

U3a Chichester

Cycling for pleasure group: Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook provides guidance for the Chichester u3a Cycling for Pleasure (CFP) group. It sets out the group's purpose, riding approach, member responsibilities and key safety arrangements. The CFP group offers sociable, non-competitive cycle rides through local countryside and nearby areas, with an emphasis on enjoyment, gentle exercise and shared responsibility. Rides normally start and finish in Chichester; the group occasionally travels out of the local area to explore destinations further afield. Riders travel to the meeting point by car, bicycle or train depending on their home location. Typical routes are between 10 and 20 miles.

Rides are planned and led by volunteer CFP group leaders, who provide route information, manage participant details and help ensure rides are safe. The CFP rides try to avoid busy roads and steep climbs wherever possible, choosing quiet country lanes, dedicated cycle paths and bridleways. This guidance highlights practical measures to support safe and enjoyable cycling.

1. Group ethos and participation

- 1.1. The CFP group is intended to be enjoyable, sociable and non-competitive; rides are not races.
- 1.2. Riders take part at their own risk and are responsible for their personal safety.
- 1.3. Bicycles should be suitable for group rides, such as road, touring, hybrid or electric bikes.
- 1.4. Ride groups typically comprise 10–20 riders. The leader may split larger groups into smaller groups following the same route but departing at different times.
- 1.5. Rides normally include a mid-morning refreshment break and lunch stop, giving members the opportunity to chat, refuel and enjoy the experience.
- 1.6. The group normally runs two rides each month.
- 1.7. All riders should help ensure that no one is left behind.
- 1.8. The weather forecast is monitored before a planned event; depending on conditions the options are:
 - 1.8.1. Cancel the ride (members may still meet at the lunch venue if appropriate.)
 - 1.8.2. Adapt the ride (e.g., plan for a shorter, sheltered route such as the Centurion Way)
 - 1.8.3. Seek shelter during the ride (e.g., from unexpected thunder, taking into account wind direction, rain etc)

2. Ride planning and communication

- 2.1. Details of the route will be sent to riders several days in advance, (e.g., distance, terrain and expected weather conditions etc.) so that members can decide whether the ride is suitable for them and their bicycle.
- 2.2. Routes are based on previous experiences, online cycling resources (such as cycle.travel and Outdooractive) and a prior survey of the route by an experienced rider.
- 2.3. Details of the ride will be shared beforehand, e.g., date, start time and meeting location. Members are asked to confirm whether they will take part and whether they will stay for lunch.

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- 2.4. A variety of routes are planned through the year, taking into account weather conditions, public holidays, feedback from previous rides etc.
3. Personal preparation and equipment
 - 3.1. Before each ride, make sure your bicycle is safe and roadworthy. Check tyres for correct inflation pressures; confirm that brakes stop the corresponding wheels; ensure the chain is lubricated and operating smoothly.
 - 3.2. Bicycles should be serviced on a regular basis.
 - 3.3. Riders should consider personal safety measures, such as wearing a helmet. (Helmets are highly recommended but are not mandatory in the UK.)
 - 3.4. Wear clothing suitable for the conditions. Layers are useful because the weather can change during a ride. Bright, reflective or high-visibility clothing is recommended.
 - 3.5. Wear footwear suitable for cycling.
 - 3.6. Riders should remove any loose jewellery that is not suitable for cycling.
 - 3.7. Consider carrying lights for low visibility conditions, and/or if delays mean riding in the dark.
 - 3.8. Carry a spare inner tube and/or a puncture repair outfit, plus a pump or inflation system.
 - 3.9. Other riders will try to help with breakdowns where possible, but riders should carry basic tools such as a multi-tool, tyre levers and a chain connector or chain breaker.
 - 3.10. Carry an adequate water supply, taking account of the weather and ride duration.
 - 3.11. Prepare for the forecast weather, for example by carrying gloves, waterproofs or sun cream; only ride if you feel comfortable and confident in the conditions.
 - 3.12. Consider your own personal warm-up requirements.
 - 3.13. Participants may wish to carry a basic first aid kit, together with any personal medication as required.
 - 3.14. Keep your bicycle in sight during short stops. For longer stops, such as at a café or pub, lock it to an immovable object or to other bikes using a good-quality lock.
 - 3.15. Carry a mobile phone so that you can call for help, either for yourself or another rider.
 - 3.16. Keep your "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) information available, for example on your phone or carried with you. Members are also encouraged to include ICE details in their u3a profile.
4. Group riding and rider responsibilities
 - 4.1. Group safety management relies on cooperation from individual riders.
 - 4.2. Groups will always have a back-marker to help ensure no one is left behind. The back-marker should also know the route and ideally be a confident rider.
 - 4.3. Riders should keep in visual contact with the group and wait when needed, so those ahead can be made aware if anyone behind has a problem.
 - 4.4. Riders who need to leave the group early should tell the ride leader before doing so.

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- 4.5. Avoid going too far ahead of the ride leader. If you overtake the leader, wait at the next convenient point, such as a junction.
 - 4.6. Riders share a duty of care for one another and should ensure that nobody leaves the group or rides alone without telling the ride leader.
 - 4.7. Do not ride too close to, or partially overlap wheels with, other riders.
 - 4.8. Warn and signal to other riders if there is a hazard in the road and give plenty of notice if you intend to stop.
 - 4.9. Keep together on all routes, including familiar ones, so the group can respond to mechanical problems, medical situations or route uncertainty.
 - 4.10. On busy or narrow roads, ride in smaller groups, single file, with enough space between riders for other road users to overtake safely. If a vehicle is clearly having difficulty overtaking e.g. down a narrow country lane, pull into a convenient passing place to allow it to overtake.
 - 4.11. Riders should take care when horses are encountered on the ride; the most important thing is to make the horse rider(s) aware of cyclists. (See British Cycling guidance for additional information, link in the references below.)
 - 4.12. When gathering at the starting location for the ride, avoid blocking pavements, access points, train platforms etc.
5. Safety, risk management and emergencies
- 5.1. A generic risk assessment has been prepared for the CFP group. This is posted on the Chichester u3a website. Any specific risks and/or hazards for a given route will be highlighted before the ride, e.g., at the starting point.
 - 5.2. Rides are planned to start and finish during daylight hours. Riders should help make themselves visible, for example by wearing reflective clothing and carrying lights.
 - 5.3. Riders are encouraged to tell the ride leader about any illness or medical issue that could affect their participation, and what action may be needed if illness occurs. (This is not mandatory.)
 - 5.4. If a rider has a medical problem or injury during a ride, the group will take appropriate steps to obtain help. Where there is no phone signal, other riders may need to seek help and provide the emergency services with details of the casualty and location.
 - 5.5. Cycling is not inherently dangerous, but riders owe a duty of care to others and must follow the Highway Code.
 - 5.6. Riders are encouraged to report any issue, accident or concern during a ride to the leader, so that appropriate action can be taken.
 - 5.7. Route planning should identify potential hazards and suitable mitigations, such as using cycle paths alongside busy roads, bridges across junctions or walking along narrow pathways. The ride leader will notify riders about these hazards as required.
 - 5.8. Riders should be familiar with and follow the Highway Code for cyclists, including guidance on clothing, lights, sharing space with pedestrians, traffic signs and junctions.

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6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. CFP group leader (CGL)

6.1.1. The generic role and job description is defined by the Chichester u3a, details are given on the u3a website (see references below)

6.1.2. For CFP rides, the group leader is the main point contact for the ride; specific responsibilities are:

6.1.2.1. Planning for the next ride, notifying group members with details, e.g., date, start time and meeting location. Members are asked to confirm whether they will take part, lead a smaller group and whether they will stay for lunch.

6.1.2.2. Monitoring the weather forecast before the ride, making adjustment to the route as required

6.1.2.3. Compiling a list of riders with names, contact details etc.

6.1.2.4. Sharing details of the ride beforehand,

6.1.2.5. Requesting confirmation of attendance by a specified date/ time, e.g. Wednesday at 5pm. (This allows time for compiling the ride register and confirming that there is a safe ratio between leaders and riders.)

6.1.2.6. Dividing the main group into sub-groups (typically less than 10 riders per group); assigning ride group leaders and back-markers. (Note sub-group numbers are at the discretion of the CFP group leader.

6.2. Ride group leaders (RGL) lead smaller groups of riders as assigned by the CFP group leader. specific responsibilities are:

6.2.1. Reviewing details of the route, enabling navigation to key locations, e.g., café stop, ferry crossings, train station etc.

6.2.2. Keeping in visual contact with their designated back-marker, checking for their hand signals as required, e.g., “all good to proceed”,... “slow down” etc.

6.2.3. Monitoring the route and the riders in their group. This will include periodic checks of group numbers during the ride (where safe to do so) and especially at junctions, ferry crossings, road crossings etc.

6.2.4. The leader and back-marker should exchange mobile phone numbers.

6.3. Back-markers ride with their designated group; specific responsibilities include:

6.3.1. Riding behind the last rider in their group to ensure that no riders are left behind.

6.3.2. Keeping in visual contact with their ride group leader.

6.3.3. Using hand signals as required for their group leader, e.g., “all good to proceed”,... “slow down” etc.

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7. Insurance

- 7.1. All u3a activities are covered by the Third Age Trust's Public Liability Insurance Policy.
- 7.2. This provides cover for third-party claims, but it is not personal accident insurance. Claims for personal injuries not resulting from the actions of third parties are unlikely to be covered.
- 7.3. Members who want personal accident protection should arrange their own personal injury insurance.
- 7.4. Members may also wish to insure their bicycle against theft.

8. References

- 8.1. u3a start-up guidelines for cycling groups
- 8.2. u3a risk assessment for outdoor activities
- 8.3. Cycling UK risk assessment guide
- 8.4. Highway code, rules for cyclists (Rules 59 to 82)
- 8.5. <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/knowledge/skills/article/izn20150106-Horses-on-the-road-0>
- 8.6. <https://www.chichesteru3a.org.uk/interestgroups/group-organisers>

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9. Amendment record

Issue	Date	Reason for amendment
1	4 th September 2026	Initial issue