



Riding in a Group with Ruthin Cycling Club

These are the guidelines for riding with Ruthin Cycling Club.

The etiquette for all club rides is to:

"Start as a group, Ride as a group and Finish as a group".

Ride Leaders

We aim to have a trained Ride Leader on our rides, though this is not always possible. Please follow his/her requests on the ride.

Poor Weather

Rides will generally be cancelled in advance if there is a Red or Amber Severe Weather Warning in place. For Yellow warnings or where conditions are otherwise thought unsafe due to, for example snow and ice, the published route may be changed beforehand or by the Ride Leader.

Clothing and Equipment

Please wear or carry suitable clothes for the expected weather conditions, including extra layers in case you are stopped for a while. Remember it can be much colder at the top of exposed hills and it can rain unexpectedly – we are in Wales!

Wear bright clothing so drivers can see you easily. And carry/use lights.

Use sun cream in the summer! And carry plenty of water and energy bars/gels.

You should have tools for fixing punctures with you including tyre levers, inner tube(s) and a pump. A Multi-tool and chain link can be handy too.

We advise riders to carry a 1st Aid Kit – include a bandage, sterile dressing (large), plasters, skin closures (steri-strips), non-allergenic tape, antiseptic wipes, aspirin, emergency blanket, or at least some of these items.

Your Bike

Before the ride, do check your bike over: tyres (worn? correct pressure), wheels (rotate freely, no wobbles, axle tight), brakes (operation & wear), bearings (any play in bottom bracket or headset?) etc. If you adjust seat, handlebars or remove wheels, brakes etc. make certain they are tightened to the correct torque. And before you put your shoes on, check that your cleat bolts are not working loose. Other club members can be a useful source of advice. Please get help if you're not sure what you're doing.

Remember, you are responsible for your own safety and well-being.

Riding two-abreast

When traffic and road conditions permit, the group should ride two abreast in close formation. This allows significant protection from the wind (up to 30% easier than riding solo!), for all but the leading



two, as well as allowing a sociable atmosphere within the group. It also reduces the length of the group allowing quicker overtaking by other traffic.

Riding single-file

The group will have to "single up" or pull over to allow traffic to pass in narrow lanes or heavy traffic. The leading rider should instruct the group to "Single-up!" in a loud voice when this is necessary.

Spacing on main/busy roads

To make it easier for cars and lorries to overtake, and safer for all concerned, please avoid creating a long, strung out group of riders with no obvious gaps that a lorry could pull into safely. Ideally split into tight groups of 3-5 riders, with perhaps 50 metres between groups, on busy or main roads.

Hazard signals within the group

The leading riders should give loud voice and hand warnings of hazards such as the need to 'single up' or of potholes, grids, walkers, parked or oncoming cars etc., and those hand-signals should be passed on as the rider behind you may not see the hazard until too late. Those at the back should warn of overtaking cars on narrow roads. But it's not necessary for the whole group to shout the same warning!

Sudden moves in a group

Remember, another rider - possibly inexperienced - is trying to follow only a couple of feet behind your back wheel, so if you sit up and freewheel, and possibly wobble, to eat, drink or adjust something, then that rider could easily run into your back wheel and crash. If in doubt, wait until a stop to regroup or go to the back of the group to eat and drink.

Staying in a group

Group riding sometimes means that stronger riders might have to ride a little easier than they might wish and weaker riders might occasionally find the ride hard but manageable. If gaps form, then a call of "Easy up!" from the rear of the group should result in an easing of the pace in order to keep the group together.

Look around you and when you see riders are fractured into groups of two and three spread over a mile of road, something is seriously wrong, it is no longer a club ride. Stop and regroup!

Climbing in a group

It's often unrealistic for groups to stay together on climbs. In this case those first to the top should wait or roll easily at the top, to allow dropped riders to get back onto the group and recover.

No dropped riders

No dropped rider should ever be abandoned. A rider who wants to leave the group should explain that to everyone and the group should be sure that he/she has food, drink, directions, and tools, to continue safely on his/her own. This applies especially to new riders and others who may not be familiar with the area.



Break-aways

On some group rides, especially with larger groups, it might prove practical to split the group into two mid-way through a ride. If this is the case, the group should fully reform for a leader for each group to be established, before any break.

Punctures or other mechanical problems

If you, or another rider, has a puncture or other mechanical issue, shout "Puncture!" or "Mechanical!". The group should stop, alerting those in front if necessary. Move to a safe place, appointing traffic lookouts if needed. Assist the person with the problem as necessary. Generally continue as a group when the problem is fixed, or otherwise by agreement.

Descending in a Group

Our accident statistics show that descending is the most dangerous time for group riding, so please follow these guidelines:

- Remind yourself and your group that descending is risky, so concentrate hard on the task in hand.
- Be very aware of the conditions (road type, traffic, pedestrians, road surface, [pot-holes, gravel, damp, leaves etc.]) and ride accordingly.
- Always assume there is a hazard around every corner. Stay to the left and ensure you can stop before your view point.
- Hazards will appear faster than you can react, so ensure your speed is appropriate for the situation.
- Keep a good gap to the rider in front to allow visibility of hazards, and time to react.
- Limit social chatting which can reduce your focus on the task.
- Competitive behaviour is often not appropriate when descending as a group. Don't race unless it is safe to do so.
- Ensure your bike is mechanically sound. Speed and vibration will aggravate the effect of any defects.

Accidents

The group should stop immediately. The first task is ensuring the safety of the injured party and the rest of the group, for example by stopping traffic. The state of any injured party should be assessed, and anyone in the group with First Aid or medical qualifications should lead the response as injuries dictate. If another person or property is involved, liability should not be admitted but contact details and photographs should be taken.

Members are asked to include their Emergency Contact in the ICE or Medical ID section of their phone accessible without unlocking it. And also written somewhere accessible eg on the back of the phone, helmet, bike, wrist band etc, in case the phone is unusable.



Respect colleagues & other road users

While it's great fun to be riding in a group, we need to respect the fact that roads are also used by cars and other vehicles, horse riders and pedestrians. So we slow down or pull in, make our presence known and do our best to let traffic flow freely, especially on country lanes.

Make pedestrians and slower cyclists aware of your presence. A bell is surprisingly effective!

Slow or stop for horses and speak loudly if approaching from behind so the horse and rider are aware of your approach. Give horses a wide berth.

We expect our Club members to obey the traffic regulations and follow the guidelines in the Highway Code at all times, in particular the January 2022 changes affecting cyclists. You are our Club ambassador when out riding.

Please also respect the new 20 mph limit by not overtaking cars who are driving at their legal maximum! Cyclists can still be prosecuted for reckless, dangerous, careless or inconsiderate riding, and "wanton or furious driving" under the 1861 Act!

ALWAYS FIT MUDGUARDS if the roads are damp to protect the rider behind you from spray and mud. Treat your colleagues with care and respect.

The club aims to follow the guidelines issued by British Cycling: [see them here](#).