

Mass Ride 4: GUIDANCE TO RIDERS

Hopefully you are excited as we are at taking over the streets of Winchester again for a short while to demonstrate the diversity and size of our cycling community and the pleasure of cycling when cycles are in the majority on the streets.

It's not too late to get friends, neighbours and other family members to join in. It's a shame the England rugby was cancelled but there goes that last excuse!

Except the weather of course, which will probably not be on our side - but if so let's make a point of showing that cycling is not just for sunny days!

GUIDANCE TO HELP MAKE THINGS AS SAFE, SMOOTH AND FUN AS POSSIBLE:

- The feeder rides are aiming to arrive in Winchester close together and merge by filling the left hand lane above the Sports Centre traffic lights on North Walls. Once assembled the mass ride will stay in the left-hand lane to King Alfred's Statue, pass round the roundabout without stopping, and head back along Eastgate Street to Friarsgate. As the ride enters Friarsgate it will spread to occupy both lanes, only narrowing at points where necessary ie at right turns.
- Each ride will have at least four marshals. Their role is to direct how the ride proceeds ie protecting the front and rear of the ride and keeping the group together, creating a shield for less experienced riders, setting an appropriate pace, negotiating junctions in an orderly fashion and so on. They are very experienced riders but they can't be responsible for every individual. Many of you will be similarly experienced and hopefully you will play your part in protecting and encouraging younger and less experienced cyclists eg by keeping traffic side whenever you can.
- For safety, minimum disruption and maximum visibility we want to make every effort to keep the ride as a single cohesive group around the two loops without traffic getting caught up in-between.
To help:
 - younger and slower riders should aim to keep towards the front of the ride;
 - try to keep close to the riders in front of you;
 - if tired skip one or both of the loops and go straight to Abbey Gardens;
 - if St George's Street is too steep to maintain a reasonable speed *use Parchment Street as a short-cut and re-join the Mass Ride as it comes down North Walls;*
 - when stopped at lights and junctions be ready to get going again when the front riders make a start.
- If the ride gets split at any time, around the loops or riding into the city, the rear group should continue as a single unit rather than getting stretched out trying to catch up the front group. Marshals will split between the groups. At some point, if safe, the front group will pause to reconnect or, at worst, especially if close to completion the two groups will continue to the finish separately.

- At the finish keep cycling up the Broadway to the zebra-crossing and enter Abbey Gardens through the wide entrance by the Guildhall so that cyclists are clear of the main roundabout as quickly as possible. Take extra care here at the end of the ride where there will be buses and coaches doing their thing.
- We aren't charging for refreshments but would appreciate a donation on the day to CycleWinchester which at the moment has few funds to support its campaigning.
Please bring a re-use cup if you have one.
- There is NO guidance on how you might add to the spirit of celebration on the day!

The Mass Ride philosophy.

The mass ride is organised as far as possible to be an informal, community affair: a lot of cyclists doing what they like to do and are lawfully able to do – albeit, all at the same time. It is meant to be a fun and sociable celebration of cycling and a chance to demonstrate to others - and remind ourselves - what a large, diverse crowd we are.

In that sense it is not an 'event', something occasional and special where roads are closed, signs put up and the police are involved. We could do a Mass Ride *any* Saturday.

Of course, we have informed the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) at WCC and explained our general approach to managing the ride which has been approved.

It is important that *we obey traffic lights* and *we have no right to block traffic*.

On the other hand most of us when out with young cyclists or a larger group will occasionally at difficult crossings position our bikes as a shield to protect the tail of a group across a busy road. It is done with discretion, presuming on the good nature of motorists for a moment and always with a clear wave of thanks afterwards. This is the spirit of the Mass Ride which the marshals will be aiming to implement and which you can help to support, especially around the inner-city loops.

As a courtesy, we have informed the bus companies about the ride, passed on some positive comments about their drivers from the December ride and said we see buses and cyclists as being on the same side - both part of the solution to pollution and congestion.

The ride is not anti-car and we don't want to create annoyance. However there will always be one or two drivers who shout or hoot their horn whatever the situation and we will just ignore them. Our approach should be quietly determined but unfailingly good-humoured.

On the other hand the Mass Ride does have an element of protest. We are tired of being poorly served by the road systems, by the priority given to motorists and, sometimes, by the way people drive. Until Winchester actually is 'Better By Bike' we are going to be a little bit assertive for an hour or so in order to make it that way: hopefully a taste of things to come!

The Mass Ride Team

Note: the ride will go ahead except in the case of an emergency or major local incident – in which case [a cancellation notice will be put on cyclewinchester.org.uk](http://cyclewinchester.org.uk) by 8am on the morning of the ride.