

## **RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

### **PRE-BUDGET/FINANCIAL SCRUTINY ON ROADS MAINTENANCE IN SCOTLAND**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM ALISTAIR POTTER**

If you look carefully you will find that most potholes form at the join between 'new' work done by utility and service companies and the existing road surface.

These companies have the legal right to dig in a road, even if it was laid the day before.

A combination of poor quality materials, poor edge finishing to keep the surface watertight, and inadequate compaction of the subsoil for the traffic conditions, create the 'opportunity' for a pothole to form.

These private companies get to walk away from the problems they are creating and shift the ongoing maintenance cost to the public purse. Some companies do a good job, many don't.

If everyone who cut into a perfectly good road surface had to insure themselves against ongoing maintenance, or lodge a repair bond with the local council (to guarantee the patch for as long as the existing road surface lasts), then the quality and longevity of these replacement patches and strips would improve dramatically and there would be a lot less potholes.

In addition, the 'council' (or responsible body) could at present save a lot of money by visiting roads before the problem starts and 'filling' all the inadequate old to new 'joins' left by contractors with the liquid 'tar' or equivalent used for this job. That would stop water penetration, which results in frost damage which opens up the join, and which then allows 'liquefaction' of the soil and infill under the road surface that will cause dips and the opportunity for edge damage along the perimeter of the hole. A pre-emptive regime like that would 'save' a lot of roads, and make them last much longer. A stitch in time!