



Riding With BCG Rider Guide



July 17

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your 'Riding with BCG' Guide which helps you understand your role and responsibilities as a rider when cycling with BCG. It provides you with useful information to help you get the most out of riding with us and has some hints and tips to keep you safe.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Role & Responsibilities | 3 |
| 2. Ride Events | 4 |
| • Guidelines on ride distance by category | 4 |
| • Number of Ride Leader for each event | 4 |
| • Considerations for long rides | 4 |
| • Our Official Rides | 5 |
| • Unofficial Rides | 5 |
| • Before the event | 6 |
| • At the start of the ride | 6 |
| • During the ride | 7 |
| • Going too fast or slow | 7 |
| • After the ride | 8 |
| • Complaints | 8 |
| • Cancelled rides | 8 |
| • What to do in the event of an accident or incident | 9 |
| • Kit to take with you | 10 |
| 3. Ride Categories Explained | 11 |
| 4. Step Up Rides | 11 |
| 5. Meet Up | 12 |
| 6. Useful Information | 14 |
| • Car parking | 14 |
| • BCG membership | 15 |
| • Ride discipline | 15 |
| 7. Training Points | 15 |
| 8. Support | 20 |
| 9. Useful Links | 21 |

1. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

BCG welcomes both female and male cyclists and we have a mix of girls and guys right across our categories. Let's start by explaining the roles in BCG starting with you as a rider.

What is a Rider?

Well that is the easy bit, that's you. The one who gets out their bike, climbs into the Lycra and enjoys cycling with other fellow enthusiasts in our sociable ride events. Your role is to abide by the guidelines within this booklet to make it enjoyable for all and keep yourself safe when riding in a group.

You should have basic bike-ability skills; able to indicate right and left and start and stop safely. You are responsible for yourself and keeping your bike in good working order, joining the events via Meet Up and listening to the guidance from your Ride Leader.

Riding with BCG should provide an enjoyable and social experience for both riders and leaders. Riding in groups builds confidence with those who perhaps have not been confident when riding on roads or other terrain.

Your actions when riding should not encourage a bad name for BCG with other road/Redway users or members of the public

What is a Ride Leader and Assistant?

A volunteer trained rider who leads a group of riders around a route and is responsible for the set up and running of the ride event. They encourage good spirit amongst the riders and makes you feel welcome and part of BCG. They are committed and able to run regular rides with a minimum of one ride per quarter. They also plan new routes and keep the riders safe. They will also advise you if you are in the wrong speed category or are riding in an unsafe manner. Please see this as great advice and not a telling off.

Ride Leader Assistants support the Ride Leader when on the ride. For example, they may take the back of the bunch to make sure no-one gets left behind or may lead for a while at the front.

What is a Ride Category Manager?

Each ride category has a Category Manager. This volunteer is responsible for the running of the category, making sure rides are set up each week and they work closely with the Ride Leaders within their category to ensure a smooth running. Together they aim to give the best experience for our riders and are willing to listen to what you want to get out of a ride.

What is the Committee?

BCG is a not for profit organisation run by a committee of up to 12 members. It has a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Group Secretary, & Treasurer. Then we have specialist roles covering Group Captain, Ride Co-Ordinator, Health & Safety, Social, PR, Events & Sponsorship. The committee is responsible for listening to rider's requirements, keeping the Group heading in the right strategic direction, the financial stability and the day to day operational requirements of the Group.

The Committee, Category Managers and Ride Leaders are all volunteers and do what they do through the love of cycling and your enjoyment. Please give them the respect they deserve.

2. RIDE EVENTS

Guidelines on ride distance by category

The recommended BCG guideline on distance per category is shown below. BCG aims to encompass **all** riders of that category ability from those wanting to ride at the lower and higher end speeds within it. Category Managers will aim to have at least one of these core ride events available each weekend. Often you will see many different rides with in the category speeds so please pay particular attention to advertised pace to make sure you can keep up or it is not too slow for you.

- A approx. 50 miles @ 18 mph +
- B+ approx. 50 miles @ 16 – 18 mph
- B approx. 50 miles @ 14 – 16 mph
- C+ approx. 40 miles @ 12 – 14 mph
- C approx. 20-30 miles @ 10 – 12 mph
- Redway 15-20 miles @ 10 – 12 mph

Number of Ride Leaders required for each event

- 1 Ride Leader can take out 8 riders (9 in total)
- 1 Ride Leader and 1 Ride Assistant can take out 11 riders (13 in total)
- Groups larger than 13 are split into separate groups with car passing distance in-between (they generally set off 5-10 mins apart)
- Redway rides can take up to 16 riders with 2 Ride Leaders/assistants

Considerations before joining long rides

- For longer distance rides, (over 75 miles), your ride leader may organise a support driver in case of breakdown or rider fatigue. BCG do not cover the cost for this so it is recommended that the riders all chip in a little to cover fuel, food and water costs. This will be made clear in the Meet Up description with a payment option included.
- You may also see some stipulations such as you need to have completed a minimum standard before joining the event. E.G for a 100 miler you might see that riders need to have completed at least one 50 mile event, at a pace of xxmph average, within 3 months prior to the event. This is to reduce the risk of inexperienced riders joining the event and slowing the group down or having to be rescued.
- For longer rides over 75 miles it is more important to think about your food and drink intake. Also, you might need battery back-ups for cycle computers or phones and maybe additional storage bags to hold the additional supplies in.

- It is also worth thinking about your back up plan should something go wrong such as fatigue or mechanical breakdown. If there is a support vehicle they will get you home however if there is no support you may need to call someone to your rescue. Although Ride Leaders will do their best to help you out it is your responsibility to get home.

Our Official Rides

Our Ride Leaders create the events subject to their availability to lead. They will plan a route, speed and style of ride responding to rider feedback from the previous ride. They will set up the event on Meet Up for you to join as you wish. They generally post up events 2 weeks in advance.

The ride event will show the distance, average pace (mph expected), amount of climbing if known, the start location, if it includes a coffee stop plus any additional useful information. You will see the route either as a GPX file to copy to your cycle computer or just listed in the description.

All regular rides to set off from either the BCG [meeting place](#) which is on the square on the corner of Countess Way and Warwick Avenue, Broughton, Milton Keynes or outside Chainey's Bike Shop, 15 Benbow Court, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes, [MK5 6JG](#)

Unofficial Rides

There may be times when people want to ride outside of the BCG Guidelines such as the occasions listed below. These are posted on Facebook only to avoid any confusion with official BCG Meet Up Rides:

- Route Reccy Rides
- Last minute get together ride
- A ride that does not fit into the BCG guidelines
- Group of friends with no official Ride Leader
- Bespoke Training Rides – sometimes individual riders may follow an individual training plan to get ready for a specific event. This may mean that the ride style does not fit in with a standard BCG ride (e.g. you may have sprint sections).

Be sure to carefully read the ride description for unofficial events as they may not follow the BCG ride guidelines.

Before the event

- Before heading out to the start check your Meet Up event in case there have been any updates, changes or cancellations.
- Please keep your Meet Up notification settings switched on, this is the only way a Ride Leader can get in touch with you. They may want to check your suitability for a ride or let you know about any changes or cancellations
- If you are a new rider you can ride with us for free for up to 3 rides before you need to join BCG. Ride Leaders do not accept payment, this needs to be done prior to your 4th ride via the BCG website. Due to insurance, you will not be able to ride your 4th ride with us until you have joined.
- If you change your mind and do not want to ride be sure to un-rsvp on the Meet Up so your reserved place can be offered to another rider on the wait list.
- You need to bring your own breakdown kit. It should include a puncture repair kit, spare inner tube(s) and pump.
- Remember your food, drink, gels etc.
- Riders aged 16 – 18yrs are to be accompanied by another rider who is responsible for them e.g. Mum, Dad or friend over 18yrs old. Unaccompanied 16yrs – 18yrs old riders are not permitted for safeguarding reasons.

At the start of the ride

- Get to the start in good time to meet your fellow riders and Ride Leader. If it is your first ride please make a point of mentioning this to your Ride Leader who can then look after you and show you the ropes. They may ask you for your previous riding experience to help gauge the level of support you may require.
- We have an official car park at Brooklands Farm Primary School on Countess Way, Brooklands, Milton Keynes. Please use this and not park nearby in resident streets or shop car parks. (see page 14)
- Please make the Ride Leader aware of any medical conditions which they can pass onto the emergency services if need be. Ride Leaders are not medically trained so cannot provide advice on health issues and how to ride with injuries etc. Best to get that advice from a doctor.
- Make sure you are wearing a helmet – no helmet no ride, sorry safety first
- Your Ride Leader will provide a briefing before you set off which will describe the route, pace and stops etc. We often get more than one ride heading off at the same time, double check you are in the right group by checking the name of the Ride Leader against the Meet Up event

During the ride

- Follow the instructions of your Ride Leader and assistants. They are trained to keep you safe and control the ride. They will let you know if they see you acting in an unsafe manner or not following these guidelines, this is primarily for your safety.
- Your Ride Leader will set the pace of the ride, please stay together in a group and not to speed off ahead – this splits the group and can ruin a ride for a slower rider riding at the correct pace trying to keep up
- No rider will be left behind. If you are struggling to keep up or need to stop inform a ride leader/assistant or shout up the group
- If the group needs to stop, they will find a safe place off the road such as a layby or pathway. Play your part and get off the road to keep safe.
- To make it easier for other road users to pass we often ride two abreast and in a pack close together. A small tight bunch is much easier to pass than a long strung out line of riders.
- Use road safety signals (pointing out pot holes, hazards, stopping, turning, etc.)
- Have a chat with other riders you'll soon make friends
- Enjoy yourself and have fun
- If you want to quit the ride or head off in another direction, please let the Ride Leader know first. We never leave anyone behind intentionally so if you feel you want to quit because you can't keep the pace then the Ride Leader has some options to get you back. It could be slowing the pace down or pairing you up with an experienced rider or you may prefer to simply make your own way back.
- Taking photos/videos whilst riding should be avoided for safety reasons unless you have a fix mounted recording device. Your fellow riders are not going to be too pleased if you cause them to crash because you are not paying attention.

Going too fast or too slow

We don't get many complaints but when we do they are usually because of the average speed of the ride. Faster riders don't like to be kept waiting by slower riders and may speed ahead and slower riders struggle to keep up and feel they are slowing it down for everyone.

To help overcome this the Ride Leaders will control the pace at the advertised average pace of the ride. Please do not speed off ahead or try to push the pace at the front, those struggling to keep up will not thank you for that.

Equally if you are too slow for the pace the Ride Leader will get you back but may suggest that you join a speed category below which may be more suitable for you.

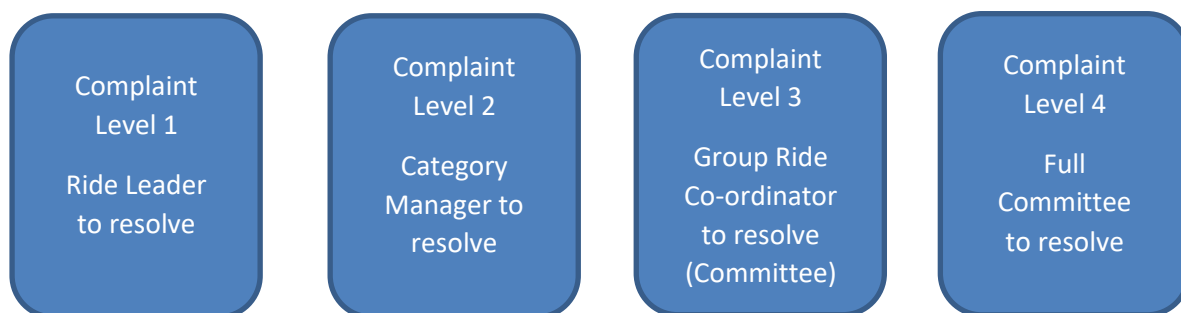
We never leave anyone behind so someone will stay with you until you get home.

After the ride

- At the finish, you normally have a brief chat to celebrate your achievement. Ride Leaders will grab a photo to share on our Facebook page. Chat with your Ride Leader about what sort of ride you want next. Thank all the riders for coming along.

Complaints

- If you have a complaint or issue about the ride please raise this with the Ride Leader face to face. It generally helps to talk things through where matters are usually resolved then and there.
- Complaints can be escalated as follows if needed by emailing: feedback@broughtoncyclinggroup.org



Cancelled Rides

It is inevitable that rides will need to be cancelled usually due to bad weather or Ride Leader availability/illness. Ride Leaders will cancel the Meet Up event and message you. Please keep your Meet Up notifications switched on or you will not receive cancellation messages. Look out on Facebook too as often cancelled rides are posted there too. Always best to check before you head to the start to make sure the ride is still on.

What to do in the event of an accident / incident

- Make the area safe (especially if on the road)
- Ask bystanders or other riders to warn oncoming traffic (in both directions) to slow down as there has been an incident
- Get yourself and others not injured off the road unless dealing with the casualty
- Get all the bikes off the road
- Take care of the casualty. If there is a qualified first aider on the ride, help them with any assistance they require. They will be checking injured people for consciousness, breathing, shock, broken bones, bleeds etc. Your help and assistance may be needed and will be greatly appreciated.
- Try and keep any casualties still. The temptation for injured people & well intentioned bystanders may be to move and wriggle to see if they are injured. In the immediate aftermath of an incident, adrenaline may be masking any injuries. Keep them still and treat them for shock by keeping them calm, warm and reassuring them. Do not give a possibly injured person anything to eat or drink.
- Things to think about:
 - Should the injured person be going to A&E or seeking medical attention? (Are they in a condition to decide, or should you be deciding for them?)
 - If any doubt at all phone 999 and someone skilled and not emotionally involved will help decide. Genuine requests even if ultimately unnecessary will not cause you trouble. Does the injured person's next of kin need to be informed?
 - If they don't need a trip to A&E, are they fit to cycle and is their bike & helmet safe to use?
 - Please never leave an injured person alone, someone will need to wait with them until their loved one arrives to collect.
 - Do you know exactly where you are and when the incident happened? If so write it down before you forget, there is so much going on, details can easily become confused later.
 - Do details need to be exchanged between those involved?
 - Do the police need to be notified? (If a car has been involved where someone has been injured, please contact the police).
 - Are there any other witnesses whose details need to be obtained?
 - Take photos of the scene where you can, these may be helpful.
 - The Ride Leader will write down what happened and promptly inform the Category Manager and the Health and Safety officer.

- Please don't post the incident on Facebook or social media. We don't want any loved ones of the injured finding out through a post.
- If an injury is sustained, the Health and Safety Officer will ask you or the Ride Leader to complete a form. So, at the time of the incident, try and make a record of as many details as you can recall. Exactly where/when it took place, how it occurred, take photos if appropriate, of the location, weather conditions, terrain, names of any witnesses, an assessment of the injuries sustained, and if the police or ambulance were called.
- It is inevitable that you will experience road rage abuse from car drivers or pedestrians at some stage. Whilst this can be frustrating and dangerous remember to keep a cool head if you get into a confrontation. Remember you are representing the group. To help prevent this, thank drivers who are delayed when trying to get past.
- BCG members are covered by the BCG liability insurance. Non-members are only covered for 3 rides. Any claims should be directed to the Health and Safety officer.

Kit you should take with you

- Cycle helmet (must be worn)
- Lights after dusk – many riders use lights during the day too
- Cycle computer to keep those all-important personal ride stats
- Your breakdown supplies (puncture repair kit, spare inner tubes, pump, multi tool, etc.)
- Water bottle / drink
- You may like to take spare energy gels or glucose tablets etc.
- Mobile phone for emergencies

3. RIDE CATEGORIES EXPLAINED

We want all riders to get the most out of their cycling and find one of the easiest ways to do this is to create ride categories to suit different riding speeds. We have 5 road riding categories (A, B+, B, C+ & C) with A being the quickest and C the most leisurely. Also, where there is demand we host Introductory rides to ease new riders into it.

In addition to that we also have a red way and a mild off road X categories.

| Category | Average Mileage | Ave Pace | Category | Average Mileage | Ave Pace |
|----------|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| A | 50 miles | 18mph + | Red Way | 15 – 20 miles | 10 - 12 mph |
| B+ | 50 miles | 16 – 18mph | X | 15 - 20 miles | 10 - 12 mph |
| B | 50 miles | 14 – 16mph | MTB | 15 – 20 miles | 10 - 12 mph |
| C+ | 40 miles | 12 – 14mph | Road Intro | 15 – 20 miles | 8 – 12 mph |
| C | 20-30 miles | 10 – 12mph | | | |

4. STEP UP RIDES

We often run Step Up rides. These are aimed at encouraging you to step up to the next category if you feel you can. It enables you to try out the pace to see how you find it. These rides are based around the following guidelines:

- A Step Up Ride should be up to 50 miles @ 18 mph
- B+ Step Up Ride should be up to 50 miles @ 16 mph
- B Step Up Ride should be up to 50 miles @ 14 mph
- C+ Step Up Ride should be up to 40 miles @ 12 mph

If you want to try another speed category, the best thing to do in the first instance is to chat with your Ride Leader. They can then get in touch with the Category Managers and get a ride arranged for you. You will find that you may need a few rides to get used to the pace so be prepared to stick with it.

The Ride Leader of the Step Up ride will know you are trying it out and will keep an eye on the pace and adapt to suit you so don't worry if you run out of puff, they will slow it down and get you back safely. The Ride Leader can then work with you to create more try out opportunities to get you up to speed or if it was all too much you can simply stay in the category you regularly ride in.

You will have a Ride Leader from both speed categories on the ride and a mix of step up and regular riders to help you make new rider friendships too.

5. MEET UP

- We use Meet Up to manage and post all our official BCG ride events. To ride with you will first need to join Meet Up group using the "Join Us" button on www.meetup.com/BroughtonCyclingGroup
- When joining Meet Up please use your correct name and add a photo of you. Please avoid nicknames or abbreviation or images which bear no resemblance to you. This is due to the difficulties it causes with the administration and ride leaders identifying you when they need to get in touch or at the start of a ride.
- Ride Leaders aim to post new ride events on a Mon/Tues but they can go up at any time. RSVP's will not open until approx. 7-10 days before the ride unless it is a 'Special Event/Trip'.
- Ride Leaders are responsible for managing the attendance on Meet Up, before and after the ride.
- There is nothing more frustrating when riders do not turn up for rides especially when someone on a wait list could have taken their place. It also causes delays at the start whilst everyone waits for them to turn up. Please make sure you UN-RSVP if you cannot attend preferable with good notice to enable another rider to take your place.
- Equally, please do not sign up for more than one ride running at the same time. You are just taking a place which another rider can take.
- When looking for a suitable ride firstly look out for your preferred category and then look at the ride distance and pace stated. Also included in the description will be information about the route and elevation etc. Take a moment to take this in and decide if that is suitable for your riding ability.
- Take a note of the start location, majority set off from our primary start point in Broughton however some may start at Chainey's bike shop. Occasionally there might be a start location elsewhere, this is usual for a special trip where you need to drive to the start such as Derbyshire Dales.

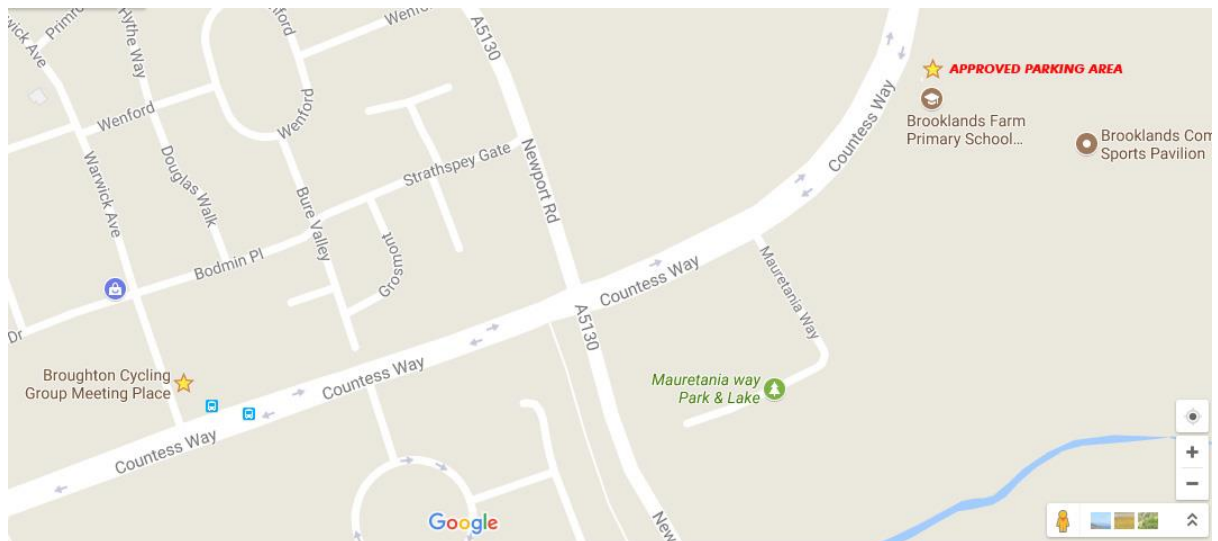
- BCG never leave a rider behind however if you bite of more than you can chew you are not going to have an enjoyable experience trying to keep up and you will slow down the pace for other riders. It is best to use the Step Up rides if you are unsure about pace where a Ride Leader can arrange a more suitable pace for you to try.
- The number of places per event will depend on how many Ride Leaders/ Assistants are available. 1 Ride Leader can take a maximum of 8, if they have an assistant they can take 12. BCG feel more than 12 in one group becomes unsafe and increasingly difficult for motorists to get past. Redway rides or off road rides allow for a few more riders as there is no risk of motorists trying to pass you.
- From time to time we run special events which may incur a charge to cover support drivers, accommodation supplies, entry fees etc. The Meet Up will share this information with you and you will be asked to pay when joining the event. Payment is done through Meet Up.
- If the Meet Up event is already full you can request to go on the waiting list. If another rider cancels and place become available for you will get a notification to let you know. Category Manager keep a close eye on wait list and if they get big will try to add another ride but this all comes down to Ride Leader availability.
- Please keep your Meet Up notifications switched on. It is the only way Ride Leaders can contact you if there is a problem or a ride is cancelled.
- You will notice a question asking you to confirm that you understand that you need to wear a helmet and use lights after dusk. This is for your own safety. No helmet no ride.
- You will notice the following statement on our events, we ask you to take notice of this please:
 - BCG welcomes both female and male cyclists and we have a mix of girls and guys right across our categories. **IMPORTANT:** You ride at your own risk, helmets must be worn and lights must be used after dusk. Paid members are covered by 3rd party liability insurance. Non-members are only covered up to three rides with the group after which you must become a paid member to continue riding with the group. You can find out about the huge benefits to being a member and register here:

<http://www.broughtoncyclinggroup.org/supporter-membership/>

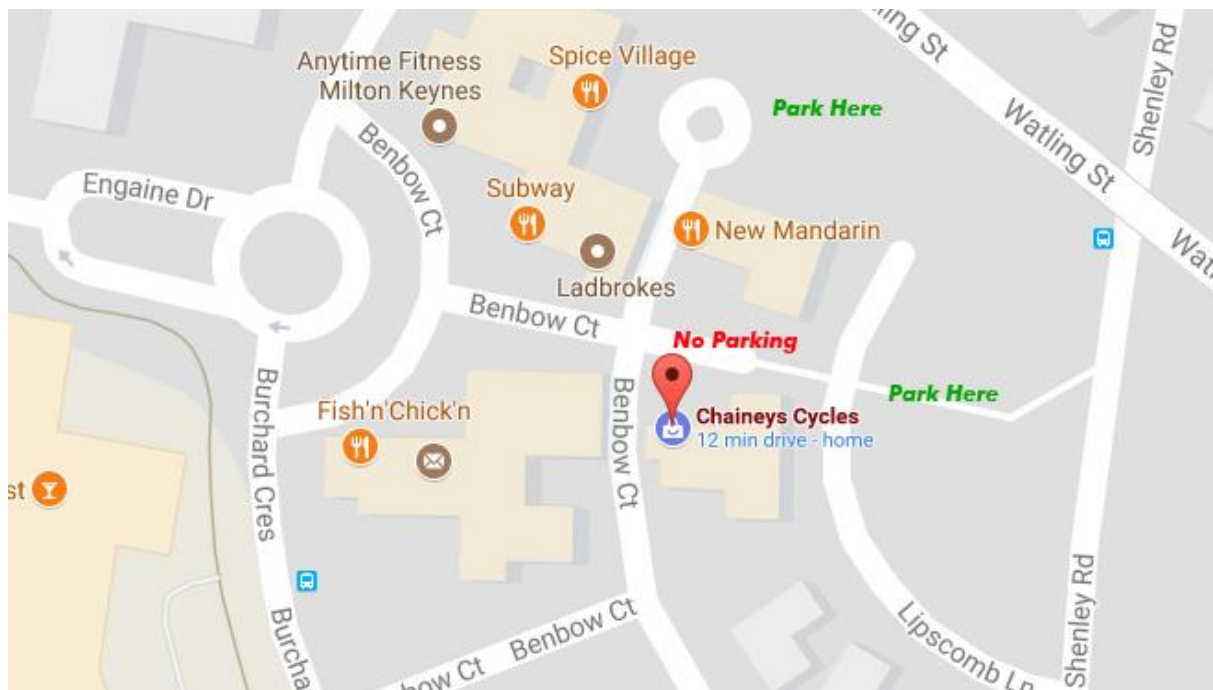
6. USEFUL INFORMATION

Car parking

We have an official car park at Brooklands Farm Primary School on Countess Way, Brooklands, Milton Keynes. It is shared with Brooklands Sports Pavilion and is the main car park at the front of the school. It is covered with CCTV and is just 2 mins cycle from the start. We want to keep good relations with local residents and shop keepers so we ask you not to park nearer to the start on the surrounding roads or shopping car park please.



If you starting at our secondary point outside Chainey's Bike store please do not park immediately outside the store, instead please use the free car parks away from the shop which allows their customers to be able to easily park.



BCG paid membership

You are welcome to ride with BCG for free for the first 3 rides then you'll need to join. This is to keep you covered under the BCG 3rd Party Liability Insurance. There are many benefits of becoming a BCG paid member. For just £2 a month you will receive many discounts and offer from our sponsors and other linked businesses. Membership is paid annually in advance up to the end of the financial year 31st March. Please see the website for more information including the latest benefits and links to join.

Rider discipline

We want you to enjoy cycling with us but from time to time your Ride Leader may have to have a chat with you if you are not following the guidelines or riding in an unsafe manner. Please don't feel uncomfortable with this we want you to ride safely in the group so usually it is a quiet supportive word with you to advise what you can do differently next time.

In extreme circumstances, continued poor discipline or bad behaviour will lead to terminating your BCG membership. We do hope we never need to get this far and matters can be resolved before this.

7. TRAINING POINTS

The following points will help you when riding in a group and understand the cycling etiquette. The most important factor to successful group riding is communication. Ride Leaders do not have to be at the front all the time but should be able to communicate with leading riders to give directions, warn of hazards and indicate a stop if needed.

Be aware - Stay relaxed in the group but constantly look around and don't mindlessly follow the wheels. Look past the riders in front to get a 'heads up' of the road ahead. Always look first and let the riders around you know before moving within the group. Address issues of safety (i.e. riding in a dangerous position on the road).

Ride consistently and predictably - Your movements will affect everyone in the group. Hold a straight line, don't weave and always overtake around the right-hand side of the group. Don't grab your brakes and if you stand out of the saddle, don't let your back wheel drop back.

Don't overlap wheels - In case the rider ahead needs to brake, don't follow their rear wheel directly. It's perfectly acceptable and you'll get the same drafting benefit from riding six inches either side of it. However, it's essential that you don't overlap their rear wheel as any sudden movements by them will be likely to bring both of you down.

Avoid half wheeling - If road conditions and traffic allows you'll often be riding two abreast. Maintain an even pace and stay level with the person next to you. Do not constantly up the pace whenever a rider draws level to you. Known as "half-wheeling" this is definitely frowned upon.

Wheel suck - Don't always sit amongst the wheels and shirk your stint on the front. Even if you just put in a few turns of the pedals it'll be appreciated. However, even if you're finding the pace easy, don't get on the front and accelerate, try to maintain the pace of the group.

Don't ride in the gutter - If you're on the front of the group, don't sit in the gutter as you'll be forcing everyone else to follow you increasing the likelihood of hitting obstructions such as drain covers and of picking up punctures. Where possible, ride 1 m out from the curb.

Expect the ground to change - Groups will change, fragment and reform as the ride progresses. Expect a more compact group on the flat sections which will spread out on longer climbs. Similarly, on descents, riders will tend to string out to give more time to react at higher speeds.

Anticipate problems - If you are riding in windy conditions or it is a hilly course, anticipate changes in the group. When the group changes directions, sometimes the weaker riders are no longer sheltered from the wind and they fall off the pace. The same is true for a hilly course. Riders that can usually stay with the group on flat roads can fall off the pace on a hill.

Keeping the pace of the group consistent and correct - This is really for the riders on the front, and can be a difficult one to master, but is probably the key aspect to making the ride enjoyable for all. The approximate ride speed is advertised by the ride leaders and you should be able to ride comfortably at this speed. If you can't, choose a slower group. Ride Leaders or other riders will request calls such as 'rider off', 'ease up', 'slow it up' if a group member is struggling. If you are a better-than-average climber or stronger, you will have to compensate even more on any upward rises. However, on longer climbs or descents it may be that it is best to just go at your own speed with a regroup at the top/bottom. It is important to look around you, see what's happening in the group. It is always best to go a bit too slow than a bit too fast. Especially think about the half-wheeling point below when you are on the front. If you are with a more experienced rider and are unsure seek advice. Sometimes the problem is that you come to the front and get an adrenaline rush which increases your power output. So stay calm. Focus on the other aspect of riding on the front (see below). Also important is that other riders shout out if the pace is too high or too low, basically meaning to increase or decrease your speed (mile-per-hour-on, or mile-per-hour-off).

Pushing-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 resting your legs. But the riders behind will quickly start to travel faster than you and they will then need to start feathering their brakes which gets all a bit twitchy. So best to keep the legs turning just enough to let those riders behind safely freewheel without needing to brake.

Eagle-eyed when on the front / looking around 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. If you are the rider on the left (at the front), then if the road is bending to the right you can probably see further round than the rider on the right. Again stay focussed and communicate. Conversely, if the road bends the other way (left) it is the right side rider who has best visibility. If you are not on “point” perhaps look ahead into the distance to see what other dangers are lurking. 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 temporary look sideways may mean you miss something ahead. This is actually something that you consciously have to think about as it is human nature to turn to face the person you are talking to. Don’t be put-off by all this responsibility – it is part of the group riding etiquette. You will be warmly thanked by the other riders in the group. When the time comes to change front riders, it is best (when the road is wide, quiet and observation is good) for the front right-hand rider to move in front of the front-left rider, and then call the group past while the two ex-leaders drop their speed and drift to the back of the group.

Regrouping after slight inclines / passing cars - Often splits in the group appear when the group has had to line out to get a car passed, or on a steeper rise where it is difficult to keep everyone together. In these cases be aware and steady it up for a while to let everyone to get back on. Once the group is all back together then the person on the back needs to shout “All ON”, and the message passed up to the front and then the pace can be slowly increased back to the required pace.

Calling out ALL hazards (and pass back through the group) - This should be well known and understood. “CALL OUT ALL OBSTACLES AND DANGERS!” and make sure riders behind you hear and pass back the message. Shouts of “gravel”, “holes”, “rabbits”, etc. are the sort of things to call out, and pointing out the dangers is also helpful.

Getting cars past the group / calling through - This is slightly more tricky and perhaps even contentious. Normally, it is best for the group to line-out, single-file for cars to pass. But often this is not necessary and can even be more problematic, especially in larger

(longer) groups. A vehicle then has to travel much further in the “danger zone” passing the longer line of cyclists. So stay tight in pairs for as long as possible but recognise that there might be times when you need to line-out. So it is often better, if the group is riding tight for a car to quickly overtake when we are still two abreast.

Half-wheeling - This is especially important if you are riding on the front, but also important all down the line. When group riding and safe to do so look down. If your front wheel is ahead of your partners then you are half-wheeling. There’s some psychological factors that cause people to do it. Just keep checking and please don’t do it.

Drafting/Riding Together - This has the benefits of someone to talk to, can save you up to 30% of your effort and offer increased road presence. However, there are some customs that you need to know to enjoy the experience:

- Never overtake or even pull up next to someone on their left. There is enough to look out for.
- It is difficult for those at the back to see what is up ahead, so the front rider(s) must think on behalf of the group, stopping if there is insufficient gap in traffic/green in the light for the whole pack to get through, calling out obstacles and hand signalling everything. Common calls are “stopping”, “clear”, “hole” and “glass”. Hand signals include turning left, right, moving right to avoid an obstacle (e.g. slow rider or parked car), glass, hole, and manhole cover.
- Everyone else in the pack should repeat the call and hand signals for the benefit of those behind them (even if the person drafting you is not formally part of the group).
- Front riders should start slowly after a stop to allow the group to stay together.
- The rear rider is responsible for letting the group know what is occurring at the back, e.g. if a car is approaching. In this circumstance the call is “car back” or “car up”.
- Allow room for the person next to you when going around a corner together.
- Keep up. There will be times when you will need to work hard to keep up. Please do so to keep the group together, knowing that there will be opportunities to catch your breath when you are drafting behind others.
- All of us like to crank hard up a big hill and that is fine. However, please wait at the top of the hill in a safe place, preferably off the road, for the last rider to join the group and recover before leading off.
- Never spit (or worse) when other riders are close behind you.

- Hold your line with no sudden movements left or right. This means that if the surface is a bit rough go through the rough patch to avoid swerving all over the place. Of course, this does not apply if there is a big hole that will bring you down.
- Brake slowly so that the rider behind is not caught unawares.

Hand signals - In addition to the standard directional signal of the left or right hand extended out to the side, which should be used whenever you are cycling on the public highway, see below some of the other common hand signals used when riding in a group situation. Make yourself aware of these prior to going out on a group ride and also check with a group member which hand signals and verbal shouts they regularly use, as they can vary locally.

One hand as if “gently patting an invisible dog”: This shows that the group is slowing down or just to ease the pace back a bit.



Pointing down at the road sometimes with a circling motion: Indicates an obstruction or hazard on the road such as a pothole or drain cover that needs to be avoided. Be sensible with this one and only point out major obstacles that should be avoided. This signal is often accompanied with a call of 'below' or 'holes'!



Waving/pointing behind back: Indicates that there is an obstruction such as a parked car pedestrian and that the whole group needs to move in the direction indicated to avoid it.



Also remember to make cycling enjoyable for everyone. When passing other cyclists, runners, pedestrians, etc. it is polite and wise to let them know that you are coming through. “Rider right” in a clear voice will usually do the trick, along with a thank you when you have passed if they have made an effort to get out of the way.

8. SUPPORT

To help stay connected with other Riders and share ideas or ask questions we have a Facebook Group for you to use. Feel free to use this there are a few things to be aware of:

- a. This is a community page so please be respectful with the language or tone you use. (no swearing or rude comments etc.)
- b. Selling items – generally this is ok if it is bike related however we ask that any business advertising is approved by the committee first by emailing info@broughtoncyclinggroup.org.
- c. Any complaints should be addressed to the same email above. Broadcasting them on social media platforms really it not helpful and generally leads to things being blown out of proportion. We’d rather have a chat to sort things out.
- d. Inappropriate posts will be removed

Ride Leaders are always willing to share top tips, as are your fellow riders, just ask.

9. USEFUL LINKS

Email: info@broughtoncyclinggroup.org

Website: <http://www.broughtoncyclinggroup.org/>

Meet Up: <https://www.meetup.com/BroughtonCyclingGroup/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/609141845784007/>

BCG Strava Group: <https://www.strava.com/clubs/109397>

BCG Garmin Group: <https://connect.garmin.com/modern/group/1756075>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BroughtonCycling>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM7he1RaGqbSdFPWRdwdpag>

British Cycling: <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/club/profile/7888/broughton-cycling-group>