

**“I will strive to make Douglas East the best  
place to live, work and play”**

*Clare*



**VOTE BETTISON** 

Douglas East – General Election – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016

## My Background

I am proud to be a resident of Douglas East and it would be my privilege to represent our constituency in the House of Keys. I will bring a fresh viewpoint to politics on the Isle of Man and would love to be given the opportunity to represent you; the people of Douglas East.

I am a 32-year-old registered nurse who has worked at Noble's Hospital for nearly nine years. I enjoyed spending every summer on the Isle of Man as a child before moving here when I completed my nurse training. The Island is my home and since moving to Grafton Street in 2007, I have fully immersed myself in Manx life and culture.

I am looking forward to meeting as many people as possible in Douglas East during the campaign and discussing the issues that you believe are important. If you would like to contact me, please use the details below:

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## **My Commitment to Douglas East**

I am committed to using my abilities to help others recognise the needs of this constituency, because I know that a vibrant community is about lots of people working together for a common goal. If there are issues that can't be resolved, I will always be honest with residents – and provide comprehensive reasoning.

I can see that in politics policies will change as new challenges present themselves and I'm keen to develop my policies through ongoing consultation. If elected, I will liaise closely with constituents, local businesses and organisations, charities and national agencies to ensure that I can represent you as effectively and efficiently as possible. I will:

- ❖ Engage with the electorate to ensure that all residents have a voice in the House of Keys.
- ❖ Support positive policies for the people of Douglas East, while opposing those that give no benefit to this constituency or our Island as a whole.
- ❖ Work with the right people to develop clear strategy for sustained growth in our economy while planning for situations beyond our control.
- ❖ Drive for the highest standards of education with more focus on extracurricular and vocational learning.
- ❖ Improve health and care services in problem areas and support changes that focus on real outcomes.
- ❖ Champion the needs of young people across Douglas East.
- ❖ Fight to maintain a visible police presence.
- ❖ Promote Douglas East as an ideal place to live, work and play – overseeing the completion of regeneration works, while avoiding unnecessary overspending.
- ❖ Only support development that is sustainable, is appropriate, and contributes to improving our infrastructure.

**At the forefront of any strategic planning and policy formation is a sustainable and strong economy.**

We must aim for continued growth in our economy while planning for those situations beyond our control, such as the UK's decision to withdraw from the European Union. I believe this is a great opportunity for us to develop trade agreements, while retaining strong links with our UK counterparts to ensure we always negotiate the best deals for our Island. I believe that a rôle of 'International Ambassador' should be created with the key responsibility of strengthening our international links and focussing on inward investment.

It is also important that we prevent the excuse of being an island community as a means of justifying heightened prices. This can be done through stricter regulation and closer monitoring of companies with virtual monopolies – such as the Steam Packet and the Manx Utilities Authority.

The private sector is crucial to growth – we need to encourage new and existing companies to register here for tax purposes. This would benefit both the companies and the Island and could encourage companies to locate their head offices here; bringing employment, tax income, spending power, as well as raising the business profile of the Island on an international stage.

We should look at the opportunities available to us to expand growth within a broad range of sectors, thereby reducing the risk associated with having 'all our eggs in one basket'. I believe that tourism and manufacturing are two key areas that warrant further investigation. Our tourist industry shows great potential for growth, but is constrained by high travel costs. A recent audit by The Tourism Alliance showed that an increase of 1% in holiday costs, led to a corresponding 1.3% fall in tourism revenues. It is essential that we make the Isle of Man both appealing and accessible.

It is vital that we continue to offer favourable conditions for new and established companies looking to locate here. I would support an internship programme whereby every company with a staff level over 50 undertakes to recruit at least five percent of their workforce from Manx educated school leavers. This would develop our on-Island knowledge, prevent students needing to leave the Island for training and education, and assist companies in fulfilling their corporate responsibility.

### **Every community can be judged on how it treats its most vulnerable people.**

The Department of Health and Social Care encompasses a large variety of services and it is imperative that there is a cohesive approach to care across the Island. Our health service does not stop at Noble's Hospital - we must make the patient experience as stress-free as possible. My first-hand experience within the health service has given me unique insight into the struggle we face.

We have a bed crisis. Although there are often enough beds, medical patients are being cared for on surgical wards where the staff are less familiar with their conditions and patients' teams of doctors are not always on hand - this needs to be addressed urgently. I believe that non-acute services should be transferred to facilities outside the main hospital body, freeing up space to create two new acute medical wards, with one specialising in rehabilitation and reablement.

We have state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, yet we don't always have enough specialist staff on hand to utilise this to its full capacity. I would like to review the services we provide and identify whether a strategy of becoming a regional specialist centre for certain disciplines would be viable. This would require renegotiation of the UK agreement to care for other conditions off-Island. We could then take UK patients on waiting lists for these specialties; meaning our staff would gain the necessary exposure to maintain their knowledge and skills and assist us to attract new staff with a desire to work in a Centre of Excellence.

We are fortunate to have excellent facilities run as a charitable concern with government funding - such as the Hyperbaric Chamber. We must work with facilities such as this to ensure adequate funding and protection of services.

I would like to see the abortion legislation brought into line with the UK as a matter of urgency.

As an Island, we have a duty of care to people with mental health issues. The promotion of good mental health for our residents will, in turn, impact upon physical health and improve quality of life. It is vital that we ensure comprehensive mental health services for all Island residents in need.

## Pensions

It is vital we encourage young people to stay on our Island through extended education programmes, apprenticeships, and internships with a natural progression to sustainable employment. We must maintain a balance of contributors and beneficiaries within our pension schemes to ensure longevity.

While review of state and public service pension schemes is inevitable, it is wholly inappropriate to modify entitlements when people have been in the system their whole life. These changes should be made for those joining pension schemes who have the opportunity to save according to the terms. I would propose pension protection for those within 10 years of retirement age, to prevent people withdrawing from the pension scheme altogether in turn losing experience, knowledge and income.

I would like to see the introduction of a workplace pension scheme for all workers to allow people to invest in their future with the support of their employer. It is vital to find the right investment levels to ensure that the cost isn't prohibitive for small businesses.

While we must address the current pensions deficit, we must also plan for the future. **I believe we must ensure that students leave full-time education with a grounding in real-life financial skills** – this should include pension planning, mortgages, loans and budgeting.

## Law and Order

**It is vital we feel safe in our homes and in our towns.**

The Isle of Man continues to be a safe place to live, however, we must never take our security for granted. We must not allow the police force to be further reduced, we need a clear police presence, and they must have the resources to solve crimes. Crime is now at its lowest level since 1970, with an annual decrease in crime of 15 percent and an increase in detection rate, however we must not be complacent. Sufficient police numbers to effectively serve both Douglas East and the Island as a whole must be maintained, supplemented by schemes that allow voluntary support of police work.

In principle, I agree that we should monitor entry and exit via the main access points of the Isle of Man. This would allow us to not only build a clearer picture of Island resident numbers, but would prevent the use of the Island for tax evasion purposes and could assist our police in solving crimes. However, a clear cost/benefit analysis would be needed before this was undertaken.

**We must protect our education facilities as these are the foundations of a successful economy.**

We are very fortunate to have a world-class education system with excellent pass rates for GCSE and A Level students. I would like to see regular teaching sessions on life skills including first aid and financial awareness (pensions, mortgages, insurance and loans). We have a duty of care to ensure our future generations have a clear understanding of their finances, allowing them to make the best decisions for their future. I would like to see delivery of this education through a collaborative scheme incorporating public, private and charitable organisations.

While university education is no longer fully-funded for Island students, we must ensure that the costs do not prohibit students from furthering their careers and bringing vital skills back to the Island. I believe the Government should consider offering fully-funded university places to students studying subjects that we have a recognised need for. In return those students would undertake to return to the Island and work within that sector for three years post-graduation, or repay the cost of their education on a pro-rata basis. For those subjects where there is a less identifiable need, I would offer a funded programme wherein student repayments are fund-matched by the Government over a four year period as long as the student returns and contributes to Manx taxation. This would encourage students to start their careers on the Island in sectors where we have a clear demand for skills and knowledge.

Those who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS) must be supported into the employment market. I believe that if, after a given period of time, people remain in this category, there should be a requirement to attend compulsory training/work experience for the equivalent of full-time hours to obtain their benefit entitlement. We must not tolerate misuse of the benefits system.

I would liaise with Douglas Borough Council and Douglas Development Partnership to continue to provide events and facilities for school age children and young adults. We must ensure facilities at the National Sports Centre are well maintained to promote our thriving national sports reputation. Sports scholarship programmes are vital, success in sports should not be dictated by ability to pay.

## Travel

### **The Steam Packet terms of contract need readdressing to ensure a fair deal for local residents.**

I would support negotiations to secure a residents' rate for use of the Steam Packet. It is vital that costs are affordable for residents, tourists and freight. The Steam Packet User Agreement should benefit the Island, rather than be a key factor in preventing growth.

Frequent, timely air travel to a range of destinations is vital if we want to attract more business to the Island. We must facilitate ease of access to Ronaldsway and work with airline operators to maintain high standards. The situation has improved but there is still work to be done to ensure that our routes for access and egress are fairly priced and operating on time. I feel that heavier penalties for missed flight slots may serve as an incentive for carriers to achieve their stated departure times.

I would be keen to see the local travel operators working with festivals/hotels/the tourist board to offer comprehensive packages that allow people to explore our beautiful Island. We must identify ways to diversify our tourist industry to increase revenue.

## Government

I believe that we must be clear in the remit of all MHKs and we should aim for smaller, streamlined government where practicable. We must recognise that every area of the Isle of Man is unique with specific challenges and we need MHKs who understand this. An example of an efficiency that could be made would be instead of every candidate in an election having their manifesto posted to every elector (at public expense), surely it would be more cost effective for every candidates' manifesto to be posted out together from a central point in one envelope per elector. To demonstrate my commitment to this, **I propose to hand-deliver, or where necessary, pay out of my own pocket for the postage of my manifestos for this election.**

The public have the right to a fully accountable government; We have an opportunity for implementing change with many clear suggestions outlined in Lord Lisvane's report. I had previously felt that the Legislative Council should be directly elected, however, I feel that Lord Lisvane's suggestion of a Nominations Commission would encourage the necessary diversity, while avoiding, 'jobs for the boys'. We do not need the multiple tiers of government that we currently have – by reducing the size of government we can steer this money to our frontline services.



**I am supportive of ongoing projects to harness our natural resources to create energy.**

It is vital that we reduce our impact on the planet by supporting schemes that identify, promote and utilise naturally occurring resources such as wind, tidal and solar energy. I would also support financial assistance and planning waivers for those installing green energy solutions. This could include microgeneration of power with feed-in arrangements and tariffs so that excess electricity generated is not wasted and can be sold back to Manx Utilities Authority. This will help to make the Island self-sufficient in power.

We must ensure a good public transport infrastructure to promote reduction in pollution. We must invest in public service vehicles to take advantage of zero-emission technology to keep our air clean and fresh.

It is vital that we keep our waters clean, this is our legacy to future generations and we cannot afford to cut corners. How much longer are we prepared to simply pour untreated sewage into the sea around our beautiful Island?! I would like all of our beaches to achieve 'Blue Flag' standard.

I am delighted to see the development of the Island Biodiversity strategy. We have a rich variety of plant and animal species that either inhabit our Island permanently or visit on a seasonal basis. We must protect the environments in which we find these species to ensure they remain for our future generations to enjoy.

I would love to see the current recycling scheme extended, with incentives for those participating in recycling, Island-wide. We must also find ways to reduce the waste we produce and reuse what we can so that we can improve our carbon footprint and save money at the same time.

The monthly Farmers' Market in Douglas East allows local residents to access a variety of high-quality produce while supporting our local community and reducing food miles. The 26 Great Taste awards that were won by Manx producers highlights the exceptional quality of our produce. Events such as the Isle of Man Food and Drink Festival are our opportunity to showcase our products to the world and invite distributors, to assist in the pairing of local producers and international sellers.

## Douglas Promenade

**Douglas Promenade is the heart of our Island and must be welcoming to both residents and visitors.**

We have a duty to our shopkeepers and customers to ease the access to local shops; this would also assist in keeping business here. We must increase parking in central Douglas, with additional echelon style parking on the shopping side of the promenade. I would also seek to identify a suitable location for a park-and-ride service to reduce the pressure on parking in the residential areas of Douglas East.

I am a big supporter of all our heritage transport - including the horse trams, but not in the manner they are currently operating. They must be run as an heritage facility and the frequency of services should be reduced, **they should not be running at peak traffic times.** I would reduce them to a single track with turning points at the end. I do not feel there is a need for more than one passing point. I would support a 10am-4pm seasonal service operating on a single track in the centre of the road with special events to showcase it as a unique attraction. In the longer term I do not believe that operations such as this fall into the remit of Government. There should be a concerted effort to seek a private operator or a charitable trust to continue the running of the Douglas Bay Horse Tram service.

## Voting

The Isle of Man has demonstrated its desire for political engagement by giving the vote to 16 and 17 year olds, however we must engage with voters of all ages and backgrounds. I have been dismayed at how many people within Douglas East were removed from the electoral roll; thereby losing their ability to influence decision-making and direct policy. Since the by-election last year there has been an increase in registered voters, but there is still work to be done. There is no question that people feel disenfranchised from our electoral system – many not registering to vote, and many not voting.

**If elected, I would like to see an Island-wide approach to engaging all citizens in the voting process.**



**I do not believe that we have gone far enough to solve residents' parking issues.**

Many of the houses in Douglas East were developed before people had cars, I believe that we must think of radical approaches to the parking crisis in Douglas East, without penalising local residents. One idea that needs further investigation is that of issuing each residential house with a booklet of parking vouchers each year allowing friends and family to park while visiting, without fear of penalty. I would support government subsidies and planning waivers for those willing to utilise their front/rear yards for parking where this does not impact on current parking infrastructure.

I would like to investigate the development of the Summerland site as a residential activity centre with climbing wall, abseiling, caving facility and a bridge linking to a controlled area for kayaking, windsurfing and other watersports on the sea. A developer's agreement ensuring the creation of a fully accessible memorial garden should be incorporated within any plans and, until completed, traffic should be diverted from the site for the duration of the annual service of remembrance.

We have many unused sites locally that are earmarked for redevelopment such as Victoria Road Prison, Park Road School, and Lord Street. Residents are, understandably, concerned about the pressures that planned development will place on local infrastructure, particularly parking. When areas are offered by the government as development opportunities to private contractors, we should stipulate that provision of certain necessary local facilities, including parking, are fundamental to the plans being approved and these would be fully-funded by the chosen developer.

Douglas East has many sites that, while representing the rich history of our constituency, are preventing the development of our future. However, the owners must not simply be allowed to wait for these sites to fall into disrepair, thereby avoiding the difficulties of planning consent; they must maintain the properties at an acceptable standard, and this must be enforced by the planning system. I propose a policy that allows the government to undertake necessary work on any property where the owners fail to do so, and place a charge on the property against the value of the work. Where appropriate, I would like to see these sites integrated into the Island Strategic Plan.

The election takes place on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016**  
Polling stations will be open between **8am and 8pm**

If you will be away for the election and wish to apply for an absent vote, please contact me on 257947 and I will assist you with this. This application form must be submitted by Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 for applications outside of the Isle of Man or Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September for applications within the Isle of Man.

**If you require a lift to the polling station, on polling day, please get in touch.**

| Ward                         | Polling Station Location                   |
|------------------------------|--|
| CDGE1 (formerly STRAND)      | Loch Prom Methodist Church, Loch Promenade |
| CDGE2 (formerly WINDSOR)     | iMuseum, Kingswood Grove                   |
| CDGE3 (formerly DERBY)       | Freemasons Hall, Woodbourne Square         |
| CDGE4 (formerly ST NINIAN'S) | Spiritualist Church, Lower Dukes Road      |
| CDGE5 (formerly TYNWALD)     | Loch Prom Methodist Church, Loch Promenade |

**BETTISON**

