

An open letter from CycleWilmslow,

To Wilmslow road users,

In the space of a week in September, two cyclists have been fatally injured in collisions with motor vehicles in our local area. The latest, a Wilmslow resident, was knocked off her bike on Manchester Road. The wrecked bicycle was dragged by the driver into Handforth town centre.

This same stretch of highway saw a cyclist lose her life in 2012.

Manchester Road forms an important link between Wilmslow and Handforth and the villages and towns beyond. It is used frequently by cyclists of all ages and riding experience, including children. Yet it is also a road that, on the latest CycleWilmslow map showing local cycle routes, bears the label "Cycle Lane upgrade due 2022".

For several years, CycleWilmslow has quietly, but persistently campaigned for upgrades to Manchester Road. Despite repeated assurances from Cheshire East Council, the promised mandatory cycle lanes, traffic segregation and regulatory enforcement needed to put an end to the misuse of the cycle lanes for car parking, have yet to materialise.

It is not just Manchester Road. Nor is it just motor vehicles.

On-road cycle paths are let down by infrequent maintenance and are left to decay and accumulate natural and man-made debris. Although they have their place, "shared" footpaths put cyclists in conflict with pedestrians and are too often seen as the easy solution. Purpose-made off-road cycle lanes are reduced to one-way travel by outgrowths and neglected greenery.

All of this is the result of chronic underfunding and, in our view, a dispiriting lack of vision and ambition in local government and national government.

As a community group whose aims are to encourage cycling, represent cyclists' concerns and campaign for better cycling provision, Cycle Wilmslow cannot allow this to continue. Please join us or work alongside us in putting pressure on those who have the power to deliver the high quality and safe cycle routes that Wilmslow's road users deserve. Write to your town and local authority councillors, as well as our MP.

Our thoughts go out to the families and friends of those who lost their lives.

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