



the National Trust
for Scotland
a place for everyone

Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Direct line: 0844 493 2565
Email: policy@nts.org.uk
10 October 2010

Dear Sir,

Consideration of Petition PE 1340

The National Trust for Scotland (the Trust) welcomes the invitation to comment on the above Petition. It is our understanding that our views are particularly sought on the question 'whether there should be a strict presumption against felling or damage to any trees, irrespective of whether or not these lie in a conservation area'.

The Trust, as Scotland's largest conservation charity, does much to manage and advocate on behalf of the natural environment. As such it can sympathise with the motivations of the petitioner but considers for such a presumption to be credible and effective that it would need to be accompanied by a system for management and with it attendant standards, possible public liability requirements, exemptions and sanctions. There is such a wide range of objectives, contexts and circumstances not to mention numbers, under which trees are managed or landscapes / public realm improvements can be sought to make such a system, if workable, very resource intensive. In addition we understand there are increasing attempts to protect trees through supplementary planning guidance and that the Forestry Commission Scotland operates stringent licensing limits on numbers of trees removed for commercial purposes. Rather we would prefer to see any additional resource being used to manage better existing woodlands, incentivate increased planting where appropriate and help with promoting the value and benefits of trees to owners and the wider community.

For the avoidance of doubt we would be happy for this letter to be made available to the public and we would be grateful to be kept advised of the outcomes of this consultation.

Yours faithfully

Terry Levinthal
Director Conservation Services and Projects
The National Trust for Scotland