

Rides Secretary's Notes

John Murdoch (extract from Club Magazine Jan-Mar 2014)

This month there are a few important matters to bring to members' attention.

1. Those of you who were able to attend the AGM will have heard me talk of the commitment of the committee to the new riding guidelines which, after consultation, are now fully "operational". I wrote about them in the previous issue of the West Surrey Cyclist, but it may be worth reiterating a few of the key points that I made at the AGM regarding why the guidelines are so important:

- We are all aware of what appears to be increasing anti cycling sentiment in Surrey, some of it justified no doubt, and the very last thing we would wish to do is to leave ourselves open to criticism. But more than that, we should always be considerate and courteous so that if another road user encounters us on a ride, any comments they might subsequently make will be positive rather than negative. In other words, we should be exemplars of good cycling practice, and always do our best to put cyclists in the best possible light. This behaviour must become instinctive, but in the short term it will require focus on our behalf.
- We should acknowledge that riding in a group is very different to solo riding, there are different dangers and different considerations
- regarding interaction with other road users. Moreover, the implications of getting it wrong are generally more severe in a group. You are not just responsible for your own safety, but for the safety of all the other riders in the group. It is not just the ride
- leader who is responsible, despite their overall role, but all riders, as how we each ride impacts on others.
- Surrey roads have changed so much over the years, they are certainly busier, their physical condition is deteriorating, and almost certainly there is more inconsiderate and aggressive driving. Our actions as riders must reflect that reality. The aim of the ride
- leader, and of riders generally, must be to avoid "danger situations", including setting the conditions for such situations, and in that way diminish the number of incidents that we have; safe at all times.

2. Having read the above, you will realise that the aim is to have no accidents on group rides. However, by way of insurance, we recognise the need for ride leaders to have basic "first responder" capability. Liz Palethorpe has very sensibly suggested that the time is right for a further training session to be organised (the last one was a year or two back, now), and it is therefore intended to arrange this for early in the New Year.

3. Another excellent idea regarding safety has been received from Clive Richardson, and following this we will be sourcing foil blankets and mini first aid kits to be issued to all regular ride leaders. It will be made clear that the foil blankets are not to be used to cover up Bob McLeod, if he again turns up for a ride inadequately attired.