

PAUL BARTLETT'S STATEMENT
KCC Councillor Ashford Central

I will speak about the recent injury record on the section of the A28 including and between the Tank and Matalan roundabouts. In total Recently, there have been 5 damage only, 18 injury collisions, including one serious injury. There seems to be a common theme of rear end shunts and vehicles not giving way to motorcyclists and cyclists. The 4 damage only are regretful but I wanted to draw to your attention the number of injuries, particularly to pedestrians and cyclists – 19 in total, one every 10 weeks, I don't need to explain to you the impact on those injured, I know that we can take it as read but they can have serious repercussions on quality of life and the ability of those effected to enjoy their lives and work for a living.

I am a regular cycle user the area, cycling along and across Chart Road from my home to Godinton and Repton to discharge my duties as the County Councillor for the area. The data I will use covers the three years to 30th September 2024.

Before turning to the injuries, I did just want to touch on the damage only incidences. Most were vehicles (HGVs in half of the cases) making incorrect turns or pulling out into traffic (so called “merging conflicts”). At least one of these (in January 2024) resulted in a physical assault, road rage, following a dispute about merging off of the Matalan Roundabout. These road rages can have a long-lasting effect on the victims including their ability to continue driving.

I am not going to list each of the injuries that effected drivers – I wanted to concentrate on cyclists – but I did want to give you a flavour of the types of injuries which arise from vehicles entering pulling in front of other vehicles often these are when two lanes go into one as drivers are eager to get to the front of a queue, these issues would not of course arise if the whole road was dualled. I did also want to say that one of these in October 2022 involved an unmarked police vehicle attempting to catch up with a suspect vehicle causing a loss of control and a second collision with the opposite kerb.

Before talking about cyclist and pedestrian injuries, I did want to point out that three of the vehicle crashes involved motorcycles. One in January 2023 and one in January 2024 knocked the motorcyclist off of their motorbikes; in the second event the offending car drove off without stopping. The other motorcyclist was fortunately at slow speed when a recovery truck with a car on the back collided with the rear of a motorbike.

Anyway, on to the effect on cyclists. The most serious injury was in June 2024 when a cyclist entered the carriageway to cross the A28 into the path of a car which hit them. There were less serious injuries but also from cyclists and pedestrians crossing the road when vehicles travelling at speed failed to look and avoid them. One pedestrian was wanting to cross Chart Road who was waved across by a driver, however a second vehicle was travelling in the second lane and collided with the pedestrian.

The other major issue for cyclist is at the Matalan roundabout. One cyclist in November 2022 was rear ended drove off, one in August 2023 involved a car exiting the access to Imperium Pest Control pulled out and collided with the cyclist. The final case I wanted to highlight was in November 2023 when a vehicle travelling from the direction of the Matalan Roundabout entered the roundabout, colliding with a cyclist and knocking them off of their bike, then drove off.

My point is that the road as currently designed is dangerous. The upgrading work is designed to deal with this creating safe crossing point and additional capacity on the new dual carriageway to allow safe passage for cyclist and pedestrian crossing points at Matalan roundabout and Loudon Way / Chart Road traffic signals and continuous shared footway / cycleways on both sides of Chart Road.