

Presentment to the Verderers Court

Minstead Village Hall, 17 November 2021

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

Dear Verderers

Thank you for allowing me to make a Presentment this morning. My name is Philip Thomas. I have lived in Dibden for than 39 years. I regularly visit the New Forest mainly by bicycle but also on foot. I also drive through it when visiting my brother in Lymington and for other reasons. I have been a member of Cycling UK (originally known as the Cyclists' Touring Club, the CTC) for over 25 years. May I state that I am making this Presentment today in a personal capacity?

On the question of using electrically assisted bikes on the gravel tracks as laid out by Forestry England, I ride one nowadays as I have an irregular heartbeat which means that I am taking betablockers. These lower the heart rate which means that when I cycle or walk up a steep hill (take the hill from Beaulieu to Hilltop as an example) I become breathless and cannot keep on cycling or walking (if I attempt to walk up the slope quickly or even on level ground quickly). I find that I cannot pedal a non-electric bike at more than 10 mph without becoming breathless. I regularly ride in Denny Wood on the electric bike and I find it very useful when climbing from Ipley Bridge to Yew Tree Heath and from the Drift Inn back, especially against the wind. Take away the e-bike and I would have to walk up that hill pushing the bike as well as walking and pushing on any steep hills in the Wood. The alternative would be to drive to Denny Wood (5 miles from home one way) and either park on the caravan site in the winter or at Matley in the summer and then walk in the Woods. The Matley car park is full in the summer as is the one at Decoy Pond Farm – the one at Shatterford being closed during the spring and early summer to protect the ground nesting birds. The e-bike saves the production of CO₂, keeps me fit, keeps another car out of the Forest car parks and roads and I do not cycle more than about 8 mph on the roads and about 6 mph or less in the Woods. I look at the trees, etc, when I am in the Woods and do not travel fast.

I have also written another Presentment which I have handed to the Clerk of the Verderer's Court.

Thank you.

Philip C Thomas