

# **PE2018/O: Recognise the value of swimming pools and provide financial relief to help keep pools open**

## **Beatrice Wishart MSP written submission, 9 April 2025**

I would be most grateful if you would consider this as a submission to support Petition PE2018: Recognise the value of swimming pools and provide financial relief to help keep pools open.

Scotland is surrounded not just by coastal waters but inland too, lochs and rivers, in urban and rural areas. We know there are financial restraints impacting the continued availability of swimming pools across the country. The value of swimming pools, and the lessons taught to Scotland's young people, I would argue, cannot be measured purely in financial terms but in the physical and mental wellbeing of a life skill. Marine activities involving leisure pursuits on the water like sailing, kayaking and paddleboarding, as well as livelihoods earned at sea, are part of island life.

I learnt to swim before the era of swimming pools, in the cold North Sea, and I am glad that my children and their children had the opportunity to learn in swimming pools. My lessons came after I nearly drowned, having fallen in the Small Board Harbour in Lerwick as a young child and I would not have survived had it not been for a quick-thinking fisherman on a nearby vessel who pulled me out. My early experience lives with me all these years later and I consider it of utmost importance that all of Scotland's young people have access to swimming pools to learn this life skill.