

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE1916: Request a public inquiry into the management of the rest and be thankful project, lodged by Cllr Douglas Philand and Cllr Donald Kelly

Background

The A83 is a 98 mile long trunk road linking Tarbet and Campbeltown. Trunk roads are owned by Scottish Ministers and managed by [Transport Scotland](#).

The day to day maintenance of each trunk road is carried out by a Trunk Road Operating Company, in the case of the A83 this is [BEAR Scotland](#).

The Rest and be Thankful is the summit of the pass on the A83 trunk road between Arrochar and Inveraray, an area that is particularly prone to landslips. The A83 has been closed at the Rest and be Thankful due to landslips on a number of occasions since 2011.

The “Old Military Road”, previously upgraded by Transport Scotland to provide a diversionary route in such situations, has itself been subject to closures and limited operational hours for the same reasons. BEAR Scotland advises that the [alternative diversionary route](#) via Tarbet and Inveraray along the A82, A85 and A819 adds 58.8 miles to any trip.

Scottish Government Action

Scottish Ministers have committed to delivering a permanent engineering solution to the issue of land slips on the A83 at the Rest and be Thankful through the [Access to Argyll \(A83\) project](#).

Scottish Parliament Action

The development of a permanent solution to landslips at the Rest and Be Thankful was the subject of a [Member's Debate on 6 October 2021](#).

It was also the subject of [petition PE01540](#), which was lodged in 2014 by petitioners including Cllr Kelly and Cllr Philand. The petition was closed by the Session 5 Public Petitions Committee at its [meeting of 8 October 2020](#), with the Convenor noting:

“The consensus is that we should close the petition. We recognise the progress that has been made by the petitioner and other campaigners on this important issue. The Scottish Government has made a serious commitment, and it will be held to account if it transpires that the work is not being progressed in a serious manner.

We agree to close the petition. We thank the petitioner for all their engagement with the committee and advise them that, if there is no progress in a year's time, the committee will be able to return to the issue.”

The issue of a solution to landslips at the Rest and be Thankful has also been the subject of many written and oral parliamentary questions and featured in questioning of Scottish Government Ministers by the Session 5 Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, most recently at [its meeting of 10 March 2021](#).

Key Organisations and relevant links

- **Transport Scotland:** Manages the trunk road network on behalf Scottish Ministers and responsible for the delivery of the Access to Argyll project.
- **Argyll and Bute Council:** Covers the area affected by closures of the A83 at the Rest and be Thankful.

- **BEAR Scotland:** Trunk road operating company with responsibility for the A83.

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