

Pedestrians now need to make an appointment to visit the waste site.

Written by A. Cyclist

Wednesday, 21 October 2009 17:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 22 October 2009 09:04

Somewhat bemused by the strange announcement that pedestrians would now need 'to make a telephoned appointment' to visit the waste site in Little Marcle Road, I took some old batteries there today on my bicycle to see what happened.

No problems with a bike, it seems. Logical in some ways since the bicycle has been defined as a 'vehicle' in all highways legislation since 1835. Illogical in others since this has been brought in as a 'safety measure' - presumably to prevent pedestrians being knocked over by vehicles. Am I any safer from such mishaps as a cyclist, or walking along narrow and pavement-less Albert Road (which is the route I take to get there)? I'll leave that for the reader to decide.

It's easy to carry small items on a bike, but large or heavy ones would be a problem. One could use a trailer, but it would have to be under 1.3m long to avoid the need for a permit...

Several months ago, I was challenged when pushing a wheelbarrow. My attention was drawn to the 'No Pedestrians' sign among the plethora of notices to the left of the gate. I pointed out that if I had come by car, as soon as I had got out of the car, I would have become a pedestrian. The attendant said that I would be getting out onto a designated walkway, and so would have been 'safe'. Fine on the higher part by the main skips, but there is no such marked-out area near the bottle and battery containers at the bottom of the site. Also, what if I had been driving a left-hand drive car, or removing items through the left-side doors of my car? All good-natured banter, and I was allowed onsite to discard two bags of lawn clippings.

This recent 'change' has come about following a memo dated 7th October sent by Worcestershire County Council (who operates the Herefordshire sites as well) to all waste site managers. It recognises there are some people 'without access to a vehicle', and says they must now telephone in advance (**01531 635615**) of their visit. You will be met at the gate and waste taken from you, but you will not be allowed on site. As the site attendant said today, presumably it would be OK for him to be run over, but not me! I suggested that he might be covered by his employer's insurance but I might not have been - doesn't Worcestershire County Council have public liability insurance? Perhaps it does, but with an exclusion clause for the public on foot. Anyway, if a pedestrian is knocked down by a vehicle, wouldn't their argument be with the driver of that vehicle, not the site owner? The presence of 'No Pedestrian' signs would let the driver off the hook by claiming 'contributory negligence' against the injured person who disregarded those signs.

If you consider the memo wording carefully, you will not theoretically be allowed to take rubbish to the site if you **do** own a vehicle but choose not to use it because you live close enough. Not a very green attitude, methinks... Or is the real reason that they want to stop people wheelbarrowing waste from vans parked outside - ie. avoiding the permit nonsense? I can understand people wanting to do this anyhow since the queues of vehicles are often ridiculously long. It only needs one badly parked Chelsea tractor (as I witnessed today) to prevent others from using the slip road to leave the site.

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Although it costs the council to provide the recycling facility, it would cost it a lot more in landfill taxes if it didn't. Putting such impediments in the way is bound to encourage fly-tipping, or putting items that should be disposed of properly but are not welcome in the wheelie bins (eg. batteries and failed so-called 'low energy' light bulbs) in the ordinary black bags.

All the rules are laid out on Worcestershire County Council's [website](#) .

Meanwhile, I wonder what other forms of 'transport' would be allowed in - pogo sticks, for instance? It seems that if your feet don't touch the ground until you're on a 'designated walkway', you'll be OK. Time for bed said Zebedee...