

## Rolls Royce – Ebike article

Hi, I'm Lynette and I work in the services area in Defence.

I have struggled with my weight for years and I was unfortunately diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in my twenties.

Since my diagnosis I have tried to eat well and exercise. My main exercise has been running which I still enjoy. However, my husband loves cycling and I decided to buy a bike on the cycle scheme last year with a view to being a bit greener and leaving the car at home more.

I do enjoy cycling and in the past year have managed to increase my mileage, but here in Bristol we do have a lot of hills – my power to weight ratio isn't that great and I found it really difficult to adapt to longer rides.

I have been trying to commute on my bike over the past few months but due to the distance (11 miles each way) I was struggling physically to do that sort of distance each day. When there was an announcement from the Council that there would be some major roadworks pending for nearly a year on my route to work, I wondered how I was going to build up my stamina or resign myself to a long wait in queues every morning in the car.....

Fortunately, we were very lucky to have a sustainable commuting day here in Bristol. We had several bike companies bring not only some lovely road bikes but we could try out the latest ebikes that were available.

If you are not aware an ebike is very simply a push bike that is assisted with an electric motor with a rechargeable battery. There are several different types of motors and different types of assistance but the premise is the bike detects how hard you are pedalling and gives you the right level of assistance. For example; if you are on the flat and going a little faster the motor will give you minimal assistance but try and keep your speed up to 15.5 MPH. If you are cycling uphill the motor will sense this and give you more of a boost – you can fly up the hills! You can control the assistance by the amount of effort you put on the pedals.

You don't need to pay any tax on these vehicles if they are restricted to 250 watts and do not go over 15.5 MPH. Apart from the initial outlay for the bike it is a very cheap way of commuting.

Once I tried one of the ebikes everything clicked into place. The bike really has changed how far I ride and I can commute to work every day easily. We are very fortunate in Bristol to have a good cycle infrastructure with a lot of excellent cycle lanes. I have found that you can find some great traffic free cycle paths that you never knew existed! Websites such as Cycle Streets are great for finding cycle paths.

One of the main benefits of the ebike is that I don't really need to wear any cycling specific clothing apart from a helmet and a good lock. I invested in a bright jacket so I am more visible in the dark and some luggage just in case I want to have a shower or take my laptop home. A lot of the ebikes come with mudguards, lights and luggage racks, so I have now started to use the ebike when I need to do a bit of shopping – the car stays at home a lot more these days!

A bonus that I just didn't realise is that it takes me a similar time to get into work as in the car and its costs next to nothing to charge the battery (I charge mine once a week) – I am saving about £100 a month in fuel costs.

If you don't feel you can manage to do your daily commute on an ordinary bike then it is worth considering an ebike. I can keep up (and pass) my husband now and 30 mile rides are no longer daunting. It's like that wonderful feeling you had when you were a kid – effortless riding.....