



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Public Petitions Committee

**Thursday 16 June 2016**

**Session 5**



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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**PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting 2016, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con)

\*Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

\*Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con)

\*attended

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Catherine Fergusson

**LOCATION**

The Sir Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)



## Scottish Parliament

## Convener

### Public Petitions Committee

*Thursday 16 June 2016*

*[Maurice Corry opened the meeting at 10:01]*

### Interests

**Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con):** Welcome to the Public Petitions Committee's first meeting in session 5. I remind everyone to switch off their mobile phones, as they can interfere with the sound system.

Item 1 is declaration of interests. I have one interest to declare and it is in my entry in the register of members' interests. Otherwise, that is it.

We will now go round the room.

**Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** I have no registrable interests to declare.

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** My interests are all declared in the register of members' interests.

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** I have no registrable interests to declare.

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** I have no registrable interests to declare.

10:02

**Maurice Corry:** Item 2 is our choice of convener—I am sitting in this position at the moment only by dint of age; there we are.

The Parliament has agreed that only members of the Scottish Labour Party are eligible for nomination as the convener of this committee, so I understand that Johann Lamont is the party's nominee for the post. Is that correct?

**Johann Lamont:** Absolutely.

*Johann Lamont was chosen as convener.*

**The Convener (Johann Lamont):** Thank you. It is quite nice to win an election, even if there is only one horse in the race—it is something of a relief. I thank members for their support and recognise that it is a real privilege to be able to convene the Public Petitions Committee. It is a particularly important committee and I look forward to working with you all.

I pay tribute to Michael McMahon, the convener of our predecessor committee. He is obviously a good friend of mine, but he was also a fine parliamentarian and we can learn a lot from what he did about how to work on a cross-party basis.

## Deputy Convener

10:04

**The Convener:** Item 3 is our choice of deputy convener. The Parliament has agreed that only members of the Scottish National Party are eligible for nomination as deputy convener of the committee. I understand that Angus MacDonald is the SNP's nominee.

*Angus MacDonald was chosen as deputy convener.*

## Work Programme

10:04

**The Convener:** Today's substantive item of business is the work programme. We have to agree a number of things.

First, it has become normal practice for committees to meet informally for the purpose of business planning towards the end of the summer recess. Therefore, does the committee agree—subject to agreement with the clerks on timings—to meet informally before the new term begins in September?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Secondly, we need to decide whether to meet again before the summer recess, to consider some of the petitions that have been carried over from session 4 and some new petitions that have not yet been considered. Does the committee agree to meet in the week before the recess?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Members have in front of them—in annex A of paper 3—a list of the petitions that have been carried over from session 4. Reference is made to that in the legacy paper from our predecessor committee, for which we are grateful. I propose that we go through annex A to allow members to comment on individual petitions. You do not have to do so in great detail, but you could say something if you feel that there are particular petitions that it would be worth our while looking at. Annex B lists the new petitions that have come in since our predecessor committee stopped considering petitions; we will look at those, too.

If possible, I would like to get a flavour of the issues in petitions that members are interested in, but it would be good if members could delegate to me responsibility for the final decision about which petitions we will consider at our next meeting. That will allow me to work with the clerks on where petitions are in the system and which ones we might be able to get people in to give evidence on. Do members agree to do that?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Let us go through annex A page by page. If anyone wants to make a comment on a particular petition, just catch my eye. We will start on page 3 of paper 3; the first petition is PE1223. Are there any petitions on that page that members want to flag up?

**Maurice Corry:** I am sorry, but could I have a set of the annexes? I apologise, but I have failed to get those. Is there a hard copy available?

[*Interruption.*] Oh, I see—the annexes are at the back. I am sorry.

**The Convener:** I should declare an interest in relation to PE1319, by William Smith and Scott Robertson, because I had dealings with it in session 4, in my capacity as the constituency member for Glasgow Pollok. Willie Smith runs a football club in the constituency, so I am aware of the issues around the petition, and I think that it would be worth our looking at it further.

Do members have any comments arising from pages 4 or 5? The fact that members have no observations at this stage does not mean that we will not consider the petitions in question; I just want to find out whether members have particular comments to make.

What about page 6?

**Maurice Corry:** I should declare an interest in relation to PE1540 on page 6, because I am a councillor on Argyll and Bute Council and Douglas Philand is a council colleague of mine.

**The Convener:** Okay—thank you.

Do members have any comments arising from pages 7 or 8?

**Angus MacDonald:** In relation to page 8, I should declare an interest, because I have been involved with PE1563 in my capacity as the constituency member for Falkirk East. I would be keen for the committee to look at the petition, because there are on-going issues in the constituency and throughout Scotland that the Scottish Government should be addressing. Any pressure that we can apply on the back of the petition would be welcome.

**The Convener:** Thanks for that.

Are there any comments arising from pages 9, 10 or 11?

**Rona Mackay:** Petition PE1595 on page 11 is on shared space schemes. I have been involved in that in my constituency.

**The Convener:** Thanks very much.

Members will realise from the petitions that have been mentioned that people think that the Public Petitions Committee has a place in considering a range of interesting issues. It is just a question of us managing our time to deal with them timeously and with respect for the petitioners.

We will have a quick look at annex B, which is new petitions. Are there any comments arising from page 13? The new petitions have not been dealt with at all. I ask the clerks to clarify for us what the procedure is when a new petition comes in.

**Catherine Fergusson (Clerk):** In previous sessions, the practice has been for new petitions to be dealt with in the order in which they were lodged. The petitions starting at PE1598 were the ones that were lodged the longest time ago and are probably the ones that the committee will look to schedule first.

**The Convener:** Okay. Are there any comments arising from pages 14 or 15?

**Angus MacDonald:** I note that there are three petitions from one petitioner. If he were to be asked to come and give evidence, perhaps he could address all three at once.

**The Convener:** Yes, that is an option.

**Maurice Corry:** I declare an interest in PE1598. I have not had dealings directly with Guy Linley-Adams but I have been involved on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council in matters concerning planning permission on Loch Etive. Although I am not directly involved, I have assisted the petitioner, not in this case but generally. He is a legal adviser on salmon.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much.

I want to ensure that, if members see petitions in which they have a particular interest, they can flag up the issues to me or to Angus MacDonald, the deputy convener. That helps consideration of what we have to do.

If I have got it right, I think that we have finished—we have dealt with all the business. I close the meeting.

*Meeting closed at 10:12.*





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