



RIDE **WESSEX**

RIDER MANUAL

WHEN

05 July 2026

WHERE

NEWBURY RUGBY CLUB

**NEVER
STOP
PUSHING**

action medical research
for children



Introduction

We are delighted that you have chosen to take part in the RIDE Wessex Downs bike ride and in doing so will be helping to raise money for and support Action Medical Research.

Please take time to familiarise yourself with the information contained in this manual so that you can enjoy your RIDE experience to the fullest extent.

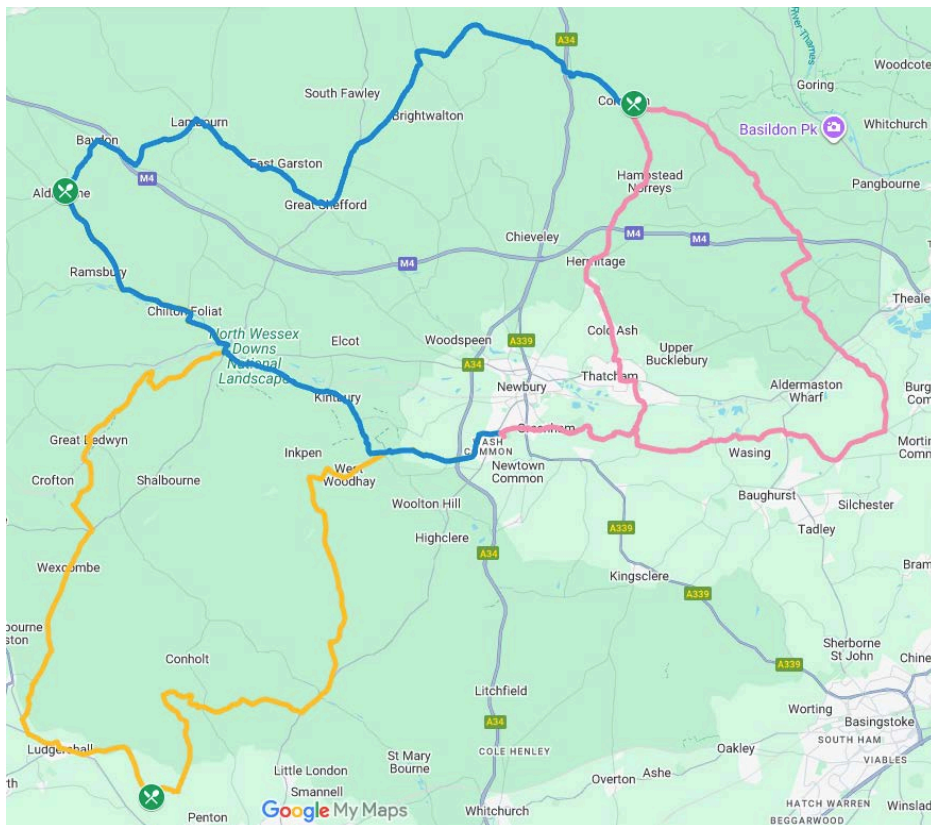
Action Medical Research team

RIDE Wessex Downs

The route

Setting out from Newbury Rugby Club the ride takes in quiet and winding Wessex lanes and picturesque countryside. With a mixture of flat roads and some more challenging climbs the route provides an achievable challenge for new cyclists and a nice social route for more experienced cyclists.

Route	Distance	Climbing
Champion	100 miles	5,086 ft
Classic	67 miles	3,173 ft
Cool	40 miles	1,114 ft



See the full route on the [Action Medical Research Website](#)

You can also download a GPX file of the route [here](#) for your GPS navigation device.

Start

Newbury Rugby Club
Monks Lane,
Newbury,
RG14 7RW



Parking

Please follow signs and marshal guidance for parking. Parking is limited and so we encourage you to car share or ride to the start where possible.

Start Times

Riders will set off in small groups at the following times according to their chosen route option. If you are inexperienced or new to cycling we recommend that you start early in your group. Each group of riders will receive a short safety briefing before they are set off.

Route	Distance	Start
Champion	100 miles	07:00 - 08:00
Classic	67 miles	08:15 - 09:00
Cool	40 miles	08.15 - 09.00

You must ride across the timing mat to activate your timing chip.

All riders must be on the road by 9.00 am to avoid the event running over. The event closes at 5pm.

Cut Off Timings

Riders on the Champion Route need to reach mile 57 by 13:00 to avoid being diverted onto the Classic Route

Aid stations

Our aid stations are run by fantastic Action Medical Research volunteers. Please respect both the volunteers and fellow riders at the aid stations on the event. There will be a range of snacks and treats at the aid stations but if you have any specific dietary requirements please bring your own food.

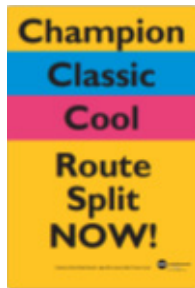
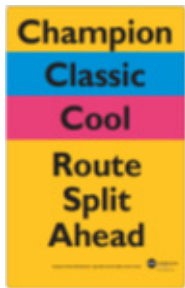
Location / Route option	Champion	Classic	Cool
Compton Village Hall	27 miles	27 miles	27 miles
Aldbourn War Memorial Hall	50 miles	50 miles	N/A
Appleshaw Hall	77 miles	N/A	N/A

Event Signage

The route is signed throughout with yellow signs bearing the 'Action' button and direction arrows.



All turns are signed; do not turn off the road unless directed to do so by signage.



Where the routes split, tri coloured signs with 'Route Split Ahead' and 'Route Split Now' will highlight the split.

From this point you should follow your selected route; the colour that denotes your route.

After the route split on the Cool and Classic routes, the signs will revert back to yellow and this is highlighted by a pink/yellow sign on the Cool route and blue/yellow on the Classic route.



Event Support

Your primary point of call should be Event Control **07719 997 017** (please text unless it is a medical emergency). Include your rider number in any communications with Event Control

Mechanical support

Mechanical assistance is available at the start and out on the road. We have roaming marshals who can assist with minor problems or if you have something a little more technical we have our team of experienced cycle mechanics on call to come to your aid – just text Event Control.

Medical support

We have medical support who will be roaming the route and respond to calls for help. In the event that you or someone is involved in an accident that requires emergency services, do not hesitate to contact **999** in the first instance and then the Event Controller on the number provided. If the incident is minor and not life threatening the Event Controller will be the first person to contact.

Broom wagon

There will be a broom wagon out on the route following the last riders. However, it will only be able to offer road side assistance to riders and **won't be able to pick them up**.

The event closes at **5pm** and our support crews will have been stood down after that time.

Health & Safety

- Participants are reminded that this event is a sportive and NOT a race.
- Participants are advised to take enough water for the duration of the event.
- The event organisation provides aid stations at appropriate distances to supplement participants provisions.
- The event aid stations will have available general first aid support as well as communication to the event control.
- Qualified paramedics will be based at the event venue and roam the course. They will stay onsite until the last riders return.
- Participants are advised of the event control number within this manual. This phone number is also printed on your rider number.
- All calls to the event control go straight to a dedicated person located at the event venue who will coordinate the medical or mechanical service to you.

Bike Security

Cycles and associated equipment are the responsibility of the participant. Action Medical Research strongly recommend ensuring that your property is not left unattended without the use of the appropriate theft prevention methods.

Aid Stations

Please only take the provisions you require to complete your ride. If you are amongst the early groups to reach the aid stations, please remember that there are many more following who will also need to refuel. We kindly ask that you don't take more than your fair share.

Strava

We now have a Strava Club. It's free to join [here](#)

The Finish

Please approach the finish with caution as there are often spectators close by. You must ride under the gantry to record your time and to receive your well earned finisher's medal. At peak times please be patient as riders are filtered through the finish enclosure. If you changed routes during the ride, it is your responsibility to advise a member of the timing crew. Times are only recorded at the start and finish, not midway. To ensure accuracy of ride times across all the routes we rely on participants advising the timing crew of any change of route. Provisional rider times will be sent to you via email following the event.

Finish Line Facilities

Post ride you will find toilet facilities and hot food and drinks available to purchase within our event village area.

Important

If you decide not to complete the ride and do not return to the finish, you must contact Event Control to let us know that you are safe and accounted for.

Thanks

Action Medical Research funds vital research to help sick and disabled babies, children and young people. We have been funding medical breakthroughs since we began 70 years ago and have helped to beat polio, fight meningitis, prevent stillbirths and develop ultrasound scanning in pregnancy. With your ongoing support we are now driving forward children's medical research, making more breakthroughs which will help children and their families of the future.

You can donate or support our work here: [RIDE Wessex Downs 2026 - JustGiving](#)

Appendix I: guide to safe cycling

Event rules:

- All riders must display their chipped rider number on their bike.
- Riders under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult during the event.
- Each group of riders will receive a short safety briefing before being set off at the start.
- The wearing of helmets (conforming to CE Standards EN1078) is mandatory for all riders. No helmet, no ride.

Road safety

During the ride there are no closed roads, therefore you must ride safely at all times and be aware of other road users. Below are some tips for staying safe on the road:

- Obey the Highway Code at all times.
- Stop at all junctions.
- Never ride more than two abreast.
- Ride single file on single track roads.
- Keep a safe distance between you and the rider in front.
- Do not use headphones whilst cycling.
- When turning off a main road, check the road behind you and signal your intentions clearly.

Riding in a group

Riding in a group is efficient, energy-saving and fast. Riding close behind another bike will allow you to 'draft' (sit in the slipstream of the rider ahead) which reduces your wind resistance, thereby saving you lots of energy and effort. Take it in turns with other riders to sit at the front of the group to help each other.

There is a technique to this so it is definitely worth getting it right. The key rules are:

- Follow a straight course – sudden changes in direction cause crashes and make for a nervous peloton.
- Signal any potential hazards or obstructions the group behind (see below for more details)
- Look ahead of you regularly when riding in a group, not just at the wheel in front – this gives you time to react to things and anticipate.
- Don't brake suddenly – this avoids the "concertina effect". Also, the less you brake, the less you have to accelerate. This maximises energy conservation.
- Don't overlap wheels with the riders in front – leave about 1 to ½ metre gap between you and the rider in front. If you do overlap, wheels can touch and if this happens it is very hard to keep it upright.
- Most importantly, look out for other riders around you and they should look out for you. Ride smoothly and stay relaxed.

Staying safe

When riding in a group, those at the front take a degree of responsibility to be the eyes and ears of the rest of the group. There are a few phrases and hand signals which are all you need to let people know what's going on.

Calling out

Use the following basic call outs / signals to communicate when riding in a group:

"Car back"	There is a vehicle behind, let it pass.
"Car up"	Vehicle up ahead, let it pass.
"Single Out"	The group needs to go from two lines into one.
"Easy"	When called from the front it signals that you need to start slowing down because of traffic lights or a junction for example.
"Directions"	Not every change in direction obviously, but when turning onto another road call 'right' or 'left'.
"Holes"	Used to point out potholes, drains, any other hole in the road. This is one of the most important calls when in a group as riding through potholes can cause punctures and injuries. It is a good idea to accompany this call with a hand signal, pointing towards the hole so your fellow riders know where exactly to avoid.

Appendix 2: route specific safety information

The route has been subjected to a full and thorough risk assessment with the safety and enjoyment of riders paramount at all times. Where deemed necessary marshals will be positioned at certain crossings to help advise cyclists. Please note the marshals do not have the power to stop traffic and are not there to cross you over the road. Make sure you take responsibility for yourself when crossing junctions and only do so where safe.

Appendix 3: bike maintenance

Keeping your bike clean and in good working order is essential to help to prevent mechanical difficulties, accidents and hopefully stop you being stranded in the middle of nowhere during a training ride!

- Tyres must be in good condition and inflated correctly - the psi values will be marked on the tyres.
- It is a very good idea to learn how to change a punctured inner tube yourself - this video is a good start: [youtube.com/watch?v=8TmIwewekVQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TmIwewekVQ)
- Brake blocks should be equally spaced over the wheel and not worn down past the wear line - if in doubt, change them.
- Brake and gear cables should be free from rust and not frayed - if in doubt, have them checked at a bike shop.
- Seat and headset clamps should be tightened to avoid movement.
- Wheels should be securely fastened to the bike frame with no movement.
- The drive chain should be in good condition and not worn - again, a bike shop can help you check.
- After cleaning your bike and chain, remember to lubricate the chain again afterwards to stop it seizing or snapping - specialist lubricant can be purchased at all bike shops.
- Have your bike fully serviced at a bike shop just before the event starts.

It is your responsibility that your own bike is in good working order before you commence your event.

Thanks

We would like to thank all the fantastic volunteers and supporters who help make the event possible.