



## Wild Wye SwimRun 2025: Race Brief



Thank you for entering the 4<sup>th</sup> Wild Wye SwimRun, a unique event in the Lower Wye Valley. Many thanks to Chepstow Town Council for enabling the event, as well as the landowners including NRW and Greenways.

### Locations:

Parking: Chepstow Racecourse (free parking)

Start: Castle Dell (approx 1km from Parking)

Finish: Piercefield Park (approx. 400m from Parking)

### Timings:

Registration Opens: 0900

Race Start: 0945

### General Instructions:

- Please wear light coloured clothing, and do not carry a torch. Lights are not permitted in Tidenham Tunnel to protect bats from disturbance (the wild bit). We will provide a swim hat. You will benefit from grippy shoes (eg fell shoes) for the second half.
- Your bib with its bib number needs to be visible at all times, and must be on your front when arriving at the swim and the finish.
- The route will be marked with arrows, and some red & white tape in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- The route will be marshalled. Please follow the marshal's instructions, particularly on the one road crossing which is after about 1km, across the B4229 in Tutshill. Be aware that the marshals will not be able to force cars to stop.
- Please run on the pavement where there is one.
- In case of difficulties please look after fellow competitors, and get word to the next marshal.
- There will be a sweeper / tail-runner all the way round, as well as a lead cyclist for most of the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the race

### Registration

- Registration will be at the top of The Dell from 0900.
- Bag drop will be available to Registration. These will be taken to the Finish. Small bags only please!
- There will not be toilets at the actual start area, but public toilets are available in the Welsh St Car Park, which is adjacent to the Castle Dell.

### The Start

- The actual start will be uphill for approx 40m, ie in the reverse direction, rounding a bollard to run down to the Castle. This is so that runners are in single file by the Wye Bridge.
- Please run on the pavement and DO NOT OVERTAKE between leaving the Castle Car Park and entering England (far side of the Wye Bridge) - listen out for peregrine falcons that nest on the cliffs here.

## Tidenham Tunnel

After about 3km the course reaches the Greenway (former Wye Valley Railway) and shortly afterwards the 1188-yard Tidenham Tunnel. This is a shared use cycleway and pedestrian route, and plenty of leisure users can be expected as well as sleeping lesser horseshoe bats!

There is a very real risk of collision with oncoming cyclists, particularly if you are overtaking and they are overtaking at the same time! So please:

- Run on the left
- Be very cautious when overtaking in the tunnel, particularly of oncoming cyclists
- In addition, be aware of the small floor-level obstructions marked with white sleepers.

Not far after Tidenham Tunnel, as you pass beside ancient woodlands full of dormice, the route leaves the Greenway. Unless conditions are very wet, it will pass through another tunnel, which we call 'Black Morgan Tunnel'. This is cobbled and somewhat uneven underfoot.

## The River Crossing

As you arrive at the river, at a spot marked as 'Faggot Wharf' on very old maps, those who are swimming and those 'taking the ferry' will split off and there will be a small amount of admin. Please remember to maintain social distancing!

Please be aware that swimming may not be an immediate option due to circumstances - if so, you will be asked to wait, or you may be directed to the ferry boat. This might be because of the number of swimmers ahead of you, because of debris in the river or for a number of other reasons. Please go with the instructions, and do not start swimming if directed not to!

You will be able to swap between swimming and taking the ferry at the last minute!

## Taking the Ferry

Ferry users will be required to wear a Buoyancy Aid (or PFD, for Personal Flotation Device)

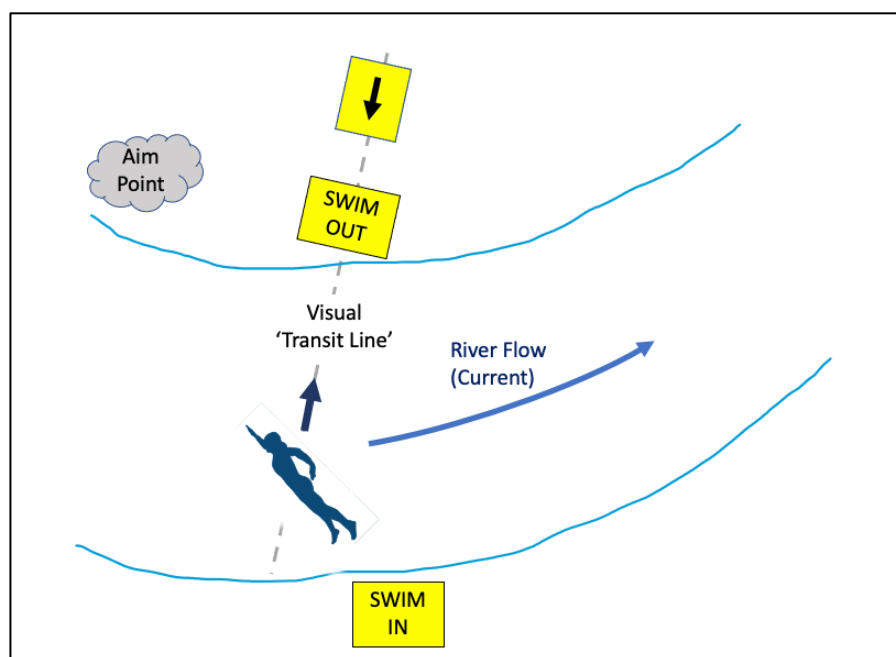
A marshal will record the bib numbers of runners getting onto the ferry, and another will record the bib numbers of runners getting off.

## Swimming Admin

1. If swimming, you will be asked if you want to wear an optional Buoyancy Aid (or PFD, for Personal Flotation Device)
2. You will be given a numbered swimming hat - which you must wear - to allow easy identification while you are in the water and afterwards
3. A marshal will record your race number and your swim hat number
4. You will then be briefed by a marshal.
5. Once briefed, you can get in the water and swim.
6. There will be help getting out of the water on the Welsh side should it be required.
7. Once you are clear of the landing area, a marshal will take your swim hat, and note its number.
8. There will be a drinks station with water and flat coke, and you are free to start running once you have handed over your hat, and PFD if you took one.
9. Do not interact with any seals that also use the incoming tide to feed.

## The Actual Swim

1. The race is arranged so that the swim will be close to high tide (slack water). The entry may involve wading through some reeds;
2. The exit will be clearly visible from the start, and is almost directly opposite. Be aware that the exit is onto a bank which is steep below the waterline – you have to be right there before you can stand up.
3. The water will almost certainly not be perfectly still – it is likely to be flowing slightly to right (still coming in) or the left (starting to go out). A marshal will point this out as you enter.
4. As a swimmer you should therefore swim in a 'ferry glide'. Aim your head and body slightly into the current, and slightly diagonal to the direct line to the exit (see below). In this way you should end up moving across the river directly towards the exit.
5. Some 'transit marks' will be set up, so that you can judge the angle and power to stay in line, by keeping the transit marks aligned. Don't worry if you don't understand this bit!
6. Do not worry if you are being taken a little away from the exit. Just swim to the far bank, and then swim back to the exit along the waters edge, where the current will be minimal
7. If you hear a whistle blown, it will be from the safety team - look and listen for instructions - if it does not involve you, then carry on swimming
8. If you need to attract help, tread water and put your hand in the air
9. Please remember to enjoy the swim and do not panic if you feel fish or otters nibbling your toes.



'Ferry Gliding' by swimming at an angle to the intended direction

## **The Welsh Side**

The second 'half' of the run route, on the Welsh side, is different in character to the first 'half'. It is longer and tougher, so be prepared! The first part is different from the first race in 2021, more varied and less grassy. Now we go through Livox Quarry, up a little track and back down through woods, before popping out onto the river bank and following it parallel to the river.

The latter part of the field is away from the river and climbs gently, then exits the woods across a fallen-down fenceline, and then up a very pretty forest track through some ancient woods, to Lower Wyndcliff Car Park.

Here the route now crosses the B-Road – since Piercefield Woods is out of bounds for running races - and follows the Wye Valley Walk for a short distance, and then another ancient carriage route, to pop out on a minor lane which leads down to the B-Road.

You MUST stay on the right side of the B-Road, and there is no pavement for the first 100m or so (sorry), and then cross the road again at the marshals where the footpath goes into Piercefield Park. Once into the park, which undulates significantly, follow the marked route parallel to the racetrack, and eventually to the finish at the far end of the grassed area.

## **Race HQ and First Aid**

Race HQ will include a full first aid facility. Race HQ will be located at the Start, and will move to the finish once the tail-runners have run across the Wye Bridge.

There will also be a first aid point at the river crossing, on the swim exit side, and a further mobile first aid team with stretcher etc. Most marshals will also be first aid trained.

## **Spectators**

We are sorry but this course is not spectator friendly, and spectators are discouraged, other than just after Lower Wyndcliff Car Park. The river crossing and section following that are on private land, and it is not possible to view the river crossing from any public vantage point.

Family members etc may choose to watch the start from the area of Chepstow Castle, and then make their way to the finish at Piercefield Park.

## **SARA**

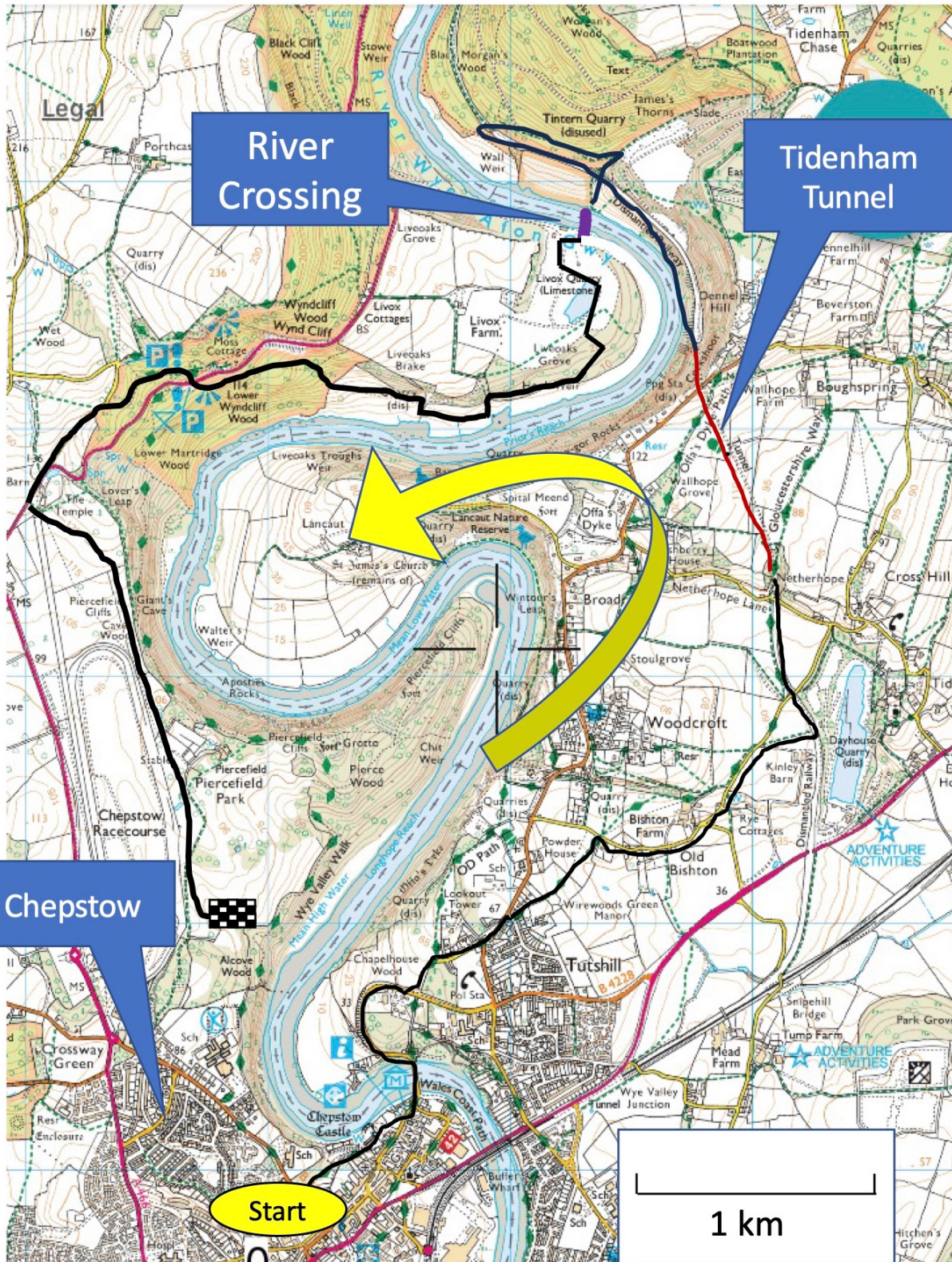
SARA is an all-volunteer search and rescue charity, with Lifeboat and Rescue Stations along the length of the River Severn. The 200 or so members provide lifeboat cover for the Lower Rivers Wye and Usk as well as the Severn, and conduct inland missing person searches across Gloucestershire and beyond. In 2021 SARA conducted six in the 48 hours following the SwimRun!

Please see [www.sara-rescue.org.uk](http://www.sara-rescue.org.uk) for more information.





# Wild Wye SwimRun 2025: Course Map





## Wild Wye Swim Run: Race Start & Finish

