From Dr Hazel Dawe, 53 Bulan Road, Oxford OX3 7HU

Tel: 07944 471083

Dear Editor

I am shocked at the death of a cyclist at the Headley Way junction in Headington. My sympathy to her family at this difficult time.  This cyclist fatality demonstrates that our highways engineers do not understand how to engineer safe cycling. This is the third death in Headington since the Access to Headington works were completed.  I work in Headington and live on the Headington/ Cowley boundary. These are routes which I cycle frequently. These collisions do not fill me with confidence.

The council’s Access to Headington scheme was supposed to make the area around the hospital safer for cyclists. However, as usual only half measures were taken. At the Headley Way junction, the only improvement was a painted cycle lane to make drivers more aware of cyclists. No additional space was allocated to cyclists, no extra time for cyclists was programmed into the traffic light cycle.

I have been lobbying the Council for cycle safety improvements to the Old Road/ Windmill Road crossroads since 21st August 2020 and to the Corner House roundabout since 19th December 2020(1).

The Council refuse to accept that there is a safety issue at Old Road because their own safety audit did not identify it. However, I challenge their safety auditors to try and use the cycle lane as painted. They will find that there is a long green light phase for motorists about to turn left. During this time cyclists on the cycle lane who wish to go straight ahead are blocking the left turn lane and are in the way of the motorists trying to turn left. The first time I tried to use this cycle lane I was hooted at by impatient motorists This cycle lane creates conflict between motorists and cyclists.

The Council claims that the Cornerhouse roundabout will be safer once the, oft postponed, Hollow Way bus gate is installed. However, the bus gate  could make the roundabout more dangerous as it reduces traffic filtering into the stream of traffic between Horspath Driftway and The Slade.

When will we finally get engineers who understand how to make cycling safe in Oxford?

Yours faithfully

Hazel Dawe, Cyclox champion and Cowley Area Transport  Group

Notes:

1.       Both dates can be verified on the ‘fix my street’ web site.