



Information about the Tour of Britain in Charlbury – Saturday 9th September

What's happening?

The Tour of Britain, Britain's biggest bike race, is coming through Charlbury. Around 150 professional cyclists, including many of the best in the world, will be racing through as part of a 120-mile stage from Hemel Hempstead to Cheltenham.

It's happening on **Saturday 9th September** and the race will be coming through at around 1pm – give or take half an hour, depending how fast the racers are going that day.

You can see the route here: <http://www.tourofbritain.co.uk/stages/stage-seven/>

Who's organising it?

The Tour of Britain is organised by professional race organisers (Sweetspot). Their aim is to get the riders safely along their way. They're helped by the police, who organise the road closures. West Oxfordshire District Council are doing some publicity work.

But that's it. There's no grand Oxfordshire Tour Committee or anything. Making a show of it in Charlbury is up to us!

What happens to the roads?

Roads are closed for the race by a 'rolling roadblock'. The police sweep through 15 minutes before the cyclists arrive. Then, once the last cyclist is through, they come through and reopen the road.

Cars will need to be moved out of the way, ideally the night before. Charlbury Primary School has generously offered use of its Wychwood Paddocks playing field.

Will there be spectators?

We expect so! Charlbury is the only place of any size in Oxfordshire to host the Tour. Our stage is a Saturday, and the penultimate day of the (eight-day) race. And we're one of only a few towns on the stage to have a railway station. Unusually, the Tour isn't going to London this year (it's finishing in Cardiff on Sunday), so London cycling fans will want somewhere to watch it.

It should be a good fund-raising opportunity for Charlbury groups, and a busy day for the town's shops and pubs. And if we're confident of making a good show of it, we can publicise that in the local press, on the internet and so on.

The race is televised, too, so we have a good chance of getting Charlbury on TV. In the other Cotswold towns (Moreton and Stow) the route just grazes the edge, whereas here, it's going right through the heart of town.

Which way is it going?

The race arrives on Woodstock Road, then Park Street, Church Street, Market Street, Dyer's Hill. The 90° turns should make for great racing.

What can we do?

That's our call – anything we like.

Can we make Charlbury look really good for the race? Flags, bunting, painted bikes, yarn-bombing, decorating houses, shops and gardens...

Can we organise activities for residents and visitors? Guided bike rides, bike-themed arts, talks, displays and performances, tea and cake...

There'll be lots going on in Charlbury that day – it's also Farmer's Market day, and the annual Ride & Stride for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (and something else too which will be revealed in due course). So we can make a real day of it.

Can we paint bikes like they do in Yorkshire?

Yes! We have an offer of a dozen or so old unwanted bikes, and there may be others that we can scrounge from people's garages.

Anything else we need to know?

We've settled on red and blue for our 'town colours' for the race – they're the race colours and they stand out better against the landscape than the green of the race leader's jersey.

Where can I put my event?

At the time of writing (end July) the Corner House and Memorial Hall are largely unbooked for September 9th. The Bell have offered us their back garden (the grassy area, not the car park) for stalls if needed.

What next?

Don't hold back! If you've got a great idea, go for it – you don't need to ask anyone's permission.

I can't claim to be a Grand Vizier of the Tour (working on the wonderful new Deli has rather exhausted my organisational capabilities for one year) but am very happy to make suggestions, answer questions, put people in touch with each other and ensure effort isn't duplicated. I'll keep a list of everything that's going on.

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