**VCM Club Rides Etiquette**

Apart from the obvious following the Highway Code, wearing a helmet (no helmet – no ride), and ensuring your own safety there are good practices to follow on our club rides.

1. First timers
   1. ride at the back
   2. listen and watch
   3. we’ll appoint someone to ensure that you stay with us and learn our etiquette
2. Where road conditions allow we will ride two abreast – never three abreast. The ride leader may decide that it is safer to ride in single file and will inform the group.
   1. When riding two abreast the leading two circulate positions after a turn at the front. The safest way to do this is for the rider on the outside to move forward and once clear pull in to the left. The rider at the front on the right now moves up to ride alongside the rider who has just ‘gone through’
   2. When riding at the front remember that the goal is to keep the group together – not to split the group – and do not ‘half-wheel’ the person alongside you
   3. The formation will break up on hills and after junctions. Reform as soon as possible.
   4. Stay at the back if you are uncomfortable riding alongside another rider
3. No sudden movements
   1. Look before manoeuvring
   2. Signal before manoeuvring
4. Hard braking
   1. Only as a last resort
   2. Do not brake if you can continue forwards
   3. Try to slow without using your brakes
   4. Shout ‘Stopping’ if you have to brake hard
5. Your presence
   1. Make sure other riders know where you are
   2. Shout ‘inside / outside’ or ‘on your left / on your right’ if passing close to another rider
   3. Ask for more space if you feel uncomfortable with someone riding too close to you
   4. A firm but gentle push is acceptable if a rider is encroaching on your space
6. Look after your front wheel (if someone hits it you will usually fall)
   1. Don’t overlap your front wheel with another rider’s rear wheel – drop back
   2. Ride slightly to the side of the wheel ahead in case the rider slows suddenly
   3. Don’t fixate on the wheel in front. Look further ahead to see what is happening
7. Take care when moving from sitting to standing (your bike may appear to move backwards to the rider behind you)
   1. Push harder on the pedals to create a gap before standing
   2. Shout ‘standing’ if you know that other riders are close to your back wheel
8. Alert other riders to hazards (eg kerbs, bollards, parked vehicles, approaching vehicles, slippery surfaces, humps and potholes!)
   1. Shout them out
   2. Ideally point them out – if safe to do so
   3. Learn the club’s terminology and signals
   4. Don’t rely on one shout from the front or the back. Pass the message on. You should ensure that the riders close to you are aware
9. Be aware of who is behind you
   1. We do not drop riders on our club rides
   2. Riders are most likely to be dropped on hills (up and down), after width restrictions and after road junctions. Those riding at the front should ensure that everyone is with the group after such instances
   3. Keep aware of riders behind you
   4. Let the group know if they are falling behind
   5. Pass the message to the front of the group
   6. Repeat the message if they continue to fall behind
   7. If you are riding at the front slow down (really slow down!) and remain slow until you hear that the dropped rider(s) is ‘back on’. It is acceptable to continue at your own pace until the top of a climb but wait at the top
   8. Do not turn off the route when a rider is ‘off the back’
10. You can ask to be left to ride at your own pace
    1. Let the group leader (or ask another rider to let him/her) know if you want to ride by yourself or if you want to fix a mechanical problem unaided
    2. The group leader will ensure that you know the route to follow and/or that you have the means to fix a mechanical problem
    3. The group leader may ask other riders to stay with you