

Group Cycling Guide

Membership

B&D U3A Cyclists is a group that participate in rides organised to take place on every second Wednesday of each month (weather permitting), and at other times for ad hoc and away-day rides. Membership of the Cycling Group is open to any B&D U3A member accepting the conditions of membership detailed in this document. Only members of the B&D U3A are covered by U3A liability insurance, and only B&D U3A members shall be permitted to join B&D U3A Cycle rides. (see also current member list and rides programme).

Terms and definitions

Ride Leader: An individual responsible for leading a ride and observing, where appropriate, the guidance detailed in the present document.

Ride Member: individual(s) agreeing to abide by the guidance in the present document.

Safety (General)

Cycling is not, of itself, dangerous, but we all owe a duty of care to ourselves and others. Individuals participating in a ride are responsible for their own safety and ride with the group at their own risk.

Before taking part in a ride:

- ensure that you have a safe, roadworthy machine
- wear suitable clothing (helmets are not obligatory, they are a personal choice)
- carry a card or other document for reference giving contacts In Case of Emergency.
- carry a spare inner tube and/or a puncture outfit and a pump
- ensure that you have whatever refreshment (liquids especially) you might need on a ride.

It is recommended that lights are carried – in case delays mean that you run out of daylight.

Arranging a ride

Group Members are encouraged to plan and lead rides – but remember that it's all about enjoyment..

Ride Leaders should encourage feedback from group riders during the ride; use the stops to see how people are feeling. Don't wait to follow up after the ride as the results won't be nearly as honest or meaningful.

For each planned ride circulate by email to Group Members a notification of:

- Date and start time,
- Whose ride it is (i.e. the Ride Leader and a contact phone number)
- Meeting place (RV)
- Length of ride (miles) and broad outline of route/itinerary (give coffee/tea/lunch arrangements).

- Estimated finish time

The decision whether a ride goes ahead should rest with the Ride Leader.

Safe Cycling Guidance

When riding in a group, please follow the instructions of the Ride Leader at all times

- Ride safely, following the Highway Code at all times.
- Do not pass the Ride Leader unless he/she agrees.
- If you become separated from the group, do not take risks to catch up - the group will wait for you.
- Riders should ride not more than two abreast. Sometimes, riding single file is safer.
- If there are a lot of riders (say 6 or more) in the line, then cycle in small groups (3 or 4) and leave gaps between groups to let overtaking traffic come in if necessary.
- Riders should not ride too close to others who may not be used to riding with you.
- Shout warnings (e.g. "car behind!", "horses ahead!", "passing on your right") and signal riders if there is a danger in the road.
- We don't have brake lights, so let other riders know well in advance if you intend to stop – shout "Stopping" loudly.
- Take especial care on all roads and lanes with restricted vision, looking and listening for other users including walkers, horse riders and cars.
- Take extra care at junctions and when crossing main roads, stopping to ensure that it is safe; make your own decision to proceed.

When leading a group ride

Remember that riders are out for pleasure, neither racing nor taking intensive exercise, and the leader should set a pace that is within the capabilities of the group as a whole. So wait at the top of hills, or for those who are slow - and give them a chance to catch their breath before carrying on.

If the group becomes spread out, take care not to "drop" people when you turn left or right. Make certain that those behind know which way the ride has gone. Leave someone at the junction if necessary.

If the group exceeds, say, 6 riders, always have a back marker. The back marker's function is to ensure that no one gets left behind. Ideally, the back marker should be one of the more confident and competent riders.

Mobile phones are very useful so that the back marker can contact the Ride Leader in case of need.

Cyclists Rights – what you need to know

Bridleways and Towpaths

Cycling on a pavement or a public footpath is forbidden in the UK, but it's legal on a towpath or bridleway. Cyclists are advised to give way to pedestrians and horse riders, though, as a matter of safety and courtesy. Incidentally, there is no exemption in law that allows children to cycle on the pavement, although they may be immune from prosecution due to their age.

To ring, or not to ring

There is no legal requirement for a bicycle to be fitted with a bell or horn; giving a warning by calling out is sufficient.

Speed Limits

Speed limits on public roads apply only to motor vehicles, not bicycles. Of course, cyclists who ride recklessly or dangerously can be charged with an offence, but speeding in itself is not a crime.

Giving Ground

Cyclists have the same rights on the road as everyone else. This means that motorists must give way to them when turning left or right. The same goes for cyclists on a roundabout; motorists should wait for them to move on from the right in exactly the same way as for another vehicle.

Undertaking

It's perfectly legal for a cyclist to undertake and overtake cars – otherwise known as lane splitting - faster progress through traffic. Overtaking on the right wherever possible is, of course, generally the safer option.

Middle of the Road

Cyclists are entitled to use the full width of their side of the carriageway in the same way as all road users. In towns and cities some drivers have the dangerous habit of opening car doors in a cyclist's path - a very good way of ruining a cyclist's day, or even life. Riding in the centre of the road avoids this, and may also be necessary to avoid potholes and drains, or to force drivers to overtake them properly, rather than trying to squeeze past where there isn't really enough space to do so.