

Rochdale Company of Archers

Safety Statement



ROCHDALE COMPANY OF ARCHERS LIMITED
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Archery and it's Governance.

The Rochdale Company of Archers, as an Archery Club with both an indoor shooting and outdoor shooting offering to its membership, has always, since its formation seventy years ago (1954) operated to the highest standards of range safety, and the ethos of safe shooting is deeply engrained within the culture of the Club.

Archery, being an ancient sport and activity, with its history and practices deeply rooted in popular culture is a sport practiced by all sectors and age groups within society and has developed, over centuries, an accepted method of safe shooting to protect the welfare of all participants, spectators, and the general public.

Due to the potential for injury caused by an inexperienced and unsupervised shooter, the sport has developed a recognised and universally adopted code of safety, backed by rigorous inspection and supervision.

Within the United Kingdom, the sport operates under the governance of the national administrative body, the Grand National Archery Society (GNAS) with its national and regional hierarchy, and, since its establishment in 2008, has promoted the standards developed by the competitive branch of the Society, Archery GB (AGB), which supports all athletes from club level through to the elite athletes at the sport's highest level.

All tournaments and competitions held within Great Britain, from club level archery, through organised county level and regional level events, to the British Olympic squad, must operate under the same defined rulebook which sets a minimum standard and specification for shooting fields and a defined shooting code.

The Rochdale Company of Archers is a Club affiliated to the Archery GB (AGB). It is also affiliated, at regional level, to the Northern Counties Archery Society (NCAS) and to the County level Lancashire Archery Association (LAA). As an affiliated Club, the shooting ranges used by the Club are required to be certified and registered with Archery GB, such registration being renewed every three years.

The Club affiliation with AGB, and the requirement for each individual archer to also hold full AGB membership, affords members the assurance of Public Liability Insurance cover provided as a part of the membership package. For this to be effective the range upon which shooting takes place must be an "Approved Facility".

Rochdale Company of Archers Regulation

Since the Club's formation in 1954, the Rochdale Company of Archers has operated at three venues within the Borough of Rochdale.

From its beginnings upon a football pitch at Half Way House, Wardle, the Club moved to Moorgate Avenue, Bamford, Rochdale, sharing the playing fields with Rochdale Rugby Union Football Club (RRUFC), an arrangement which continues currently, broken only for a period of four years during the 1990's when, due to the Club development and pitch realignment at Rochdale Rugby Club, the archers used the playing fields at Bowlee, owned by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

As a requirement for the use of the Council facility, the Archery Club were required to submit fully detailed risk assessments and range details to the Council, which were satisfactory and approved.

The range facilities currently enjoyed by the Archery Club at the Rochdale Rugby Moorgate Avenue venue extend to both an Indoor 20 yards range, and two Outdoor 100 yards range established on the RRUFC playing fields.

Each of the two shooting areas has been inspected and registered with Archery GB on the National Register of Approved Shooting sites.

The Club has recently upgraded its activities to meet the newly heightened standards for an "On Target" Club, a certified recognition by Archery GB, awarded to Clubs operating to the highest levels of archer tuition, safety, safeguarding and inclusion. The Club intends to expand upon this with the intention of being a recognised Performance Centre. The new facilities would greatly aid this goal.

The current membership includes twelve accredited and certified archery coaches, the Lancashire County Junior Squad Coach, the Lancashire County Coaching Coordinator, the Lancashire County Treasurer, the Lancashire County President, a Lancashire County Candidate Judge, and the Northern Counties Regional Secretary.

Two members of the Club have achieved membership of the England Archery squad and competed nationally.

RCA is frequently a venue for Lancashire Junior Squad Training.

All new Club members, upon joining, must undertake a Beginner's Course comprising of 12 hours of supervised coaching where experienced and qualified coaches instruct beginners in the techniques of shooting necessary to embed the culture of safety to ensure that both the archer and their shooting companions are enjoying their sport in a safe and controlled manner.

To date, in 2023, the Archery Club has not experienced or recorded an incident where a member of the public has been injured nor Third Party property damaged, by a failure to comply with the range standards or the conduct of a Club member.

Range Design and Accreditation

Archery, as a sport, shoots its competitive disciplines by the shooting of "Rounds".

Rounds are a series of designated activities where, over the period of the shoot, an archer will shoot a set number of arrows over a number of various distances, aiming at a standard size target face mounted upon a "Boss", a stand of a regulation height.

For Archery GB, for the traditional imperial competitions, the common distances for outdoor rounds are 100 yds, 80 yds, 60 yds, 50 yds and 40 yds.

For the World Archery, Olympic metric rounds, the distances are 90 metres, 70 metres, 60 metres 50 metres and 30 metres.

On an outdoor shooting range (field) a fixed "Shooting Line" is marked out on the ground, and all archers shoot their arrows from this single line. The line does not move as the distances vary, instead the target bosses are moved accordingly. The "Rounds" start at the furthest distances for that shoot, and the target "Bosses" are moved closer at the required distance changes. This has the added safety effect that the hazard of a mis-aimed arrow is reduced at the longer distances as the shot arrow loses velocity at longer distances.

All shooting areas within outdoor ranges are orientated within a prescribed setting, according to its location and the topography of the land, and once set does not vary. For example, a shooting field may be orientated South to North and, once determined and registered, no shooting in any other direction or orientation is permitted.

The standards for the outdoor ranges are laid out in guidance from the Archery GB governing body including safety and overshoot areas.

When competition takes place at a National, Regional or County level, at least two official Judges adjudicate over the shoot. A range inspection is carried out before shooting commences.

During competition shoots, there is always a Judge present, who is in charge of the day's shooting, and should any danger or hazard be observed then all shooting is immediately brought to a halt whilst the hazard is examined. Shooting does not recommence until the problem has been resolved to the judge's satisfaction.

During Club shooting, a "Field Captain" is appointed, who carries out the same function as a competition judge. The field is inspected before shooting commences.

During any shoots, whether competition or club shooting, all participants (archers or visitors) can at any time shout the command "Fast" if they observe anything which is perceived to be potentially dangerous. On hearing "Fast", all shooting will immediately cease. The Field Captain will investigate the observed hazard and shooting will only resume after this has been dealt with and all aspects of the shooting range are deemed to be safe to shoot.

Current Outdoor Ranges at Rochdale Rugby Club

The Archery Club currently has the use of two pitches at Rochdale Rugby Union Club for Outdoor shooting, with one of the pitches being designated as the main shooting field.

The marked pitch is circa 96 metres in length and circa 69 metres wide.

The furthest distance at which Archer's shoot is 100 yards (91.44 metres) for the Imperial Rounds or 90 metres for the Metric Rounds.

Both distances can be accommodated within a standard sized playing surface. No cross-pitch shooting is permitted.

There is a clear area behind the "Target Boss" known as the "Overshoot" but at these distances an arrow is falling and losing momentum.

The current shooting area at Rochdale Rugby Club can be seen on the aerial photographs below.



The photograph shows the current shooting area with an East to West shooting orientation.

The first image shows how several target bosses could be set up for a typical club shoot.

On the second photograph, two target bosses can be seen on the field at distances of 80 yds and 60 yds, and the archers upon the shooting line on the right close to the Rugby "Try Line".

The lines in "Magenta" show the route of a Public Right of Way, identified as "Bridlepath Number 9" on the Rochdale MBC Rights of Way Definitive Map. Also, within close proximity, is the defined route of "Bridlepath Number 8".

The annotated photograph below, shows the current outdoor range in a setting which notes the proximity of the Range to Public Rights of Way and to publicly accessible areas, including Rochdale Golf Club course.



The overshoot allowance upon the current range is inspected and certified as complying with Archery GB range guidance.

No incidences of harm to the public or damage to property have ever been recorded at this venue.

It should also be noted that, although not a Public Right of Way recorded upon the Borough Definitive Map, the Rugby Club's internal pathways are walked by many people, e.g. dog walkers.

To give notice to the public, clear and visible safety notices are displayed to ensure that there is never an issue or likelihood of people inadvertently entering the Range.

Proposed Outdoor Shooting Range at Ashworth (Application Site)



The Planning Application submitted to Rochdale MBC, seeks consent for the establishment of both an Indoor Range and an Outdoor Shooting Area on land at Ashworth Valley, off Ashworth Road, Rochdale.

This appraisal considers the Outdoor Shooting Range only.

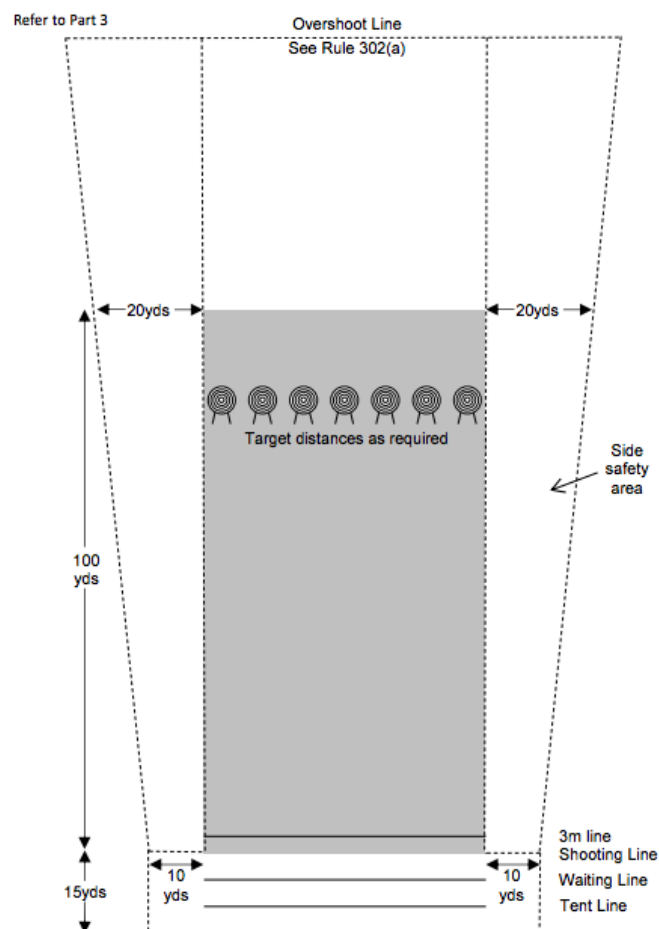
The envisaged location and orientation of the outdoor shooting range is shown on the Site Plan submitted as a part of the Planning Application.

The outdoor range will be orientated from South West to North East with the defined shooting line at the South Eastern end of the defined area and with all shooting carried out towards the North East. No shooting in any other direction across the Range will be authorised or permitted.

The orientation of the shooting range, i.e. facing as near to North as possible, is necessary to avoid the effects of the sun from "dazzling" archers when aiming at targets.

The outdoor range will be accessed from the proposed Clubhouse and at a point behind the shooting line only.

Rules of Shooting - Overshoot



The recommended side safety areas taper from 10 yards wide at the shooting line to 20 yards wide at 100 yards from the shooting line.

Impenetrable Fence

The overshoot area beyond the 100 yards distance is outside the perimeter of our land therefore the Archery Club will adopt an alternative solution.

A 2m high "impenetrable fence" will be installed behind the target bosses to prevent any arrows passing outside the shooting range.

The construction will utilise tanalised timber vertical louvred lats to form a fence of no more than 2m height which will prevent the passage of arrows from the direction of shooting whilst not constituting a blank wall of solid fencing. Louvres will also allow the barrier to withstand pressure from high winds.

When shooting is taking place the Archery Club places signage at all access points to the range.

Examples





The proposed outdoor shooting area is not crossed by, or immediately adjacent to, any Public Rights of Way.

The Rochdale Company of Archers promote a culture, within the Club, of adherence to the highest standards of range safety.

Through the observation and use of an accurate and accredited layout at the defined shooting area, and the provision of the aforementioned measures to enhance the safety of the range, the Club are confident that they can continue to operate their facilities to the highest safety standards, in accordance with the requirements for ranges laid down by the accrediting organisations.

Whilst the expectation is that it will never to be needed, the Club, through their affiliation to Archery GB, have the benefit of Public Liability Insurance for their activities, to an Indemnity Limit of £10,000,000 (£ 10 million).

