# Isle of Man residents blame £26m oval roundabouts for chaos and safety fears on busiest roads



Frustration has reached a boiling point among residents of the Isle of Man over the newly implemented oval-shaped roundabouts, or "roundels," that were introduced as part of a £26 million revamp of the Douglas seafront. Locals have voiced their concerns, calling these roundabouts 'a tragedy waiting to happen' as they navigate the busy junctions connecting Broadway and Church Road Marina, the two most trafficked routes in the capital city.

Critics argue that the roundels lack a central island, leading motorists to treat them as mere stretches of road rather than properly marked junctions. This has resulted in chaotic traffic conditions, with drivers often speeding through the painted designs. A local business owner lamented the noise pollution and confusion, stating, "It's honking every day basically. People aren't sure what the rules are... It's a nightmare really." Such sentiments reflect a growing unease in the community regarding the effectiveness and safety of these designs.

Adding to the confusion, pedestrians have found themselves uncertain about right-of-way at these junctions, further contributing to the hazardous environment. The roundels, which were part of a broader initiative to promote a "low-speed environment" encompassing vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, have instead been met with scepticism. Observers have noted that the stated goals of traffic calming and improved safety appear to have backfired. As one concerned local put it, “It seems we always have to be different on this island, and that gets tiring after a while. Let’s make them deathtraps!”

This discontent takes place against a backdrop of the Isle of Man adopting a range of progressive policies, such as legalising medicinal cannabis and the recent passage of an assisted dying bill. The latter makes the Isle the first place in the British Isles to consider such legislation, although this has drawn considerable debate among residents. A young couple expressed their differing views on assisted dying, reflecting the complexities of the island's shifting identity. While some residents embrace the island’s newfound liberalism, others worry it may unintentionally brand the Isle of Man as a destination for "death tourism."

In August 2021, the Minister for Infrastructure asserted that motorists would adapt to the oval roundabout design, which purportedly aligns with modern highway practices. Yet, as feedback from the populace flows in, it becomes increasingly clear that these roundabouts are more confusing than intended. In a recent study, one of the roundels was even named among the UK’s most bewildering roads, highlighting just how problematic they have become.

As the local authorities defend the roundels as a necessary innovation, residents continue to question the rationale behind such a distinctive design. The mixed feelings surrounding these roundabouts encapsulate a broader sense of unease about the pace at which the Isle of Man is evolving, as it grapples with challenging yet potentially beneficial reforms. The juxtaposition of these controversies against a backdrop of significant social change illuminates a moment of tension in the island’s history—a tension expressed vividly through the everyday experience of its citizens navigating both the roads and their rapidly transforming society.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-08-27/controversial-oval-roundabout-to-open-to-motorists-in-the-isle-of-man)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.foxnews.com/auto/british-drivers-baffled-bizarre-roundabout)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-08-27/controversial-oval-roundabout-to-open-to-motorists-in-the-isle-of-man), [[7]](https://www.iomtoday.co.im/news/joke-isle-of-man-roundabout-named-on-list-of-uks-most-confusing-roads-639614)
5. Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-08-27/controversial-oval-roundabout-to-open-to-motorists-in-the-isle-of-man), [[3]](https://www.foxnews.com/auto/british-drivers-baffled-bizarre-roundabout)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.thenational.scot/news/19110080.boris-johnsons-isle-man-roundabout-plan-not-credible-top-architect-warns/), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-55245987)
7. Paragraph 7: [[3]](https://www.foxnews.com/auto/british-drivers-baffled-bizarre-roundabout), [[4]](https://www.thenational.scot/news/19110080.boris-johnsons-isle-man-roundabout-plan-not-credible-top-architect-warns/), [[7]](https://www.iomtoday.co.im/news/joke-isle-of-man-roundabout-named-on-list-of-uks-most-confusing-roads-639614)
8. Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-08-27/controversial-oval-roundabout-to-open-to-motorists-in-the-isle-of-man)

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## Bibliography

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687169/Is-WORST-roundabout-Despairing-residents-woke-Isle-Man-blast-crazy-painted-oval-roundel-introduced-26million-revamp-insist-deathtrap.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-08-27/controversial-oval-roundabout-to-open-to-motorists-in-the-isle-of-man> - In August 2021, a new controversial roundabout, known as a 'roundel,' was set to open on the Douglas Promenade in the Isle of Man. Despite criticism of its design, the Minister for Infrastructure stated that motorists would 'soon get used to them' and that they were part of 'modern highway design.' The roundel was one of two new road features being installed as part of the Department of Infrastructure's £26 million refurbishment of the Douglas Promenade. The design aimed to create a low-speed environment accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, horse trams, and vehicles. The roundel was scheduled to fully open to traffic on July 15, 2021. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2021-08-27/controversial-oval-roundabout-to-open-to-motorists-in-the-isle-of-man?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.foxnews.com/auto/british-drivers-baffled-bizarre-roundabout> - In 2021, drivers on the Isle of Man were puzzled by a new roundabout comprising concentric ovals in Douglas. The feature lacked a physical island or clearly defined lanes, leading to confusion among locals. The Department of Infrastructure described it as a 'roundel' and noted that it was located in a 20 mph zone, with similar designs used elsewhere as traffic calming features. The roundel was intended to be driven in the same way as any other roundabout. ([foxnews.com](https://www.foxnews.com/auto/british-drivers-baffled-bizarre-roundabout?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.thenational.scot/news/19110080.boris-johnsons-isle-man-roundabout-plan-not-credible-top-architect-warns/> - In 2021, Prime Minister Boris Johnson proposed a subterranean traffic roundabout beneath the Isle of Man to connect a network of tunnels between Scotland, Ireland, and England. The plan was met with skepticism, with critics questioning its credibility and feasibility. The proposal aimed to bolster transport links between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK post-Brexit. ([thenational.scot](https://www.thenational.scot/news/19110080.boris-johnsons-isle-man-roundabout-plan-not-credible-top-architect-warns/?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-55245987> - In 2020, plans to install speed bumps and cushions in Castletown, Isle of Man, to improve road safety were altered due to concerns from rally organizers. Manx Auto Sport raised safety issues regarding the impact of the proposed traffic calming measures on future rally events. The Department of Infrastructure adjusted the plans, removing two of the proposed features to address these concerns. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-55245987?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-55336800> - In 2020, the Isle of Man's government revised its traffic calming plans in Castletown after rally organizers expressed concerns about the impact on rally stages. The Department of Infrastructure removed two of the proposed traffic calming features to address these concerns, ensuring that major rally events could continue without disruption. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-55336800?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.iomtoday.co.im/news/joke-isle-of-man-roundabout-named-on-list-of-uks-most-confusing-roads-639614> - In September 2023, the Oval Roundabout in Douglas, Isle of Man, was named one of the UK's most confusing roads. The roundabout, known locally as one of the city's two 'roundels,' was described as 'one of the most bewildering rotaries' by car company Cinch. The design has been a subject of criticism since its introduction, with visitors finding it difficult to navigate. ([iomtoday.co.im](https://www.iomtoday.co.im/news/joke-isle-of-man-roundabout-named-on-list-of-uks-most-confusing-roads-639614?utm_source=openai))