)
- » [Hasler](#)
- » [Pool sessions](#)

10 — **Pages**

6 — **Login**

9 — **Useful Links**

7 — **Archives**

8 — **Categories**

1. Blog Title – as well as saying who we are if you click on this it will always take you back to the top of the blog and show you the most recent postings.
2. This is a “posting” an article which someone has written on the blog. Blog postings tend to be fairly short – no more than a few paragraphs- and may include a small number of small images. See the notes on Pictures in postings below.
3. Author information. The software we’re using automatically knows who you are when you log in and puts your name and the date of the post just underneath the title. This is to stop people writing things and claiming it wasn’t them...
4. Categories are just a way of collecting together postings on a particular subject. When you create a posting (see below) you’ll be asked to give it one of more categories from a list (which is gradually growing as we find more stuff to write about). These categories get listed under the posting and, if you click on them, will take you to a page which shows all the postings in that category.
5. Comments – these don’t get used a lot at the moment, but there is the ability for people to make comments on things other people have posted. See the section on Comments below..
6. The login box is where you will need to enter your username and password if you want to do something with the site other than just read it. Once you’ve logged in this will change and give you a list of things you’re allowed to do. See the section on Creating Content below.
7. This is a link to the posting archives. The software does all this automatically for us and shuffles postings off the front page and stores them away in an archive month by month, year by year.
8. Categories again – this is just a list of the current categories we’ve set up. We can easily add more if you think we’ve missed something – just talk to Andy or Deb.
9. This isn’t really part of the blog at all – just a list of links to other useful websites and other blogs including a link to our own main club website.
10. Again not really part of the blog – these are mostly admin pages that, for some reason, sit within the blog site rather than the main club website.

5 How do I get a login?

Easy, you talk to Andy or Deb. We’ve gone for the registration approach so that our blog doesn’t get used by people who just want to write rubbish, do advertising or claim that Man Utd are the greatest football team ever. Anyone who is a member of the club is perfectly entitled to post on the blog (subject to the very simple rules), but we just need to know who you are so that we can control access. Just give us your email address and we’ll set you up and email you your username and password – it only takes about a minute to do. At that stage we’ll also send you this document (or that maybe how you got it in the first place).

6 Getting started

Once you’ve got your username and password, go to the site and enter them into the boxes on the right hand side and click the big “login” button. At that point the login section will go away and instead you’ll see something which says “Welcome {yourname} and gives you a list of options. For most people, most

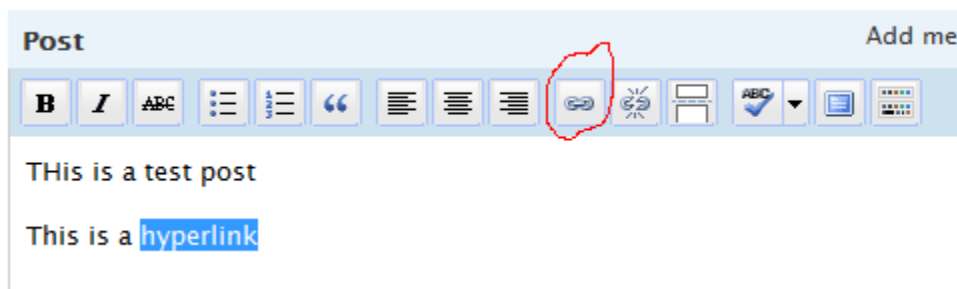
of the time what you'll want to do is just create a new post (article) so we've put a link in to do just that. The "Dashboard" is the main part of the blog admin site where you can do anything (well anything you've been given the rights to do depending on your role)

7 Creating content

To be honest, what you're most likely to want to do is write a posting so that's what I'll talk about. Once you've logged in the easiest way is to just click on the "create new post" link (or you can get to exactly the same place by clicking on "Dashboard" and then the "Write a new post" button on the right-hand side of the orange strip.

Either way the "write a post" window comes up, and I think it's pretty self-explanatory. You put a title in the box marked "title" and then you type the text you want into the box marked "Post". You've got most of the text tools you'd expect from your favourite word processor like bold, italics, underline, bullet points etc.

If you want to insert a link to a webpage or something then you highlight the word you want to be the link and then you'll see that the "insert link" button (10th from the left) becomes available



...just click on that and enter the address (URL) of where you want that link to go.

Once you've finished writing your posting, you just need to look at the next two boxes. The first one marked "tags" is entirely optional – tags are just a set of keywords which you can apply to your postings if you like to make them easier to find

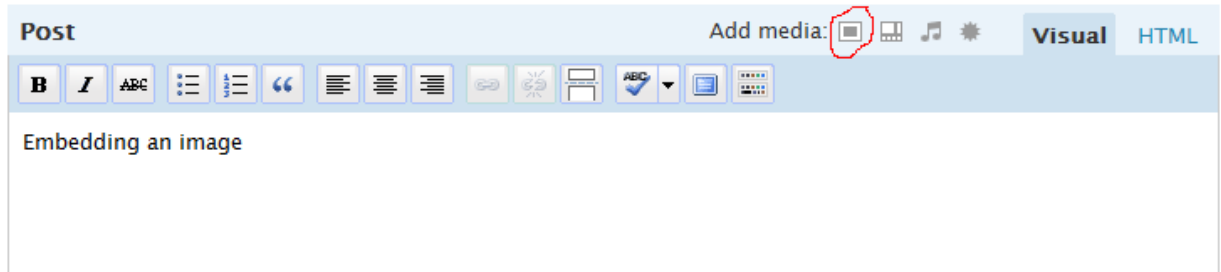
The second box marked "Categories" is more important – just tick any categories (usually one or two) which are appropriate for whatever your posting is about. These just make the site hang together better and make it easier to find postings about the same subject as the blog grows over time. If you think that we need a new category then give us a call and we'll add it in.

When you're done then look up in the top right-hand corner and you'll see a box marked "publish status" – just click on "Publish" and bingo, your post will appear on the blog. If you get interrupted half-way through and you're not finished yet, then you have the option to click "Save" instead which will save it as a draft, and you can come back to it later (in which case you will have to go the "Dashboard" and follow the link to your drafts folder.)

8 Pictures in postings

If you want to include a picture in your post then you can do – all we'd ask is that you keep the number of pictures down to one (or two at most), and that you make sure they are an appropriate size so that they don't break the layout of the blog.

To do this you need to click on the first of the "Add media" buttons at the top of the post window.



This will pop open a new window and you just want to click on the button which says "Choose files to upload" as this lets you grab pictures off your own computer. When it's finished getting them it's **very important** that you scroll down a bit and check that in the section for "Size" it is set to medium – this will automatically resize your image so that it fits nicely on the page. When you're done just click "Insert into post" and you'll have the picture embedded in the middle of your posting.

9 Appropriate content

The rules for what you can and can't post up here can really be summarised in two words

Play nicely!

This blog is a means for people within the club to pass on news, information and thoughts about what's going on in and around the club. We don't use it for bitching about things which annoy us, attacking other people, selling stuff or making fun of other people (ok, well maybe a bit of that last one).

Remember that anything you post will be visible to the whole of the internet and whatever you write will reflect on you (because everyone will see your name as the author) and the club as a whole.

We **absolutely will not** be censoring postings but if something goes up which we feel is inappropriate we will temporarily suspend it and discuss it with you.

There is one exception to the above rule - you should, of course, make sure that what you write makes sense in terms of grammar and spelling. There is a spellchecker available if that helps (although it worryingly seems to accept American spellings...)

Please no txt speak - If u have 2 rite like this lol...

...then I'll summarily delete you for crimes against the English language ☺

10 Comments

Comments on postings are great, if for no other reason than it proves that someone is reading all your ~~mindless drivel~~ literary masterpieces. You can comment whether or not you're logged in as a registered user.

If you are not logged in then your comment will get sent to the admins for approval – this is just to stop the blog filling up with advertisements for dodgy online gambling sites (I'd blame Phil Robinson myself), Viagra substitutes or people wanting to give me millions of pounds for helping them transfer illicit government funds out of Nigeria... Anything which is not spam will, of course be approved by us as soon as we see it (remember that might not be for anything up to about 24 hours although we do try to check on a regular basis).

If you are registered and logged in then the first time you make a comment it will still get passed to the admins for approval. Once we've approved one of your comments however, any time after that your comments will get published automatically without having to be approved.

11 Summary

I think that probably covers everything you need to know (and quite possibly lots of things you didn't want to know). If you understood all that then either I've been unusually clear in my writing, or you have a career ahead of you as a blogger!

Comments, questions, suggestions, requests for setting you up a login or offers of money should be sent to me at the usual address and I'll get back to you just as soon as I can.

I look forward to reading you.

Andy May