



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01792

Name of petitioner

Thomas Butler

Petition title

Access to Scottish piers and harbours

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that local authorities and service providers provide access for those with disabilities at public facilities such as piers and harbours.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have raised the issue with Kate Forbes MSP and Rhoda Grant MSP who have both been very supportive. I have also discussed the issue with Transport Scotland.

Petition background information

For many people, living on the coast and being at sea is a fundamental part of their culture and identity. Throughout Scotland people have been making a living from the sea for generations which continues today in industries such as fishing, aquaculture and marine tourism. These marine industries, both large and small, are vital for the sustainability of already-challenged coastal regions, such as the Scottish Highlands, where seasonality and remoteness make for fragile economies and a difficult life.

With the significant decline of fishing and boat-building in recent years, tourism has become the main and vital element enabling many communities to, at least, survive. Whilst tourism has grown significantly, even in remote areas, the infrastructure necessary to support this growth has either lagged behind or been completely absent. The huge financial benefits from tourism will not be sustained in the long term if the necessary improved facilities are either not put in place, or are not executed to the standards expected by today's 'world' traveller.

The need is for facilities which are 'socially inclusive' of as many sections of society as possible and cater for the young, the elderly and those with disabilities. Visitors and locals alike need to feel welcomed and not excluded.

I own and operate a small wildlife cruise company in Uig on the Isle of Skye where The Highland Council is preparing to embark on a £60 million regeneration project to the pier and wider harbour area.

I have been writing to and attending meetings with the Highland Council for 2 years to discuss disabled access to the water at our local harbour. Since the first public consultation meeting for the project two years ago, I and many others have been trying our hardest to have ramped access to the water included in the new designs. Sadly, the council have stated that, as the pier development is not covered by legislation stated in DDA and BS 8300 2018, the provision of steps will meet the minimum requirement. Accordingly, they say that they are not in breach of the equalities act 2010.

I, and many others in our community, find this attitude unbelievable in the 21st century. It specifically excludes and positively discriminates against a large section of society with limited mobility from working or enjoying what Scotland's seas and magnificent coastline have to offer.

I would be hugely grateful if this issue was considered more fully and widely with a view to improving and revising construction legislation, as necessary, to right this injustice for anyone who can't use steps.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01792>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion