

## PRESENTMENT FOR E-BIKES

To the Court

My name is Ross Kempson, owner of Cyclexperience in Brockenhurst.

I understand the Official Verderer is being asked to consider whether permission should be granted to allow electric bikes on the waymarked cycle trails, along with the current permissive use of non-electrically assisted cycles.

The UK government adopted the EU framework for electrically assisted bicycles in April 2015. This stated that EAPC's or Ebikes or Pedelecs can be ridden on any roads or cycle paths and anywhere else that bikes are normally allowed if the rider is aged over 14 years old and the bike has pedals that propel it, an electric motor that won't assist when you are travelling more than 15.5 mph and the power does not exceed 250 watts.

I can reassure the Court that Cyclexperience and all major cycle hire providers in the New Forest only rent and sell bikes that meet this description. We have all increased the number of electric bikes in our hire fleets in line with the growth in popularity of these bike styles which is the only major growth area in volume bike sales within the UK.

I imagine the reason the Verderers Court is being asked to scrutinise Ebike use in the New Forest is due to a small number of private E-Bike owners who are cycling off the approved network as do a small number of non E-Bike riders. However, as far as bike hire is concerned, we are mostly seeing couples aged 50+ who are considering buying EBikes and want to try them first; family groups where the oldest or less healthy members can now participate, families with small children who want to use EBikes to make towing trailers easier and foreign nationals who are simply used to riding E-Bikes in their own country. Regarding E-Bike sales, the most popular demographic seems to be 50+ year old retiree couples who have chosen cycling as their new pastime and have invested in 2 modern bikes plus accessories and clothing. As businesses, the majority of Ebike related customers we deal with seem both responsible and aware of the cycling access restrictions within the New Forest.

I won't pretend that there aren't shop customers who veer off the network on their own bikes but they are either unaware of the access policy or simply feel they have the right to cycle on trails off the network if they don't feel they are causing harm or disturbance. Personally I feel a few improvements in the current network to join up missing links and better general messaging and awareness of the network will do much to solve off-piste cycling. The danger of introducing penalties and further restrictions will only stir up hostility and discontent if cyclists feel there is an air of inequality within the New Forest when the rest of the country (if not the world) are encouraging cycling as a major force to tackle pollution and congestion while increasing the health and well-being of its citizens.

In short, I would respectfully point the Official Verderer back to the legal framework for Ebike use in the UK and Europe which I highlighted at the start and hope he looks to that when making his decision. *For example, Ebikes can be ridden on any roads or cycle paths and anywhere else that bikes are normally allowed if the rider is aged over 14 years old and the bike has pedals that propel it, an electric motor that won't assist when you are travelling more than 15.5 mph and the power does not exceed 250 watts.*