

u3a Cycling – Start up Guidance

This Guidance provides ideas you may wish to consider before setting up a cycling group within your u3a. They are ideas, not rules or regulations

If you would like to get involved with u3a cycling, the first thing to do is check whether your u3a has a Cycling Group

If they do contact the Group, have a chat about what they do, their rides, distances, days, etc, and go along and meet the group. There is nothing better than actually “checking out” a group that you can join, ride and spend many happy hours with them

If your u3a does not have a cycling group you can consider setting one up

Starting a new group

Speak to your Trustees to check what support is available e.g. someone to help you, such as a Groups Co-Ordinator/Facilitator who has helpful guidance, information and can explain the processes in your u3a

With the help of your Trustees, put together a basic proposal outlining the group activities. Once approved, publicise that you are looking for members to join the group

When you have a few people, arrange an informal get together to discuss how you all think the group could be organised

Consider the following:-

- The type of cycling you all want to do – remember for most people it will be enjoyable and not a competition or race
- On road/Off road?
- Distances?
 - Don't be afraid of trying different lengths, dependent of terrain/climb – this may encourage members to try the group, enjoy themselves and come back for more
- You may want to discuss the type of bike suitable for rides
 - Don't be too prescriptive. It is better to provide people with details of the route, terrain, conditions, etc, and let them decide whether they, and their bike, are capable of taking part
- What group size do you feel comfortable riding with?
 - If numbers increase consider splitting the group and riding different routes and/or the same route at slightly different times
- Will there be a regular ride programme or occasional events?
- Who will be the Group Leader? – they don't have to do all the work planning & leading all the routes, etc., but could act as the main focal/contact point for the group
- Have a simple safety code/code of conduct – don't make it complicated but can help group management if you agree what is expected of riders
- You may want to encourage people to think about their personal safety by wearing helmets, appropriate clothing, etc, **BUT you cannot be prescriptive**, as it is personal choice in UK
- Route planning tools – There are many free online tools that can be used to develop cycling routes

Organising the first ride

Keep it simple

- Share route details/meeting location/date/start time with group members prior to ride and publicise through your u3a via web page, Facebook page/group, Newsletter, etc. This may encourage others to consider joining the group – people can decide whether the ride is for them. Ask they notify you know if they are coming
- Include a cafe stop/lunch stop – this gives the opportunity for a chat, refuel and enjoy the experience. Gauge the feeling of the group – it's fresh in their minds!
- Chat about the next ride and what they may like – even if it's suggesting/deciding which cafe stop they want to visit and the route is planned around that!
- Photographs/Video of the ride shared on your u3a social media may encourage others to consider joining your cycling group or u3a

Considering a Ride Programme

- Developing a ride programme is easier when there are people to share the workload, as offers different routes and variation in planning
- Publish the programme to the Group and share through your u3a's publicity/media outlets to encourage other riders
- For each ride share:
 - Date & start time
 - Start/Meeting Location
 - Route details – include as much information as possible to enable members to decide if the route, length, terrain & elevation is for them
 - Ride Leader & contact information – so people can let you know they are coming

Each Rider should Consider

- Before each ride ensure you have a safe, roadworthy machine
- Have ICE, (In Case of Emergency), information available on your person or programmed on your phone. You may choose to supply this to the Ride Leader prior to the ride
- Consider your clothing choice – Layers are good! Weather conditions can change during the ride, you may get warmer whilst riding and cool down at the cafe stop
- Helmets are highly recommended but are not mandatory. They are a personal choice
- Carry spare inner tube(s) and/or a puncture repair outfit & a pump/inflation system – it is sometimes quicker & easier to swap out a punctured tube and replace with a new one, (having checked for the cause of the puncture), particularly if it is raining and/or cold!
- Consider carrying lights – if there are delays it may mean that you run out of daylight and they help you get home safely

Risk Assessment, Safety & Insurance

Cycling is not, of itself, dangerous, but we all owe a duty of care to others we ride with and we need to follow the Highway Code and be safe

The Ride Leader should prepare a Risk Assessment for the ride and share it with members. This can be before the ride and/or discussed at the start point. The assessment should outline the route, highlight areas that could be considered potentially risky and what can be done to mitigate the risk. Examples of specific areas outlined are likely to be busy roads/junctions, very narrow sections, rough surfaces, steep hills up/down. Making riders aware of areas of the route where they need to take particular care for their own safety

All participating in a u3a cycle ride do so at their own risk.

Safety

Riders should follow the Highway Code – check the revised highway code rules of March 2022, in relation to cyclist and other vulnerable road users

Follow the instructions of the leader at all times. Do not pass the leader unless he/she agrees

Keep the group together – it's not a race

If someone becomes separated from the group wait for them

Wait at the top of hills for those who are slower & give them a chance to catch their breath before carrying on

Take care not to "loose" people when you turn left or right. Make sure those behind know which way you have gone – leave someone at the junction if necessary

If the group exceeds, say, 6 riders consider a back marker to ensure that no one gets left behind – the back marker should know the route &, ideally, be one of the more confident riders

Mobile phones are useful so the back marker can contact the leader if needed

Do not ride too close or partially overlap wheels with other riders – some riders may be nervous and/or not used to riding in a group

Shout warnings and signal to other riders if there is a danger in the road, (e.g. "potholes", "car behind", "pedestrians ahead", etc), equally let riders know if you intend to stop, giving them plenty of notice by shout "Stopping"

Take care and be aware of your surroundings at all times – look and listen for other users

Take extra care and ensure Your personal safety at junctions and when crossing main roads – make your own decision to proceed don't rely on others

Insurance

All u3a activities are covered by the Third Age Trust's Public Liability Insurance Policy

This gives cover in the event of third party actions but it should be noted that the insurance is not a personal accident insurance and claims for personal injuries not resulting from the action of third parties are unlikely to be covered

Members considering such protection is necessary would need to arrange their own personal injury insurance