Local Government and Communities Committee

Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013

Submission from Duncan McAllister

We learn from the press that the Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Communities Committee—

“wants to know whether the Act is working in practice. We want to hear from those with experience in this area so that we can give a considered view to the wider Parliament on whether or not the Act could be improved.”

The aims of this Act are excellent and long overdue however, a fee is payable by the complainer to the tune of £450 prior to any action – and non-returnable, win or lose and “it will be for the Council to decide how the fee structure will operate.”

We emphasise the following points:

(a) The proposed fee is extortionate and should not exist.

(b) That a supposedly intelligent group of government officers are capable of compiling the current funding proposals is reflective of gross negligence, if not idiocy.

(c) The proposed fee purports to “ensure that the council can cover the costs of investigating the complaint.”

(d) The degree of expertise necessary to investigate the complaint is no more exacting than that required to investigate dog-fouling.

Who pockets the profit, the council, the government or both?

All costs must be borne by the offending party and that based on factual costing and not wild guesswork by officials who know not what they do.

The imposition of tax on the hedge owner is the only effective solution and that set at a figure, the higher the better, to ensure rapid action and avoiding delays. This also maintains a measure of control which appears non-existent at present.

We leave the matter in your good hands.

Yours faithfully,

D.McAllister