

Swan Wheelers Cycling Club Ride Leader Tips

Thank you for offering to lead a ride for the club, we've put together these notes to help you lead a successful, enjoyable and safe ride.

Please make yourself familiar with the ride pages on the club website. You will find useful information, club rules, and the ride sheet.

[Rides](#), [Ride Leaders](#), [Ride rules](#)

Preparation

Planning your route: Firstly, this will depend on which Group Ride you have volunteered to lead as that will determine the distance/speed & time expected plus this will ultimately be mapped with your destination for the Cafe of your choice. Also it's a good idea to consider the wind direction as part of your planning, generally to ride home with the wind on your back where possible.

But ensure that it will be both safe and enjoyable for the ability for the group of riders you will be leading.

If you're unsure & to help you with this process, it's a good idea to review previously posted rides on the forum for ideas of routes, Cafe & format etc.

There are a number of Route Planning Tools that can be used; like Garmin, Strava, Map my Ride, Komoot etc. Whilst not essential, a good cycle computer with GPS is very useful to guide you throughout the route when out with your group.

For experienced RL's they will generally know their planned routes & any challenges but for newer RL's it is good to check the route or have knowledge of in advance or maybe talk through with other RL's in advance.

Ensure to post your route as an event on the club forum ideally by Thursday before the Sunday ride and on Monday before a midweek. Note the details of the ride for an introduction, it's distance, duration and planned stops. This allows members to register their interest by clicking the "I'm attending" button. This also allows you to see who you've got on the ride. (don't be surprised when more people turn up on the day). Feel free to embed the ride detail from your favourite planning tool, but please do remember to also upload a '.gpx' file so anyone can upload to their computer.

Do set expectation in your notes - It's a good idea to advise that all riders have sufficient drinks/refreshments, mudguards are fitted in expected wet conditions and during the warmer months have considered applying sun cream!

Again not essential, but can be useful to post your mobile number so riders can contact you before the ride.

Café Stops: experienced RL's will know them & their capabilities in serving numbers, for newer RL's it is good to check to ensure that they are able to cope with the number of riders expected. For larger known ride groups, it's a good idea that they are notified of quantity & expected time of arrival in advance.

Ride Sheets: Ensure that you have a 'blank' ride signing-on sheet, download from the website & a pen/pencil. [Ride Sheet](#)

Adverse Ride Conditions: prior to the ride day if the forecasted conditions are in the club committee's opinion & even on the day are considered unsafe, rain, frost, ice etc. the Ride Lead coordinator will be in contact for full agreement & call-off the ride. Forum posts should be updated along with our other social media platforms.

Lastly do not rely solely on a GPS device for your directions, issues may arise on a ride that may require the route to be changed &/or shortened, know any alternatives &/or discuss with group members for ensuring the safety of the group for your onward journey.

Pre-start

Arrive at the **Swan Pool** starting point 20-30mins before depart time, to welcome the riders, especially anyone new to the club. Discuss their capabilities to establish which group they should firstly try.

Ensure that the signing-on sheet is completed correctly and that the number in the group matches the number on the sheet (don't forget your own details!!!)

If the ride group size is >8 it is a good idea to appoint an experienced rider as a "lantern rouge" to ride at the back of the group to provide support to any riders struggling or who have suffered a puncture/mechanical.

Pre-Ride Chat: Take the opportunity to impart to the riders the route, expected pace, distance & cafe stop destination and expected time back plus any other information for the type and nature of the ride, group riding, etc.

For wet ride conditions request that any rider without mudguards remain at the rear of the group.

Depart promptly, it's not fair to make the whole group wait for 1 individual - unless they are in communication with you.

During

Start the ride off steadily to allow for the group to form safely and establish a rhythm.

Ensure that clear and effective directions/warnings are given during the ride.

Keep an eye on all riders to ensure that the pace is maintained and at a rate that all riders can achieve.

Be prepared to advise a rider if they are too fast and/or are riding carelessly.

Ensure that the group stay together by effective communication & safe riding. Encourage riders to talk to each other and ensure messages are passed up and down the line.

If the group is split due to a hill, ease the pace to allow for the riders to re-group or be prepared to stop (safely) to enable the group to reform and recover.

Resist the temptation to argue/abuse any other road users no matter what the circumstances. Don't let someone else ruin your day. Please also encourage your group to do the same.

Café Stop

Expect to stop for 30mins dependent on group size and speed of service. Encourage riders to follow any house rules and clear up after themselves. It's always nice to be welcome back.

Post Ride

Thank the group, and gain feedback on the ride, especially from any newcomers to the club.

Ensure that the completed ride signing on sheet is sent back to the ride coordinator via means of a photo snapped with your smartphone, this can be emailed or WhatsApped. Once received, please destroy the paper copy.

Advise the ride coordinator and/or committee of any incidents and/or accidents that may have arisen during the ride.

Start planning your next ride!!!!