



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01722

Name of petitioner

Dr Shiona Ruhemann on behalf of Iona and Mull Community Councils and others

Petition title

Parking charges at island lifeline ferry ports

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to island-proof transport infrastructure to ensure that public bodies do not charge for parking in car parks at island ferry ports, which are essential lifeline services, and any proposed island parking charges are subject to rigorous impact assessment.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Formal objections, correspondence with Council Leader, Council Chief Executive, and Executive Director Development and Infrastructure, meetings with Councillors, requests for meetings with CEO and Council Leader; formal complaint raised with Council, correspondence with Michael Russell MSP, to highlight that our concerns are not being heard by the Council.

Petition background information

This petition is submitted and led jointly by: Iona Community Council (ICC), Mull Community Council (MCC), Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT), South West Mull and Iona Development (SWMID) and Mull and Iona Ferry Committee (MIFC).

Parking at lifeline service ferry ports must be free.

Steep parking charges are being imposed on some island car parks as an ill-considered 'easy' way to raise revenue for the Council or other public owner.

However, these charges are very damaging for island communities. Often island car parks are integral parts of the 'lifeline' ferry services that connect islands to the mainland (a lifeline service being one that is indispensable to an island community's viability). Parking charges are at rates (e.g., £9 per day) that are designed for town-centre short-stay car parks, not for island contexts where parking is genuinely needed

to be long-stay. Charges are also being inflicted on islanders – and on the visitors who are so crucial to island economies and sustainability – who use these car parks without any choice.

Islanders have to use car parks differently to mainland residents as they have no choice but to travel to the mainland for essential medical and other appointments, or to visit children who have to board at High School. That travel takes many, many hours due to the passage time and infrequency of the ferry service, particularly for 6 months of the winter timetable. Public transport from home to ferry terminal is simply not available for most, meaning their private cars must be used.

These parking charges cause very serious harm to islanders who face an unforeseen parking ‘poll tax’ yet who already have to cope with minimal transport infrastructure, lower than average incomes and higher costs of living – e.g., more than doubling the cost of a day trip, and vastly increasing costs for a longer visit to the mainland.

Parking charges are also bad for visitors, and therefore fragile small businesses that are crucial to island sustainability – imposing yet more barriers where the costs, challenges, disincentives and risks of doing business are already very high.

Reducing the parking charges does not solve the problem – this just risks choking up islands in pointless bureaucracy, because the costs of administering parking will more or less cancel out any significant revenue. Charging visitors only – not island residents – will likewise result in revenue that is not worth the red tape, and will needlessly put islands’ fragile economies at risk.

Therefore, car parks at island ferry ports must be free of charge.

Any proposed parking charges on islands must be subject to rigorous impact assessment.

The Scottish Government is committed through its flagship Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to empower island communities and ‘island proof’ decision making, including putting local experience and expertise of the unique challenges faced by each island at the heart of any significant decisions.

Under the Islands Act, ‘relevant authorities’ (e.g., Councils) will be required to carry out Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIAs) for decisions that are likely to have a distinct impact on island communities. However, provisions of the Act relating to ICIAs are still not yet in force, which means relevant authorities are still making decisions which could cause significant harm to island communities – such as imposing parking charges – but not carrying out an ICIA.

The Scottish Government needs to accelerate its efforts to bring the whole Islands Act into force, to develop templates and good practice on ICIAs and to support Councils to change their culture in line with the Islands Act.

Meanwhile, whether an ICIA or another type, rigorous impact assessments must be carried out for any proposed charges on islands. Any risks must be identified and mitigated, and clear benefits demonstrated that outweigh any residual risk.

Media interest

Several media articles have been published in relation to the issues raised in this petition (e.g., Herald, Times, Daily Mail, Oban Times) and BBC interviews broadcast.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/freeparkingatlifelineferryports>

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YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

19 / 06 / 2019

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