

Boxford Bike Club

MTB Guidelines

These are the guidelines for Mountain Bike (MTB) rides with the Boxford Bike Club. Specifically this is for MTB (offroad) rides organised under the auspices of the club. However, these guidelines are good practice for informal rides or organised rides not under the auspices of the Boxford Bike Club.

MTB Ride Rules and Guidelines

1. **Definition of a MTB Ride Leader.** The MTB Ride Leaders are the people who have planned a route and arranged the start point. All rides are simply a group of riders gathering to have some fun offroad.
2. **Self-Sufficiency.** Riders are expected to be self-sufficient ie carry the suitable equipment to deal with common mechanicals; protect themselves from the forecast weather; and make their own dynamic risk assessments of situations that they encounter. As such all individual riders have responsibility for the safety of themselves, other riders in the group, other road / trail users.
3. **Supporting the Group.** It is good practice that riders identify hazards to other riders as this reduces the risk of incidents. Riders will naturally support each other in the event of a mechanical, incident etc. However, the requirement for self-sufficiency remains.
4. **Insurance.** Unless you are an individual member of British Cycling or Cycle UK you do not have 3rd party insurance. The general club insurance does not cover individual members. We strongly recommend that you have 3rd Party Cover and insurance for your bike in the event of an incident with other road / trail users. Cycle UK, British Cycling and other providers have a range of membership option with different levels of insurance. Please see the insurance section on the club website.
5. **The Principles of Mechanicals.** We expect there to be mechanicals, that's part of cycling especially MTB. However, we also expect riders to respect their fellow riders and have the equipment to get themselves going again as quickly as possible. If you don't know what is available, ask. If you don't know how to use something - ask or use YouTube! If you do have a mechanical you will be assisted by the group, but the more self-sufficient you are the better. Respect other riders – ensure your bike is in good working order and you have the necessary equipment.

Equipment

1. **Helmets.** We know that according to UK law helmets are not compulsory on bikes. However, if you choose not to wear a helmet you are putting the Ride Leader and your fellow riders in a difficult position. They will be the ones that will have to deal with situation if you receive a potentially life changing head injury that would have been prevented by simply wearing a helmet. **As such for Boxford Bike Club MTB rides, helmets are mandatory for members and those non-members wishing to join rides.**
2. **Eye protection.** We strongly recommend that you wear eye protection as MTB often involves riding past brambles and other hazards, plus mud from tyres.
3. **Other Protection.** We strongly recommend that riders wear cycling gloves when riding. This reduces the risk of injury in the event of a fall and /or from undergrowth.
4. **Bikes.** Mountain Bikes are ideal for club MTB rides. Gravel Bikes, Cross bikes, Hybrids, and other bikes may or may not be suitable depending on the terrain, pace, weather and other factors.

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5. **Tyres & Tubes & Tubeless.** Most MTB riders in the club now use tubeless tyres. This significantly reduces the number of puncture related mechanicals. This also reduces the amount of time that other riders are standing around getting cold, allows us to ride further and have fewer stops.
6. We strongly recommend that riders consider converting to tubeless tyres as it reduces the impact on other riders in the group, ie fewer punctures less waiting around getting cold. If you do not have tubeless wheels, we suggest using something like slime to reduce the impact of punctures, there are various different products available.
7. **Essential To Carry (Tubeless Bike):** It is essential to carry / wear these items on all MTB rides if you are riding a tubeless bike.
 - a. 1 x Spare Tube (if tubeless) – on particularly long rides.
 - b. Plugs / worms to fill holes.
 - c. Tyre levers,
 - d. Allen keys suitable for your bike.
 - e. Pump.
 - f. Water – sufficient for the ride
 - g. Gloves
 - h. Helmet
 - i. Eye Protection.
 - j. Suitable clothing for the weather.
 - k. Gels or another suitable snack to keep you fuelled.
 - l. Mobile Phone
8. **Essential To Carry (Tube Bike).**
 - a. 2 x Spare Tube
 - b. Quick Use patches
 - c. Tyre levers,
 - d. Allen keys suitable for your bike.
 - e. Pump.
 - f. Water – sufficient for the ride
 - g. Gloves
 - h. Helmet
 - i. Eye Protection.
 - j. Suitable clothing for the weather.
 - k. Gels or another snack to keep you fuelled
 - l. Mobile Phone
9. **Essential to Carry - Night (all bikes):** Bring fully charged lights suitable for off-road mountain biking, riders are encouraged to have two lights – one handlebar mounted, and one helmet mounted. As some riding may use public roads, riders should bring a rear red light. Note. Many normal lights designed for commuting on roads or rides to the shops are insufficient for MTB. Other club members will be able to provide suggestions.
10. **Additional Considerations:** You may wish to carry some of these additional items as they can make the difference to being able to ride home or needing to call for a lift. It also makes things easier for Ride Leaders / fellow riders if you can get yourself riding again.
 - a. Spare links
 - b. Chain tool
 - c. Small bottle of tubeless fluid (if tubeless)
 - d. Tyre wall patch,

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- e. Spare valve & Valve tool.
- f. Spare derailleur hanger (if your bike has one)
- g. Small first aid kit
- h. CO2 cylinders for tyre inflation – with suitable valve
- i. Electrolyte in water bottle / water bladder

Ride Etiquette

11. **Leaving a Ride.** If you wish to leave a ride before the end, ensure you tell the other riders and the Ride Leader, otherwise they may not know that you have left and will start looking for you.
12. **Collision Avoidance.** The rider behind is responsible for collision avoidance. For example, if the rider ahead of you suddenly brakes you should be in a position to react safely.
13. **Injury.** If someone is injured and decides to leave a ride before the end, a volunteer may be needed to ride back with them to ensure their safety.
14. **Emergency Contacts & Location Reporting.** Riders are encouraged to bring mobile phones with “In Case of Emergency” (ICE) numbers preloaded. Additionally, we recommend that you have what3words installed as this can make passing off road locations to emergency services a lot more reliable. Riders are also encouraged to register their mobile phones with the “999” emergency service. This will allow the emergency services to respond to text messages which may be available when there is insufficient phone signal for voice calls.
(http://www.emergencysms.org.uk/registering_your_mobile_phone.php).

Riding Alone

15. MTB has different risks when compared to road riding. You may be riding in areas where there are few people. When riding alone we recommend that riders consider how they are going to get home in the event of an injury, or mechanical. Good practice such as having tracker apps (eg find my friends / Strava), telling someone else where you are going etc are worth factoring in to your planning.

Fitness, Illness, Injury

16. The health and safety of our participants is a key concern, these guidelines apply not just to the individual for themselves but also to the individual as part of a ride group.
17. Cycling can be beneficial to your fitness and well-being, however, if you have any health concerns or existing medical conditions, please consult your GP before joining us on a ride. There are some important considerations before going on a ride. There is supporting material on many cycling organisation and health provider websites, and it is recommended that members and joining members consult these. There are some simple suggestions below:
18. If you are feeling significantly unwell, then do not ride.
19. If you are carrying an injury, let the Ride Leader know.
20. If you are returning to cycling following an illness or injury, follow the advice provided by your healthcare professionals.

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Horses

21. Horses and their riders are fellow off-roaders, however special care is needed when passing them.
22. Please slow right down for them and give them a wide berth.
23. Horses don't understand bikes and may react as if you are a predator in the wild. Also remember that the horse with blinkers can't see you until you are ride up next to them; wait for the rider to notice you as they may need to take a stronger hold on their mount or to reassure their horse. When you go past a horse, slow down and keep talking to that the horse knows that you are human.

General Rules

24. These rules apply on road and as appropriate, on the trails:
 - a. Always obey the Highway Code and instructions given by authorised people such as the police or other emergency services personnel.
 - b. Always be polite and friendly. If you come across someone who looks like they want to have an argument with cyclists – do not engage. Respectfully ride on.
 - c. The whole group stops if a member has a puncture or a mechanical problem. Indeed, fixing such issues is faster if members of the group help as appropriate.
 - d. Tell someone if you have a problem or if you feel unwell. The group should then decide how to accommodate your needs.
 - e. Do not ride off the front, it will annoy the rest of the group. If you disappear off the front and take a wrong turn, nobody will come to find you as they will not know where you went. This also makes it more difficult for the Ride Leader to manage the ride.
 - f. When overtaking – call which side you will be overtaking. Pass when it is safe to do so as quickly and as safely as possible. Before passing the front rider of the passing group must check that it is safe to pass and call "on your right / left" to the group /rider to be passed in good time so that they are aware of the passing group and do not initiate evolutions of their own.
 - g. When riding on roads where there is heavy traffic, or the road is narrow you should ride single file. You should not ride more than two-abreast.

Group Riding

25. When riding in a group it is essential to respect certain guidance, for safety reasons and the benefit of other riders. See points below:
 - a. Be aware that everything you do has a knock-on effect on everyone behind and beside you.
 - b. You are responsible for the safety of everyone around you as you are for your own well-being.
 - c. Don't half-wheel.