



Falmouth Wheelers Group Ride Guidelines

Group awareness and communication are the key elements of successful and safe group riding. The safety of all riders is paramount. Please be considerate to all road users around you and think about how your actions may affect them.

People may be riding conventional, non-conventional or e-bikes. All should be welcomed on an equal basis with all riders being mindful that e-cycles and other types of bicycle are enabling more people to enjoy the benefits of cycling for longer.

It is the responsibility of **ALL** riders to:

- Adhere to the Highway Code at all times.
- Ensure that you and your bike are adequately prepared for the ride.
- Understand their cycle and its controls before joining a group or club ride as different types of cycle may ride differently and need specialist tools to carry out road side repairs.
- E-bike riders should be familiar with the range and handling of their cycles and ensure e-cycles are charged sufficiently for the length of the ride.
- Ensure you have the correct clothing and lights for the changeable weather and your safety.
- Encourage all riders to have Cycle Insurance.

If you are new to the club or just visiting, introduce yourself and inform someone in the group about any health conditions, medical alerts and an In Case of Emergency Number (ICE).

Riding on the road

Riders should assess the pace of the ride and group dynamics during the first a few miles of the ride and consider the need to split into smaller more manageable groups of about 6 (of similar paced riders).

When travelling on busy roads, split into smaller groups (4/5). Allow at least 50 metres between the groups to allow other vehicles to pass easily and keep the traffic flowing.

Stay in your group and ride at the slowest paced rider's speed. Avoid the temptation to race ahead.

Maintain concentration and communication and avoid excessive chat that can compromise safety.

Road positioning – Ride in the Secondary Position (approx. 0.75m–1m from the left edge) and in Primary Position (more central to your lane) as and when needed. See more [here](#)

When turning right on busy roads, the rider at the rear of the group will give the signal to pull out into the centre when its safe and verbally communicate this forward to the rest of the group.

At Junctions, wait away from the junction to give cars full visibility of the road and junction.

Keep moving and maintain your speed. Sudden braking or stopping can cause accidents and it may break up the group continuity while riders adjust their gears or gain their momentum again. It's easier for vehicles to pass a group that has a consistent speed and good grouping rather than variable speed and spread out.

At times, it's safer to ride two abreast. Be aware of any vehicles behind you and change to single file as and when necessary.

On smaller roads, allow vehicles to pass when it is clear and safe by pulling over, if needed and/or waving them through. Ensure you communicate any manoeuvre with your group (verbally or hand signals).

Ride in single file, keeping on the left, when descending or ascending a hill to allow faster cyclists to pass.

Respect the dynamic of the group ride. Ride steady if it's a steady ride and support your fellow riders rather than attacking and breaking up the group.

Share the load and take a turn on the front especially if there is a strong headwind (if you're able to do so).

The difference in the power output of e-bikes can sometimes cause issues with fellow riders. If you are on an e-cycle, you might be able to ride a bit faster than the others and be tempted to zoom on ahead. This is fine, as long as the ride leader is happy about it and you are confident you know the intended route. Conventional bike riders should be aware that e-bike assistance is generally limited to 15mph and whilst they may be faster going up-hill they may fall behind on the flat if the pace is high. This 'yo-yoing' may disrupt group dynamics but can be dealt with through good communication, awareness and understanding.

E-bikers should try and ride at a steady pace, to keep as near the other riders as possible. E-bikers should be mindful that whilst they may be able to chat away easily on climbs, not everyone will be able to or feel like it. Keep the gossip for the café stop or when regrouping at the top of a climb. As with all group riding, everyone should be encouraged to take their turn 'on the front' when riding into wind. This requires the rider to keep a constant pace and line, communicate their intentions and highlight hazards to those behind them.

A downhill followed by an uphill can be a concern when group riding due to the disparity between a relatively fast descent and possible rapid speed reduction as the road rises. Riders should be aware of their road position and keep left for faster bikes to pass. The speed difference between descent and ascent maybe more noticeable for e and non-conventional bikes.

An upright cycling position (mountain bike, hybrid, e-bike) can block the vision of shorter/narrower road bikes and therefore requires riders to keep to the secondary road position when in front or in close proximity of others. Riders should remain mindful of the road width and traffic when determining which road position to adopt.

Getting out of the saddle – practice makes perfect.

Take care not to 'kick-back' your bike. (It can help to shift up a gear before standing to maintain the cadence/power) Be observant of who's in front/behind and position yourself or communicate accordingly.

Do not undertake/communicate it – *'I'm on your left'* or *'coming through on your left'*
Do not half wheel – overlap the wheel of the bike in front

Always look behind before manoeuvring your bike.

Highlight potential hazards by calling out:

Car front/down or Car back/up. Calls allow everyone to be aware and adjust their riding position if needed.

Potholes – debris – gravel, walkers etc. Be considerate of the rider behind you (on your wheel) Call out or use hand signals for any upcoming manoeuvrers
Shout out or point out

Stopping/Slowing. If you need to stop, pull off the highway in a safe place e.g. away from a junction, on a straight clear road, in a pull in/gateway.
Communicate this to your group (verbally or [hand signals](#))

Horses – Talk to the riders – *Is it ok to pass?* Continue to talk as you pass as it can be reassuring for the horse.

Mudguards – It is respectful to ride with mudguards in wet weather conditions, e.g. during the winter months.

Lights/Hi-vis clothing – provide enhanced visibility to the traffic and thereby enhanced rider safety.

The ride leader has every right to ask any biker to leave their ride if they believe safety is compromised, either to the biker himself/herself or to fellow riders.

It is every member's responsibility to reflect the club and cycling as a positive experience for all road users and treat road users with respect.

References:

www.Cyclinguk.org/group/page/essential-guidelines-safe-riding

www.cyclingweekly.com/fitness/training/guide-group-cycling-119044

<https://roadcyclinguk.com/how-to/technique/essential-guide-road-cycling-hand-signals-calls.html>

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/road-positioning-cycling-explained>

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/top-10-tips-including-e-cycles-group-ride>