

Ashbourne Cycling Club Rules of the Road

Cycling on the public roads has some inherent danger attached but as a club we want to support and encourage people to ride safely and enjoyably, respecting their fellow riders and other road users. By following a few basic “rules of etiquette”, we can achieve this, so please read, and if you are unsure about anything then please ask one of the regular riders.

Guiding Principles: Safety, Respect, Fun

1. The **SAFETY** of riders and other road-users must be considered as our first priority
2. Riders, car drivers, pedestrians and other road users have the right to be treated with **RESPECT** during club rides
3. Riding a bike is one of life’s great pleasures; if we’re not having **FUN** on our bikes then we must be doing something wrong!

SAFETY: This is the single most important consideration for our club ride and we ask you to take this very seriously:

- It is essential that you and your bike are in a safe and roadworthy condition. The club website contains some useful information on what to wear and it will also point you towards trusted local bike shops if you need help and advice
- It is British Cycling best practice that helmets should always be worn when riding, and we would strongly encourage that you do so for your own safety
- All riders under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or a guardian

RESPECT: We ask everyone, when riding on an Ashbourne ride to have respect for their fellow riders and other road-users:

- Follow the highway-code at all times, including stopping at red-lights and riding no more than two-abreast
- Respect ALL other road users including drivers, pedestrians, runners, dog- walkers and horse-riders. Where appropriate and safe to do so, allow drivers to get past you on narrow roads. Please avoid ‘coaching’ other road users, e.g. via hand gestures and verbal ‘advice’
- Make sure that you are able to fix your own basic problems, such as punctures, and always carry your own spare inner tubes and pump/CO2 canister.
- If the roads are wet then make sure you have long mudguards fitted

FUN: Let’s not forget that we do this because we love cycling, so let’s do it with a smile on our faces. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve club rides then please speak to a member of the committee.

GENERAL GROUP RIDING ETIQUETTE FOR BEGINNERS

Pick the right group - Club Rides will be split into an A, B and C group (with A the fastest). The website will give an indication of approximate average speeds. We advise you to start with a slower group first and work your way up. When you move up to a faster group it may take some time to adjust to the new pace; if you're still struggling after 3-4 rides then you may want to think about dropping back into a slower group. You may want to ride the A, B or C route at a lower or higher pace than indicated; if so please post your suggestion on the club Whatsapp group to see if others would like to join you

Ride as a group - the group should aim to stay as compact as possible on the road to make it easier for other road users to pass. Ride two-abreast whenever it is safe to do so but move to single-file when the road is narrow and/or visibility is poor, e.g. tight corners. NEVER ride three (or more) abreast, irrespective of how good the conversation is!

Watch, talk, and listen to your fellow riders - roads are full of traffic, rocks, signs, pot holes, parked cars, animals, pedestrians, etc. and visibility is limited for the cyclists who are not at the front of the group. Please help the group to ride smoothly and safely by shouting and pointing out hazards.

(N.B. If you don't feel confident enough to take your hands off the bars to point then just shout!)

Car Back: car approaching from the rear

Car Up: car approaching from the front

Car right or left: car approaching on the left or right of the group ride

Rock or Hole: there is a hazard in the road; riders will point in the direction of the obstacle

Bike up: there is a slower cyclist ahead that we are likely to overtake

Horse: slow right down, shout "bike behind" to the horse rider and take a wide line (when safe)

Clear: the traffic is clear and the group is safe to ride through a junction without stopping

Easy: potential hazard ahead, control speed (but don't brake sharply to a standstill)

Stop (with one arm raised): we are going to have to stop - there is a hazard we can't ride round

Single: move to single-file (whilst maintaining the same speed)

You will also see a rider pointing or waving behind their lower back. If they are pointing or waving to the right (the most common) then it indicates that the whole group will have to move out to overtake a large obstacle such as a parked car. If they are pointing to the left then there is usually oncoming traffic or a wide load coming in the opposite direction.

Hold your line - do not overlap wheels; if the rider ahead swerves to avoid an obstacle then you could cause a crash. Similarly, do not swerve at the last minute to avoid an

obstacle - there is a danger of catching someone else's wheel and there is also a good chance that you will trigger braking reaction from riders behind you.

Do not brake unnecessarily - look ahead, listen to your fellow riders and maintain a constant speed. Your hands should be on the hoods with your first and/or index finger resting on the brake levers ready to lightly feather the brakes when needed. Do not brake hard unless absolutely necessary.

12 Top-Tips for Club Riding with Ashbourne Cycling Club

1. **It's a club ride, not a race**
Saturday club runs are not races, they are social rides where the choice of café is just as important as the average speed. Within each group there will be a mix of abilities and some riders may choose to push themselves harder up some of the more challenging hills; you don't have to chase them! If a group of riders want to push on (e.g. they may need to get back for a certain time) then they should discuss this with the rest of the group before doing so.
2. **It's a club ride, wear your club colours with pride!**
We have a wide range of club kit available to order so please come dressed to impress.
3. **Keep compact**
Cars need to be able to overtake safely - if our groups are too big then we put ourselves (and other road users) at risk. Ride two-abreast whenever it is safe to do so. If there are more than 10 people in a group then split into two separate groups; these sub-groups only need to ride 50 yards apart on the road and can still arrive at the café stop at the same time.
4. **Keep the pace of the group consistent and correct**
The riders at the front of the group are responsible for setting the pace but this isn't an easy job and they rely on feedback from other riders in the group. Take a regular look over your shoulder to check that the rider behind you is still on your wheel, if not then shout ahead to ask the group to slow down - a shout of "***Back Off***" usually works. If you're struggling to hold the wheel then don't be afraid to ask the group to slow down
5. **No half-wheeling**
This is especially important if you are riding on the front, but also important all down the line. If your front wheel is ahead of your partners then you are half-wheeling. This encourages your partner to push harder to get level with your wheel and can increase the pace of the group
6. **Push-on slightly (on the front) when on flat areas and slight descents**
Contrary to the above point, this further complicates the pace setting at the front, but if you are on a slight descent it can be tempting to free-wheel to rest your legs. The riders behind will quickly start to travel faster than you and they will then need to start feathering their brakes so best to keep the legs turning

just enough to let those riders behind safely freewheel without needing to brake.

7. Changing the riders on the front

When the two riders on the front are ready for a rest they should single out; the rider on the right moving in front of the rider on the left. The outside line of riders then moves up, with riders 2 & 3 forming the new front pair.

8. Regrouping

A split will sometimes appear as a result of junctions, traffic lights or long inclines. Slow the pace down to allow everyone to get back on. Once the group is all back together then the person on the back shouts “*All On*”, and the message is passed up to the front so that the speed can be slowly increased back to the required pace.

9. Eagle-eyed when on the front / looking round corners

When you are on the front you are the main eyes and ears of the whole group. Think about the group as a single body - the objective is to get everyone out and back safely. Stay eagle-eyed looking for dangers and be ready to call out. Because of where we ride observation, communication and 100% concentration is essential. Also, don't be tempted to turn your head to talk to your fellow lead rider - keep your head pointing forward - you'll still be able to hear each other, and a quick look sideways may mean you miss something ahead.

10. Calling cars past the group

This is a tricky and contentious subject - if a car has been stuck behind the group then it is tempting for the riders at the front to wave the car through. This puts the whole group at risk, especially if the driver hesitates and/or overtakes slowly. The safest approach is to allow the driver to make their own judgement and not to wave the car through.

11. Clearing your airways

Cycling and snot production go hand in hand - if you need to clear your airways then please consider your fellow cyclists. Make sure you are on the outside (or at the back) of group before releasing your 'snot rocket' - ideally you should wait until it is safe to move slightly away from the rest of the group before you do so.

12. Come prepared

Bring tea money (£5 max), tubes, pump/CO2, water bottles, mudguards (when wet) and appropriate clothing.