



North Cotswold Cycling Club Group Riding

These are basic rules to be observed when riding in a group so that the ride is safe and enjoyable. When riding with the club, please remember you are representing the NCCC and need to conduct yourself accordingly. Bad riding is both dangerous and does not support the image of cycling we wish to portray. Be courteous at all times; do not respond to, shout or wave abuse at motorists at any time, even if they are in the wrong.

Stick to the guidelines below and this will make for a safer and more enjoyable ride

General etiquette

- A club run is not a race, it's a group ride. Do not attack off the front to show how strong you are. The only exception being major climbs if there are any, and the final sprint if this is agreed as part of the run.
- The average speed of each club run is decided at the start. If you are uncertain of which group is right for you it is better to try an easier group first and then consider moving up on following runs.
- Most of us at some time have struggled to keep up with a group and it can be a dispiriting experience. If you do find yourself in this position firstly try and move forward in the group this is an easier place to ride and with less chance of being dropped. You may need to consider cutting the ride short or making your own way home but you must let the Ride Leader know your intentions to avoid the group waiting unnecessarily.
- The group should always wait for riders who have a problem be it mechanical or otherwise. If it is a mechanical problem that cannot be resolved it is up to the rider concerned to find their way home.
- The group should collectively ensure that no-one is left behind and that anybody who is dropped has no health problems, knows where they are, and is able to get home. Riders towards the rear have a responsibility to keep the rest of the group informed about riders who have any problem.
- On long climbs, such as up the Cotswold escarpment, it's likely that the group will spread out as riders' pace their effort to the top. On reaching the summit the quickest riders should find a safe place to pull in and wait for all the riders before recommencing the ride.
- Riders on the front should shout and point out any hazards (pot holes, debris, parked cars, pedestrians, etc). The warnings should be passed back through the group so that all riders are aware of the danger.
- Never swerve suddenly or brake sharply in a group. Ride straight over the hazard if necessary rather than braking or swerving. The front riders should also shout back at a junction to indicate whether the way is clear or not and wait for the whole group to cross the junction.

Finer points of Group riding

- When riding pairs there should be no gaps in a group. If there is a space in front of you, fill it - even if this means you have to talk to someone other than your mate.
- **Do not overlap the wheel of the rider in front** – this is dangerous as if the rider in front has to swerve the chance of an accident is greatly increased if wheels are overlapping.
- In order to share the work, the riders on the front should rotate at regular intervals. This is the accepted way to do it:
 - The rider on the right pulls in front of the rider on his left and the rider behind him moves up to the front followed by the riders on the right all moving up one place to fill the gap in front of them. The effect is that the riders all move round in an anti-clockwise direction, whilst keeping the pace constant. If you find yourself reaching the front and struggling then cut your turn short and ask other riders to rotate through.
- Do not “half wheel” your partner. That is riding slightly faster than your partner so that your wheel is slightly ahead of theirs. This results in the speed gradually increases and leads to disorganisation of the group.
- Although the urge to be first to the top of a major climb is irresistible it should be firmly resisted on every short rise; this is annoying as it disturbs the rhythm of the group, drops out riders who may be at their limit and causes the group to become disorganised and more difficult for traffic to overtake.
- When on the front avoid accelerating hard as this causes a ‘concertina effect’, stretching the group out and can result in riders being dropped particularly if it’s a strong headwind
- On descents stick to your lines. Keep to the left and overtake on the right. Allow plenty of room when overtaking. Remember we are not riding on closed roads.

Safety and dealing with other road users

- Observe all aspects of the Highway Code and always ride on the left hand side of the road. See rules for cyclists 59 to 82. Pay particular attention to rule 66. **Never ride more than two abreast.**
- Ride in twos in tight formation so that traffic can pass more easily. Shout “car back” to indicate traffic behind and close any gaps to make the group as compact as possible. Do not automatically single out because this makes the group twice as long and harder for traffic to overtake safely. Change to single file when necessary to ride safely or avoid undue obstruction to other road users. The riders to the outside should then drop in behind the rider on their inside.
- When passing horses ALWAYS shout “Bike!” or other such warning in good time to make the rider and horse aware that you are approaching from behind. If a horse appears startled always be prepared to slow or stop if necessary. Give horses plenty of room and take into account other traffic.

General Points

- A helmet must be worn on club rides
- Riders must ensure they have suitable clothing for the conditions. Remember it can get cold on a bike particularly if wet.
- A rear mudguard must be fitted while riding on club rides during the winter, late autumn and early spring. This not only keeps your bike clean and helps prevent damage, but it

prevents road grime from flicking up into the following rider's eyes and mouth. We do not expect everyone to own a fully kitted out winter bike, but various retro fit mudguards can be fitted to race bikes. The club Sunday Captain shall inform club members in advance of the first ride of when this rule will commence each year.

- Always keep a well-maintained bike (gears, brakes, tyres, chain etc) and always carry at least a spare inner tube, tyre levers, pump to fix the inevitable puncture. Other tools such as Allen keys, a chain tool and a magic link are desirable. One advantage of riding in a group is that help is on hand to try and fix any problems. However, when something happens that can't be repaired, or illness prevents you from completing a ride, it is always wise to have an alternative means of getting home. So, carrying a mobile and some cash is strongly advised.
- The points described here are firstly to keep you safe and secondly to maximise the enjoyment for you and your fellow riders. If you are unsure of anything or want advice, please just ask your Ride Leader.

Most importantly though, enjoy the riding. Have fun but be safe and considerate.