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Stourton Caundle Cycle Group– Parish Council Annual Report – 2021

The Caundle Vélo Club (CVC), as it is known here in the village, continues to thrive under the supervision of Tom Eden and Richard Miles, supported by co-Caundlers - David Keenan, Mike Taylor and Joe Edwards - as well as 20 other members from nearby towns and villages. Clad in garish Lycra colours and helmets, we can be spotted gathering at the start of rides on the bridge opposite the Trooper each Monday and Friday mornings all year round.

The past 12 months has certainly been different. Our last pre-Covid group ride in 2020 was on Monday March 23, on the eve of the first official lockdown, when we were allowed to hold a midday “socially distanced” picnic on common ground near Sedgemoor in Wiltshire. Thereafter, until the first lockdown release on June 8, 2020 we were only allowed to exercise alone “for an hour or so” within our local catchment area, although some have confessed to stretching this time constraint somewhat. On June 8, Boris allowed us to regroup as a peloton of no more than 6 cyclists, which saw us through the rest of summer and autumn until the second lockdown on November 2 – although we had to do without our usual café pauses and hearty pub lunches. Then a brief 3-week respite from lockdown for the planned Christmas holiday re-opening, prior to the second longer one from January 15, in which we still languish as this is written, cycling only in pairs. Nevertheless, CVC members have stayed in touch with one another via our online Strava performance Apps, and by swapping photos and chit-chat on our own CVC Whatsapp grouping.

During the past 12 months of restrictions, we have got used to swigging coffee from the back-pack thermos and picnicking in cold, wet and sometimes freezing meadows, churchyards, bus stops, or wherever we find a dry patch to sit down (away from public scrutiny, as even this is not permitted).

It's been a sobering experience (literally) to be denied one's pub lunch with a pile of chips and a thirst quenching jug of ale. But, like most things in life, we have got used to the “new normal” habits and may well continue with picnics this summer. This said, we cannot wait for the final third lockdown release date on Monday March 29, being our first opportunity to ride in small groups; and April 12 when we hope to frequent pubs and cafés once again.

Tom Eden & Richard Miles