



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Thursday 30 May 2019

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

14th Meeting 2019, Session 5

CONVENER

*Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

*Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)

*Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con)

*Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con) (Committee Substitute)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Claire Menzies

LOCATION

The James Clerk Maxwell Room (CR4)

Scottish Parliament

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Thursday 30 May 2019

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Ruth Maguire): Good morning and welcome to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee's 14th meeting in 2019. I ask everyone to ensure that all mobile devices are switched off and put away. We have apologies from Annie Wells, and I welcome Alison Harris as her substitute.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. Do members agree to take in private item 3, which is a discussion of correspondence from the Scottish Government on Gypsy Travellers?

Members indicated agreement.

Petition

Access to Justice (Environment) (PE1372)

09:30

The Convener: Item 2 is consideration of public petition PE1372, on access to justice in environmental matters, by Duncan McLaren, on behalf of Friends of the Earth Scotland. The petition calls on the Scottish Parliament

"to urge the Scottish Government to clearly demonstrate how access to the Scottish courts is compliant with the Aarhus convention on 'Access to Justice in Environmental Matters'".

I refer members to paper 1, which is a note from the clerks, and paper 2, which is from the Scottish Parliament information centre, and I invite comments from members.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): Given the continued interest in the area, I am keen that we write to the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments to seek an update on their progress.

Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): I absolutely agree with my colleague Oliver Mundell. It is important that we write to find out what is happening. As we can see from our papers, a lot has happened since the petition was lodged, which was quite some time ago. Also, there are on-going uncertainties about how the convention will apply once we leave the European Union. We have to state that in our correspondence and get clarity on those uncertainties.

I also note that the Scottish Government published a consultation on environmental principles and governance in Scotland, which closed only a couple of weeks ago. We need to give the Government a chance to collate all the evidence and ask it to keep us updated.

The Convener: Do we agree to do what we have discussed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: As the committee agreed to take item 3 in private, we will move into private session.

Our next meeting will be on 6 June, when we will take evidence from the Lord Advocate on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill.

09:32

Meeting continued in private until 09:56.

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Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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