

GUIDE TO GROUP RIDING AND ETIQUETTE ON CLUB RIDES

WHY RIDE IN A GROUP?

For several reasons - social, safety, sporting and fitness. And, of course, if you are new to the sport or the area, you won't get lost. By riding in a group you'll learn road skills and be able to chat to more experienced riders, generally speaking it is the best place to learn about how to get into cycling. Therefore - Lincoln Wheelers organises regular group rides.

BEFORE THE RIDE

Please ensure that you come along with you and your bike adequately prepared

Equipment

All riders should carry adequate tools to fix common mechanical problems.

Minimum kit should include:

- a pump / means of inflating at least two tyres
- two spare inner tubes or one inner tube & puncture repair kit
- at least two tyre levers
- a multitool or basic tool kit

Clothing

All riders should wear adequate clothing and ensure that they are prepared for a change in conditions. Always consider wearing appropriate clothing that has good road visibility to other road users. In poor visibility consider specific high viz clothing.

The wearing of cycle helmets is compulsory on Club runs.

Bike

Please ensure that your bike is roadworthy, paying special attention to brakes and tyres. If visibility is poor or there is a risk of a late return, ensure that your bike is equipped with working front and rear lights.

If aero / tri bars are fitted to your bike, please be aware that they may not be used during a ride as they can cause instability which may be dangerous whilst riding in a group.

AT THE RIDE

Details are posted on the club website calendar and Facebook page.

The times given are departure times and you should turn up at least 5-10 minutes before the advertised departure time.

If you are new to group riding and / or have any relevant medical conditions please make sure that you inform the ride leader.

Young persons should be accompanied by an adult, parent (LWCC Club member) or another adult Club member nominated by the parent. The appropriate Young Riders form should be completed prior to the Club Ride.

The ride leader will brief all riders before the ride on the expectations and etiquette during the ride and any known issues on the route regarding safety and road conditions.

ETIQUETTE DURING THE RIDE

There are a few simple basic rules which, if consistently adopted will help ensure the enjoyment of all riders.

Do not pass the ride leader

They are in charge of the ride and will when appropriate invite other riders to "go on the front"

Follow the Highway Code

It should go without saying!

Respect the white line

Safety is paramount and this does not need further explanation except to state the obvious fact that riding on the wrong side of the road puts you, other riders and other road users in unnecessary and unwarranted danger.

Ride in two lines

Two parallel lines of riders is the safest and most practical riding formation. All club runs will assume this formation, usually with the ride leader at the front and another experienced rider at the back. Do not break the line and overtake only on hills or safe places where the road ahead is clear. Contrary to some road users opinion this is legal and it is at the discretion of the riders to single out.

The focus is keeping the group neat and tidy. Riders should attempt to ride with 1ft approx. between their front wheel and the back wheel of the rider in front. There should also be about 1ft or so between the shoulders of pairs riding abreast. There can sometimes be a tendency for riders to take a line to one side of the rider in front of them and to overlap wheels. This should be avoided for a number of reasons:

- It causes the group to echelon and spread across the road, giving the appearance, when the group is approached from front or back, that the riders in the group are riding 3 and 4 abreast (to the annoyance of other road users);
- If you ride in the middle of the two wheels in front of you, you **will** push the rider on your outside into the path of passing vehicles;
- If you overlap wheels, or nudge in between the wheels of the riders in front. Any sudden change in direction from either you or the riders in front is likely to result in a crash, potentially bringing down riders behind as well.

Young riders

Young riders should at **all times remain on the inside** of their parent or nominated adult and ideally be in a position of third wheel in the group.

Singling out

On busy roads it may be safer to single out, the ride leader will give instructions to do so. Also on narrow lanes with traffic behind or oncoming it may be necessary to single out. The best way to single out is that riders on the inside should in turn slightly accelerate to allow riders on the outside to slip in behind them. The instinctive reaction to an oncoming car is to brake. This has a ripple effect through the group and makes singling out more difficult, and is the more likely to cause a crash.

Riding on the front

When on the front **keep pedalling!** If you freewheel, everyone behind you will have to brake. It seems only fair that all members of the group should take a turn at the front, particularly when the group is riding into a strong wind or other adverse weather. There are a couple of techniques for this. First, clearly tell the group that there is to be a change at the front.

1. Either the rider on the outside at the front accelerates and moves over in front of the nearside rider. The outside riders then move up one and the last rider on the inside will move to the outside to reform into pairs.

2. Or the rider in front pulls off to the right allowing the rider behind to come through. If riding in pairs the rider on the left pulls off to the left and the rider to the right pulls off to the right. The pair of riders behind can then come through to the front.

Be aware that riders behind will experience the 'concertina effect'. When riding on the front do not accelerate hard away from tight corners and junctions, and give warnings of hazards as early as possible to give riders towards the back of the group time to react.

Road Junctions and roundabouts

Particular care must be taken at road junctions. Groups should try to remain orderly and avoid bunching at the mouth of the junction. Members of the group who have negotiated the junction should be aware that other members may have had to wait and need time to rejoin. If the group does split the riders at the front should wait for delayed riders, either stopping altogether or riding at a gentle pace until the group is back together. Whilst it is customary for riders to give a shout of "clear" to those behind, please remember that each member of the group is individually responsible for his or her own safety and they should only proceed onto a junction when they are sure that it is safe to do so.

Climbing

Everyone climbs differently and a climb will inevitably lead to the group splitting. If you know you are a weaker climber, drop to the back before the climb. Do not move to the front, you will be forcing other riders to go around you when the climb starts.

Standing out of the saddle causes a momentary deceleration, so if you plan to do this let the rider behind you know. When a climb levels out, the leading riders should pedal through, do not suddenly stop pedalling and slow down. If other riders have been dropped on the climb, gently reduce the pace and wait for them to catch up.

Tell someone if you have a problem

You may be feeling a bit shy about it but tell the riders around you if you have a puncture or mechanical problem, don't drift to the back and off it without telling anyone. If they drop you on a hill they will wait or send a rider or two back to pace you up to the group so don't worry, they won't abandon you.

Punctures





If you are a slow mechanic ask for help. There will be experienced riders who can fix a flat in a matter of seconds, so don't feel afraid to ask if it will save the group time.


Send the message to the front

If you are riding at the back and a rider is dropped for whatever reason tell the riders in front of you and ask them to shout up to the front. The pace can then be adjusted to suit the problem or the group can stop.

Group communication

Riders should navigate and point out hazards in the road by either shouting or using hand signals. It is important that information is passed quickly and clearly to all members of the group. Listed below are some common used signals.

Hole 	Pointing down at road sometimes with a circling motion to obstruction on road such as a pothole or drain cover that needs to be avoided. Be sensible with this one and only point out major obstacles e.g. pothole, a branch, a brick, large puddle, etc.. This signal is often accompanied with a call of "below".
On the left 	Waving/pointing behind back indicates that there is an obstruction such as a parked car or pedestrian and that the whole group needs to move in the direction indicated to avoid it.
Easy or Slowing 	A vocal request to slow down and be careful, for example because there is a hazard ahead or the group is approaching a junction, or there is some problem in the group. Move one hand as if gently patting an invisible dog.
Stop 	A command to stop. Hand straight up in air. Group is stopping for a junction, puncture or because there is an obstruction in the road.

<p>Right or left</p> 	<p>Left or right hand extended out to side. Direction of turn/change in direction coming up.</p>
<p>Puncture /Mechanical</p>	<p>Warn riders behind you that you are likely to slow that you are going off the back with a problem. If you can control your bike, raise your hand in the air to indicate, as above.</p>
<p>Clear</p>	<p>At a junction, this is an indication to other riders that that the road is completely clear in both directions. However, please note that a shout of 'clear' is never ever a justification for not checking and pulling out and every rider has individual responsibility to ensure the road is clear for themselves.</p>
<p>Gravel</p>	<p>Gravel or other loose debris is signalled on the road, by holding the hand flat over the road and shaking it.</p>
<p>Ease up</p>	<p>An instruction to the lead riders to slow the pace (usually as a result of other riders being dropped). The lead riders should not stop but should continue to “soft pedal” at a slower pace until the group has reformed and the “All on” signal (see below) has been communicated up the line.</p>
<p>All on</p>	<p>A signal to be passed up to the lead riders to indicate that dropped riders have rejoined the main group and that normal riding pace may be resumed. It is important that the lead riders do not accelerate to normal pace until such a call is received.</p>
<p>Car back</p>	<p>Warns that a vehicle is approaching the rear of the group, only necessary on narrow roads.</p>
<p>Car front</p>	<p>Warns that a vehicle is approaching the front of the group, on a narrow road.</p>