

## **Presentment to New Forest Verderers Court by Professor Bob Damper**

**Minstead Village Hall, 17 November 2021**

### **Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPC) on the Waymarked Cycle Routes**

Thank you for allowing me to make a presentment this morning. My name is Bob Damper. I have lived in Chandler's Ford for more than 40 years and I am a frequent visitor to the Forest, usually by bicycle. I am a member of the New Forest Association (recently rebranded Friends of the New Forest), of the Local Access Forum for the Forest, and of the Cycle Working Group facilitated by the NFNPA. I am a Life Member of Cycling UK and represent CUK on the Campaign for National Parks. I should emphasise, however, that I am making this presentment today in an entirely personal capacity.

I am keenly interested in conservation and protection of Britain's beautiful natural landscapes, their local communities and their unique heritage. I see cycling as an outstandingly important way for people to enjoy intimately special places such as the New Forest with low environmental impact, as well as significant benefits to their mental and physical wellbeing. It is a sad fact that only about 5% of trips to and within the Forest are by cycle whereas 93% are by car<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, there is huge scope for encouraging cycling at the expense of unfettered car use, with great potential to counter the highly damaging effects of climate change that are increasingly being felt. I am very pleased, therefore, to see that the Verderers are minded to agree to the use of electrically assisted cycles on the waymarked Forest cycle routes and I wish to support this unreservedly. EAPCs allow those who through age, infirmity or for whatever reason are less able to propel their machine entirely through their own efforts to enjoy the benefits of cycling. Such inclusivity should be very much encouraged. I am also in complete agreement with the Verderers that fully electrically powered cycles are entirely out of place. Any electric cycle that does not meet EAPC rules is classed as a motorcycle or moped; it needs to be registered and taxed and the rider requires a driving licence<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Footprint Ecology, Recreational Use of the New Forest, Telephone Survey, 30 March 2020, report commissioned by partnership of local authorities.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/electric-bike-rules>.