



VC COLETS

CLUB HANDBOOK 2021





INTRODUCTION

ABOUT US...

[VC COLETS](#) is the cycling club of [Colets Health & Fitness](#) , located in Thames Ditton.

Our main activity is the weekly Club Ride, which takes place every Sunday morning. In addition to those we also have a Summer Series of midweek evening rides (from May through to August), as well as other special events, rides and socials (see our events calendar in this handbook)

On our rides we place a strong emphasis on good and safe group cycling. Good group cycling is a learnable skill and everyone who chooses to can develop their ability to ride safely and effectively within a tight group. We have also gained a reputation as a considerate club when out on the road, not always an easy task!

Lastly and by no means least, we are a club whose club kit genuinely is the envy of many others (it is even a 'fav' at Sportful head office in Italy) and is something we are very proud of..... so wear it with pride and always be an ambassador for us and our beloved sport when doing so.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK...

Throughout this handbook any text in orange and underlined is a hyperlink which if you 'click' will take you to a webpage or smartphone app (e.g. WhatsApp)

Please take the time to carefully read through this handbook. We ask that you do this each time it is renewed as minor things may well have evolved in line with our collective experience.

Thank You!

CONTENTS

Club Ride Guide

British Cycling Membership

Club Communications

Club Kit

Events

Social Media & Links

Key Personnel



CLUB RIDE GUIDE

Our weekly Club Ride takes place every Sunday morning.

We meet at 08:30 in the Colets Health & Fitness cafe before heading out for a 3 - 4 hour ride, usually into the Surrey Hills. We aim to be back for around 12:30, but on occasion some groups might be 30 minutes either side of that.

Through December - February we meet at 09:00, but we still aim to be back by about 12:30.

Please arrive as close to the meet up time as you possibly can.

Depending on turnout we generally have two to three groups each week. Please select the appropriate group based on your current level of fitness AND experience of cycling in a group. The faster groups tend to ride in a much tighter pack, so you will need to be an experienced group cyclist.

If you do choose to join a faster group you must make sure that you know the route and are self sufficient in case you struggle to keep up with the pace for the duration of the ride.

If you opt for a slower group **please** don't try to ramp the pace up if you find it's too slow for you.

If there's only enough of us for one group, then the steady group protocol will apply.

The steady group will always wait for people.

From time to time it may be deemed necessary to call off the road ride due to poor or unsafe conditions.

BEFORE THE RIDE

It is essential that all members carefully read and understand the club's [Risk Assessment](#), as it is a key facet of our insurance cover from British Cycling.

Please familiarise yourself with the hand signals and group riding skills by visiting our [Group Riding Skills](#) page. When riding in a group you do have a responsibility to the person behind you.

This short [video](#) and [article](#) about group cycling are recommended viewing/reading for all members.

Carry the following:-
inner tube (ideally two) tyre levers pump/Co2
multi-tool money/card mobile phone
sufficient food & water for the duration of the ride.

Please also have emergency contact details on your phone (the iPhone Health app or an ICE app on other platforms are best)

If a route has been shared in advance, please be sure to load it onto your GPS device.

If your bike is fitted with tri-bars / aero bars / TT bars, please remove these for club rides.

When using lights on a club ride (e.g. winter rides and summer evening rides) please set them to their dimmest setting and non-flashing.

Winter Rides:- If you are able to fit a full/long mudguard to your rear wheel for winter rides, then it will be greatly appreciated! Winter tyres are also strongly advised.

PRE-RIDE BIKE CHECKS

A few quick & easy checks before you head out can help reduce the chances of having a bike-related issue miles from home. Listed below are the ones that our Cyctech qualified 'club mechanic', Luis, recommends that you do.



BRAKES

Give each wheel a spin and apply the brakes to check that it stops the wheel. Check the pads for excessive wear. Remember to also check the calliper lever is closed.

TYRES

Check that they are properly inflated and for any embedded pieces of flint (remove these with a penknife or suchlike). Check that the tyre isn't excessively worn or cut. If the profile has worn square (as opposed to round) it is time to replace.



QUICK RELEASE LEVERS

Check that both of these are fully and firmly shut and not pointing forwards. Also give the wheels a spin to check for any wobbles, buckles or brake rub.

HEADSET & HANDLEBARS

Check for any play in the headset by applying the front brake and trying to rock the bike backwards and forwards. Check that the handlebar bolts are not loose.



SADDLE

Ensure that the saddle is secure and at the proper riding angle & height. Also check your saddle pack contents (if you carry one)

LUBRICATE THE CHAIN AND...

Check that you have a bottle in the cage. If it is a summer evening or low visibility winter ride, check that you have fitted lights (and they are charged up!)



MONTHLY

Give the bike a thorough clean and...

- Check for worn tyres and replace if necessary.
- Check the cables for fraying.
- Check the chain for wear (with a chain checker or by trying to pull away from chain ring).
- Check that the gears shift smoothly.

ANNUALLY

Get the bike serviced by a competent mechanic.

DURING THE RIDE

- Please remember that the Sunday Club Ride is not a training ride, a race or a test; we roll together as a group.
- We ride in pairs as our 'default setting' but be prepared to move into single file when necessary.
- Anybody accelerating ahead of the group will be assumed to be on another ride and will not be called or chased after if they take a wrong turn.
- Take care not to 'half-wheel' the rider next to you in order to try and push the pace up, always keep your handlebars level with theirs.
- For your own safety and for those behind you, you must avoid overlapping your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front.
- Remember to both use and to pass on signals, as those at either end of the group may not be able to see or hear it. Hand signals are preferable to shouts.
- Please do not ride out of line to see road ahead, as this creates the illusion that we are MORE than two abreast.
- For your safety and of those behind, please spread out on fast descents as the person in front may not always be able to point out any hazards.
- Do not jump red lights on club rides, or when wearing our club kit on any other ride.
- At junctions stop in your group formation, do not push in front of others within our group and do not swarm around other road users, including other cycling groups.
- If & when you stop to regroup please move as tight to the kerbside as possible in order to keep the road & junctions as clear as we can.
- In the event of someone experiencing a mechanical issue then the whole group should stop and wait. The ride captain will decide what action needs to be taken from there onwards.
- When setting off from any stops please set off gently and gradually increase the speed, so as to allow those behind time to clip in and close up, before resuming the ride pace.
- Please follow any requests from your group's Ride Captain as they are there to oversee the ride for everybody's benefit and enjoyment.

Finally..... at the end of the ride all groups tend to reconvene back at Colets for post ride refreshments and chat; please try to allow time for this important aspect too!



Participation in our club rides is entirely at your own risk and you are responsible for your own welfare and safety.

We strongly recommend that you take out membership of a cycling body, such as [British Cycling](#) or [Cycling UK](#) to benefit from their insurance cover

Membership of British Cycling also includes member benefits, such as money off at numerous retailers (check the BC website for details) as well as access to training plans and their excellent insight videos on all manner of cycling related topics.



CLUB COMMUNICATIONS

We use WhatsApp for sharing and communicating important information about club rides, up & coming events and general chat and banter.

So that important items do not get lost in a long list of chat, we have three groups each one with a distinct purpose.



VCC - Announcements

This group is locked so no replies are permitted so that important posts are easy to find.

It's purely for what it says it is and acts a bit like a notice board.



VCC - Club Rides

This group is for the organisation of our club rides, such as assembling groups and sharing routes etc. We ask that it is kept 'on-topic' again so details of our weekly 'bread & butter' aren't lost in a lot of chat & banter.



VCC - General Chat

This group is for all other chat and banter.



CLUB KIT

Our club kit is exclusive to club members only, who may access it once they have joined VC Colets and been on a few rides with us. Please do not buy items on behalf of non-club members.

It is manufactured from Sportful's Bodyfit range which was developed exclusively for the Tinkoff team, so is of pro-peloton quality.

The main items of club kit are shown below, with their size range and prices (correct at the time of going to press, but subject to change). We find that this range of items, when combined and supplemented with a couple of different gauges of base layer, along with a set of arm & knee warmers, covers you for pretty much all year round.

Here's the link to [Sportful's Sizing Charts](#)



Club Jersey (XXS - 5XL) £65



Bib shorts (XXS - 3XL) £95



LS Jersey (XXS - 5XL) £90



Tights (XXS - 5XL) £110



Gilet (XXS - 5XL) £90

From time to time we will submit 'one-off' orders for special items of kit not listed above.

Current members can check current stock levels by clicking [HERE](#)



To add your name to any pending orders and communications re: the status of orders, we have a WhatsApp group called [VCC - Club Kit](#). Feel free to exit and rejoin this group as required.



EVENTS

Below is our annual events calendar, though some dates are TBC nearer the time and will be announced via the WhatsApp [VCC Announcements](#) group.

VC COLETS - 2021 CALENDAR

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
	Wednesday 19th Summer Evening Series Commences	Saturday 5th Brighton & back Saturday 12th Brighton & back (res.date)
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Fri. 2nd - Sun. 4th VCC Wales 2021	Wednesday 18th Summer Evening Series Finale	
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
	Friday 12th Annual Dinner & Awards	Sunday 12th Christmas Club Ride Christmas Drinks

Despite benefitting from what are now 'settled formats', the two annual club events that always require a little bit more planning & communication than our others are 'Brighton & Back' and 'VCC Wales'.

Below you will find some initial information about both, but if you are attending either do be sure to watch out for and read all additional information which will be shared.

BRIGHTON & BACK

Each year on a Saturday in June the club do this 'Classic' ride, you can choose to ride both ways or just one way. We always set a reserve date of the following Saturday for this event, so that in the event of inclement weather we will try again the following week (which we have only had to do on one occasion thus far).

We usually have three speeds of group so you can choose one that suits your ability and/or current level of bike-fitness.

For the [outward leg](#) the groups depart at 30 minute intervals starting with the slower of the three; the idea is that all three groups arrive out our designated destination in Brighton around the same time (give or take 10 or so minutes).

For the [return leg](#) there is just a 5 minute gap between groups setting off, this time starting with the faster of the three. There will be a couple of designated stops on the way home where each group should wait for the following group to arrive before setting off. This allows people to move up or down a group in order to find a pace that suits their level of fatigue.

We ask that everyone 'book the whole day' with their families etc. for this ride, so that no-one is in a rush to get back therefore putting pressure on the rest of the group. It is one to be savoured!

VCC WALES

Each year we have a residential in the Brecon Beacons, where we stay in the well equipped, static caravans at [Lakeside Carvan Park](#) in [Llangorse](#).

We assemble from the Friday afternoon onwards.

On Saturday morning we roll out later than normal as some people won't arrive until late on Friday night so will appreciate the later start. We can also enjoy a leisurely breakfast and the roads are not as busy as Surrey.

There are usually two or three groups each doing a version of the same [route](#), so we cover at least some of the same territory.

After the ride it's all pretty laid back, we just hang about in a couple of the 'vans eating, drinking and socialising, so there's no need to bring dressy clothing, just bring stuff for lounging around in. There's a lake for walks AND there's a pub on site too!

Sunday morning is the café run! We ride as one big social group, so we ask that the stronger riders help out the slower ones when needed. There is a climb of Llangynidr Mountain after breakfast (worth it for the stunning views and exhilarating descent). We should be back at the site by around 12:30 - 13:00, shortly after which we all hit the road for the drive home.

Food wise, the weekend is self-catering.



SOCIAL MEDIA & LINKS

We don't do an awful lot on social media, our Instagram feed is our most active and one worth following as that is where we post most of the photos from rides and events.

We are a verified club on Strava, so whilst you remain a member of VC COLETS if you wish to join us on there, please request and we will add you.



[VC Colets](#)



[@vccolets](#)



[VC Colets](#)



[@vccolets](#)



[VC Colets](#)

Our homepage is now part of Colets Health & Fitness website. We also have a 'Members page' on there too. Links for both are below.



[Homepage](#)



[Member Page](#)

We are in the process of building a library of routes on ridewithgps.com, but it is very much a work in progress so please bear with us whilst that takes place.



[VC Colets](#)



KEY PERSONNEL

There are a few people who are involved in the 'behind the scenes' running of the club, so it is worth you knowing who they are in the event that you have any questions or suggestions.



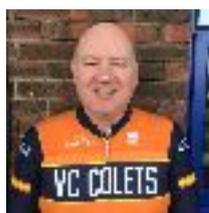
Chris Murray takes care of much of the 'day to day' running of the club, so for British Cycling purposes he is the Club Secretary.



Stefan Atanasov also has an overall responsibility, as he is one of the managers at Colets Health & Fitness and is the club's direct link to the organisation.



Chris Dain is the membership secretary, so has a key role in inducting new joiners and taking care of renewals.



Jon Griffiths oversees all aspects of Health & Safety, from the Risk Assessment protocols through to our First Aid provision.



Frank Laino is the social sec. So takes care of organising the our social events, making sure that everything is in place for them to be a success.

RIDE CAPTAINS

Our team of Ride Captains are key to help making sure that our most important activity, The Sunday Club Ride, fulfils all that it needs to in order for it to be a success.

As the Ride Captain group does change from time to time you can find an up to date list and 'rogues gallery' via this link to the [Ride Captains](#) page on our website.

FIRST AIDERS

A number of our Ride Captains, along with other members, hold a current First Aid certificate; they are as follows:-

Chris Murray

Stefan Atanasov

Chris Dain

Lisa Price

Julie Davidson

Jon Griffiths

John Wilkinson

Mark Flounders

Rakesh Bhasin

Dave Fereday

Last and by no means least, the most 'key' of all personnel in VC Colets is YOU the member, because without all of you there simply would be no club.