

PE2056/J: Introduce legislation allowing Scottish Ministers to intervene on the hire of public land

Petitioner written submission, 19 September 2025

There have been a few developments since the last consideration of our petition.

Glasgow

We received contact from Glasgow Council events land hire on the 7th of January 2025, bizarrely just as the second hearing of our petition was submitted. They asked us to contact them regarding enquiries we had made on land hire in Glasgow in the summer of 2024, stating they were aware of several email enquiries but thought a “conversation or a site visit may be more useful”. We obliged and set a meeting to hire Glasgow Green, where we were told immediately we could not hire it because the council had planned a Christmas Market and wished us to be involved and that there was a toxic dump that we could not set up our event on top of. We informed them that Christmas market type events are not what we do, and asked if we can hire Bellahouston Park for a large scale event. We were told the land was available on the date 30th May 2026 and were asked to fill in the permission to use form, which we did immediately mid-January. After chasing several times we heard back from Glasgow events, a different department, asking for a full breakdown of the event and saying that it would need to go to the events board, we provided this immediately. We expressed concerns regarding plagiarism, which is rife in this industry and were told it would be treated as confidential but we would not be told who sat on the events board. After chasing for a month we were told it was going to an in-house advisory group for a collective decision on a city wide appraisal as it was “GCC Land”, I always thought it belonged to us, the people. Anyway, after chasing for nearly 2 months we heard back from GCC Land hire asking for a meeting with our team. We held a meeting 3 weeks later and gave them an overview of the event, who was performing, and all relevant details.

After some more chasing, 6 weeks later we received feedback that as we had not held an event of this scale before, they wanted to set another meeting with Police Scotland to make sure they were happy. After more chasing, a month later we heard back saying they would contact Police Scotland for a date, a month later another email, “we’ve not forgotten about you, we will chase Police Scotland for a date” (now start of September). After more chasing and an unannounced office visit, we received a date of 17th September.

At this meeting we had TWO globally respected event managers/organisers who have organised every kind of massive event everywhere in the world, one of the most proficient traffic management people on the planet and one of the most respected security companies in the UK (the latter two could not get into the Teams meeting after several attempts). At this meeting GCC and Police Scotland after all questions had been answered by the experts said we needed to provide a full management plan (at a cost of approximately £100k) which would then go to the Events Board for consideration and that we still did not have permission to use the land.

Aberdeen

We last approached Aberdeen City Council in March 2022 and were told we could not hire our chosen park until late August because of current yearly bookings. They have since hired to other events companies in the summer.

We contacted ACC the start of June 2025, heard nothing for a month, again made contact and heard nothing for 2 weeks, contacted them again and were given a direct email address (the only way to contact land hire). We received a response two days later asking for details, which we answered immediately, they came back with a form that we filled in giving all event details including management personnel involved and asking for a Teams call. They came back saying they were too busy for that and asked were the details on the form correct regarding capacity and “have we run an event of this scale before” and said they don't think the park will accommodate this many people. We assured them it would and that the numbers we quoted were correct, emphasising the experience of the team involved and that time was marching on and we asked can we get the process started. This took us to last week but have heard nothing since.

I believe this is an utterly ridiculous state of affairs, it seems impossible to get any kind of commitment on land hire. Once land hire is given we still need to go through the full licensing process and also provide all the relevant documents on the actual event itself, which is a different process to the council, the land hire should be the easy part of this. As the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee is the only way for citizens that are actually on the sharp end of this to get something done about this, it is beyond question that the Scottish Government need to step in as this is not only a time wasting, expensive and demoralising way to have to do business, but also a nationwide issue.