

Brewin Dolphin New Forest Sportive Saturday 1st July 2017

Hugh Marchant, Sway Parish Councillor – 14nd July 2017

Highlights:

Pros:

1. Around 1,000 participants
2. Most wearing numbers on backs
3. Smaller groups
4. Field more spread out
5. Wooden stakes used for signage

Cons:

1. Lack of advance communication with councils, residents and businesses
2. Inadequate marshalling
3. 1 in 6 cyclists not displaying rear number clearly

Details:

I drove the 45 miles from Gang Warily to Fordingbridge beginning around 10:30am as the first participant approached the finish line. This enabled me to encounter almost the entire field, although I would have missed a few at the feed stops.

I counted 1,014 cyclists (ignoring those clearly not part of the event). This higher than predicted figure may well be due to the presence of a small number of non-participants within some of the groups. The majority of cyclists were wearing numbers on their backs which was a welcome improvement.

However:

Over the 45 miles I counted just 4 Marshalls (not including those at feed stops). One of these was sitting in his vehicle rather than actively marshalling. Those I observed were:

Junction of Lodge Lane (Bucklers Hard Rd) and B3054



Maybe(?) one at Shirley Holmes junction with the A337 but he was sitting in the blue ford fiesta on the left here partially blocking the road:



One at the junction of Marks Lane and the B3055



And one where Ornamental Drive crosses the A35:



This is woefully inadequate. There needs to be one marshal at **every** junction where cyclists cross, turn onto or turn off a busy major road. There also needs to be one at each pinch point where two-way traffic is present.

There was the usual unfortunate cycling madness along Shirley Holmes – this group of 8 hogging the entire width of road:



And soon after this, several cyclists bombing down the hill over the cattle grid and round the bend with no thought of others using the road. The road has a 40 mph speed limit and if they had met anyone doing 40, it would have been disaster. I had to stop for the group shown above, and fortunately was only doing 15 mph when I encountered the others.

The lack of any marshal on Bashley Common Rd at the junction with Marks Lane meant several cyclists missed the turn – highly dangerous if car drivers coming out of Marks Lane were to assume they would be turning.

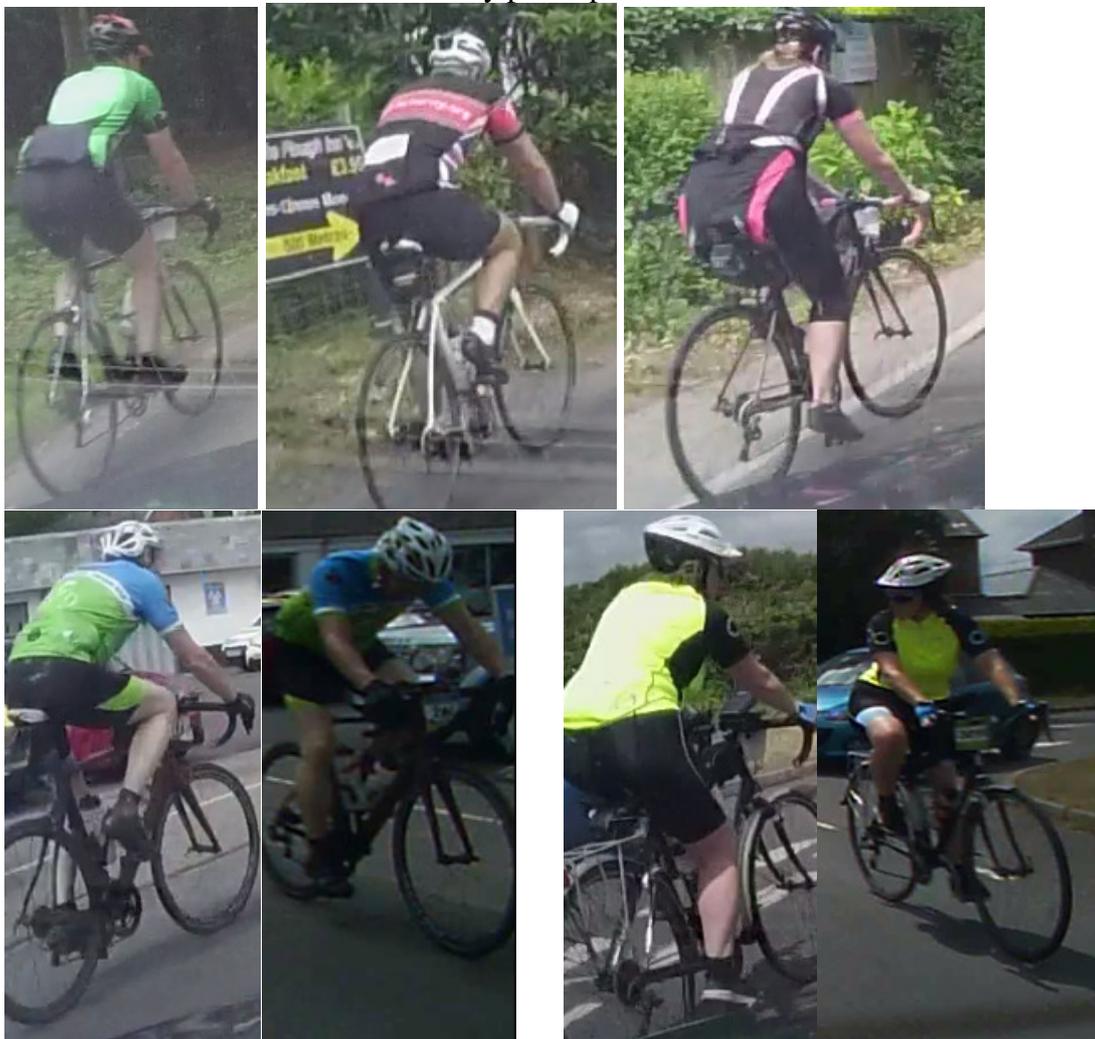


Judging from her hand signal, the last person in this group possibly realised her error!

While I heartily agree with the need for a temporary reduction in speed limit on main roads like A337 and A35, I would like to be assured that these were in fact provided through official channels with authorised temporary traffic orders. The suspicion in the past has been that such signs may well have been placed there unofficially, which would make it very problematic in the event of any incident:



The numbers displayed on the backs of cyclists was a welcome sight. However over 150 (nearly 1 in 6) were either not wearing their number, or it was obscured by a backpack. In at least one case (the middle picture below) the number was there but had folded in half making it impossible to read. All those I counted had their numbers on their handlebars and were definitely participants in this event.



Overall summary:

I believe that this event resulted in fairly minimal disruption to Sway

We were fortunate enough this time to be located towards the end of the event hence there were far smaller groups of cyclists. We were also well beyond those points where the three routes split and recombined hence the field was much better spaced out. At previous events I had observed many groups of more than a dozen cyclists hogging the road. With the field spread out so much more and the smaller number of cyclists in total, the largest group I observed was 8. Most of the time I encountered individual cyclists or much smaller groups of 3 or 4 maximum. Those parishes closer to the start may well have seen larger groups and potentially more congestion.

Recommendations:

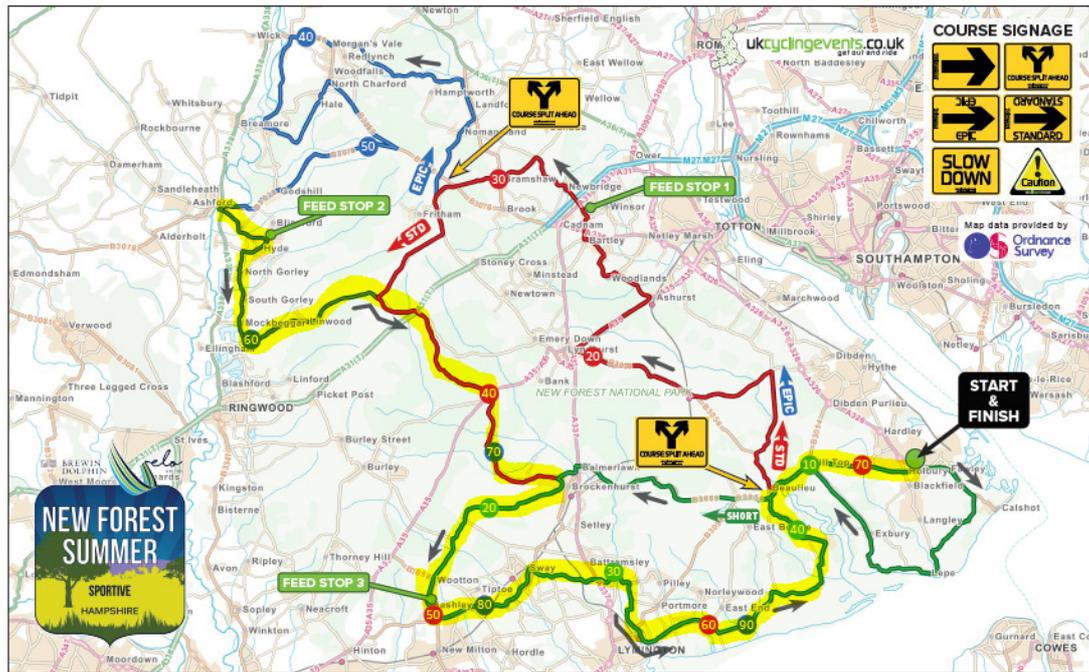
UK Cycling Events should be congratulated on coming closer to complying with the New Forest Cycle Event Organisers' charter. I hope their Wiggle event in September will improve on this by also taking the opportunity to consult with Sway and other Parish Councils prior to finalising the route for that event.

However, I believe that the charter itself is not stringent enough and needs to be revised for the safety of participants and other road users. My recommendations for improvement are:

- 1 – Require marshals at all busy junctions and pinch points.
- 2 – No groups of more than 6 cyclists.
- 3 – Ensure participants fully comply with wearing numbers on their backs
- 4 – Reduce the maximum number of participants to 500.

In addition, temporary speed restrictions of no greater than 30 mph should be considered on roads affected by such large events. Indeed, along narrower lanes, I rarely exceeded 20 mph knowing that around the next corner there could well be a group of cyclists across my side of the road.

Event map showing my route from Holbury to Fordingbridge highlighted in yellow.



COURSE MAP

BREWIN DOLPHIN NEW FOREST SUMMER
SATURDAY 1ST JULY 2017

EVENT VENUE
Gang Warly Recreation Centre
Newlands Road
Fawley, Southampton
SO45 1GA

ROUTE DISTANCES
Epic: 99 miles
Standard: 71 miles
Short: 45 miles

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES: 07961 063 100
MECHANICAL ASSISTANCE: 07854 081 972
Note: All Riders must return or call the event centre before 5:00pm and report to a member of the UK Cycling Events Team.