The Committee will consider the following current petitions—

PE616 Petition calling for the Scottish Parliament to investigate and assess the health and safety hazards caused by seagulls in urban areas.

PE759 Petition by Robbie the Pict, on behalf of the Scottish Peoples Mission, calling for the Scottish Parliament to take the necessary steps to ensure that the names of judges serving on a judicial Bench are displayed and that a full-tape recording or short-hand record is kept of court proceedings which is available to any party involved.

PE855 Petition by Leslie Morrison, on behalf of Kirkside Area Residents, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to review the performance of all local authorities in Scotland in respect of maintaining and repairing roads, pavements and footpaths.

PE695 Petition calling for the Scottish Parliament to ensure that local authorities have affordable, accessible local transport available to disabled people who cannot use public transport and to provide ring-fenced funding to allow local authority and/or community groups to provide Dial a Ride projects for this purpose.

PE789 Petition by Eric Brown calling for the Scottish Parliament to take a view regarding the need for regulation to ensure that methadone prescriptions are taken by the patient while supervised by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

PE893 Petition by Paul Macdonald, on behalf of the Save our Swords Campaign, calling for the Scottish Parliament to oppose the introduction of any ban on the sale or possession of swords in Scotland which are used for legitimate historical, cultural, artistic, sporting, economic and religious purposes.
PE888 Petition by Chris Daly calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive, in the interests of those who have suffered institutional child abuse, to (a) reform Court of Session rules to allow ‘fast-track’ court hearings in personal injury cases; (b) review the implementation of the Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973; and (c) to implement the recommendations of the Law Commission report on the Limitation of Actions.

PE535 Petition calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to (a) make an inquiry into past institutional child abuse, in particular for those children who were in the care of the State under the supervision of religious orders and (b) make unreserved apology for said State bodies and to urge the religious orders to apologise unconditionally.

PE704 Petition calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to support the terms of UNISON Scotland’s NHS Food for Good Charter.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of principal petitioner:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to.</td>
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<td>Merk Hood</td>
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<th>Text of petition:</th>
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<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petition by Mark Hood calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to consider the need for a new Forth road bridge.</td>
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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: 15 March 2006</td>
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The Forth Estuary Transport Authority had powers conferred on it by the Scottish Parliament that gave it delegated powers with regards to the Forth Road Bridge and the development of surrounding road networks. In the process of undertaking the duties the Board has agreed that there should be a new bridge and this decision has been informed by a variety of technical reports. Recent reports said that all HGVs would be banned from using the bridge by 2013 and that all cars would no longer be able to use the bridge by 2019. The Scottish Executive have asked for yet more reports. The existing bridge is now carrying more than three times the capacity than was ever envisaged when it was first designed. 44 tonne HGVs had never been dreamt of and the scale of housing development across Scotland north of the Forth was never anticipated.

There is real urgency regarding a decision since the existing bridge was opened after a lead in time that took from 1947 from drawing board to the opening of the bridge in 1964. The timescale has equally been long from agreement in principle in the early 1990's and will only start construction in late 2006. The swiftest that any bridge of such a scale has been built is in Hong Kong where the agreement to opening took only six years.

The Forth Crossing has national importance and is thought to be part of the Trans European Road Network. The crossing is part of the strategic road network and with the Superfast Ships facilitating development of the Road Freight capacity has increased in importance.

The Central and Eastern regions of Scotland are dependent on the crossing with links to the more fragile Highlands region as well as Aberdeen and Tayside. The lack of any crossing at this point would create a major disconnect and threaten the Aberdeen Oil Sector for which Edinburgh International Airport has become of key importance.

Tourism to the area north of the Forth has grown by over 50% and this too would be in jeopardy. The Tayside Economic Forum has agreed that a new bridge should be an urgent priority.

The economic development and growth in Edinburgh has resulted in many new homes being built in Fife but without the commerce or industry to support the families that have purchased these new homes. As a consequence there is now a dependency on the bridge for the commuters who live in Fife but work in the areas surrounding the City of Edinburgh. Only 12% of the traffic crossing the bridge head for the City Centre at peak commuter times. The other traffic has destinations including East Lothian, the City Bypass, Livingstone, Linlithgow, Falkirk, Glasgow, Stirling and West Lothian.

Fife Council has for more than ten years invested heavily in collaboration with the Scottish Executive in efforts to build capacity in public transport to assist in the process of taking commuters off the road network. However, there remains a desperate shortage of capacity and commuters are continuing to be served by an extremely poor rail service. The performance levels of ScotRail continue to leave a lot to be desired with Helen Eadie MSP receiving many representations from discontented commuters. Whilst bus services have greatly improved there continues to be problems for shift workers, especially hospital workers from Fife who work in the Edinburgh hospitals being able to access reliable public transport.

There are plans for City and Metropolitan Regions to be developed but all of these policy objectives will be put at risk in the event that the crossing at the Forth Bridge is not secured. Dundee may potentially be marginalised in its economic development if the future of this crossing is not made absolutely secure.

The impact on industry and commerce for this entire area is potentially huge. 11,000 people commute into Fife to work each day and 28,000 Fifers commute south out of Fife heading for the various destinations mentioned earlier. 24% of the inbound commuters are from Edinburgh into Fife. 75% of all of these commuters take the car because either the destinations of public transport does not accommodate the transport needs of the commuters or the existing public transport is so unreliable. More people would travel by Public Transport if the service was radically improved and expanded.
There are capacity issues in developing better public transport for more trains with constraints caused by both the need for development in Waverley station and also the need for coal to continue to need routes out of Fife. This situation will not improve in the short term.

66% of Finance and Business commuters work in Edinburgh City. 25% of commuters out of Fife work in the Financial and Business Services.

In the area immediately to the north of the Forth Bridge there are a number of initiatives in the process of development. For example, there is Rosyth as a National Transport Hub; there is strategic employment land, strategic development areas, medium scale expansion areas, economic development zones, business growth corridors, coastal regeneration zones, South Fife economic development zone, St. Andrews World Class Environmental Improvement Priority.

The economy of the whole of East Central Scotland is urgently in need of reassurances from the Scottish Executive. The call is for another crossing to replace the existing crossing to be urgently agreed in recognition of the long lead in time and the fact that all other alternatives to a new bridge/tunnel crossing will be at capacity by 2012 and this is borne out by the outcome of the SITCOS study.
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 MPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Fife Councillors and MSPs are supportive of this petition and they have been making representations on this issue of a replacement Forth Road Bridge for some time now. My local MSP Helen Eadie tabled a motion on this issue. Scott Barrie the MSP for the neighbouring constituency also table a motion and secured a member's business debate. Parliamentary Questions have been put to the Scottish Executive Ministers at Question time for a number of years now.

Union delegates from this constituency put a motion to the Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline Trades and they agreed to present a motion to the STUC Annual Conference which was passed over two years ago.

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.

- Given the length of time required to plan and construct a 2nd crossing work needs to start as soon as possible.
- If there is any restriction on traffic crossing the Forth estuary the local economies will suffer.

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 [x]
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...12th December 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

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.

Details of principal petitioner:

Bill Cantley, Chair, ForthRight Alliance

The ForthRight Alliance is the campaign alliance against the construction of a Second Forth Road Bridge, its members include:


Text of petition:

Petition by Bill Cantley, on behalf of the ForthRight Alliance, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to desist from spending taxpayers’ money on preparing for the construction of a Second Forth Road Bridge before having at its disposal all the facts regarding the condition of the existing Forth Road Bridge on the grounds that any such expenditure would be both environmentally irresponsible and fiscally imprudent.
Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition:

The ForthRight Alliance has approached the Scottish Executive regarding the relevant concern, and have received no response beyond a holding response.

Members of The ForthRight Alliance have also met with the Chair of the Firth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA).

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 X
I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

Signature of principal petitioner:

Signature Bill Cantley, Chair of The ForthRight Alliance

Date 27.01.2006

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
ForthRight Alliance -
Forth Road Bridge petition

Additional information

The ForthRight Alliance, the campaign alliance against the construction of a Second Forth Road Bridge, continues to review the discussions and proposals for a Second Forth Road Bridge from a position of critical interest. The Alliance takes the view that the Scottish Ministers should have all the facts at its disposal before taking a stance on the possibility of an additional bridge; failing to do so would be both environmentally irresponsible and fiscally imprudent.

It is our belief that all options to maintain and preserve the existing bridge (such as replacement cables and dehumidification), demand management (including a variable charging regime), and the delivery of sustainable transport alternatives must be fully explored before a further new bridge is actively pursued. Furthermore we seek assurances that the results of the Scottish Executive’s audit of FETA’s research on the current condition of the Forth Road Bridge will be released into the public domain as soon as this information is available.

The ForthRight Alliance has written to Scottish Executive Transport Minister Tavish Scott MSP requesting clarification of comments attributed to him in The Scotsman on 27th January 2006: "We will make a decision [on a new bridge] in principle by Easter." The ForthRight Alliance has requested on what basis the Minister would make such a decision upon and how does this fit with the Scottish Executive’s official statements on the matter. The ForthRight Alliance has still to receive a substantive response from the Minister.

The ForthRight Alliance has, and will, continue to try to pursue a responsible line in a political environment evidently characterised by spin and disinformation at the time of the Dunfermline West by-election. The ForthRight Alliance is seeking assurances that the Scottish Executive will not take a decision on the future of possible further crossing across the Firth of Forth before having all the facts all the facts at its disposal. It is our understanding that this information will not be available until the completion of the commissioned cable replacement / augmentation feasibility study, due in May 2007.

Membership of The ForthRight Alliance includes the following organisations:

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.

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, email address and phone number if available

Mrs Catherine M MacKinnon

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 Mrs Catherine MacKinnon, on behalf of Roy Bridge Primary School, calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to recognise and promote 'Public Community Partnership' (PCP) funding as an alternative to PPP funding as a means of securing the long term future of rural schools.

Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the 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, MSFs and MPs. Please enter details of those approached below and append copies of relevant correspondence, which will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition.

We have prepared a Community Options Appraisal which fully costs a pilot Public Community Partnership approach to delivering a new school. This has been submitted to the Highland Council, staff and councillors, and circulated widely to other relevant individuals including Rt Hon Jack McConnell MSP, Nicol Stephen MSP, Allan Wilson MSP, Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Johann Lamont MSP, Robert Brown MSP, Ross Finnie MSP, Rhona Brankin MSP, Peter Peacock MSP, Maureen MacMillan MSP, Jim Mather MSP, Fergus Ewing MSP, Charles Kennedy MP.

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 ..............................

31.1.06

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
The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

Public Community Partnership

Please find enclosed our petition calling for the Scottish Executive to recognise and promote ‘Public Community Partnership’ (PCP) funding as an alternative to PPP funding and as a means of securing the long term future of rural schools.

What we are proposing is for the Scottish Executive to allow the community to lease the school site from Highland Council, build a new school (the Bank of Scotland would lend us the money) then lease the building back to Highland Council for a set number of years (probably 20) until the cost of the development is repaid.

We also want to ask the Scottish Executive to put up ‘Level Playing Field Support’ to subsidise the annual loan repayment. This is what has encouraged Highland Council to enter into the various PPP agreements and what would give weight and credibility to our PCP proposal.

Due to your restriction on enclosures I have not enclosed a copy of our Community Options Appraisal which fully outlines our proposal. If you would like me to forward a copy or any other additional information that you may require please let me know.

Yours faithfully,

Catherine M MacKinnon
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.

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, email address and phone number if available

Andrew Watt (on behalf of The Old Musselburgh Club)

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 Andrew Watt, on behalf of the Old Musselburgh Club, calling on the Scottish Parliament to consider and debate the process of local engagement and consultation in local planning issues.

Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.
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| Norman Murray, Leader, East Lothian Council (seen at local surgery by a delegation from the community) |
| Susan Deacon, Member of the Scottish Parliament (seen at local surgery by a delegation from the community) |

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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 | ☒ |
| 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 2/3/2006 |

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
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The petitioners represent the Old Musselburgh Club and Musselburgh Conservation Society who undertake responsibility for heritage and conservation matters in the town of Musselburgh, East Lothian, who are joined in this petition by Musselburgh and Inveresk Community Council, who represent the entire community of Musselburgh and Inveresk and are a statutory planning consultee, Musselburgh Rotary Club and the Musselburgh Probus Club. These are long established and respected community organisations in Musselburgh who play a significant role in and reflect a wide body of opinion within the community.

The petitioners wish to bring to the Parliament’s attention their experience regarding the proposed construction of a floodlit all weather racetrack on Musselburgh Racecourse. These proposals are the subject of a planning application from Musselburgh Joint Racing Committee, which is constituted by a Minute of Agreement between East Lothian Council and Lothian Racing Syndicate Limited. The petitioners believe that this experience highlights significant deficiencies in East Lothian Council’s practice regarding effective engagement with and accountability to local communities. These practices do not comply with either the substance or the spirit of both local and national government commitments.

The intended development is on Musselburgh Links, which is Common Good Land. The Links is located on the east side of the town of Musselburgh and consists of a historic golf course, which predates 1672. The golf course is largely enclosed within a horse racecourse, which was established in 1816. The south, east and west sides of The Links are overlooked by residential housing, some of which falls within a conservation area, while on the north side there is reclaimed land. Located on the reclaimed land there is a bird sanctuary, a recreational boating lake and the area is used extensively for walking and rambling. All of these amenities will be seriously affected by these proposals. In addition it is a site of special scientific interest, it forms part of a designated nature reserve and is a Designated Protection Area.

In 2003 East Lothian Council commissioned external consultants to produce a master plan for the development of the Musselburgh Lagoons/Links area. No reference to an all weather track was included in the initial plan. The proposals for this measure appeared in a second draft of the master plan and were shortly thereafter approved by the council. There was minimal local consultation on this issue. In response to emerging concerns, assurances were given that any development would be subject to a formal planning application and further local consultation. The all weather track has now been included in the draft local plan despite not being included in the original plan.

In late 2004 draft plans for this development were made available at Musselburgh Race Course. In addition to an all weather track lighting pylons were to be erected around the racecourse and across the Links. This would permit an increase of race days from 26 each year to 80 to 100. The development is to be funded with an interest free loan from the Betting Levy Board, subject to the inclusion of an integral all weather track and a £9 million low interest loan from East Lothian Council. This development raises serious issues that local people were neither consulted nor involved in any of the decision making.
These issues are:

- Will alter the overall character of the area which is a picturesque gateway to the town
- Environmental intrusion of floodlights
- No justified benefit to the community
- Increased traffic flow within the town
- Failure to consider the impact on traffic flow in conjunction with other proposed developments
- Reduction in leisure area
- Interference in the right to roam on public land
- Wildlife disturbance
- Serious statutory implications for the operation of the golf course and concerns for the courses historic integrity

The planning applications for this development have been ongoing since February 2005. Throughout the planning process statutory consultation periods have applied. Plans have been available at the racecourse on race days which were available to race goers but only to limited groups from within the community who received complimentary tickets to these race meeting. This indicates a failure by Musselburgh Joint Racing Committee to consult and involve the wider community in the consultation and decision making process for this locally sensitive plan.

In addition, there has been no attempt by East Lothian Council to carry out any form of consultation in the town other than that required by statute. Leading East Lothian councillors, who are members of the Musselburgh Joint Racing Committee and are supportive of the planned development, have declined to seek their constituents' views on this matter. The only means of contacting councillors has been at their weekly surgeries where there is little sympathy shown to constituents concerned about this subject. This sharply contrasts with East Lothian Council's aims and objectives articulated in their Corporate Plan 2004-2007: Strategic Statement, "to consult with citizens and stakeholders...to enhance our understanding of their views," and "recognise the importance of open and transparent communication with the diverse communities of East Lothian and their representatives." There is also requirement placed on local authorities by national government to ascertain the needs of their communities and find ways of involving them in community planning. The only real consultation on this issue was when Musselburgh Community Council called a public meeting. About 300 local people attended. Those present unanimously rejected an apparently unprepared and unconvincing case put forward by the representatives of Musselburgh Joint Racing Committee. Leading councillors supporting the development failed to attend.

From the Petitioners experience in this development there has been both discrepancies and variations in who was consulted and involved in making recommendations from within the community. There has been a failure in the application of the best practice recommended for national and local government in their engagement with communities in deciding sensitive community issues. It is their view that the whole of the community should be involved not only in the consultative process but should be involved in the decision making at an early stage.
in community planning matters, which needs to be addressed with regard to this particular issue and those taking place in the future. There is a need for confidence, fairness and transparency in our system, which has not been apparent in Musselburgh.
We the undersigned support the petition by Andrew Watt on behalf of the Old Musselburgh Club and call for the Scottish Parliament to consider the process of local engagement and consultation in local planning issues.

Date 3/3/06

Organization: Musselburgh and Inveresk Community Council

Date 4/3/06

Organization: Musselburgh Conservation Society

Date 4/3/06

Organization: Musselburgh Rotary Club

Date 2/3/06

Organization: Musselburgh Probus Club
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public 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, email address and phone number if available.

The Society for the Protection of Salmon and Sea Trout
Frank M Buckley

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 Mr Buckley calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure greater protection for the rivers, streams and lochs of Scotland, such as Loch Broom and the River Gruinard, from fish farms developments.
Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the 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 MPs. Please enter details of those approached below and append copies of relevant correspondence, which will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition.

Charles Kennedy MP, Rhona Brodie MSP, John Feeney MSP, Rose Finnie MSP, Highland Council, Blaikie Morgan MSP, SNH

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

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 14/2/06
SALMON, SEA TROUT AND SALMON FARMS

THE FACTS

1) DECLINE
There has been a steady decline in sea trout and salmon due to various factors, including global warming and over-fishing at sea. However, soon after the salmon farms were located on the West Coast, there was a decline in sea trout and salmon stocks. This has continued, year on year, to the present critically low levels.

2) STOCKS
Wild sea trout and salmon in Loch Maree are near their lowest levels since records began.

3) EXTINCTION
We have already seen some areas devoid of salmon and sea trout. To name but one area, Salmon became extinct in Loch Sguod in 1990. Loch Sguod is connected to Loch Ewe.

4) FARM SALMON
Some years in the 1990's indicate that up to 38% of salmon caught in the River Ewe were escaped farm fish. In recent years, farm fish have interbred with wild stocks, ruining the genetic strain of Ewe salmon which has evolved over thousands of years, and thereby affecting their ability to survive in the wild.

5) ESCAPES

6) TOURISM COLLAPSE
There has been a massive downturn in tourism, due to the increasing lack of sea trout and salmon. For example, fishing enthusiasts and their families staying in affected areas have declined greatly.
7) **Economic Effect a:**
For example, Loch Maree Hotel used to employ twelve fishing ghillies, plus extra hotel staff. There is now only one part-time ghillie and a consequent reduction in other staff. There were also many more ghillies, employed by other hotels, and self-employed, throughout Wester Ross. These jobs have virtually disappeared but could return if wild stocks were increased.

8) **Economic Effect b:**
Kinlochewe, Gairloch, Poolewe, Aultbea, Laide, Lochcarron, Dundonnell, Ullapool.
Many of the fishing enthusiasts and their families stayed in the above areas (and others too many too mention) in hotels, self catering units and B&Bs. We have lost this tourism input and the related jobs.

9) **Unprecedented**
Allowing for the natural rise and fall of the fish population, with its usual peaks and troughs, there is no evidence whatsoever that such a decline in wild salmon and sea trout stocks has ever happened before.

10) **Sea Lice**
In 2004, sea- lice monitoring was carried out on the River Ewe by myself and other groups. On average, 70 sea lice were recorded on post-smolt sea trout in the River Ewe.
30 sea lice can kill a sea trout post-smolt. Studies in Norway have shown that salmon post-smolts are killed by less than 15 sea lice. No studies have been published on the numbers of sea lice on post-smolt salmon leaving Scottish sea lochs. There should be an immediate programme of synchronized sea lice treatments on all farms in adjacent areas.

11) **Jobs Crisis**
Just between Kinlochewe and Poolewe, a distance of only some 27 miles, the number of jobs lost is conservatively estimated at between thirty and forty with many small businesses also affected (e.g. cafes, shops, post offices, garages etc.) Traditional rural jobs, e.g. shellfish farming, fishing, river keepers, ghillies, etc. have also been affected, having been the backbone of employment in the Highlands for hundreds of years. In addition the number of jobs available for hotel and B & B staff have been reduced.

12) **Revenue Loss**
The loss of revenue to the area is staggering. How many bed nights have been lost in hotels, B&Bs, and self-catering? How much revenue has been lost to all the above businesses and to the Highland Economy overall?
13) **Cooperation**

Area Management Agreements have been the main form of cooperation between the fish farms and wild fish interests. However, everyone on an AMA is obliged to sign a confidentiality agreement. Why the need for secrecy? The decline of salmon and sea trout has an economic impact on all of us in the area. All AMA’s should have representation from a much wider spectrum of the community than is currently involved. There should be representatives from the tourism industry, environmentalists, etc.

14) **Regeneration**

Where fish farms have been fallowed for long periods of time, or relocated, and where strict sea lice monitoring is in force, stocks of sea trout and salmon have started to regenerate. The Norwegian Government monitor sea lice levels on fish farms (and temporarily close down farms where levels are too high) and have also relocated a number of fish farms away from migratory fish routes. These have proved to be key points in helping to halt the decline.

15) **Tourism**

Tourism is Scotland’s biggest industry and generates £4.5 billion per year, employing over 180,000 people. It is an activity that dwarfs all of our other industries. Why should poor sea lice management and a poor choice of location of fish farms threaten tourism, which is a sustainable industry that has very minimal environmental effects on Wester Ross?

16) **Fish Farm Jobs**

The value of these, in my opinion, has been greatly overstated, although they do provide some valuable employment in rural areas. Since the closure of some fish farms due to non-profitability, plus an increase in automation, the number of available jobs have been reduced.

17) **Economy**

Every wild fish caught is worth approximately £100 for the economy (based on previous studies). A recent study from the Scottish Executive has indicated that wild fisheries, even in their present poor state, are worth £113 million to the Scottish economy.

Additionally, financial grants from various official bodies, given to fish farms are staggering, and a number of fish farms have closed down, losing millions of pounds of public money. In contrast, very little money is available to assist in the preservation of wild salmon and sea trout stocks.
18) **Concerns**
Aquaculture has a good future, but not in its present form. Where fish farms are located in sea lochs where migratory fish run, they should be relocated to sites where they will not affect the wild fisheries. Financial assistance for relocation could be given by the Scottish Executive.
Also, more pressure should be put on fish farms to cooperate with angling associations, fisheries, environmental groups, and tourism to ensure an appropriate balance of the interests of all parties.

19) **Pollution**
Fish farms should be fined for incidents resulting in pollution, including overstocking. To this end, far stricter monitoring should commence as a matter of urgency. These should be spot checks, and not, as at present, prearranged visits.

20) **Preservation**
Relocating a fish farm to a less sensitive site (either land-based with treatment plants, or moved further out to sea, or in a bay where there are no migratory fish runs), is a small price to pay for the preservation of a precious resource that is a vital component of our tourism industry and an incomparable part of Scotland’s heritage. If no action is taken, the result will be;

21) **Further Losses**
Of tourism jobs
Of angling tourism
Of revenue to Scotland
Of sea trout
Of salmon

The Society for the Protection of Salmon and Sea Trout