Ride Leaders

INTRODUCTION

The Club cannot operate successfully without ride leaders. We rely on them to provide interesting, challenging, and safe rides. They also help maintain our reputation and provide support for our members. We are always looking for volunteers.

Leading a ride for the first few times can be a little daunting, but please don't let this put you off, it can be a thoroughly enjoyable experience. If you have any queries or concerns, you can; contact an experienced ride leader, "*share*" the ride for comment, post a question on WhatsApp, contact our "*rides guru*" Nick Dunkley, or email *bike@wensumvalleycycling.co.uk*.

INSURANCE

We are affiliated with British Cycling, which provides third-party liability insurance for ride leaders. Please see *Part 1* for more details.

ROUTE PLANNING AND PUBLISHING

Ride with GPS is our go-to app for route planning (free sign-up at *www.ridewithgps.com*). You can easily get a link for members to download your route, which should be published on the relevant WhatsApp group (together with a link for ride registration).

When planning, in addition to distance, give some thought to the type of roads. Some riders feel intimidated by busy main roads; equally, some are not keen on narrow back lanes that have poor visibility and awful, muddy, pot-holed road surfaces. Weather, and the time of year can significantly affect road surfaces.

When using *Ride with GPS*, ensure the "*Routing*" drop-down is set to "*Driving*" **not** "*Cycling*" or "*Walking*", otherwise, when you click between two locations, you may well be routed along dirt tracks and footpaths! "*Driving*" forces on-road routing. You may need to switch to "*Cycling*" occasionally; for example, to route along the likes of the cut-through at the bottom of Marl Hill at Attlebridge. When naming for club rides – consider; date (reversed) + plus location (café stop or other location). This should put your ride top of the list on devices.

To publish, use "*Share*", top left, to get a download link. To download, click the small orange square with three dots (upper left), then select "*More Export Options*" – choose "*FIT Course (.fit)*" for Garmin devices, or "*TCX Course (.tcx)*" for other devices.

Try and publish the route a few days before a ride together with details of any café stop. This will give members the opportunity to view the route and advise of potential problems that you may not be aware of and gives time for a revision to be published.

If including a café stop, check with the café beforehand to ensure they will be open and are happy with the number of riders that might be attending. When posting a ride it might be necessary to ask who is riding so numbers can be passed to the café.

RULES

Ride leaders are required to enforce the following:

> Riders are required to wear a properly adjusted cycling helmet. You should refuse permission to ride if someone is not wearing a helmet.

> You should ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that all riders, including guests, have completed ride registration, so we have up-to-date next of kin details.

KNOWING WHO YOU'VE GOT

As the ride leader, you will need to have access to the ride register. This will be made available on your phone and will tell you who has registered that day, what their preferred ride group is and, most importantly, their emergency contact details.

In order to be given access, you will need a Gmail email address (sign up for a free one at www.google.com if you don't already have one). Then send an email, using the Gmail address, to *bike@wensumvalleycycling.co.uk*, with your name and date of first lead.

This only needs to be done once. A link will be returned to you to use on rides. Please note that the list only shows riders for the current day and please treat the contents as confidential.

GROUPS

We recommend no more than 12 riders in a group so, if there are more, please split into smaller groups. Experienced club members are required to lead the groups, preferably with the route (or have someone with them that has it to "*shout*" directions).

Riders are required to meet 15 minutes before the start of a ride for pre-ride briefing and ride registration. Groups should then leave with a gap of a few minutes between departures. If all of the groups are following the same route, the groups should depart in order of ability (average speed), with the faster groups going first.

Group Riding

Part 2 gives specific details with regards to group riding. Please try to encourage the group to ride in accordance with these instructions.

Riding two abreast is the maximum and only where safe to do so. If you are confident with the "*double pace line*" (see *Part 2*), then this can be encouraged so that riders rotate through the front of the bunch.

Leaders will usually ride at the front (particularly for the first few miles) with the aim of keeping the group together whilst assessing the pace. Weaker riders, or those who are flagging, should be encouraged to ride in the middle of the group.

There may be a rider that charges off the front; discourage this where possible, otherwise let them go – upping the pace and chasing after them is counterproductive and will certainly upset the rhythm of the ride for everyone else.

Keeping a group together can be easier said than done, especially with fast groups. Consider appointing an experienced rider to "*boss*" the back and be the "*tail end Charlie*" to call for speed changes. That person will not be able to get involved with a "*chain gang*". This has advantages; the leader only needs to look out for a single person to know "*all-on*" and there will be a dedicated rider at the back to "*shout*" if there is a problem.

No-Drop

We operate a no-drop policy so, if someone is struggling, the group should adjust its pace to suit the slower rider. If a rider so wishes (and with the leader's knowledge) they may like to "*drop off*" to the group behind - *providing they have the route, or if not, understand that they must wait at the next junction*.

Should a rider get dropped without prior arrangement; as soon as the leader is aware, bring the group to a halt. Someone, preferably with mechanical knowhow, should return to find the rider. This is **mandatory** as they might be a lone female, have a mechanical problem or have had an accident and be injured.

MECHANICALS AND ACCIDENTS

Unfortunately, both of these happen from time to time and will bring the ride to a halt. Mechanical difficulties and punctures can often be fixed at the roadside. Ensure you stop the group where it is safe to do so. Where a problem can't be fixed, it's likely that the rider will need to phone for assistance. Consideration must be given as to whether or not it is safe for the rider to be left on their own until this arrives. **Never** leave a female rider on their own – consider splitting the group or leave an experienced and reliable male rider with them – not a guest or another female, as they will then be left alone when the rider is rescued.

In the event of an accident, always err on the side of caution when assessing possible injuries. If in any doubt, call for an ambulance – this is particularly important if there has been any head impact. Consequently, leaders need to carry a phone (which can also be used to register riders at the start if they do not have one themselves).

What3Words

Giving accurate location information to emergency services can be difficult when you are riding over extended distances. We encourage all of our ride leaders to download the free "What3Words" app for their phone and familiarise themselves with how it works. In short, the app provides 3 words that can be given to the emergency call handler that will identify your location to with 3 metres. For example, the pub is ///glorified.otter.plugged.

WEATHER

All rides are weather permitting and can be affected by strong winds, heavy rain and ice. A realistic judgement also needs to be made with regards to the state of the roads and their suitability for thin-tyred road bikes.   Ice is a particular hazard so, to help make this judgement call, a set of minimum temperatures has been established.   The overnight temperature should not fall below +4°C and, for the duration of the ride, the temperature should be at least +5°C.

BBC weather *http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/2644617* should be checked the evening before and again on the morning of the ride. If there is the risk of ice, consider going off-road on mountain bikes. Calling off a ride due to weather is most certainly not a case of "*wimping out*". Rather, it demonstrates the ride leader exercising his or her duty of care towards fellow Club members.