

# West Surrey Cycling Club

## Annual Report 2024

### Definition

West Surrey CC is the local member group of Cycling UK covering the postcode areas GU1-10, 12, 15-16 and 18-27, KT7-8, 10-16 and 24, and RG45. Total members in these areas in April 2023 was 1346(1286 in April 2022).

### Organisation

The committee consisted of the four ex-officio posts of Chair (Derek Ridyard), Rides Secretary (John Carolin), Secretary (Nick Davison) and Treasurer (Keith Stainer), plus four additional members, John Child (Website Organiser), Alison Warren (Publicity), Neil McIntyre (New Rider Coordinator) and Helen Stewart. Our President is Elizabeth Palethorpe.

The committee met on five occasions (25th May, 8th August, 23rd October in 2023, and 29th January, 9th April in 2024).

### Events

The Tour of the Hills Audax was held on 6 August, the 41<sup>st</sup> occasion on which the club has staged this event. Rider numbers were just shy of 150, a big improvement on 2022, and as usual the event yielded both a good cash surplus and excellent publicity for the club. The 2024 event has been booked for Sunday 11 August

The Elstead Audaxes (which have been a regular club event since 1978) were once again cancelled in 2023, but Neil McIntyre has stepped in to ensure that these events will take place in 2024, and arrangements are in place for them to go ahead on Sunday 16 June.

We have also created an events team that we hope to provide a more sustainable basis for both the Elstead and Tour of the Hills Audaxes, and you may already have seen the publicity materials that have been created to advertise these two great events in tandem. Details of both of the WSCC Audax events have been posted on Spond and advertised with local cycling clubs as well as the Audax website, and entries are starting to mount up.

### Rides Secretary's Report

After another busy year, we can see from records of the club's activities on Spond that in the calendar year 2023:

- The club staged 447 rides.
- Active riders numbered 157 (including guests).
- With a total of just over 3,650 individual rides recorded.

This was roughly 10% more events than the previous year together with a similar percentage increase in the number of riders on each ride.

This impressive tally is thanks to the commitment of the club's Group Leaders who organise their group rides programme, and thanks to our Ride Leaders who volunteer to lead our rides across Surrey and adjacent counties. Our club simply could not function without all their continuing enthusiastic and hard-working support.

The club has six weekend ride groups and 7 weekday groups (mostly on Wednesdays) that cater for a wide range of levels of cycling. Most of the groups are well attended throughout the year, even during the chillier months. A couple of the groups have been struggling for numbers, but we will seek to reinvigorate those groups during 2024.

Ride Leaders are now making full use of the Spond sports club app to publicise and manage their rides. But, where applicable, Group Leaders continue to make sure that no members are left out from this technological transition. Likewise, we have moved to using a Google Rides Calendar on the club's website as our primary way to promote our programme of rides in the months ahead. This visibility is particularly important for prospective members exploring what we offer. There were a couple of teething problems with our use of the on-line Rides Calendar but we believe that they have now been resolved.

In 2023, our published guidance for all riders and Ride Leaders was reviewed and modified slightly to make sure it meets the latest guidance from Cycling UK and addresses the risks identified in generic risk assessments for Cycling UK club rides.

During the past year we have registered six new Ride Leaders with Cycling UK, namely John Pritchard, Jennie Johnson, Nick Moses, Clare Price, Les Roberts, and David Price. We are very fortunate that each year several members step forward in this way to maintain the vitality of our club.

Last year fifteen G2 riders enjoyed a cycling holiday in Tenterden, Kent and likewise nine G2 riders in Normandy, France. G4 and G5 riders also enjoyed trips in the Vosges and the French Alps.

### **First Aid Training**

Following discussion within the committee, Keith Stainer took the lead in organising a series of first aid training courses for club members, which were run by Wimbledon First Aid in sessions held at Merrist Wood college. In all, four separate sessions were held in groups of 8 members, covering practical advice on first aid emergencies and hands-on practice of CPR and the use of defibrillators. The feedback has been very positive, and this initiative has strengthened our capability across the club to address first aid issues that might arise. We have also researched and made an online first aid training course available, which a number of members have taken up.

The website has been updated to note the accreditation of those members who completed the training, Almost all members who expressed an interest found a place on one of the sessions, but we will keep this under review and consider running a further session as required in the coming year.

## **Russ Mantle**

The year also marked the sad passing of Russ Mantle, a formidable West Surrey member and former Ride Leader whose incredible million mile lifetime cycling achievement attracted great publicity. A good contingent of WSCC members attended Russ' funeral in June 2023.

## **Awards**

The club dinner, which again took place at the Mill in Elstead in March 2024 provided an opportunity to make the following awards for notable club achievements:

- The Golden Crank award was made to John Pritchard for leading a truly heroic effort when one of our riders had a medical emergency on a Wednesday G5 ride in the summer. Tim Richards accepted the award on John's behalf at the dinner, as he (along with Nick Moses and Mark Slater) all made vital contributions on the day.
- The George Aylesbury Tankard was awarded to Keith Stainer for most midweek rides.
- The Bill Inder Trophy was awarded (again) to Clive Richardson for his exceptional and unwavering support of the club's Sunday rides.
- The Keith Parfitt Memorial Trophy was awarded to Nick Davison in (belated) recognition of his efforts running the Elstead Audaxes over a number of years.
- Finally, the Wooden Crank award was not made at the Dinner due to a disappointing number of nominations. But we are pleased to report that suggestions have since flooded in, and the lucky recipient will be announced at the AGM on 27 April.

## **New Riders Report**

There has continued to be a steady flow of cyclists getting in touch with the club. While the number of enquiries has been a bit lower than in previous years, a higher proportion of these have elected to join. Of the 47 who contacted us during 2023, 26 have become members and this pattern has continued through the quieter winter months into spring 2024.

Our core recruitment area continues to centre on the Guildford-Farnham-Godalming triangle, although Woking and Pyrford also feature quite frequently. As ever, G2 is probably the most common entry point to the club (especially in Farnham) but there have been clear signs of people migrating to other groups once they settle into our rides. As to why the club appeals to new members, the fact that we seek to ensure no-one is left behind is often cited as an attractive trait.

## **Club Communications**

The website continues to be central to all the club's activities and communications and members are encouraged to submit items to be published. Members who are signed up continue to receive additional communication by email as well as email notifications of new Blog or Latest news postings.

Club members are members of Cycling UK and enjoy access to many benefits. The club website provides a direct link to the benefits section on the Cycling UK website.

The club continues to use Spond to publicise and organise rides. At present there are 174 members signed up to use Spond, including 22 guests or prospective members.

The RideWithGPS club membership has been in place for almost two years and now hosts a fairly comprehensive and ever-growing rides database to which which Ride Leaders can contribute, and borrow from when planning routes. Guidance notes for users have been posted on the website. Please ask if you are unsure how to access and use this facility, as the whole club stands to benefit from using this resource.

WhatsApp continues to be widely used by the club for general communication. The club Facebook page and Instagram accounts are moderated by WSCC. Both accounts have regular posts and can be accessed via logos on the home page of the club website as well as directly through Facebook and Instagram, and we are looking to make increased use of social media over the coming year. The social media accounts play an important role in promoting the Elstead Audaxes as well as the Tour of the Hills. Going forward we hope social media will continue to promote the club and to attract new attract new riders who are vital for our future.

There is a West Surrey Cycling Club club on Strava, which can be accessed directly from Strava.

Finally, there are still 8 or 9 club kit items in stock from our last order (April 2023), so please get in touch if you are interested in what is available. The kit remains popular with members. Its bright colours and prominent club logo allows club riders to stay safe and be seen, and continues to promote the club with 'free publicity'. If there is sufficient interest, and if demand does not match the available stock, we will consider organising another order during the course of the coming year.

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