PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

2nd Meeting, 2006 (Session 2)

Monday 30 January 2006

The Committee will consider the following new petitions—

PE908 Petition by Connie M Syme calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that traffic regulation orders are applied to all disabled parking bays to ensure that they are used by registered disabled users only.

PE909 Petition by James MacLeod, on behalf of Inverclyde Council on Disability Ltd., calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations to allow for speedier provision and enforcement of dropped kerbs and disabled parking bays to prevent their abuse, ensuring greater and easier access for disabled, elderly and other users.

PE920 Petition by Helen Smith calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to commit further resources to the provision of NHS dentistry, in particular for the recruitment of NHS salaried dentists to provide emergency and comprehensive care and for the provision of dedicated NHS dentistry facilities.

PE922 Petition by Peter Thomson calling on the Scottish Parliament to look at implementing a different model to the current plan to ensure that NHS dentistry is available in remote and rural areas in the medium to long term.

PE921 Petition by Rev. Ross Brown calling for the Scottish parliament to urge the Scottish Executive not to increase the tolls on the Forth Road Bridge.
Petition by Ben Conway calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to promote pastoral and spiritual care in hospitals to ensure that the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients are properly addressed.
Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

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Details of principal petitioner:
Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to.

Mrs Connie M Syme

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.

The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

Petition by Connie M Syme calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that traffic regulation orders are applied to all disabled parking bays to ensure that they are used by registered disabled users only.

Period for gathering signatures:
Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks

Closing date:
**Additional information:**

*Please enter any other information relating to the issues raised in your e-petition, including the reasons why the action requested is necessary. The text entered in this field should not exceed 2 pages. However, you may wish to provide further sources/links to background information.*

Where disabled bays outlined in white are situated in a street where there are only houses, this appears to be quite adequate as neighbouring residents respect that it is essential to have a parking place for a disabled person right outside his/her house. It is an entirely different scenario where these bays are positioned in lay-bys shared by commercial/businesses and residents. In other words these lay-bys should have the same status as car parks.

On writing to The Scottish Executive for assistance, they gave the information that Local Authorities do have specific powers to make a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) which they can raise if they so wish, but it is at their discretion. I consider there is a loop hole in the system, if disabled bays not covered by TROs are situated in lay-bys which act as car parks for commercial areas adjoining residential areas on a shared basis.

The response I received on contacting our local authority was that they could not see the problem. They did not advise me what measures they had taken to arrive at that conclusion. It is obvious from my experience that disabled bays outlined in white situated in lay-bys sharing parking with commercial/businesses and residential properties and not covered by a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) are going to be abused by able bodied drivers as they see the white lining as only an advisory measure and know that no law covers them. If the commercial area is extremely busy and operates during day time and evenings, then this reduces the chance of a disabled driver gaining the designated disabled parking bay. From my own experience, many of the public have no regard for the disabled persons needs. On many occasions when returning with the weekly shopping, there is a vehicle not displaying the Blue Badge in the window, parked in the disabled space. It is very distressing to have to park the car well away from the house until the able bodied driver returns which could be quite a while. The shopping has to then remain in the car.

On taking this problem up with the Police, their comment was that disabled parking bays outlined in white without a Traffic Regulation Order are not covered by the law and therefore they could not take action with any unauthorised drivers abusing them. It was left to the disabled person to deal with the situation on their own.

From my own experience, it is very daunting having to tackle able bodied drivers who park in disabled parking bays and their replies can vary from anger to very abusive indeed, when requested to vacate the space as they have no Blue Badge showing. Recently that very situation happened and the police had to be involved due to the level of abuse. It is distressing enough to have uncalled for comments or even swearing from these inconsiderate drivers but I dread to think if the incident turned really ugly. Even a near neighbour expressed her view on disabled bays having to be put in the lay-by thus cutting down space for other drivers. I could have responded that perhaps she would like to change places with me, then perhaps she would have understood the need to have designated spaces for disabled people and what a difference they made.

Other disabled drivers can also use the space if it is not require by me at anytime for shopping etc so it covers extra disabled parking as in a car park. Disabled drivers usually only require to use it for a very short time so this does not cause a problem. It is purely the able bodied public who are the problem.

From observation while using supermarket car parks, they mostly deal with the needs of the disabled by installing adequate proper marked car spaces for disabled persons only and regularly check that able bodied drivers are not using them. In my opinion the Local Authority fall down on providing proper parking where commercial/business and residents have to share the allotted space and do not take into account that it is the sharing of this space that is causing problems.

Having read other disabled peoples experiences, I have to agree that at times I feel like being a second class citizen and a proper nuisance. I would gladly change places with these fit and active people so that I do not need the preferential treatment but unfortunately this is not possible.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern, by for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Mrs Helen Eadie, MSP
Fife Councils Area Transportation Plan Team Leader (West)

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

Is it right to put disabled people at risk by being left to take the law into their own hands, all because their designated parking bay which is to enable them to park as near to their home as possible, happens to be situated in a lay-by also shared by commercial businesses, but their disabled bay is not automatically covered by a Traffic Regulation Order as in car parks, which the Local Authority have the power to do. They should not be put in that position as it is stressful enough living with disabilities.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee’s consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.
Please indicate below if you do **NOT** wish to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I do **NOT** wish to make a brief statement before the Committee [ ]

**Signature of principal petitioner:**

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature:

Date: 23rd November 2005

For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

**Note**

Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

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James MacLeod

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.

The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

Petition by James MacLeod, on behalf of Inverclyde Council on Disability Ltd, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations to allow for speedier provision and enforcement of dropped kerbs and disabled parking bays to prevent their abuse, ensuring greater and easier access for disabled, elderly and other users.

Additional information:
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Maria Eagle, Minister for the Disabled (2004)
Tavish Scott, Minister for Transport (2005)
Anne McGuire, Minister for the Disabled (2005)
Cllr Alan Blair, Leader, Inverclyde Council (2005)

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Signature of principal petitioner:

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature:

Date ............ 15th November 05 .................................................................

Please note that any additional information, copies of relevant correspondence and additional signatures should be appended to this form and submitted to:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Inverclyde Council on Disability Ltd

Petition to Scottish Parliament By James MacLeod, Chairperson of Inverclyde Council on Disability Ltd.

Petition Number: PE909

Dropped kerbs are regularly blocked by inconsiderate motorists - Help our local authorities to combat this discrimination

Inverclyde Council on Disability has been working in partnership with Inverclyde Council for a number of years helping to map and plan more dropped kerbs within our communities. This has involved considerable expense by our local authority, and also significant time from ICOD volunteers and staff. This has led to greater mobility and choice for our members in recent years, however our members have also experienced discrimination from inconsiderate motorists, who habitually park over the dropped kerbs. This has thwarted the good works of Inverclyde Council and ICOD, with the actions of these inconsiderate motorists negating the financial and other efforts of our organisations. As can be seen from the press articles below,
ICOD and our local authority have been vocal in drawing the attention of the wider public to this issue, however as can be seen from the photos above, taken recently, kerbs are still regularly being blocked.

At present, for these kerbs to be marked with double yellow lines, it takes a considerable amount of legal work and time by local authorities. ICOD are asking the petitions committee to consider changing the Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations to allow double yellow lines to be provided automatically where dropped kerbs are installed. This would allow our traffic wardens and police to take action against inconsiderate motorists that block access for disabled people and others within our communities. It is hoped that by doing so motorists will become more aware of their responsibilities when parking, and help our communities be more accessible for all.

This issue also affects the provision of disabled parking bays, with a similar, lengthy process involved on behalf of local authorities before the bays can be provided. Disabled people often have to wait a year from their initial request before these much needed spaces can be provided.

The way I see it by Eric Baxter

HAVE you ever thought of how difficult it would be to push yourself along a pavement in a wheelchair? And how much harder that task would become if motorists behaved thoughtlessly?

Inverclyde Council on Disability, which never leaves the proverbial stone unturned to improve conditions for disabled people, demonstrated in the centre of Greenock to try to stop motorists parking in front of kerbs that have been lowered specifically to make it easier for wheelchair users or mums with prams to get across the street.

Possibly many drivers do it without even realising the kerb has been dropped and others just dump their motors almost anywhere because parking in Greenock and, indeed, most places in the civilised world, has become an absolute nightmare.

So good on ICOD for bringing this to everyone’s attention and for petitioning the Scottish Parliament to stop it.

The petition, if successful, would allow councils to put down double yellow lines at dropped kerbs.

It seems incredible the Disability Discrimination Act was passed by Westminster away back in 1995 to end the unfairness many disabled people face every day, and yet they are still having to protest in the street in the pouring rain so that they can use dropped kerbs. MSPs should debate and approve this petition early next year, and then motorists can be booked if they continue to block the lowered kerbs.

At the moment, motorists can and should be fined for parking their cars so far over on pavements that wheelchairs or prams can’t get by without having to go on to the road and risk being hit by other vehicles.

Parking so inconsiderately is totally out of order. And so is obstructing lowered kerbs.
Disability slam selfish drivers

By Eric Baxter

The Government is being asked to help stop inconsiderate motorists blocking crossing places on busy roads in Inverclyde.

Port Glasgow town centre is believed to be one of the worst places for cars being parked at dipped pavements designed to help disabled people, the elderly, children and mums with prams to get across roads.

Council leader Alan Blair has written to Transport Minister Nicolson Stephen asking him to streamline legislation to allow double-yellow enforcement lines to be painted when kerbs are dropped.

Mr Blair said this cannot be done at the moment because it involves a lengthy and complicated process of getting traffic orders passed for a large number of crossing points.

He was supported by Jim MacLeod, secretary of Inverclyde Council on Disability, who said: "ICOD has been working in partnership with the council.

"I think there should be a fine and penalty points for any motorist who blocks crossing points.

"It's not just bad manners — it's downright dangerous."

Mr Blair told Mr Stephen about the good work being done by Shopmobility in Inverclyde by providing electronic scooters for disabled people.

He said: "The council would obviously wish its investment in disability provision to be fully effective.

"More important, we plainly wish disabled people to get the full benefit of the service, which allows them to have a significantly fuller life than would otherwise be possible."

Mr Blair also asked Mr Stephen to take action over able-bodied people taking up disabled parking spaces in car parks.

He said: "There is no sanction available to enforce this, as would be the case with a normal parking offence."

JIM MacLeod and his wife Sylvia, a director of Inverclyde Council on Disability, with council leader Alan Blair, left, and deputy leader Maxie Hill at a blocked crossing place in Port Glasgow town centre.

Once cross-over access is blocked, a wheelchair user faces the inconvenience of finding another safe place to leave the pavement.
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Helen Smith

Text of petition:

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Helen Eadie MSP

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Signature: ____________________________

Date: ________________

22 December 2005

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The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee, 
The Scottish Parliament, 
Edinburgh 
EH99 1SP 
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
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Peter Thomson BDS MIQA, Larglea Tarff, Twynholm, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4NF

Text of petition:

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The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament looks at implementing a different model to the current plan to ensure that NHS dentistry is available in remote and rural areas in the medium to long term.

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Closing date: 30 December 2005
1 The road to ineffectiveness:

The root of the collapse of NHS dentistry is hard to pin down to an exact policy. The decline in dentists’ confidence in government intentions for NHS dentistry go back as far as the ‘Winter of Discontent’ and were not enhanced when opticians were ‘privatised’ in the early 80’s; for the rest of the 80’s most dentists were waiting for a similar axe to fall on NHS dentistry. The ‘consultations’ in 1988 created an awareness amongst the rank and file that the contract discussions between the BDA and government were clearly about government trying to squeeze more from less; many dentists saw this as pressure to privatise NHS dentistry by the back door. The more thoughtful dentists saw that trying to retain a ‘universal service’ on a capped budget was a non-starter.

The financial assessment of the 1990 contract indicated that treating children to the proper standard would cost the average practice in North and West Dorset (at that time) around £250 per surgery per week. The vote on the proposed 1990 contract, run by the Electoral Commission, saw dentists registering a 3:1 vote against acceptance. The BDA caved in to Government pressure and accepted the contract against the wishes of the profession.

In 1991 I, colleagues from Dorset and our Conservative MP's met with the Minister with responsibility for dentistry, Baroness Hooper. In the face of our detailed argument the Minister was left flapping like a recently landed pikehead. The inability of her or her staff to answer our questions left our MPs – Nicholas Baker, Sir James Spicer and Malcolm Bruce – embarrassed. The gist of our argument was: you can not get a Rolls Royce for Lada prices; there is nothing wrong with a Lada but you have to understand it’s a Lada and accept its limitations.

Our core ‘Lada’ principle was that NHS dental funding should be targeted on children, those with low income and not used to subsidise middle class voters for expensive bridgework, crowns and the like. This was clearly sensible in terms of long term health benefit but unacceptable in terms of the short term Conservative target vote. The political imperative then left my colleagues and me with only one option, to take action and ‘privatise’ our practices. We did this in-line with our core ‘Lada’ principle which is still the model that many practices privatising still follow – subsidising NHS work from private income to retain standards of care. As you may imagine this method of cross funding essential NHS care causes many private dentists much ire when we are told we are ‘greedy dentists’ by ignorant politicians.

The chance was there this time round to create effective change in the main burden still effecting NHS dentists – excessive case load. The PDS trial in England saw NHS dental case load being reduced by 30% giving dentists in the trial time to set out effective treatment planning and target funding where required rather than being lead by the scale of fees. Now that the PDS roll out is happening across England it is estimated that the maximum case level reduction will be 5%.

Once again NHS dentists have been lied to and Mr Kerr’s suggestion that the SEHD will now introduce the PDS contract in Scotland (as a sop to Integrated Dental Holdings (IDH) – an English dental company) will give the remaining NHS dentists little comfort. The importation of dentists into Scotland clearly has more to do with the weakness of the Labour vote in key marginal seats than the actual needs for NHS dental provision in remote and rural areas. My opinion, given the EU employment rules, is that as soon as the Polish dentists are able, they will leave salaried employment for more lucrative private practice – I know I would – and the NHS dental access problem will return.

The problem NHS dentistry faces is that politicians think dentists leaving the NHS are only concerned about money. Dentists will, in part, admit to some extent this is true as many see NHS dentistry as a second rate service for a third rate fee. A more important reason is the excessive case load that NHS dentists face on a daily basis and the physical, psychological and emotional strain this puts on dentists, their spouses and families which is reflected in the profession’s high levels of suicide, ill health retirement and divorce rates. The best way for dentists to prevent or reduce these risks is to privatise their practice. I consider that IDH taking on NHS provision in remote and rural areas may lead to a further round of NHS practices in these areas privatising, as these practices may feel they no longer need to defend NHS access and will seek to reduce their case loads.

The argument that, ‘What we need to do is train more dentists!’ is both specious and fanciful. The extra 20 dental undergraduates at Dundee will cost £4.5 million over the next five years. A recent survey of UK undergraduates has revealed that only 3% of undergraduates are considering a full time NHS career. The idea of reopening Edinburgh Dental Institute as an undergraduate teaching centre, to solve the lack of NHS dentists, has serious cost implications on the University and FE funding budget (£2.7 million minimum per annum to be found, not including inflation and start up costs) and
that is if you can get the academic staff of sufficient quality to get the course ratified by the GDC as of adequate standard. If the plan to develop a dental school at Aberdeen is included then Government will have to find an additional £5.4 million from the University and FE budget annually. The effective spend for Government for all this annual investment as far as NHS dentistry is concerned - £162,000 or 9 extra NHS dentists per annum. You do not need to be a whiz with figures to see that this approach is not very cost effective for a Government trying to increase the numbers of NHS dentists. The final time bomb that is ticking is many of the remaining NHS dentists in remote and rural Scotland will retire within the next ten years. Many will be unable to sell their practices as going concerns given the low level of investment in equipment and materials which is common to rural NHS practices. Graduates will continue to focus on the areas of Scotland where the main population centres are, the need to look good is important and the money is available to pay for cosmetic treatment. To solve the problems of access to public dental health, especially in remote and rural areas, there is a desperate need to think laterally rather than simply doing the same things differently.

2. Thinking laterally

There is a way to solve the problem but it requires both government and the dental profession to think in a different way when delivering public dental health. The idea is not new and is in action in Canada's remote and rural communities. It accepts the fact that dentists, for historical and commercial reasons, will tend to congregate in major population centres and only a small percentage will be interested in a life in the 'wolds'. Remote and rural areas' public dental service is provided mainly by therapists, hygienists, prosthetic technicians and dental health educators in Canada. Patients still see a dentist for their exam and treatment plan but all the routine work is carried out by therapists. They only see the dentist for complex treatments. The advantage for the remote and rural community is that the therapists are local people, locally trained and want to stay in the area. This proposal creates jobs for those bright young people that are remote and rural areas biggest export.

3. Summary

I believe that this proposal is reasonably well argued and as a model has already been tried not only in Canada but in the Khumbu in Nepal with great benefit to the remote communities it serves.
To put the model in place will require the challenging of many vested interests within the SEHD, British Dental Association, NES and Dental Practice Board.
It will also require defeating the argument that what it creates is a two tier system of dental provision.
This is a silly argument, made by academics and politicians with little knowledge that within dentistry there has been a two tier system as long as private has existed alongside NHS dentistry and that is as long as NHS dentistry had existed. The NHS is not willing to make the funding available to compete with private dentistry, never has and never should. Its responsibility is to provide a core service to ensure dental health for all and especially the most vulnerable.
The NHS dental contract in 1990 failed to protect the most vulnerable and as a result saw children being sent for multiple extractions, under general anaesthetic in numbers not seen since the 1960's. The rise in GA's also meant that for the first time in a decade children were dying in dental surgeries. Government policies on funding lead to sharp practice by the Ikes of the infamous 'Pogo GA Clinics' which climaxed in the avoidable death of a child in their practice at Peffermill through negligence.
That is why it is essential for politicians to dwell a marching pace before deciding that importing dentists from a country with a different language, culture and qualifying requirements is actually as clever as it appears. Only time will tell and one thing is for sure, it will not stand still.
Ken MacDonalid runs the only NHS dental practice on Lewis or Stornoway, he can not get dentists to join his practice, is threatening to withdraw from his NHS dental contract as he can no longer cope, no one will purchase his practice and is due to retire in five years – then there will be no dentist available on Lewis or Harris. There is a clear need to act fast, effectively and differently before it is too late.
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I am in contact with my MSP Alex Fergusson and other South of Scotland MSPs on this issue but they have advised me that the SEHD is not interested and claims that importing dentists and bringing in IDH will solve all the problems even though the Scottish BDA has informed them that the policy will do nothing to attract dentists back into the NHS.
I have E-mailed Mr Kerr for a response to a detailed argument and received a standard, word processed response which avoids all the issues raised. I am awaiting a reply to my second request for information.

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

There are insufficient dentists employed or subcontracted to meet the needs of NHS Dentistry in Scotland and that NHS Dentistry can only be effectively delivered to remote and rural areas using a model that uses highly trained local people to deliver core dentistry as happens in Canada’s northern territories.
The SEHD’s current policy is trying to hide its long term failure to deal with the lack of access to NHS dentistry behind a smoke screen of greedy dentists and relies on the ignorance of the population on how NHS dentistry is actually funded so it can appear it is in the right.
The SEHD’s current policy does not engage the key problems that NHS dentists in remote and rural areas face with excessive case lists, inability to attract new dentists and impact this excessive stress has on them and their families.
That the fee paid to an NHS dentist to provide a full set of dentures is a third, in real terms, of the fee paid in 1952.
Why is there not a greater public out cry given that in Dumfries and Galloway only 35% of patients have regular access to any form of dentistry and the Health Board currently has a waiting list of 9,000 adults looking for a dentist. If this reflects a failure of GP services all hell would break loose.
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Signature of principal petitioner:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Peter Thomson BDS MIQA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>11/11/05</td>
</tr>
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For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Note
Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

Should you wish to submit an e-petition allowing signatures to be gathered online on the Public Petitions Committee e-petitioner web pages please complete the template below. Before submitting your e-petition please consult the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on what is and is not admissible. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

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<th>Period for gathering signatures:</th>
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<td>Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks</td>
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<td>Closing date:</td>
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The issues being raised in this petition affects many communities both north and south of the River Forth. I bring this proposal as a Fifer but I am mindful of the huge detrimental impact of the proposals to increase the tolls to £4 across the whole of Central East Scotland. This decision by the Forth Estuary Transport Authority is totally unacceptable. The decision has been taken against a background of the Skye Bridge Tolls having been removed. The Erskine Bridge Tolls seemingly to be removed soon and the only Bridges left in Scotland namely the Forth and the Tay are to have increased Toll charges. This is perverse logic and completely unjust. The proposals to increase the tolls for users of the Forth Bridge are totally unacceptable. The proposals are to have a variety of different tolls in place at different times of the day depending on whether a car is being used by one user or more. If taken to its logical conclusion every road in Scotland where there is congestion ought to be charged a toll. Why should the users of the Forth Bridge be treated in such an inequitable way? Why should those users who are unable to access good employment opportunities locally be penalised for having to travel elsewhere to earn a living? If the haulage industry has caused so much damage to the bridge and road surface why should they be allowed to cross without a much increased fee or be made by byelaw to reroute via Kincardine?

Why should motor cyclists (and cyclists) be permitted to cross free of charge while car and light goods vehicles have to pay? (motor cyclists drive along side cars jumping the toll booth conga lane style frustrating other motorists who wait patiently in them the lanes to pay at the booths)

Why should the people of West Fife have to pay to cross a bridge that was due to have it’s tolls abolished once it was paid for? (which was in the early 90s)

Meanwhile seeing others in our nation having their road infrastructure paid out of government resources e.g. Skye Bridge? Which has a lesser traffic flow and is not a major route covering east central and the Forth Road Bridge is a main Trans European route for Scotland with neighbouring Rosyth Dockyard which is a gateway to Europe.

Given the huge taxation exacted upon motorists through our petrol taxes, V.A.T, etc on motoring costs why is there a persistency to persecute the people of West Fife, East Central Scotland and the Highlands by prolonged feasibility studies, delaying action on building a bridge even more, meanwhile scaremongering concerned commuters?

On the latter point is the Parliament aware some people are moving out of the Duloch area east of Dunfermline back to Edinburgh for fear of not getting to work and the pressures caused by commuting/bridge delays and now dramatically increased tolls?

My parishioners are constantly talking of being ignored and left out in the dark regarding their need for good transport coverage and road networks, whilst in the mean time having to leave earlier and earlier to get to work due to over crowded roads. It is not uncommon to be leaving to get to work in Lothian or Edinburgh at 6.30am in order to get to start around 8am. Even at this time in the morning, the Inverkeithing town and approaches to the bridge are excessively busy. Something is going to give in the near future and it will only take some lobby group to organise protests etc. to cause chaos. Feelings are running high in our communities regarding road transport, and I feel these frustrations must be addressed with high profile statements and clear commitments being given to the people of West Fife by the Scottish Parliament in order to alleviate fears caused by press manipulation.

Train services and bus services are not adequate with no major new rail lines having been built in East Central Scotland for the over 100 years. The train capacity does not match demand having grown by nearly 40% in the last ten years. Trains are regularly cancelled with no warning. Many commuters using the bridge are business people who require their vehicles to
carry the tools of their trade. Many business people from areas surrounding the capital city already state that they no longer can tender for business in Edinburgh because of the punitive fines that are imposed on them and if these charges are to be imposed too then the many businesses will collapse and this impacts on those business people travelling to sell their products and services going north as well as those businesses from the north selling south of the River Forth.

Every effort has been made by Fife Council over the years to increase public transport. In relatively recent years Fife Council was one of only two local authorities to have provided free bus passes for all of the senior citizens living in Fife and also provided train journeys to Edinburgh and Glasgow at minimal cost. Essentially it was well ahead of others in this key aspect of public policy. Fife Council has and continues to provide major subsidy to the public transport infrastructure in Fife with tens of millions of pounds of investment in the past twenty years.

Local authorities surrounding the Forth Bridge continue with massively important work in leading on a range of major initiatives to improve and develop Public Transport having been players in the South East Scotland Transport Partnership for over ten years. The through ticketing scheme has been just one of the examples where a key focus for that partnership as well as developing vastly improved public transport information systems has been on making it possible to have through ticketing from one bus to another. Fife Council initiated the Park and Ride facility at Ferrytoll where the car park immediately to the north of the Forth Bridge allows car users to park their cars there and use the buses at a very favourable cost direct to the City Centre.

The key point here is that not all vehicles travelling across either go to or come from Edinburgh City Centre. In fact, only 12% of all bridge users are heading to or from the City Centre. The key destinations for other bridge users are Glasgow, the A1 or the M4, Stirling, Falkirk, Linlithgow, East Lothian towns and villages. Commuters to or from these areas are predominantly business people moving in either direction and for whom if they were to rely on public transport would necessarily have to go into Edinburgh and then back out again to their main destination thereby imposing a major burden on an already creaking public transport infrastructure at Haymarket and Waverly railway stations and intolerable demand on the new Edinburgh bus station. Journeys for the people concerned would not take account of the special equipment required by the business people or the products that sales persons are required to carry for demonstration purposes.

In essence whilst I applaud developments in Public Transport improvements there has to be recognition that for a vast number of people they don't have train or bus alternatives that are suitable for serving their needs. Car users must be accommodated on the basis of fairly developed policies and must be able to have the use of major routes in the same way that other people across Scotland do.

Finally, I believe as do many other people in the community, that it is quite wrong to have policy developed in the way that FETA is developing policy; namely, every time that Edinburgh City Council leaders are in the chair we have a policy that is manifestly unfair to car users and every time that Fife Council is in the chair the policy swings the other way recognising the needs of car users. All of this happens each six months depending which authority is in the chair. In my opinion sound policies should be developed that recognise the economic disadvantage of all of those areas that surround Edinburgh. Edinburgh's prosperity has blinded it to the hardship and suffering of so many outside the city and I do hope that the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament will reject this manifestly unfair proposal decided on the casting vote of the Chair at that time in the hands of Edinburgh City Council supported by Perth and Kinross Councillors.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern, by for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Fife MSPs have asked Parliamentary Questions and Helen Eadie MSP has written to the First Minister Jack McConnell MSP, the Transport Minister Nicol Stephen MSP and all of the Board members of the Forth Estuary Transport Authority as well as leading Fife and Edinburgh Councillors.

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

These tolls are effectively congestion charging which is discriminating against one of the areas with a number of the most deprived and disadvantaged communities in Scotland apart from Glasgow. If congestion charges are to be used in Scotland they should be applied equitably for all major routes only following a referendum in the same way that Edinburgh City Council had a referendum and that all areas in Scotland with an interest in this main Trans-European route should have a vote in any such referendum. To selectively impose charging for the Forth Bridge would result in many people on both sides of the River no longer finding it economic to work in their current employment.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

Signature of principal petitioner:
When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature

Date 22/12/2005

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Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please complete the template below. Please refer to the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on issues of admissibility before completing the template. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

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Helen Eadie MSP

Correspondence to follow.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee
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Please indicate below if you do NOT wish to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I do NOT wish to make a brief statement before the Committee

Signature of principal petitioner:
When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature:

Date 12.01.06

Please note that any additional information, copies of relevant correspondence and additional signatures should be appended to this form and submitted to:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Dear Mr Johnston,

May I introduce myself, I am involved with the Kelty Community Council and at the present time am Chair of that Organisation and have been chair for a number of years.

I am a member of Kelty Church in which I am an Elder and Co-ordinator of our Pastoral Work Group which I have been for over 14 years.

I have a team of 8 people who help pastoral care work in visiting in Queen Margaret Hospital and Lynbank Hospital over many years were very regular visitors.

People in the village often commented on how it was nice to have a visitor, often the family were working and unable to attend. The Medical Staff – Nursing Staff and Doctors often said the good work we were doing did the patients a whole lot of good & helped them to recover better from their illness.

It was a huge blow when found we could not access the Hospital lists, hence the reason for us petitioning the Scottish Parliament to consider if it is possible to make our own Scottish Law in relation to the current UK Data Protection Act 1989.

We acknowledge the importance of the Act and must recognise why it is there to protect the members of the public.

We feel in a lot of instances the welfare of the public is being denied them by the current legislation, and the pastoral, spiritual, Psychological Social needs are not being fully met and need to be addressed.

We therefore as a pastoral care group of Kelty Church ask you respectfully to consider and discuss the DATA PROTECTION ACT UK 1989 and its present implication of faith groups visiting hospitals. Can amendments be made to the Bill, enabling us to visit again?
We would be very grateful if you would take on board all that is necessary to protect the people we visit with confidentiality at all times paramount.

We have also attended a number of seminars run by Fife Health Board over the past two years on The Right for Fife. We are pleased that the pastoral care theme has been addressed by the Health Board at different times recognising this need for the Patients in the Hospital.
Any help in this very complicated field would be a major help and boost all around to all those involved in any way in pastoral and spiritual care.

Can I thank the Committee for taking the time to read this correspondence and allowing us the time to address you on a subject very close to our hearts with desire to help those who need a listening ear & a word of comfort when in Hospital under the physical, psychological, social, pastoral and spiritual care theme.

Yours in Community Spirit

Ben Conway
Chair Kelty Community Council