

STIRLING BIKE CLUB – Road Ride Section

NEW ROAD RIDERS' GUIDANCE NOTES (V1)

Background

Stirling Bike Club (SBC) is one of the most popular cycling clubs in Scotland and, as a potential new member, we thought that it may be useful for you to have some guidance as to what you can expect from our Club and, at the same time, what the Club would like to expect of you.

To help you enjoy your cycling experience with SBC we have put together some Notes which we hope will assist you in your early days of road cycling.

A question we're asked, from time to time, is 'why would I want to ride in a group?'. Three main reasons; firstly, there's the social aspect and being able to chat with your fellow riders. Secondly, group riding will vastly improve your riding skills and, finally, you'll find your fitness levels improving.

So, let's begin with some background on the Road Riding section of the Club. The Club organises Group Road Rides mainly on Saturday mornings and sometimes, during the summer months, on Sunday mornings. Much more information is available at the SBC website (www.stirlingbikeclub.org.uk) so please visit for further details.

Group Road Rides

The Club has 5 different types of Group Road Rides and each of these is defined by distance and average speed. Each of the rides is weekly, normally on a Saturday and each of the rides is as follows :

Development Group with a typical ride distance of 25-40miles at an average speed of 12-13mph

Intermediate Group with a typical ride distance of 40-55miles at an average speed of 14-15mph

Middle Group with a typical ride distance of 50-65miles at an average speed of 15-17mph

Tempo Group with a typical ride distance of 60-75miles at an average speed of 17-19mph

Fast Group with a typical ride distance of 70+ miles at an average speed of 20+ mph

The safety of the group riders is paramount and, as a new Member, it is important that we allow you, as a new rider, to safely develop your bike skills and to build your confidence in road riding. Alternatively, you may have already developed your confidence in solo road riding but maybe do not have much experience with group riding – we will help you with that, too. Each of the above rides is led by a Road Ride Leader (RRL) who will help and advise you on group riding skills.

Irrespective of your riding experience, each new Rider will require to take their first Club organised Group Road Ride in either the Development Group or the Intermediate Group. This will allow the RRL of the group to which you have been allocated to assess your group riding skills. This is to ensure your safety and those of the rest of the group.

How do I make my first Point of Contact?

You've decided that you'd like to try a group road ride. Congratulations – you've come to the right club. The first thing that you need to do is to e-mail road@stirlingbikeclub.org.uk with some details about yourself including your bike riding experience, any medical issues we should know about and a contact telephone number. One of the Club's Road Representatives will pick this up and get back to you with information on the best way forward for you. This may be in the Development Group or, if you have some experience in group riding, in the Intermediate group. Once we feel that you're safe to ride in a group, you can then go onto which every group you feel suits your abilities.

The Club is minded to form an Introductory Group Ride as and when Road Ride Leader availability permits and it will be aimed at those riders who feel less confident about riding on public road and in groups. This will take place on a couple of 20 mile routes on specially chosen quieter roads. These routes are :

Route 1 <http://www.strava.com/routes/2842295595773286376>

Route 2 <http://www.strava.com/routes/2841776663770883822>

As a starter, why don't you go out and try one of these routes on your own before coming along to a SBC Group ride; see if you can complete the ride within, say, 2 hours. That will give you an indication of what will be expected of you.

So, what is the 'Development' Group

The Development Group usually rides most Saturday mornings. This group includes a Road Ride Leader who will be happy to continue to advise on the finer points of group road riding.

Remaining Road Riding Groups

At the point where you feel you wish to move onto one of the other Groups you will probably have developed sufficient basic bike handling skills to see you through; the main difference with the other groups (ie Middle, Tempo and Fast) is that the group rides have a higher average speed and the ride is longer.

What equipment do I need?

Firstly, let's deal with the bicycle. You will need a Road Bike but we do not turn away riders who fetch-up on a Hybrid (ie straight handlebars). Hybrid bikes tend to be slightly heavier than Road bikes and therefore require more energy to keep up with the group's speed so that's something to bear in mind when choosing a bike.

In terms of personal equipment, cycling helmets are mandatory when riding with the Club. You will also need to carry a spare inner tyre tube, tyre levers, a tyre inflater and allen keys or multi-head spanners as appropriate to your bike.. Also, you will need food and fluid to see you through the ride. So far as clothing is concerned, bike specific clothing is the most comfortable particularly in terms of padded shorts. Scotland's weather is notoriously changeable so remember to 'layer up' and bring a wet-weather cycling jacket with you.

Bike Maintenance

Please ensure that your bicycle is road worthy and suitably maintained. What do we mean by this? It includes:

- tyres are not worn out and are inflated to the correct pressures
- brakes are functioning properly
- gear changing is working adequately
- mudguards are fitted during winter months.
- Rear lights are strongly advised

Also, ensure that the bar ends on your drop handlebars must be plugged and tri-bars are not permitted on group rides. Recycle-a-bike, Stirling are usually happy to carry out a quick check for you but if you've any concerns please discuss these during the initial phone call with the Road Rep.

There are numerous YouTube videos available which you will find helpful in ensuring that you bike is suitable.

Do I need to join Stirling Bike Club prior to my first group ride?

No. We actively encourage new riders to 'come and try' before committing themselves to joining the Club.

We are happy to provide 2 or 3 'trial' group rides but, following that, we expect the new rider to become a member and they can join via the Club's website.

How do I attend my first 'trial' group ride?

Non-SBC Members can join Spond prior to joining SBC for the purpose of doing a (few) tester ride(s). This is the ONLY link that should be used by anyone (including SBC members) joining the SBC Spond groups. After using this link the codes for additional groups can be used.

<https://club.spond.com/landing/signup/stirlingbc>

There is a membership option "Pre-membership Trial Ride" which should be selected.

Welcome Pack

Following on from your initial contact with one of the Club's Road Representatives, you will be forwarded a copy of the Club's Welcome Pack which will include the following documents :

- New Road Riders' Guidance Notes
- Group Road Riding Protocol : Covid-19
- Club Ride Code of Conduct

Many other important documents are available on the Club's website such as the Club's Constitution and the Club's Development Plan and we would urge you to acquaint yourself with these at an early point.

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