

REGENERATION • RECREATION • RECYCLING



Andrew

**BENTLEY**

DOUGLAS BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTION  
THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2021  
DOUGLAS EAST WARD



# About me

My name is Andrew Bentley. I am an Architect, Chairman of the Isle of Man Green Party and since August 2018 Douglas Council member for Derby Ward. In my three years as a Councillor, I have championed safer streets, parking management through the planning system, recycling, regeneration, children's wellbeing, action on climate change and inclusivity.

With the rearrangement of Douglas Council's electoral wards I am now standing in the new Douglas East ward in the local elections on the 22nd July. I hope to pursue these same causes over the next four years alongside fellow Douglas East candidate Councillor Devon Watson with whom I have had a very productive working relationship.

## Our Streets and Parking

The residential streets of inner Douglas are where people live and should not be used as shortcuts for out-of-town commuters rushing to get to and from work. I have repeatedly called for the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the residential streets of inner Douglas to provide a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists, pets, wingmirrors and for parents to allow their children the freedom many of us enjoyed as children. Such schemes have been common in the UK and one is now under consideration in the vicinity of Ballakermeen school.

I was the only Councillor to vote against the changes to parking in Nobles Park including the introduction of pay & display as I felt the use of parking discs to be a more proportionate response to the abandoned vehicle issues. This parking charge could push cars into the surrounding streets to the detriment of the area and annoyance of the residents. The situation must be monitored and reversed should problems arise.

The subdivision of large houses into flats or conversion into Houses in Multiple Occupation disproportionately impacts the availability of parking in the densely populated areas of the town. I have called for the Department of Infrastructure's forthcoming parking strategy to limit the number of parking permits available to new planning applications to mitigate their potential impact on parking.



# Regeneration

Douglas has little public space in the town centre. I support pedestrianisation on North Quay, especially between St Matthew's Church and the Old Market Hall. I would like to see some of the town's smaller streets used for outdoor cafes such as Nelson Street and Chapel Row if supported by the local businesses.

Consideration should be given to pedestrianising parts of Victoria Street. This wide handsome street should be our premier public space uniting the two sides of Duke Street, not a busy traffic thoroughfare dividing the town centre in two.

We need to encourage more uses of the town centre to attract more people and to get them to stay there for longer. The sunken gardens have fantastic potential for additional sporting, leisure and cultural use.

As part of the Environment & Services Committee we have supported the Council of Ministers directive to refuse planning permission for temporary car parks on empty sites. These empty wasteland sites are a blight on our Island's capital and their use as car parking provides an incentive not to redevelop, while offering no benefit to the residents of inner Douglas.

As part of the Council's Environment & Services Committee we have pushed for the Council to use its flat registration powers to insist that new flat and HMO developments contain fit-for-purpose bicycle storage as part of the planning process, thus giving residents an alternative transport option.

Together with Councillor Devon Watson, I have campaigned for the Government to experiment with fare free bus travel as being trialled in many European cities. Such experiments are shown to have reduced traffic and demand on parking.

A foreseeable problem for the coming years will be the absence of electric car charging points. As EVs become more and more common it is important that the residents of inner Douglas without off street parking do not get left behind.

The parking and traffic problems of Douglas are far from unique, and we must look to examples around the world to find solutions. The only practical way to solve the parking issues is to reduce our dependence on the private motor vehicle, we simply cannot create parking space by magic. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, cycle storage, better public transport and improved pavements are all part of this vision.



# Waste and Recycling

The need to increase recycling rates is both a financial and environmental matter. The disposal of the residual “black bin” waste costed the council over £900,000 in 20-21 and gate fees at the Energy from Waste Plant will continue to rise. Waste audits have shown 40% of all black bin waste could have been recycled using the council’s existing facilities.

Since joining the Council’s Environment & Services Committee I have insisted that bin storage be shown as part of planning applications including communal recycling bins for flat developments. Such bins stores will avoid bins being left as obstructions on the street and make recycling more convenient for flat residents.

# Wellbeing, Play and Recreation

The Isle of Man is blessed with the Isle of Play, a charity whose members are attuned to the world’s leading experts on children’s play and wellbeing. The Council should seek to progress its relationship with this charity and, should funds develop, provide space in Nobles Park for an area like the Lister’s Yard playground in South Douglas.

The planning system requires housing developments to provide a quantity of public open space. The council must insist that these spaces meet a minimum quality of play sufficiency in order to be adopted. The council needs to liaise with personal trainers, Public Health and Manx Sport and Recreation to find ways to make best use of our parks for exercise and wellbeing.

Nobles park is regularly subject to proposals by the Council, Department of Infrastructure, and the Department for Enterprise. I have regularly called for the Council to insist that the three parties draw up a masterplan that optimises traffic circulation during racing while ensuring that any development enhances the park and does not detract from its amenity during the rest of the year.

Without the holiday crowds of the past, the reintroduction of the carnival along Douglas Promenade was not particularly successful. I would like to see the effort and resources go into the Noble’s Park Family Fun Day which has been a far more successful event in recent years.

The Family Library is under threat from a lack of funding. Councillor Devon Watson and I campaigned for additional funding to keep this wonderful facility open. Should the additional funding cease, the Council’s HBN library should try to ensure that it provides a similar service within its own facility for the children and parents of Douglas.



# Climate Change and Biodiversity

Douglas manages the Local Government Pension Fund, of which 4.6% is invested in the fossil fuel industry. The decarbonising of the world's economies poses the risk of leaving the council with "stranded assets" and I have opposed the fossil fuel investments on both ethical and financial grounds and will continue to seek a full divestment in line with many other councils and governments around the world.

The Council's carbon footprint has been established by the Carbon Trust. The process of decarbonising can no longer be kicked into the long grass, we must take concrete steps to reduce our emissions to zero by 2050 in accordance with the Climate Change Act.

The Council's biggest source of emissions is its 2,200 houses and flats. The council needs to seek additional funding from the Department of Infrastructure and Treasury to upgrade some of the oldest housing stock on the Island to reduce carbon emissions and to fight fuel poverty.

I have supported the Council's Plan Bee programme to provide pollinating plants within the town's verges and adopted land.

## Equality, Inclusivity and Accessibility

For many Douglas residents the pavements are a barrier to movement. Councillor Devon Watson and I recently lobbied the Department of Infrastructure for more dropped kerbs in the Derby Road area which have begun to appear in Melbourne Street and Glen Falcon Road. The Department intend to extend this programme up Ballaquayle Road.



I would like to see more consideration given to families in the arrangement of park benches, the traditional line of benches does little to encourage communication and interaction.

The Council's Town Centre Management has "soft power" through its social media presence. I would like to see town centre businesses celebrated when they make changes to promote accessibility such as the 2019 campaign I organised with Manx Blind Welfare to promote large print menus in the town's cafes and restaurants.




***Please VOTE for***

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