



The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust Fundraising Flotilla 2024: Information for Swimming Participants

Cold water swimming can be dangerous and poses various risks, particularly in tidal waters. The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust (AOET) will take measures to minimise risks as much as possible for the safety of swimming participants. Please read the following document before making your final decision to participate. It is important that you make an informed decision and understand that, although we take health and safety precautions seriously, we cannot eliminate all the risks that might arise; each participant is responsible for their own safety (please see the registration disclaimer).

Please only register to participate as a swimmer if you meet the following:

- You are aged 16 year or over (under 18s will need to be accompanied by a participating adult).
- You are a competent and experienced cold water swimmer.
- To the best of your knowledge, you do not have any medical conditions that may be brought on or worsened during swimming and/or while exposed to the cold. Examples of such conditions are: back pain aggravated by a long swim, previous heart attacks/ongoing heart conditions, asthma which is aggravated by the cold or exercise, a tendency for cramping, poor blood circulation, vertigo, epilepsy.

If any issues should occur in the water and you feel your safety is at risk, please float on your back and call for help immediately – a safety kayak or boat will be nearby to support you out of the water and alert the medical team that you will need attention. The medical team will be situated along the route. Assessments will be made for any necessary further action and medical intervention.

In order to minimise risk, please adhere to the following:

- Always wear the numbered, high visibility swimming cap provided on the day of the event so that you can be seen and identified.
- Do not jump into the water – ease in slowly to prevent ‘cold water shock’.
- Read through the Health and Safety procedures and disclaimer attached to the registration application.
- Obey the health and safety instructions given to you by the Event Director on the day of the event.
- Recreational swimmers must keep their float attached. Elite swimmers also have the option of utilising a provided float.



- Do not swim after consuming alcohol.
- It is encouraged that swimmers wear a wet suit while swimming and footwear while on the shore (there may be sharp stones or washed-up fishing tackle).
- All swimmers should aim to swim with a buddy so as to look out for each other in the water. However, safety boats and kayaks will also be positioned along the route to provide reassurance and, if necessary, make the medical team aware of any issues.

There are two classes of swimmers – recreational and elite:

- Recreational swimmers will be provided with a towable swimming float on the day which must be used.
- Elite swimmers should be very experienced cold-water swimmers as use of the provided towable float is optional. There is a competitive aspect among participants in this class as swimmers will be timed.

Please read through the safeguarding procedures, disclaimer, health and safety procedures for your consideration before registering to participate in this event. As stated in the participation disclaimer, although health and safety measures have been taken and procedures have been designed to minimise risk, **each participant is responsible for their own safety and wellbeing when participating in this event.**

If you have any questions relating to your participation in this event, please do not hesitate to contact us at operations@aoetrust.org.

For further information, we advise that you read the following:

- Outdoor swimming Safety and Risk Assessment - Outdoor Swimmer Magazine
<https://outdoorswimmer.com/featured/outdoor-swimming-safety-and-risk-assessment/>
- 8 questions winter swimmers ask about cold – Outdoor Swimming Society Outdoor Swimming Society
<https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/tips-on-winter-swimming/>
- RNLI Open Water Swimming Safety Advice and Tips
<https://rnli.org/safety/choose-your-activity/open-water-swimming>
- Understanding tides – and how they can affect swimming conditions - Outdoor Swimmer Magazine
<https://outdoorswimmer.com/featured/understanding-tides-and-how-they-can-affect-swimming-conditions/>
- Keeping seals safe – Outdoor Swimming Society Outdoor Swimming Society
<https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/seal-swimming/>