

## **Things to consider when planning to lead a SAPAR social ride**

The following is intended to be helpful for ride leaders. It is based on feedback from past ride leaders as well as riders, who have taken part in our group rides. We want to ensure that everyone participates safely and happily. We hope that everyone enjoys the social rides and comes back for more after their first outing with us.

**Thinking of leading a ride?** Have a chat with the ride coordinator. He/She tries to ensure that we have a ride leader every month and that the routes vary from one month to the next.

**Who can lead a ride?** Anyone who is a member! It is not a requirement that you have passed your RoSPA test.

**Start & end points:** Rides start usually from Montford Bridge Café in Shrewsbury (SY4 1EB) and should finish there, or another convenient location in and around Shrewsbury. Remember – not everyone may be familiar with the area.

**Timing:** The start and finish times vary: during British Summer Time (BST – usually April till October inclusive) the ride starts at 9:30 and should finish at around 17:00. Otherwise rides start at 10:30 and should finish around 15:30.

**Planning your route:** We don't wish to be prescriptive about the mileage, BUT you need to remember that people with different abilities will take part: ranging from:

- Those new to the group and/or advanced riding to those who are more experienced
- Riders who usually ride for 1-2 hours to those who are used to day-long outings.
- Riders who may have already been on the road for an hour just to get to the meeting place.
- Riders' ability to concentrate varies.

**Choose roads which are suitable for the time of year and your intended mileage. Taking the above into account:** - Avoid un-adopted roads; single track roads where a group of bikes could inconvenience other road users; roads with loose gravel or seriously poor surfaces. Try to do the tricky bits in the morning, when people feel fresh. Plan sufficient breaks so that riders can relax or leave the group early. Your breaks need to be long enough so that even the last rider (tail-end-charlie) gets a good break. (i.e. last rider gets 20-30mins at short break, last rider gets 60-90mins at lunch) It helps to know your route confidently. Some people stick to areas they know, others try out a new route and familiarize themselves before the group ride. Having said that, 25 bikes doing a U-turn has occurred in the past and the world didn't end. Be prepared to amend your route in case it takes the group longer than you expected or if the weather becomes adverse. You need to think of toilet, petrol, refreshment and lunch breaks. We

recommend that a leg of the journey should not exceed 1.5 hours for the morning legs and one hour in the afternoon when riders may be a little jaded.

It is easy to underestimate the time for a break! A ride attracts on average between 20-30 bikes. It may take 30 minutes for that number of bikes to queue for petrol and payment, especially if the group has stopped at a small rural filling station with 1 pump. If 30 people want to have a drink or lunch, this may take an hour. It may also be helpful to ring the café / lunch venue to let them know how many people to expect. Suggestions for breaks can come from:

- Other people who are familiar with an area
- Check out whether there is a supermarket in the area: Morrisons and Sainsbury's do petrol, toilet and coffee shops (check opening times)
- The internet has a lot of sites for truckstops, cafes etc.
- Be aware that riders may not know how to get home from the final destination (if different from the start point). Ensure that you take precautions to ensure that ALL riders have the ability to return home safely.

Send details of your planned ride to the website coordinator [webinfo@saparweb.com](mailto:webinfo@saparweb.com) so that others apart from members have access to the rideout information.

A few days before your ride: Email all the members and introduce yourself. Remind members of the date, start time and to arrive with full tank. Give an indication of your destination and the types of roads to get there: i.e. mixed, open, challenging, etc. Also, include your planned finish time. This gives riders an idea of the length of the ride and they can decide whether they are up for the whole or just part of the ride.

What to do in case of bad weather and a risk of cancellation: Include a comment about likely weather in your email. If the weather looks adverse, you may want to call the ride off. It is not in the interest of a road safety group to take risks in snow, ice or gale force winds. The decision to cancel a ride is yours! Some people say that they will email members by a certain time - the day before. Others say that they will turn up and decide on the day. It's up to you how you manage this. The important point is that members are clear about what's happening. On the day:

- Have a word with the tail-end-charlie. It is helpful if he knows where you're heading and where the stops are. Also, swap mobile phone numbers with him/her.
- The group will be gathered just before we set off to be reminded about basic etiquette on the ride (\*see below).
- This is your opportunity to tell people about breaks and the destination. On rare occasions, it has happened that someone got separated from the group. They can catch up with the group, if they know where the group will stop.
- Check whether someone is there for the very first time: make sure they understand what's happening.

- Remember to stick to the speed limit or just below: the group will always need to ride faster to keep up with the lead rider.
- We use a marker system, where the 2nd bike in the group, the one behind the lead bike, marks the turn-offs. Ride leader indicates to the bike behind where they should stop, the position for marking must be safe and, in some circumstances, could require two markers, perhaps on a large roundabout or a confusing junction. NB: If you can't see the bike behind you need to wait until the next bike arrives and can take over marking.
- In the unlikely case of an incident or breakdown, the tail-end-charlie rider will continue the ride, having ensured that the unfortunate rider is looked after and can be recovered.
- **To avoid confusion Tail End Charlie will be wearing an Orange Hi Vis Jacket with our name and logo on the back. The rider marking the junction must wait for the TEC to pass, checking that it is TEC and not a stranger with an orange Hi Viz. Once satisfied that it is our TEC then move off and when safe overtake him/her.**

\*You may be the person who gathers the group and reminds them of the following: S.A.P.A.R etiquette for group riding. There are rules to do with the Rideout and by taking part riders agree to adhere to these rules:

- You are responsible for your own riding
- You must be in control of your motorcycle at all times
- We will adhere to all speed limits – 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and the national speed limit
- Motorcycles MUST be taxed and where necessary have a current MOT certificate
- You must have a driving licence and insurance for the machine that you ride
- You are responsible to ensure your machine is safe, roadworthy and fully legal for riding on the road.
- Overtaking within the group is permitted provided it is safe to do so and does not impede any other road user.
- We ride to the slowest riders' abilities, for whatever reason that may be.
- When marking a junction remain safe and be clear in directing the group with a clear arm signal.
- If marking a junction, you must wait for tail-end-charlie before you move off (immediately after him) then overtake when safe to do so. This could appear to be a long time especially if the group is large and/or traffic is heavy.
- This is a social event, neither SAPAR, its officers or RoSPA can be held responsible for any injury or damage however caused. It is your responsibility to ride responsibly and within the law.

Where possible the route will be posted on the website on the [Route Library](#) page. From here you can connect your sat-nav device and download the route. You can

of course use this facility to download and edit routes using [MyRouteApp](#) which has a free or Gold version. The free version is sufficient to create and download routes.

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