

Tonbridge Archery Club FAQs

Club Communications

- All club communications are by e-mail
- Club Notices, changes to the shooting programme, notices about courses: these only go via e-mail
- The club does not have a Facebook page
- The club does not have a WhatsApp group
- Basic club documents are available on the club website
- No password is needed to access the club website - anyone can access all of it

Bow Styles and Weights

- We cater for Recurve, Compound, Barebow, Longbow, and most traditional bow styles.
- For indoor shooting we are uncomfortable with compounds over 35lb and for new members limit the maximum weight to 45lb.
- For outdoor shooting we are uncomfortable with compounds over 50lb but do not actually limit the weight.
- We do not permit crossbows or catapults.
- We do not allow pure carbon arrows. All arrows must be relatively easily findable with a metal detector

Club Shooting Days

- Our club shooting days are Sunday all year and Tuesday indoors
- Tuesdays outdoors are not club shooting days. You can still shoot rounds, but they don't count for records purposes and do not affect your classification or handicap.
- Rounds, records and six gold ends only count if shot on Club shooting days.

Ranges

We shoot on ranges where there is no public access except for the footpath which runs along the WW2 tank trap behind the upper Bickmore Terrace. Therefore we do not need to rope off the field when we shoot. Nevertheless we must always put signage up when we're shooting outdoors, especially at the top of the bank at the far end of the terrace. Signs must be placed so as to be visible from the lower terraces.

When shooting we have to be alert in particular to the possibilities of children being present on the lower terrace or by the tennis courts and the possibility of their running unexpectedly onto the field. There is enough visibility to see them coming, but alertness is nevertheless essential at all times.

Shooting is not permissible when anyone is on the astroturf beside the upper Bickmore terrace. Anyone there has to be moved before we can shoot and no-one can go onto the astroturf before we finish.

- The upper Bickmore Terrace is our primary outdoor range
- When shooting at 100 yards the shooting line must be level with the start of the astroturf field. Anywhere forwards of this leaves insufficient overshoot.
- We occasionally do a Wand Shoot shoot on the Lower Bickmore Terrace.
- For safety reasons we do not permit shooting on both the Upper and Lower terraces at the same time. If we shoot on the lower terrace then there is no shooting, free practice, beginner's course, bow tuning or anything on the upper terrace.
- We occasionally shoot a clout on the parkland range opposite the carpark
- We have in the past shot on the open parkland range beyond the schools when school events preclude use of the Bickmore area, but prefer not to because its rough ground and a school road runs alongside the field

- Provided the schools are not using it we have use of the Bickmore Hall on Tuesday evenings in winter and in inclement weather on Sundays year round. Inclement weather is not defined but generally means cold, wet or windy.
- The maximum distance we are registered to shoot indoors is 25m conditional on all bows and equipment being setup and kept outside of the sports hall except when shooting. At 20m or less we can setup inside the sports hall.
- We shoot outdoors in all weathers except thunderstorms and high wind conditions.

AGB

- We are an AGB affiliated club. We are separately affiliated with AGB (Archery GB, the national organization controlling most archery in the UK and through which the UK participates in international competition and the Olympics), SCAS (Southern Counties Archery Association, the regional AGB organisation arraigning events in the south east quadrant of the UK) and KAA (Kent Archery Association, like SCAS but covering just Kent). With any luck AGB will reorganise itself to simplify all of this.
- We reregister as an AGB affiliated club annually
- We are an independent club, not a part of the AGB. We conform to AGB rules and regulations but cannot be instructed or directed by the AGB. We could unregister with AGB at any time if we wished.
- Any range we shoot on, including the hall, must registered with the AGB and each must have its own risk assessment. These have to be reregistered every two or three years or whenever any change occurs.
- Our insurance is provided via our membership of AGB.
- Everyone shooting with with Tonbridge Archery Club must be a member of AGB. This applies to members, associate members, visiting archers and all participants in tournaments. Beginner's on registered courses are covered by the Club's AGB affiliation.
- Every event we run must be registered individually with AGB (eg Beginner's Courses, Tournaments, Have-a-gos).
- We do not allow anyone to join the club or to sign-up for one of our courses or events via AGB.

New Archers

- We do not run Have-A-Gos. These are open events where anyone can come along for an hour or two and try out shooting, usually for a nominal fee. They are hard to arrange and organise, they bring in very little cash to the club, they give almost no impression of what club shooting is like and if people are enthused that enthusiasm drops sharply when they realise that they'll have to wait for a course and then, if they join, buy all their own kit.
- We do not participate in AGB Big Archery Weekends or Big Archery Weeks, for the same reason.
- We get a few enquiries about membership most weeks, and usually have more than a dozen people on the waiting list for courses
- We run courses once every couple of months, when the venue, a coach and people to help with a course are available.
- After each course we need some time to get new joiners up to speed before we can run another.
- All experienced archers requesting to join are assessed before we accept them. This is a simple safety check where we watch them setup their kit, shoot a few arrows and take their kit down again. If we're happy that they know what they're doing, behave in a safe manner and the kit is serviceable we invite them to join, otherwise we suggest a beginner's/ refresher course. There are **no exceptions** to this process. In general the better the archer the happier they are that we insist on this.

Safety is Paramount

- The vast majority of club rules, even the seemingly daft ones, are there for safety reasons
- Safety includes but is not limited to physical safety of everyone at the venue; safety from accusations against the club, eg child safety, inappropriate behaviour, prejudice or bias, data protection; safety of individual members from similar accusations &c &c &c

- It includes safety for club officers from, for example, “but surely you’ll make an exception for little old/young/new me who didn’t/doesn’t know or understand all these rules” - wheedling does not work - Club Officers will say NO. Don’t even think about it. And don’t call them Shirley.
- If in doubt, call “Fast”. Act first, think later.
- Lost arrows must be found before we leave the venue. As a last resort, after extensive searching and failing light, if not found then the schools must be informed before we vacate the field and the AGB insurers must be informed the same or following day.

Field Captains

- The Field Captain is responsible for control of the field from the start of setup to the end of clearing away. You do what the field captain says
- Most clubs allow any member to be a field captain, we do not. This is a safety and safeguarding issue
- We have a list of approved field captains which is reviewed from time to time. New field captains are given some training before being considered for the list.

Equipment sales

- The club does not generally buy or sell kit for individuals
- If we receive donations of kit then we’ll sell it to members (or others) for a fair but low price
- If you want to sell any kit then you can offer it to other members by providing a full description, photos and an idea of price via the club secretary
- Caveat Emptor - buyer beware, the club does not guarantee the origin, quality or condition of any items sold/bought through any of the above mechanisms. Nor does it do refunds.

Clothes and shoes

- The club adheres to AGB rules on clothes and shoes
- No-one can go on the field without hard-toed shoes. Safety issue
- No blue denim jeans and no camouflage coloured clothing is allowed
- No bare midriffs are allowed
- Men’s arms are particularly offensive apparently so mens shirts must have sleeves
- For tournaments its preferred that everyone wears green, white or club colours, in any combination.
- Some external tournaments have their own clothing rules
- Our club colours are not registered with AGB but this does not preclude them from being worn at external tournaments

Under 12s

- We do not cater for under 12s even if they have an older sibling who shoots with us
- We do not accept under 12s on courses - waiting list yes, but no course until they’re 12
- We do not have training kit suitable for under 12s and do not wish to incur the expense of obtaining any
- We have a long standing agreement with the Schools that we shall run courses for them if they want us to
- When we moved to Somerhill we ran courses for one year, where the participation started with about 10 and by the end of the season fell to one. The following year the interest had fallen to zero and we have not run a course since
- Occasionally a parent from the school asks to talk about us about running a school archery club - by the end of the discussion they usually decide its too much work, and expense, for them. We have details from the last discussion to refer back to for any future discussion

Under 18s

- All under 18s must be accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian, both on courses and for any club shooting.
- If the parent or guardian leaves while the under 18 is shooting then the under 18 must stop shooting until the parent or guardian returns. The field captain WILL enforce this.

Assembly

- Assembly is half an hour before the scheduled start time for a shoot
- You are expected to arrive in time for assembly.
- The round to be shot and the field layout will be decided before anyone sets up their own kit
- Do not setup your own kit until the field has been setup
- If you arrive late you must get the field captain's permission to join
- If you arrive late you are expected to fit in with whatever has already been decided

Signing-in and signing-out

The sign-in sign-out procedures are part of our agreement with the Schools following an incident a few years ago. They must be followed and failure so to do would likely result in our losing the venue.

- Archery is a potentially dangerous, even lethal, sport and safety is paramount in everything we do.
- We shoot on a sports ground for under 12s
- Leaving arrows or any hard kit behind when we finish shooting could lead to serious injury, for example if a child fell on an arrow, or a child (or teacher, or groundsman, or anyone) picked up a carbon arrow with bare hands
- Signing-in and -out is part of a process designed to minimise the chance of anything being left at the field and to make it clear to the schools how seriously we take our responsibilities
- Signing-in and -out reminds you that you are accountable if there's any incident regarding your kit
- Failure to follow the procedures will result in immediate suspension of your shooting rights for a fortnight. Repeated failure will be cause for your permanent suspension.

Grumbling

- Were there an international grumbling tournament archers would win every single medal
- Grumbling about your performance, the weather, the lack of weather, the traffic, the state of the economy, potholes, postal services &c &c are all fine
- Grumbling about other archers is not acceptable. If there's an issue take it up with them, the field captain or the club secretary

Field setup and takedown

- The field will be setup before anyone sets-up their own kit
- At the end of the shoot the field will be cleared away before anyone takes-down their own kit

Sighters

- Six arrows may be shot as sighters before the beginning of each round, under direction from the field captain

Number of rounds you can shoot on a day

- You can shoot as many rounds as you like, but you may not shoot rounds simultaneously, eg a Western is the same as a National but with two extra dozen at the shorter distance. If you stop after finishing a National you score a National. If you continue you score a Western. If you don't finish the Western its still a Western, not a National.
- You may not shoot a round using two bows. One round, one bow
- You may not shoot a round using first one bow and then another on each end. Eg its been known for someone to shoot ends using first a recurve and then a longbow and claim two different rounds have been shot. This is not permitted.
- For records purposes only the first round you shoot on a day, regardless of bow type, counts. For example if you shoot a National in the morning with a recurve and a Western in the afternoon with a compound, only the National counts

Bouncers

- A bouncer is an arrow that bounces off the boss or bounces off an arrow in the boss. If it bounces off the flag, the stand, an arrow that's not in the boss, a rock, whatever, its not a bouncer. Even though it bounced.
- Bouncers always bounce out of the gold. No archer in recorded history has ever admitted a bouncer was from the 1. Tough.
- If you get a bouncer continue shooting the arrows for that end and then step back from the shooting line and raise your bow to get the field captain's attention. You will be instructed on what to do next.

Damages

- If you damage someone else's arrow, for example by treading on it or bending it while pulling it from the boss, then you should **immediately** offer to pay for it.
- Damage caused by hitting someone else's arrow with yours while shooting is an archery hazard and you should **not** offer to pay for it.
- Do not pull longbow archer's arrows without permission. They're fragile and snappy.

Shooting Programme

- The Shooting programme is a guideline to what we plan to shoot each Tuesday and Sunday. Its published on the club website. Any changes will be notified by club e-mail. If its not notified by club e-mail (eg when discussions are held at the club or on WhatsApp) then there is **no** change to the programme. WhatsApp is just a discussion amongst people who might or might not be club members.
- On the day those present may decide to shoot something different to the programme, and archers may, at the discretion of the field captain, shoot a different round.
- On the day some archers may want to shoot a different round to the majority. This is fine provided the rounds fit without causing undue delay to the majority, at the discretion of the field captain.
- During inclement weather we can use the hall on Sundays, provided the schools are not using it (eg for cricket practice).
- If some want to shoot outdoors and some indoors thats fine provided there is one field captain indoors and a second outdoors. If not then everyone has to be in or out.
- Sunday morning shooting on days when the programme is for an afternoon shoot is fine, provided at least two archers are present and one of them is a field captain.
- Sunday morning indoor shooting on days when the programme is for an afternoon shoot is fine, provided a key holder and at least two archers are present and one of them is a field captain, provided also that the schools are not using the hall and no beginner's course needs the hall.
- If archers shoot indoors on a Sunday morning then they are expected to leave the hall setup and wait until afternoon archers arrive. If afternoon archers want to shoot indoors then the morning archers can leave, otherwise the morning archers should then clear the hall before leaving or shooting outdoors.

At the boss

In order, to minimize delays:

1. Archers gather at the boss
2. No-one touches any arrow or the boss.
3. All archers in turn call their arrow scores to the target captain
4. Archers with missing arrows go to find them
5. Simultaneous with 4, arrows are pulled
6. Once all missing arrows are recovered all archers return to the waiting line
7. Scores are added up. Do not add scores at the boss.

Scoresheets

- Never, ever, change an arrow score on a scoresheet. If you do then your round will be invalidated. It won't count for classification, handicap, six gold end, personal best, club record, county record or anything at all. Do not do it. If the arrow value is recorded

incorrectly then do not allow any arrows to be pulled from the boss, summon the field captain, have them verify the arrow score and use a different colour pen to change the value and initial that they've done it.

- If you get a six gold end then do not allow any arrows to be pulled from the boss, summon the field captain, have them verify it. Carry on and complete the the round - there's a bit of ambiguity about whether you can count a six-gold end if you do not finish the round. Usually its ok, occasionally its been rejected by AGB.
- Verified scoresheets or scores for every round you shoot, anywhere, must be sent to the club records officer. This is an AGB rule.
- Your classification and handicap is what the club records officer says it is after recording your scores and recalculating your performance. Its is not what you say it is, its what the records officer says it is after they've done the recalculation.

Club participation in Tournaments

- We organise one Tournament a year. This is the club's birthday shoot, celebrating the formation of the club in 1978.
- This shoot brings in a fair amount of cash for the club and helps keep club fees low (very low by comparison with some)
- We decide each year whether members can participate in the Birthday Shoot. We need quite a few people to run the event and if we're unsure of numbers we expect members to help rather than compete.
- We support CEDAK whenever we can, including running a tournament for them at Somerhill if asked and it being possible
- We do not compete in tournaments as a club, but we do encourage members to compete in tournaments
- We do not participate in local or national archery leagues.
- We are open to participating in leagues provided it does not prevent or seriously impact normal club shooting
- We used to be a member of the Mid Kent League but stopped after being penalised for not being able to shoot with a club that only shot on Saturdays. We thought they should have been penalised for not shooting on Sunday like almost everyone else and left in a huff.

Tournament conventions

- Never hold your bow out sideways - always keep it pointing towards the targets and avoid bumping other archers with it
- The third name on the scoresheet, or the third scoresheet in the pack for a boss, is by convention the target captain
- No under 18 can be a target captain
- Minimise the time you spend at the boss after each end
- Help with resetting the field after each distance unless the opening instructions say not to

The Answer is NO

to any question starting with, containing, ending with or implying

- ... but in my other club ...
- ... but last week ...
- ... can't be meant to apply to me ...
- ... surely ...
- ... exception ...
- ... just this once ...

Don't ask, you already know the answer.

Smoking

- Is not permitted anywhere at Somerhill, indoors, outdoors or behind the bike sheds. This is a school rule and if you are seen on any of the many cctv cameras there could be negative consequences for the club.

Parking

- You must park in the staff carpark at the top of the hill unless you have a valid reason for parking at the hall and have the club secretary's agreement. If in doubt you do not have permission.

Dogs

- Are not permitted anywhere on school premises and are in addition a potential danger when shooting.

Colds and flu

- You are requested not to come to Somerhill if you have cold or flu symptoms, or anything else infectious. The club has vulnerable members and we don't want them to be catching things from other archers (or anyone else).

Friends/relatives who want to learn archery

- Are one of our best likely sources for new members. However, they get no preferential treatment, ie they can't just join, and if they want to do a beginner's course the process is the same as for anyone else. This is to avoid making us vulnerable to any of the innumerable possible accusations of prejudice, bias or favouritism that are prevalent in society today.
- Do not invite a friend/relative to come and try shooting a few arrows. We are not insured for that.

Friends of Tonbridge Archers Whatsapp group

- Is a friendly and useful place to chat and discuss any (club) issues
- Is not inclusive as under 16s and those without easy access to it are excluded
- Is not monitored
- Is not used for any official club communications
- Is not operated by the club
- Is not covered by GDPR
- Is not limited to club members

Do not shoot in the garden

- Its dangerous
- You are not insured
- The neighbours won't like it
- AGB advise very strongly indeed against doing it