



The first step on the process of becoming a Go-Ride Clubmark Club is signing up to the Go-Ride programme and getting activities for young people up and running. CC Ashwell are a new Go-Ride Club in the Eastern region and they have very kindly shared their initial thoughts about the impact that signing up to the Go-Ride programme has had their club.

"For those clubs undecided or decidedly against, think again. Without exception, everything positive that can happen is part and parcel of this programme.

The club officials of CC Ashwell recognised that without new young blood in our club, we would most probably stagnate and dwindle because a club's membership naturally evolves as people get older and move on to bigger and better things. So without a continuous influx of new members this cycling club that provides an excellent route into the sport would gradually shrink as people move on, and the demands placed on fewer and fewer volunteers would get greater. The Go-Ride programme delivers precisely those aspects essential to a club's growth and future health. Namely, well trained, eager and enthusiastic youngsters ready and able to bolster and boost the flagging hopes of your club.

Some clubs are very big and have become entrenched and established in their local area. As a consequence they may find it harder to adapt and embrace the newer approaches. However, by following the programme it will happen and you won't regret all the time and effort you will have put in. For new clubs with no hard and fast traditions

and rules, the transition is perfectly natural and quite easy.

So what do you need and what will happen? Firstly, you need trained coaches to deliver the programme. Get on to British Cycling and find out what is involved. Secondly, you need some structure to your programme, suitable facilities and a number of willing volunteers within the club who will assist to maintain the initial enthusiasm and momentum. You will need finance to cover training and equipment, but over and above all of these you will need the active and positive co-operation of your club to want to develop and accommodate a younger section.

Many clubs are comfortable as they are, all well and good. However, if you want to know and realise the buzz that comes with growing and developing a youth section, then there is no better way than to Go-Ride. If you already have a youth section I still think you will gain from adopting the programme as it will help broaden the range and scope of delivering training using many innovative techniques.

Enough of the build-up. What has it meant to our very young club? Since doing my Level 2 coaching course; an experience I thoroughly enjoyed, as did all participants, we started to promote and run Go-Ride sessions 1 evening a week for 1 hour, in May. Now, in August, we have a register of over 30 young people and an average weekly take-up in excess of 15. School holidays, family holidays, and atrocious weather have dented this attendance over the last couple of weeks but we are picking up again nicely.

Our age range spans from 6-16 and all abilities. Some of the parents are even asking for sessions to improve their confidence and bike handling skills, demonstrating how our new approach and involvement in the community can help attract more adult members and volunteers because with every child comes a carer, guardian or parent. We have hired our village recreation ground and pavilion for these sessions and are therefore able to offer safe, off-road facilities and a grass track into the bargain. I cannot recommend this approach highly enough. It gives us a first class opportunity to extend the bike handling into well monitored and managed track and road racing/competitive skills and techniques.

Other trained coaches assist in these sessions and regular help from Max Pendleton on the grass track has been of inestimable value. The pleasure gained in watching these growing skills and confidence transferred into competent and keen competition is reward in itself for all the effort that has been put in. For me it has been a revelation and is quite addictive. A young girl who had broken her arm on 3 separate occasions before coming on Go-Ride, the last being when she lost control while changing gears on her bike, is transformed from someone who wouldn't take her hands off the bars, to a person with total confidence to ride one handed left or right. This in itself, after just one hour's session, was worth all the effort and many other pluses are yours for the asking.

Everyone will find that the fun and enthusiasm is self-feeding and fuelling. If you get the balance of fun and discipline correct, everyone is a winner. Some of our young riders are now competing at national races and events racking up the points and enjoying every minute of it.

Try it and find out for yourself. We did and we are not looking back. Next stop, our own grass track and possibly a tarmac track with club house. Who knows? After this start anything is possible. We are on track and raring to grow. Check our progress and see if we don't deliver."

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www.ccashwell.com