

Stonehouse Wheelers

Guidance for Ride Leaders

1. PLANNING A RIDE:

- a. Plan the route and ride it beforehand to check out that there are no unexpected road closures/obstacles/changes that you were not aware of.
- b. If you are planning to stop at a café/pub for refreshments – check that they will be open and if possible, it is courteous to let them know that you will be calling in with a group.
- c. Formulate a ride plan. The information that your ride plan should include is:
 - i. The meeting place, date and time.
 - ii. Your name and phone number.
 - iii. Approximate mileage.
 - iv. Assessment of the overall gradient using the scale below. (Be realistic! Bear in mind that lots of ascent on a longer ride will be more challenging for some riders than others)
 1. **Fairly Flat** (Usually towards River Severn, some undulating low hills)
 2. **Slightly Hilly** (Either one long hill or some moderate hills)
 3. **Hilly** (Steep hills or many moderate hills)
 4. **Very Hilly** (Lots of climbing)
 - v. Details of any off-road sections, if applicable.
 - vi. Details of any café stops or whether riders will need to bring their own food and drinks for the ride.
- d. When you've completed your ride plan send it to the Runs Co-ordinator, preferably by email. If you do not have access to email, you can either:
 - i. send a hard copy in the post
 - ii. give it to them on a ride
 - iii. give them the details over the phone.
- e. If it becomes necessary to make changes that will substantially alter the route prior to the ride day, please notify the Runs Co-ordinator or Secretary by email or telephone so that all members can be informed in good time.
- f. If you have to change the planned route at the last minute – ie on the day of the ride - ensure that you give a thorough briefing to all riders about the changes before commencing the ride.

2. ON THE DAY OF THE RIDE:

- a. Make sure you know the route clearly so that you can lead it safely and confidently.
- b. Aim to be at the meeting point at least 10 minutes ahead of the start time. If there are new people joining the ride be prepared to give a little extra attention to them for example, to tell them about the 'shouts', staying together, etc.
- c. Ask for a volunteer to be a back marker. If possible give a map to the back marker or at least make sure they know the route you plan to take.
- d. If you have a mobile phone, give your number to the back marker.
- e. Give a short but thorough briefing about where the route will go and how flat or hilly it will be.
- f. Take a headcount.
- g. Ensure that you capture a record of the names of all riders. After the ride this information should be passed by the ride leader to either the Secretary or the Rides Co-ordinator. You could take a photograph of the page in the runs book and send it by email or notify by telephone.
- h. Safety in the group – if there are a large number of riders, be prepared to split into smaller groups of around 6 riders per group. Ideally allocate a person to lead each group. If this is not

possible make sure that the groups keep each other in sight and stop at regular intervals to re-group.

- i. Include information about any known hazards along the way, such as steep descents, dangerous junctions, adverse weather considerations etc.
- j. Remind the group where the tea stop or picnic will be and if possible, how long you aim to stop there for.
- k. Do a last minute check that everyone is ready and has lights if you think they will be needed.

3. DURING THE RIDE:

- a. Stick to the planned route. If you need to deviate make sure you stop the group and explain any changes. Make sure your back marker knows and understands any changes.
- b. Always obey the rules of the road – no jumping red lights – even at road works.
- c. Maintain a steady speed which suits all riders in the group.
- d. Give clear hand signals, in good time, to ensure that the rest of the group and other road users are completely clear of your intentions.
- e. Carry out regular checks (eg look over your shoulder or stop) to make sure that everyone is coping with the pace of the ride. Remember that we all experience fluctuations in fitness and health throughout the seasons.
- f. Leaders have discretion to allow riders to make their own way at their own pace up a climb or down a descent. Regroup at the top of the climb or after a descent if necessary.
- g. Leave a marker every time the route turns off left or right at junctions or side roads.
- h. Ensure you have enough rest stops. Riders will tire at different times.
- i. In the event of a puncture or mechanical failure the whole group must stop whilst the situation is assessed and to help fix the fault if possible. If the problem is unresolvable by the roadside and the rider cannot continue the rider must NOT be left unless and until a clear plan for their return is known.
- j. Traffic – in the event of a 'tail' of traffic building up, do not be tempted to wave them through. Instead, find a safe place where the whole group can stop to allow the tail to pass.
- k. In the event of an accident, the whole group must stop and render first aid or assistance as appropriate. The Ride Leader will be responsible for arranging the emergency services and for obtaining names and addresses of those involved, if required. If the injured rider is unable to continue they must not be left unless there is a clear plan to get them safely home. Obviously the nature and severity of the problem will dictate what is the appropriate course of action.
- l. Weather – if the weather deteriorates unexpectedly during the ride, be prepared to alter or shorten the route if necessary.

4. AT THE END OF THE RIDE:

- a. Make sure you know if anyone will be leaving the ride before the end. You could mention this in your briefing.
- b. Make sure you have a list of the names of all riders.

5. CANCELLING THE RIDE:

- a. If a Ride Leader becomes unable to lead a ride for any reason, they should contact the Runs Co-ordinator or Secretary as soon as possible so that all members can be contacted and a substitute leader appointed or the ride cancelled.
- b. In the event of a last-minute cancellation the Ride Leader should contact the Runs Co-ordinator or Secretary **and also** go to the ride start point in case any riders did not get the notification in time. If the Ride Leader is unable to go to the start themselves, they should ensure that someone else is there.
- c. The Ride Leader must be mindful of the threat of extreme weather, which is becoming more commonplace. If there is a likelihood of extreme weather which may threaten the safety of participants the Ride Leader should consider cancelling the ride using one of the above options as appropriate.