



Royston Cycling Club - Ride Guidelines

Many riders will agree that the most rewarding part of club membership is the Sunday club ride. These group rides are highly social and a great way to improve fitness and your ability to ride further and faster while exploring the surrounding countryside.

To get the most from group-riding calls for techniques, habits and awareness which in some cases differ from solo cycling. Accordingly, while all riders with the club ride at their own risk, the key pointers below are designed to equip members with the information they need to prepare for and enjoy group rides while ensuring the safety of fellow riders and other road users.

1. Preparing to ride

Yes, most of this list of what to check and take is obvious but worth rehearsing nevertheless.

- * Make sure your bike is safe and roadworthy. If in doubt visit your local bike shop.
- * Check the weather forecast and dress appropriately (bearing in mind a typical club run is two hours).
- * Always wear a helmet. No helmet, no ride.
- * Water
- * Energy snack
- * Tools to deal with minor mechanical problems. Typically this means carrying the following: -
 - ✓ Spare inner tube (ideally two)
 - ✓ Tyre levers
 - ✓ Pump
 - ✓ Multi-tool
- * A phone, plus emergency contact details in writing

- * Money/credit card (useful for the post-ride coffee at the Bull)
- * Lights – if visibility is poor
- * Mudguards – indispensable for winter and wet weather riding

2. Sunday morning club rides

Sunday morning club rides leave promptly at 9am from outside the Mica hardware store in the town's market square. The rides normally divide into groups with each group comprising riders able to sustain a similar average speed over two hours. Average group speeds typically range from 10-12 mph to 18+ mph.

Which riders ride with which group can change week to week dependent on the route, weather conditions, the riders participating on the day and riders' energy levels. However, the general advice is to ride within your capabilities and if in doubt to start with a slower ride and look to move to a faster group in subsequent weeks.

Each group will have a navigator. The navigator will be familiar with the route, have some cycling experience and be responsible for any changes to the route dictated by the weather, traffic or road conditions.

It is intended that each group leaves and returns as a group riding at a uniform pace so that no riders are dropped. Please do not break up your group by riding at too high a tempo. If you find the pace too slow you can of course join a faster group on subsequent rides.

If you find yourself at risk of dropping behind during a ride – or if you notice a fellow rider is struggling - please alert the group as soon as possible using the 'Easy' call so that the pace can be moderated. Alternatively if there is a following slower group you can choose to wait and join their ride. In this instance please ensure that the group you started with is aware of your decision.

There are two exceptions to this general approach.

Typically a group will stretch out on hill climbs and then reform before proceeding when all riders have completed the climb.

Towards the end of a ride when on familiar roads approaching Royston some members may choose to sprint the final 2/3 miles.

If any single group comprises more than 10 riders it may be split into two groups.

Routes for the Sunday rides will usually be posted on the club forum on Saturday evening. The route will generally be chosen from one of the rides in the route bank on the club website. Any club member can suggest which routes we ride.

3. Riding safely in a group

The club shares the road with a wide range of other users - lorries, cars, agricultural vehicles, other cyclists, runners, dog-walkers, horse-riders and ramblers. Awareness of and respect for all these road users is important both for safety and for the impression we leave of cyclists in general and of our club in particular.

Of course, follow the Highway Code. In particular obey road markings and traffic lights just as you would when driving and ride only on roads or cycle paths. Never ride more than two abreast and ride single file on busy or narrow roads.

Cycling as a group is highly efficient and you may be surprised at how much faster you go compared with a solo ride. However, cycling in close proximity with other riders reduces reaction times. To be safe it is important to ride smoothly and at a constant speed, holding your line, not overlapping wheels (i.e. as part of a group do not ride with your front wheel projecting ahead of any part of the rear wheel of the rider immediately in front of you), avoiding hard braking and overreaction while staying alert to what is going on in the road ahead and anticipating what traffic will do.

Effective communication during any a group ride is therefore vital and cyclists employ a set of calls and signals to indicate manoeuvres and potential hazards to all the group's riders as soon as they become apparent.

These widely-used calls and signals are as follows.

- * *Car Back*: car approaching from the rear
- * *Car Up*: car approaching from the front
- * *Car right or left*: car approaching from the direction called
- * *Hole or gravel* : hazard in the road
- * *Walker/runner up*: pedestrian ahead
- * *Biker up*: cyclist ahead that we are likely to overtake
- * *Clear*: appears safe to ride on at junction/roundabout ahead but remain vigilant. Only use this call when you have clear line of sight to any

approaching traffic, i.e. do not repeat the call of a rider ahead unless you are in a position to see that it is safe to proceed.

- * *Slowing*: potential hazard ahead, reduce speed but don't brake sharply
- * *Stop/stopping*: we are going to have to stop - there is a hazard we can't ride round
- * *Single out* : move to single file
- * *Easy*: called to ride leader to slow the pace if the rider(s) at the rear are being dropped
- * *Mechanical/puncture*: a repair requires the group to stop
- * Rider pointing down to left or right: indicates pothole or other obstacle that riders following should adjust their line to avoid
- * Rider with arm behind their back pointing right: indicates need to move right to avoid parked car or other obstacle.

Horses

Club rides frequently encounter horses and they need to be treated with caution.

When approaching a horse from the front reduce your pace and look to the rider and horse for any sign of nerves. If necessary stop and wait for the horse to pass.

When approaching from behind call to the rider to alert them to your presence and ask their consent for you to ride through slowly. Be prepared to stop if it's apparent that the rider first needs to calm their horse. This is especially important in larger groups where the silent (to the horse and rider) approach of cyclists can easily spook a highly-strung animal and an unprepared rider.

By joining our club you agree to abide by these guidelines, so please take the time to study them. If in doubt about any of the guidance please email the club at roystoncc@hotmail.com or, of course, ask any of the experienced club members before your ride.



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