

New Forest Equestrian Association

Press Release

Immediate Release: Monday 12th August 2013

New Forest Horse Riders warned of next commercial cycle event

The New Forest Equestrian Association is warning horse riders to take extra care and to check ahead whether their usual routes might be taken over by racing cyclists next Sunday. Hundreds of cyclists are expected to set out from Moyles Court from 8.30am onwards on Sunday on timed circuits that take in most of the Forest. The NFEA has provided a link to the route map on its Facebook page and website.

This year's "New Forest Rattler", a commercial cycle sportive, has been expanded to include a 100-mile route, using many of the same lanes also taken by the Wiggle sportives.

The NFEA is working with other Forest organisations to develop a charter for these events, and produced its own 5-point plan in July so that horses, ponies and cyclists can safely share local roads. The plan followed an incident in June in which one cyclist collided at high speed with a New Forest pony, and many reports of dangerous and inconsiderate cycling by sportive competitors.

Chairman of the NFEA, Dr Tony Hockley, commented:

"We are working hard to improve safety on the roads and on Forest tracks, and believe that very large numbers of bikes racing against the clock make sharing road space on the Forest's quiet lanes very difficult. We warmly welcome initiatives that get people out of their cars on a regular basis, whether for local journeys or quiet enjoyment of the Forest, and cyclists and horse riders have strong common interests in road safety. But commercial sportives are specifically designed to avoid any form of authorisation or control.

"We believe that the priority for investment in cycling should be getting local people out of their cars on a regular basis, ahead of initiatives to attract increasing numbers of tourists onto Forest roads. Improved signage of commuter cycle routes and reduced road speed limits would be welcome improvements that help us all."

Further Information: Tony Hockley 07768 237389 chairman@nfea.org.uk

Notes for Editors:

The NFEA was formed in 1993 as the representative of horse riders within the unique circumstances of the New Forest. It is independent and funded entirely by its members, and is run by an elected committee. It played a major role in the development of the Forestry Commission's New Forest Code for Horse Riding.

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