

EXECUTIVE - 4 JULY 2023

AGENDA ITEM 4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The following question has been received from Libby Ralph, Farnham:

“Please can Waverley Borough Council give a clear-cut statement on their position regarding supposedly permissive cycling in Farnham Park, provide documentation as to where and when this position was reached, and provide a formal statement of the position regarding the historic Byelaws?

Byelaws 5(ii) of the Byelaws for Pleasure Grounds (which includes Farnham Park) came into force on the 1 June 1965. These state: “A person shall not, except in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, ride any bicycle, tricycle or other similar machine in any part of the pleasure ground”.

This, and the rest of the Byelaws were still in place and quoted in the Management Plan for Farnham Park in 1995. However, by 2010, the updated Management Plan states: “Cycling is permitted formally on Footpath 98, and informally elsewhere in the Park as long as there is no conflict with other users or site integrity”.

We can find no documentary evidence of this policy change. Various other wording on permissive cycling has been used since. The stated primary purpose of the Park is for recreation (as well as being a sensitive Local Nature Reserve), and it is used primarily by families with small children, pushchairs, dogs, toys etc., and hence there *are* conflicts between cyclists and these users particularly on the steep paths. The supposed permission on permissive cycling is being used by some to promote the idea of these paths as dual-use, increasing potential conflicts, but over the past 10 years, the Friends of Farnham Park have been unable to get clarity from the Council on this issue.

There are some small sections of flatter routes in the Park where we would be happy to discuss permissive cycling as already allowed on Footpath 98, but this must be on the basis of demonstrated need, for example to provide a direct route to schools, rather than for leisure cyclists.

Yours faithfully,

Libby Ralph, Chair, Friends of Farnham Park

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