



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

6th Meeting, 2021 (Session 5)

Wednesday 10 March 2021

Present:

Maurice Corry
Tom Mason
David Torrance

Johann Lamont (Convener)
Gail Ross (Deputy Convener)

Also present: Rhoda Grant (PE1723) and Finlay Carson (PE1845)

The meeting opened at 9.30 am.

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed to take item 3 in private.
2. **Consideration of continued petitions:** The Committee considered the following continued petitions—

PE1723: Essential tremor treatment in Scotland. The Committee agreed to continue this petition and include it in its legacy paper for its successor Committee, along with a suggestion to seek an update from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport on the Scottish Government's plans to make an application to the National Specialist Services Committee for a MRgFUS service.

PE1812: Protect Scotland's remaining ancient, native and semi-native woodlands and woodland floors. The Committee agreed to continue this petition and include it in its legacy paper for its successor Committee, along with a suggestion to seek an update from the Scottish Government on its response to the independent Deer Working Group, any progress that has been made to develop its new biodiversity strategy and further information on any legislation it intends to bring forward relevant to the issues raised by the petition.

PE1838: Regulation of non-statutory child advocacy services. The Committee agreed to continue this petition and include it in its legacy paper for its successor Committee, along with a suggestion to write to the

relevant Minister to ask whether they will undertake the work necessary to introduce legislation to regulate non-statutory child advocacy services.

PE1842: Regulate the professional dog walking industry. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the welfare of dogs subject to dog walking services is currently protected by the general requirements of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, and the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 provides a framework for extending licensing activities to dog walking in the future.

PE1843: Review the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the Commissioner is not subject to the direction or control of any member of the Parliament, the Scottish Government, or the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) - a statutory provision to protect her independence, there are procedures in place for the Commissioner to submit to Parliament an annual general report on the activities of her office and a strategic plan every four years, and the SPCB has no plans to ask the Scottish Government to review the role of the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.

PE1844: Introduce an external regulatory complaints body for NHS boards. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman provides the role of an external independent regulatory body for the NHS and is seeking additional powers, which has been welcomed by the Scottish Government, to allow it to investigate complaints on its own initiative, and changes to NHS oversight are already underway with the Scottish Government committing to introduce a Patient Safety Commissioner which would amplify the patient voice. The Committee also agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport.

PE1845: Agency to advocate for the healthcare needs of rural Scotland. The Committee agreed to continue this petition and include it in its legacy paper for its successor Committee, along with a suggestion to seek views from the Remote and Rural General Practice Short Life Working Group, chaired by Sir Lewis Ritchie, and rural NHS boards, and to write to the Scottish Government to request an update on the National Centre for Rural Health.

PE1848: Allow snooker and pool venues to open in more tiers. The Committee agreed to close the petition under Rule 15.7 of Standing Orders on the basis that it would not be possible for the Committee to progress the issues raised in the petition in the time available before the end of the current Parliamentary session. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Public Health and Sport.

3. **Legacy paper (in private):** The Committee considered a draft report reflecting on its work during the current session and suggesting priorities for Session 6. The Committee agreed to consider a further draft at its next meeting.
4. **Annual report (in private):** The Committee considered and agreed its draft annual report for the parliamentary year from 12 May 2020 to 24 March 2021.

The meeting closed at 10.47 am.

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