



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01428

Name of petitioner

Councillor Douglas Philand on behalf of Argyll First

Petition title

Improvements for the A83

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to address the 4 key points which are currently impacting upon the communities along the A83 which are (1) issues relating to the Rest and Be Thankful; (2) pinch points at Inveraray and between Lochgilphead and Tarbert (Lochfyne); (3) safe crossing points at Ardrishaig and Tarbert (Lochfyne) and (4) formally trunk the road between Kennacraig and Campbeltown.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

The issue has been raised by successive elected councillors with various levels of Scottish and UK government with to date little success.

This issue has been raised at many community councils which we attend again with little action undertaken.

There have been discussions and representations made with Transerve who are the Operating Company responsible for the management & maintenance of the Trunk Road Network in North West Scotland regarding these issues but without any successful outcome.

Petition background information

The A83 links Helensburgh and Lomond into the rest of Argyll.

It climbs to the masculine grandness of the great pass at Rest and Be Thankful, to Inveraray and the fishing village of Tarbert, then skirts the west coast of Kintyre.

It links Loch Lomond to Loch Long, to Loch Fyne, to West Loch Tarbert, to the Sound of Gigha, to the Atlantic coast and to Campbeltown Loch.

It provides mainland access to and from the massive Cowal peninsula – via the B845 from Rest and Be Thankful to Lochgoilhead and Carrick Castle; via the A816 to Strachur, Glendaruel and the short ferry crossing from Colintraive to the Isle of Bute on the A886; via the A816 itself, on down from Strachur to the historic Clydeside town of Dunoon – and right to Toward, at the southeast tip of the peninsula.

It provides access to and from the Isle of Arran – from the junction with the B8001 to

Claonaig for the ferry crossing to Lochranza.

It provides access to and from the Isle of Islay (and on to the Isle of Jura) via the ferry port of Kennacraig on West Loch Tarbert.

It provides access to and from the little Isle of Gigha via the little ferry port of Tayinloan.

It provides access to and from the Antrim coast of Northern Ireland via the Kintyre Express ferry service from Campbeltown at its southernmost extremity.

It carries traffic to and from Campbeltown airport, with the third longest runway in the UK at 9,500 ft.

It carries traffic to and from the headquarters of Argyll and Bute Council at Kilmory in Lochgilphead.

It carves its way right through Mid Argyll, offering access to Loch Awe, Lorn, Oban and Glencoe via the A819 at Inveraray.

It offers access to the upper west coast of Argyll – to the Crinan Canal and the passenger ferry to Jura, to Lochs Melfort and Craighnish, to the Slate Isles and on to Oban – through its junction with the A816 at Lochgilphead.

It carries both ends of the loop into the magical timelessness of the Kilberry peninsula in Kintyre, with its breathtaking views to Jura.

It carries both ends of the other loop into the lush and sheltered east coast of Kintyre, down Kilbrannan Sound and looking over to the magisterial Isle of Arran.

It carries residents, visitors, golfers, business traffic, courier services, haulage, wind turbine towers made in Campbeltown and timber from all parts in Argyll – which has something like 40% of Scotland's forest estate.

Argyll First Councillors have campaigned both individually and as a group on many occasions regarding the various problems associated with the A83.

I will now illustrate and give examples of some of the difficulties experienced by people along the route.

The constant threat of the rest and be thankful and landslides have become so problematic particularly to travellers and haulage and businesses. Residents in Arrochar have witnessed a lack of passing trade when the rest is closed at 4.30pm. These businesses are reliant on passing trade particularly in the winter months and after all they contribute in terms of taxes and rates to the local economy which could be in jeopardy if this is a continual difficulty. Busses and haulage company's fuel bills have increased enormously during periods of closure with no way of being recompensed for the extra mileage and inconvenience to travellers in the detour particular where haulage companies work within a very fine profit margin are stating that they cannot sustain such losses on a continuing basis. The A82 is not one of the best roads in the country so to divert traffic along this route increases the likelihood of accidents.

There are particular pinch points which narrow the road and cause difficulties particularly in the summer. In Inveraray articulated lorries offloading have to stop on one side of the carriageway which can cause traffic chaos during the summer. Between Lochgilphead and Tarbert there are particular narrow black spots where accidents have occurred mainly owing to road users who are not familiar with the road.

In terms of crossing points there has been particular difficulties which access across the carriageway in Ardrishaig and Tarbert community councils area. There are crossing points in Lochgilphead so the precedent has been set for crossing points in villages.

Lastly Campbeltown is now seen as an area of economic regeneration and in fact the first minister has highlighted that Machrihanish is now seen as a Key centre for manufacturing renewable and is deemed a centre of excellence for green energy.

The road from Kennacraig to Campbeltown in quote from a road user is seen as "parts that you actually think has been ploughed". If this is the image a road user who is not local has, how the economic regeneration of Kintyre can continue is uncertain.

The time has come to work together in a positive and constructive manner for the

benefit of the Argyll and Bute Community. We have received many representations from members of the public, community councils and businesses regarding the various problems associated with this route.

The intention of submitting a petition is to ask the Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action on behalf of the residents of Argyll and Bute.

Whilst recognising the fact that Transport Scotland is currently commissioning a survey with regard to the road issues associated with the A83. We are asking that the petitions committee support our request that a firm plan of action is put in place to rectify the issues identified by the survey.

The announcement of 1 million pounds by the government is welcome but will not provide a permanent solution to the problems at the rest and be thankful.

The allocated 1m will primarily go to address the issue of providing a backup solution. This solution will be the upgrading of the existing forestry road which runs parallel to the Rest.

Major investment and a firm plan of action is still required to address the key landslide issues on the A83.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01428>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

10000

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion