

## CONCERNS OVER THE LEVEL OF CYCLING IN THE NEW FOREST

Presentment by Mr Peter Rejchrt, resident of Hyde

This is a summary of my concerns about the level of cycling in the northern New Forest. I am resident in Hyde and have observed the increased level of cycling off permitted tracks. I fear that without any obvious enforcement or visible deterrents this will only increase during the warmer months as visitor numbers increased, emboldened by local cyclists disobeying the good conduct code.

I have attached a photo from Ocknell Plain where I recently saw damage to the open Forest. I can provide details of the exact location if needed, but I feel this a good example of cycling illegally across open terrain and destroying the habitat, happy to clarify on particular locations, etc.

Not only is there destruction to the habitat for wildlife, in the wet winter conditions cycling off permitted paths also causes such damage as to make pedestrian life harder with gouged out tracks in mud, sand and wet gravel, e.g. along Ditchend Brook towards Newgrounds and Pitts Wood.

Cycling at speed on gravel in bends (e.g. the steep track off Hampton Ridge along the back of Blissford/Chilly Hill to Ditchend Brook).

Many cyclists do obey the code, yet there is a significant number that do not and become abusive towards other users when challenged.

In the recent wet weather conditions, I am coming across bike tracks alongside paths not on the cycle network where the gravel paths are flooded and cyclists then destroy the surrounding heathland.

It appears there is a small, but nevertheless significant, local and 'near local' cohort of cyclists that feel the code does not apply, as the problem, whilst significantly worse in the summer, persists throughout the year.

Technology allows cyclists to conduct races blatantly and flagrantly using apps like Strava, e.g. the gravel track down from Abbotswell Millennium Stone car park to Latchmore Brook.

The commons, particularly Ibsley, Gorley and Rockford seem particularly favoured for destructive cycling, or it may simply be more evident in the sandy terrain, and it seems there is particular appeal in these for the off-road MTB crowd.

Certain routes seem popular 'short cuts' by cyclists on longer tours, e.g., cutting across from Ocknell Plain via Broomy, Hasley and Abbotswell to rejoin the track to Fordingbridge, thus eliminating the loop via Moyles Court and Mockbeggar and again causing particular damage in the sandy track from Broomy to Hasley.