

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE Newsletter



December 2013, Issue 2

Introduction

This is the second newsletter highlighting the current work of the Public Petitions Committee and describing what the role of the Committee is. It includes information on the online petitions system and how it can be used by petitioners.

The newsletter is aimed at MSPs, MPs in Scotland and staff to inform them about the work of the Committee. The aim is for it to be quarterly.

More information about the Public Petitions Committee is available on our [webpage](#).

Online petitions system

We encourage people to submit petitions using the Parliament's online petitions system. By creating an account and completing the online template petitioners can submit their proposal to the clerks. The system can be used to host petitions while they gather signatures of support for a set period. It also has a facility for comments and views.

Further information on the system can be found here:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/Index.aspx>

Inquiry into child sexual exploitation

The Committee is nearing completion of its inquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Scotland. The inquiry follows on from a petition by Barnardo's Scotland ([PE1393](#)).

The Committee recently concluded its evidence gathering. It aims to publish its report in the New Year. Further information about the inquiry can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/60242.aspx>

1500th petition

The Committee will shortly be considering the 1500th petition which seeks to have the Golden Eagle designated as the national bird of Scotland.

Upcoming meetings or events

December 2013

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10 th | Committee meeting |
| 17 th | Committee meeting (in private) |

January 2014

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 7 th | Committee meeting (in private) |
| 14 th | Committee meeting |

Petitions gathering signatures

The latest petitions currently collecting signatures include:

Golden Eagle as the National Bird of Scotland by Stuart Housden, on behalf of RSPB Scotland ([PE1500](#))

Save the Ecurie Ecosse racing car collection by Shonah Gibbon, which seeks funding from the Scottish Government ([PE1502](#))

Supermarket expansion on local high streets by Ellie Harrison, on behalf of *Say No to Tesco* which seeks to give local councils and communities additional powers ([PE1497](#))

Religious representatives on local authority education committees by Colin Emerson, on behalf of the Edinburgh Secular Society ([PE1498](#))



New petitions lodged

In November the Committee considered a number of new petitions.

On **12 November** the Committee heard from:

Peter John Gordon on a Sunshine Act for Scotland which seeks to create a searchable record of all payments (including payments in kind) to NHS healthcare workers from industry and commerce ([PE1493](#))

On **26 November** the Committee heard from:

Robert Watson and Kyle Kelly, on behalf of the *What About Us?* campaign which seeks respite services for younger disabled adults with life-limiting conditions ([PE1499](#)), and

Alan Wyllie, on behalf of the *No2BedroomTax* campaign on 'bedroom tax' mitigation which seeks funding from the Scottish Government ([PE1496](#))

Petitions under current consideration

The Committee is currently considering a number of petitions including:

Religious observance in schools by Mark Gordon and the Scottish Secular Society ([PE1487](#))

Opt for Life by Caroline Wilson, on behalf of The Evening Times & Kidney Research UK (Scotland) on an opt-out system of organ donation ([PE1453](#))

Access to insulin pump therapy by Stephen Fyfe, on behalf of Diabetes UK Scotland ([PE1404](#))

Ban on the use of wild animals in circuses by Libby Anderson, on behalf of OneKind ([PE1400](#))



What can the Committee do?

The Public Petitions Committee is dedicated to considering admissible petitions. New petitions are normally considered at each meeting as well as current petitions. In the case of new petitions the Committee will regularly invite the petitioner to give oral evidence.

Petitions should raise issues which relate to matters within the Scottish Parliament's responsibility, in general these will be devolved matters. Petitions should be relevant at a national level and not just a personal or local matter. The Committee has no remit to intervene in the operational decisions or actions of public bodies such as local authorities and health boards. While the Committee cannot become directly involved in such matters it can, for example, ask the Scottish Government to review the wider national policies and / or guidance.

The Committee may not adjudicate on personal or commercial interests, and is unable to consider petitions that bear on matters currently being determined by the courts, or which are potentially defamatory. Advice on admissibility can be obtained from the clerks and further guidance accessed at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/29869.aspx>

The Committee usually meets on a Tuesday and papers are issued the preceding Thursday.



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