

Wootton Tri Club

Group Riding Rules and Etiquette

Cycling with a group is one of the most enjoyable ways of seeing your area and getting healthy exercise. You can also get good advice riding with a group and this is a great way of picking up tips. Your group leader is usually a volunteer who has offered to share their local knowledge and cycling experience; please follow their advice and instructions. Look for the ride that suits your fitness level, the group descriptor can be found on the Wootton Web Page.

To take part in a Wootton Tri cycle group you must be a member of the club. It is also a good idea to make sure the leader has your mobile number and emergency contact number.

1. Keep to the rules of the road and countryside when riding

You are responsible for yourself even in a group. The leader can offer directions and advice but is not responsible for you knowing and following the requirements of the Highway Code and Countryside Code. Additionally as a club with identifiable distinctive clothing we are also judged on what the public see us doing.

2. Make sure your bike is ready for the ride

During our club rides no one will ever be left at the road side alone but a basic kit is essential. Carry at least one spare inner tube, a pump and tyre levers. Make sure your bike is in good working order.

3. Be prepared

Always carry a drink and on long scheduled rides some food with you. As most rides continue regardless of weather, it is advisable to dress appropriately. Cycling specific clothing is not necessary but will help you to ride more comfortably and safely. **The wearing of a helmet is compulsory.** Carry a waterproof /windproof jacket on all but the very best of days. Carry some form of identification and your mobile phone. In some instances a ride may stop at a cafe so bring some money with you as well.

4. If you have to leave the group

Please notify the leader if you intend to leave the group as a sudden disappearance will bring a halt to the group; someone may turn back to look for you and a phone call may be made to your given mobile and/or emergency number.

5. Riding in close proximity to other cyclists takes practice

Relax and enjoy the company but always allow for others in front and behind. Riding as a close group allows for easy conversation and takes best advantage of the slipstream effect from front riders thus saving your energy. Avoid overlapping your front wheel with someone else's back wheel as a change in their direction may bring you down and also those following you. Also avoid being too close and in-line with rider's wheel in front of you. Instead ride slightly to the side and behind them. In all instances be prepared to make an emergency stop.

6. The group riding pattern

The group riding pattern is normally in pairs, this is sociable and keeps the group together. Single file is courteous and safer on some roads. The Highway Code specifically allows cyclists to ride two abreast, as



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this is safer for cyclists as cars must then overtake properly, but as in most things common sense should be used. **Never ride three abreast.**

7. Avoid sudden movements

Group riding can be very safe especially if some simple rules are followed. Avoid any sudden movements, always look and let others know verbally before you change speed or direction. When an accident happens a common cause is a sudden stop. For example, if you get a puncture shout out "PUNCTURE" and slowly pull over to the nearside. Even if you drop something or have a mechanical problem take your time. The whole group will stop with you anyway. If you are at the back let someone else know before you stop. It can be surprising how quickly the group moves on.

8. Signals

Hand and verbal signals should be used to inform others in the group of hazards such as potholes, gravel, changes in riding pattern and cars. Everyone in the group should pass on a signal, such as pointing down to a pothole, to make sure it travels the full length of the group. On coming cars should have the call of 'car down' and cars approaching from behind 'car up'. This will make others in the group aware of an approaching car and the direction that it is approaching. For the safety of your fellow riders everyone should repeat a signal or call, don't presume that the next person has heard or seen the original signal. Only the front riders get a clear view of road defects, parked cars etc so it is vital that they give clear indications in plenty of time to those behind.

9. Always assist other group members if possible

One of the purposes of group cycling is to learn more about the pastime. It is also the way a less experienced rider can be sure of support if they have problems. The whole group should be supportive to all riders. Conversely experienced riders should not bombard the newcomer with advice!

10. Re-grouping

Even groups of similar abilities easily get separated. Everyone climbs hills at a different pace and the whole of a group may not be able to cross a junction at once. It is usual to find a place to stop where the group can re-form away from traffic. On a hill it is usual to wait at the top if it is safe to do so.

11. Keep with the group

Don't overtake and ride well ahead of the group leader unless you are willing to take responsibility for your navigation. The group leader is not obliged to chase after people who miss a turning in this way.

12. Highway Code

On all rides the group must follow the Highway Code and be alert and courteous to other road users, including vehicles, pedestrians, animals and other cyclists. Do not block the road by riding down the centre line and never on the wrong side of the road. Ensure that you move out in plenty of time to overtake/go past pedestrians/animals/parked vehicles and signal well in advance of turning.