

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 26 November 2025
18th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

PE1962: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires

Introduction

Petitioner Lynn and Darren Redfern

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve licensing enforcement on motorhomes to ensure they are only parking in designated and regulated locations.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1962>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 23 April 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received new written submissions from the Scottish Government, the Petitioner, and Edward Mountain MSP, which are set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 21 September 2022](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 1,147 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

8. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
November 2025

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE1962: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires

Petitioner

Lynn and Darren Redfern

Date Lodged

18 August 2022

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve licensing enforcement on motorhomes to ensure they are only parking in designated and regulated locations.

Previous action

There have been several emails between ourselves and Maree Todd, our local MSP, as well as emails with various people within the highland council. All of which have not managed to solve the issue.

Background information

We believe that motorhomes that choose not to use campsites, caravan parks or Aires (small-scale designated campsites with only basic facilities) place an unnecessary burden on local communities by parking inappropriately, disposing of their rubbish, chemical toilet and dirty water as well as defecating at the side of the road. Regulated parks offer all these facilities in one safe location. Motorhomes often park in an unsafe manner, where regulated parks are required to keep motorhomes 6m apart for fire risk (motorhomes use LPG), Unregulated parking places them much closer together and is a disaster waiting to happen.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code does not apply to motorised vehicles and motorhome users who must have the permission of the landowner before parking overnight. This almost never happens. Although there is much documented evidence of motorhomes parking in adverse spots across the Scotland, enforcement is not being implemented to stop this happening.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1962 on 23 April 2025

The Convener: Our next petition is PE1962, lodged by Lynn and Darren Redfern, which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve licensing enforcement on motorhomes to ensure that they are parked only in designated and regulated locations.

We last considered the petition at our meeting on 15 May 2024, when we agreed to write to the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government's response to the committee highlights the £4 million budget allocation for the rural tourism infrastructure fund, and the £2 million that was delivered through VisitScotland, which includes support for activity to spread visitor numbers more equally across Scotland.

On the visitor levy, the Scottish Government states that it remains open to discussion with stakeholders on the issue of a levy on motorhomes and camper vans, and will consider any developed proposals that work to support the visitor economy. The submission states that discussions with council and land management stakeholders have highlighted significant issues with such a levy, including potential difficulties with its application, with administration and with compliance.

A written submission from the petitioners highlights a number of concerns about safety and what they believe is a disparity between the licensing requirements for campsites and a lack of regulation for landowners. The petitioners call for all locations that offer overnight motorhome parking to be required to obtain a licence, including car parks and laybys.

The committee has also received a written submission from an individual, Mr Ed Hall, who raises questions about when land should be considered a campsite with the requirement to obtain a licence under existing legislation.

Do colleagues have any suggestions for action?

David Torrance: Perhaps the committee would consider writing to the Scottish Government to seek its views on whether, in the interests of safety and parity with formal campsites and areas, landowners who allow overnight motorhome habitation should be required to obtain a licence for that activity.

The Convener: Are colleagues content to do that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submissions

Scottish Government written submission, 2 June 2025

PE1962/K: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires

Thanks to the committee for reaching out in connection with “PE1962: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires”.

The Committee asked for: *the Scottish Government’s views on whether, in the interests of safety and parity with formal campsites and aires, landowners who allow overnight motorhome habitation should be required to obtain a licence for this activity.*

The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 Schedules 1 to 6 makes reference to allowing overnight motorhome/caravan habitation. A landowner does not require a licence if they allow three or less caravans at any given time to stay for a maximum of 28 days within a 12 month period. A licence would be required if more than three caravans were sited on the land or if the land was in use for more than 28 days in a 12 month period. The paragraph 3 exemption only applies if the total period of occupation by caravans is less than 28 days in any 12 month period. The 28 day limit does not reset after a period of occupation by 1-3 caravans ends.

Planning permission is not required for the actual stationing of a caravan or motorhome on land. It is however required where; either the stationing of the caravan or motorhome would, in the opinion of the relevant planning authority, result in a material change of use of the land in question, or if any physical alterations were made to the land in question such as the formation of a hardstanding permanent pitch or the installation of facilities associated with the stationing of caravans/motorhomes.

Decisions as to whether any particular use would be material in planning terms are made by the relevant planning authority on an individual case by case basis.

Because of these existing licencing and planning rules, the Scottish Government’s view is that there is no requirement to change the existing legislation.

I hope this information proves useful to the committee.

Directorate for Business and Better Regulation

Petitioner written submission, 6 June 2025

PE1962/L: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires

We are aware of the law, which is very clear. And if it were that simple we would not have a petition running in the first place.

However the answer received from the Scottish Government does not solve the problem illustrated in our last submission 23rd September 2024. Everyone is making up their own rules. Our last submission outlined the issue as follows:

“it seems that car parks where motorhomes “park overnight” do not have to be licenced or follow the Scottish Government’s guidance ‘Fire safety - existing premises with sleeping accommodation: practical guidance’ – particularly carparks operated by the local authority.

The rules on Fire Safety seem to have been blurred recently and we believe that clarification is required.

The Scottish Fire and rescue Service are recommending 6m spacing between units.

The Caravan and Motorhome Professional Association (CAMPA) are recommending 4m Spacing.

The Campaign for Real Aires (CAMPrA) are recommending 3m spacing.

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Stay the Night scheme require motorhomes to be 4m apart.

Scottish Canals Motorhome Transit Stopovers require motorhomes to be 3m apart.

A recent FOI request to FLS also revealed that they do not have specific fire risk assessments for their Stay the Night locations. Currently any motorhome parking outwith a regulated space can do what they like. Fire Safety guidance needs to be made clear and needs to be standardised so that it is the same for everyone.”

Highland council car parks do not require a licence, Forestry and Land Commission Scotland are operating on an exemption granted by the Scottish Government, and Scottish Canals are operating on exemption certificates granted from Campa. We are also aware that NatureScot permits motorhomes to stay overnight for the purposes of human habitation, and apparently those motorhomes using laybys as campsites are exempt under the highway code which permits vehicles (including motorhomes) to rest stop so that people do not drive tired. We have also highlighted to Environmental Health (who issues licences) about various locations nearby where motorhomes are permitted to use private land in exchange for a donation, or so long as money is spent in their establishment. These locations are operating without a licence and the authorities do not seem to care about it

All these locations most definitely host motorhomes for more than 28 nights of the year and most of them host more than 3 motorhomes at a time.

This just illustrates that the law while appearing clear has many grey areas that are being abused, and that government both at national level and at local level do not care enough to do anything about it.

We seek clarification, when a landowner permits a motorhome to use his/her land for the purposes of human habitation (regardless of licencing or exemptions etc...) what are the fire safety rules that need to be followed?

There are apps and websites like Park4night and Searchforsites which advertise and promote these locations along side licenced campsites.

The problem is so great that in 2022, the Highland Council Access Rangers recorded over 30,000 motorhomes parking outwith campsites over the course of just one summer.

There are a lot of loopholes and a lack of enforcement.

We feel that there is a lack of willingness from government at all levels to address this issue which will continue to get worse until someone gets injured or killed by using their motorhomes for the purposes of human habitation in unlicensed and unregulated locations.

Edward Mountain MSP written submission, 29 July 2025

PE1962/M: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires

I write in response to the Scottish Government response to my constituent's Lynn and Darren Redfern's petition PE1962.

In the response from the Scottish Government, they are suggesting that if a site was not used for more than 28 days planning permission is not required. This "de minimus" use of land for an alternative purpose is laid out in the relevant planning acts.

However, in this case there is no control of the use of any parking site for a period of 28 days. Each site is open all year and so the Government or indeed the Highland Council cannot prove "de minimus" use. Indeed, they are available 365 days of the year and are marked and signed as such.

As such, I do not believe the arguments proposed by the Government are correct.

I will leave it entirely up to you as to how you progress the matter. In the meantime, I have copied this letter to Lynn and Darren.