

Public Petitions Committee
Thursday 10 September 2026
2nd Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

PE2213: Introduce the Small Animal road signs in Scotland

Introduction

Petitioner Sharon Longhurst on behalf of Burntisland Hedgehog Haven

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce Small Animal road warning signage.

It is two years since the Small Animal road signs were introduced in England under the Sunak government but they are yet to be introduced in Scotland.

We would like to see the Small Animal sign displayed in highly populated hedgehog areas. We would like to see these signs recognised in Scotland as they are in England and be made available to councils in areas where there are high populations of hedgehogs and road deaths.

This would help to save a species who are already on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list as a near threatened species. It is thought that 335,000 hedgehogs are killed on UK roads every year.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2213>

1. This is a new petition that was published on 17 June 2026.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
4. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 1,256 signatures have been received on this petition.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered.
6. The Committee has received submissions from the Scottish Government and the Petitioner, both of which are set out in **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

7. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

PPC/S7/26/2/12

**Clerks to the Committee
September 2026**

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2213: Introduce the Small Animal road signs in Scotland

Petitioner

Sharon Longhurst on behalf of Burntisland Hedgehog Haven

Date Published

17 June 2026

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce Small Animal road warning signage.

It is two years since the Small Animal road signs were introduced in England under the Sunak government but they are yet to be introduced in Scotland.

We would like to see the Small Animal sign displayed in highly populated hedgehog areas. We would like to see these signs recognised in Scotland as they are in England and be made available to councils in areas where there are high populations of hedgehogs and road deaths.

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Background information

We are a hedgehog rescue service, and part of our mission is to raise awareness and help educate people on the hazards hedgehogs face. We want to help this vulnerable to extinction species as much as possible.

Hedgehogs are in the top 5 most commonly recorded roadkill species by the Citizen Science Project. 1 out of 3 will die on our roads.

We feel the wild animal signage (featuring the deer) should only cover larger animals and if you saw that sign you would not be looking out for small animals such as hedgehogs.

We held a poll and the overwhelming majority of people said that if they saw that sign they would think there was a danger of deer running out in front of them not hedgehogs!

We have had many orphaned hoglets into the rescue who have been found at the side of the road next to their deceased mothers.

Annexe B: SPICe briefing



Scottish Parliament
Information Centre
Ionad Fiosrachaidh
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2213: Introduce the Small Animal road signs in Scotland, lodged by Sharon Longhurst on behalf of Burntisland Hedgehog Haven

Background

Traffic signs: The design, size, location, and illumination of traffic signs used on roads across Great Britain are defined in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD), as amended. While the regulation of traffic signs was devolved to Scottish Ministers under the Scotland Act 2016, there remains a very consistent approach to traffic signage across Britain.

Non-prescribed signs: National authorities, that is Scottish Ministers in Scotland, can approve the use of signs not included in the TSRGD, typically at the request of roads authorities.

Wildlife warning signs: The TSRGD includes three signs intended to warn drivers that wildlife may be present in the road ahead. These are:



Wild horses likely to be in the road ahead.



Wild animals likely to be in the road ahead.



Wild fowl likely to be in the road ahead.

The TSRGD also includes a sign that can be used in the very specific temporary situation where migratory toads may be crossing a road:



Use of the Small Animal sign in England: The [UK Government](#) created a standardised small animal sign for use on English roads in 2019. The TSRGD was not amended to include this sign, meaning it is non-prescribed. Individual highway authorities had to receive permission from the UK Department for Transport (DfT) prior to using this sign.

In [2023, the UK Government](#) tweaked the design of the Small Animal sign and removed the requirement that highway authorities receive approval from the DfT prior to using it. The small animal sign now looks like:



While the sign depicts a hedgehog, it is intended to warn motorists that they are driving through an area where there are concentrations of small wild animals, which can also include species such as squirrels, badgers, and otters.

Transport Scotland view on using the Small Animal sign in Scotland: Transport Scotland published a [Position Statement on wildlife signs on Scottish roads](#) in 2022, updated in February 2024, which considered the use of Small Animal signs. This concluded that:

“Transport Scotland does not support the introduction or use of new species-specific ‘silhouette style’ warning signs for smaller animals. However, species-specific supplementary plates used in association with the standard warning sign to TSRGD Diagram 562 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The use of these supplementary plates will be subject to approval through the non-prescribed signs process, so that Transport Scotland can ensure that their use is controlled and is only applied in appropriate circumstances.”

Examples of TSRGD Diagram 562 and supplementary plates are provided below:



Key Organisations and relevant links

Key organisations fall into three broad categories, key representatives of which include:

- **Wildlife groups:** [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#), [Scottish SPCA](#), [British Hedgehog Preservation Society](#)

- **Motoring groups:** [Brake](#), [RAC Foundation](#), [IAM Roadsmart](#), [Road Haulage Association](#), [Motorcycle Industry Association](#)
- **Roads authorities and professional bodies:** [Scottish Collaboration of Transport Specialists](#) (SCOTS), [Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport](#), [Institute of Highway Engineers](#).

Alan Rehfish
Senior Researcher
11 August 2026

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C: Written submission

Scottish Government written submission, 3 August 2026

PE2213/A: Introduce the Small Animal road signs in Scotland

1. Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable?

The Scottish Government national transport agency, Transport Scotland, has previously considered this matter following the introduction of the Small Wild Animal road sign in England in 2019 by the Department for Transport (DfT). The sign, depicting the silhouette of a hedgehog, is intended to represent all smaller wildlife species such as otter, badger, red squirrel and hedgehogs etc. The purpose of its introduction in England was not to support species conservation, but rather as a driver safety measure to alert drivers to the potential hazard caused by the regular crossing of roads by such animals. DfT has provided no evidence that the introduction of this signage in England has had any positive, material effect on the conservation of smaller wildlife species.

Transport Scotland does not support the use of the Small Wild Animal Sign in Scotland and the agency [published a position statement on this matter in July 2022](#). Transport Scotland has received and considered a number of requests on this issue but has consistently opposed the introduction of signage relating to individual species. This is, primarily, to prevent a proliferation of different signs across the network, which could distract drivers, create road safety risks, and have an unnecessary visual impact on the landscape. Transport Scotland employs an alternative approach which the agency considers to be more appropriate and effective. This is described in section 2, below.

The stylised image of the hedgehog used on the Small Wild Animal road sign in England is intended to represent a number of different species and the agency's considered view, supported by NatureScot, the statutory nature conservation organisation (SNCO), is that this would be potentially confusing to motorists, particularly where the sign may be used to indicate the presence of other wildlife, such as a red squirrel, or otter etc., and not specifically hedgehogs. In consultation on the matter, NatureScot confirmed that it does not believe the roll-out of individual species signage is the most appropriate way to protect wildlife from road-related impacts.

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD)

The TSRGD is the statutory instrument regulating traffic signs, signals, and road markings on all roads within the UK. It guarantees uniformity of messaging across the country ensuring road signage is clear, consistent, and understood by everyone. This contributes to efficient road management, smoother traffic flow, and is vital for the safety of all road users.

The Small Wild Animal sign is not included in the TSRGD.

There is an established process in place for assessing the suitability of any sign not included in TSRGD (non-prescribed signs). The process requires the detailed

consideration of each proposed application, taking account of the design, siting, and installation, including the specific intended location and local context. This provides a robust approach to ensure each application supports the safe, effective, and justified use of the relevant sign, and the sign is consistently applied wherever it is used.

DfT introduced a 'blanket approval' for the Small Wild Animal Sign in 2023 which permits all local authorities in England to install these signs on their roads without seeking further consent (this does not currently apply to motorways or trunk roads). However, it is believed that there is a risk that this could lead to a reduction in uniformity of application, a lack of contextual sensitivity, and an increase in signage clutter.

Conclusion

As there is already an alternative process in place (see section 2 below) providing an effective, consistent, yet flexible means of warning drivers of the potential hazard resulting from small wildlife species crossing the road ahead, and considering the potential confusion the Small Wild Animal sign is likely to introduce to motorists, Transport Scotland does not support this approach or believe it to be practical.

2. What, if any, action is the Scottish Government currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

Transport Scotland recognises the impacts that linear infrastructure can have on wildlife, including habitat fragmentation and reduced ecological connectivity. To address these challenges, the agency works collaboratively with NatureScot and other relevant organisations and stakeholders to mitigate and, where practicable, reduce conflicts between wildlife movement and the road network.

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) already includes a range of prescribed warning signs specifically designed to alert road users to potential hazards arising from animals being on, or crossing, the road. The most commonly used sign is the silhouette of the running deer, which serves as a generic representation of all wild animals.

To reiterate, while reducing wildlife casualties is an important consideration for Transport Scotland, the primary purpose of warning signage is to safeguard road users.

It is acknowledged, however, that the existing wild animal sign is widely associated with deer, and drivers may not always recognise it as indicating the possible presence of smaller or different species crossing the road in front of their vehicle.

For this reason, Transport Scotland has established a procedure to deploy the standard prescribed hazard warning sign wherever there is strong evidence supporting the need to warn drivers of a specific wildlife risk. The sign – a black exclamation mark in a white triangular sign with red edging – is universally recognised across the globe as a caution or warning, under International Safety Standards (ISO 7010).

To enhance clarity of message, Transport Scotland has determined that the sign may, subject to authorisation via the standard non-prescribed signs process, be used in combination with a supplementary plate providing more detailed information about the particular hazard, such as 'Caution hedgehogs' and, where appropriate, the distance over which the risk applies (e.g. 'for X miles/metres').

This approach ensures that warnings are clear, concise, and easily understood by all road users, while remaining flexible enough to address a range of native species. Importantly, it aligns with TSRGD requirements and avoids the need to introduce additional, potentially confusing sign types.

The Transport Scotland position statement on wildlife signage is available here:

- [Position statement - Wildlife signs on Scottish Roads - July 2022 | Transport Scotland](#).

3. Is there any further information the Scottish Government wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which would assist it in considering this petition?

Wildlife mortality locations are often linked to the desire of animals to cross roads in search of food or to seek a mate. In general, risks arise where roads bisect otherwise suitable habitats, disrupting movement corridors and reducing connectivity. This can lead to habitat fragmentation, leaving smaller, isolated areas that are less capable of sustaining viable species populations.

Best practice for reducing wildlife/traffic conflicts typically involves understanding the broad range of factors influencing species movement at a landscape scale, rather than focusing solely on the immediate roadside environment. Engaging with adjacent landowners to consider how land management practices affect wildlife, and taking steps to protect, enhance, or create suitable habitats away from major road corridors, can help support populations while reducing the need for animals to cross roads.

Transport Scotland is currently preparing a sectoral Biodiversity Strategy, due to be published later this year, in response to the national strategy: Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045. The Transport Scotland strategy will set out key objectives aimed at contributing to national commitments to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. These include embedding biodiversity considerations into all activities and decision-making, enhancing landscape connectivity, and strengthening public and stakeholder engagement through collaborative working.

Through the promotion of such measures Transport Scotland aims to help protect and support native wildlife across and beyond the Trunk Road Network.

Environment, Climate, & Sustainability Directorate, Transport Scotland

Petitioner written submission, 3 September 2026

PE2213/B: Introduce the Small Animal road signs in Scotland

As a hedgehog rescue we see first-hand the devastating effects that road deaths and casualties have on hedgehog populations. Every year many hoglets become

orphans after losing their mothers this way and are often found on the road very near their deceased mothers. This is not isolated to our rescue: rescues all over Scotland see the same terrible injuries and deaths. If these hoglets did not come to rescues like ours, they too would die without their mothers to nurse them.

Hedgehogs are now listed as vulnerable to extinction on the IUCN Red List of British mammals (October 2024), along with many other small animals. Hedgehog numbers in Britain have declined by between 30% and 75% since 2000.

Smaller hedgehog populations in our towns and villages are under threat and at risk of local extinction from road deaths, according to a new study by Nottingham Trent University published after our petition was submitted. You can read the study at:

- [New study: Smaller hedgehog populations could risk collapse due to roadkill - The British Hedgehog Preservation Society](#)

We agree with Transport Scotland and NatureScot that different species-specific signs could confuse drivers. That is why we believe a single Small Animal road sign would remove the need for individual species signs. It would cover hedgehogs, red squirrels, toads, otters and similar animals. The wild deer sign already in use would remain for deer and other larger animals. In our view this would simplify the signage system and reduce confusion, so drivers look out for the relevant danger at the relevant height.

These signs would only be considered in high-casualty areas so as not to add significant sign clutter. We welcome a hazard warning that could include wording such as "Caution: hedgehogs for X miles/metres", but it is not clear whether signs of this type would be available for residential areas as well as trunk roads.

Hedgehogs now live more in urban areas than in rural ones. Rural hedgehog populations have declined by 50%. You can read that study here:

- [SoBH-2022-Final.pdf](#)

Male hedgehogs in particular can travel up to 1.2 miles a night during the mating season. With so many visitors and tourists passing through our towns and villages, Small Animal signs would be a life-saving addition in places where people are not used to looking out for them. We believe these signs could have a real impact on a declining species if they are placed in the right locations, where road deaths are a regular occurrence. Many of these roads are B roads that connect our towns and villages. For example, the B923 out of Burntisland is a regular hotspot for hedgehog and deer deaths, but a wild animal sign was rejected by Fife Council as unnecessary when I wrote to them about installing one. Cowdenbeath Road in Burntisland is another hotspot, with deer, badgers and hedgehogs frequently found dead at the roadside or in the road.

More needs to be done to warn drivers. Doing so can save many lives.