

# Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

4th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Wednesday 9  
March 2022

PE1896: Provide every primary school child in  
Scotland with a reusable water bottle

## Note by the Clerk

**Lodged on** 20 September 2021

**Petitioner** Callum Isted

**Petition  
summary** Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to  
replace the disposable water bottle provided with primary school  
lunches with a sustainable, reusable, metal bottle.

**Webpage** <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1896>

## Introduction

1. The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on [3 November 2021](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to key stakeholders and to invite the petitioner to give evidence at a future meeting.
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. A separate questions paper is provided for Members as **Paper 3 (private paper)**.
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's initial position on this petition can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).

## Action

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

**Clerk to the Committee**

## Annexe A

# PE1896: Provide every primary school child in Scotland with a reusable water bottle

## Petitioner

Callum Isted

## Date Lodged

20/09/2021

## Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to replace the disposable water bottle provided with primary school lunches with a sustainable, reusable, metal bottle.

## Previous action

Callum has:

- written to his headteacher, who forwarded his complaint to West Lothian Council who then made the disposable water bottle in school lunches optional
- contacted & received positive responses from several MSPs
- raised over £1,400 to buy reusable water bottles for his school, with additional lids to make his scheme sustainable for the future
- will have finished walking the entire John Muir Way (134 miles) in order to raise the money above

## Background information

Each week schoolchildren are given 250ml disposable plastic water bottles to have with their lunches. Callum (age 7) feels very strongly that this is the wrong thing to do.

Callum has been running his campaign since early 2021 and is very determined to succeed.

He says that you want to help the environment but were wasting more plastic than the weight of one of the pandas at the zoo (estimated per

school, per year). He has solved the problem for his school and now wants to help the whole of Scotland.

Many adults have agreed with him and Sue Webber MSP has been particularly helpful.

He says adults should listen to children about the environment and provide the money to buy more water bottles. Shortly, he will have walked 134 miles to prove his point.

He has already achieved a phenomenal amount for a 7 year old and I hope his petition is viewed positively.

## Annexe B

### Extract from the Official Report of last consideration of PE1896 on 3 November 2021

**The Convener:** PE1896 calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to replace the disposable water bottle that is provided with primary school lunches with a sustainable, reusable, metal bottle.

The petitioner is aged seven years old and is called Callum Isted. I believe that he might be the youngest petitioner that there has been to the Scottish Parliament, so I congratulate him straight away on that. He advises that, each week, schoolchildren are given 250ml disposable plastic water bottles to have with their lunches. He feels strongly that that is the wrong thing to do.

Callum has been campaigning to have reusable water bottles since early this year and is determined that his campaign will succeed. He has solved the problem for his school and now wants to help the whole of Scotland. He points out that some schools do not have working facilities such as drinking taps. He and his eco group at school have asked for the broken taps in his school to be repaired.

Callum does not understand why the Scottish Government cannot provide funding to councils to provide reusable water bottles. He also mentions COP26 and the fact that some children in Scotland cannot access safe drinking water without damaging the oceans with single use plastic.

The Scottish Government submission details the requirement that free drinking water must be readily available for all children and young people throughout the school day, as per the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020—that sounds very Mr Gradgrind. However, the nutritional standards and the associated statutory guidance do not specify the way in which water should be provided, and the Scottish Government states that that is a matter for individual education authorities to determine. The Covid-19 pandemic was cited as one reason why education authorities and schools might not wish to progress with providing reusable water bottles, given concerns about communal water facilities.

I am delighted that we are joined by Sue Webber MSP, who has an interest in the petition. I invite her to make any comments that she wishes to the committee.

**Sue Webber:** Thank you, convener. You have said a lot about Callum. He is already a determined and passionate young man.

With the support of his family, Callum set out over the summer to walk the John Muir way from Helensburgh to Dunbar in various stages. His walk concluded in the October holidays, when I met him. He has been determined to complete that

sponsored walk so that every pupil in his school could get a reusable water bottle and has succeeded. In addition, he has organised a raffle and a pyjama day to beat his financial target and allow Klean Kanteen bottles to be provided to the 185 pupils in his school in Livingston. He has written to the First Minister regarding his concerns and he has managed to get the petition here before the committee. He is absolutely delighted about that in itself. However, I am really delighted to support the campaign further.

As I said, Callum is a very determined young man and he is not finished yet. He will continue with his campaign, whatever happens, in order to reduce plastics in schools. Right now, he is at home “bouncing off the walls”—those are the words of his mum—because he has been invited to the green zone at COP on Friday. Given what is going on in the country this week, it is only right that we support him in his ambition for every child at primary school to have a reusable water bottle.

**The Convener:** I am sure that the whole committee congratulates Callum, and I am sure that he will make a very effective presentation when he is there on Friday. Sue Webber said that he is at home this week, which means that he might be watching us just now. If that is the case—congratulations, Callum.

**David Torrance:** The petition is very relevant in relation to COP26 and our carbon footprint. As somebody who is in their third session of being on the committee that deals with petitions, it is incredible to see somebody who is seven years of age petition us to try and achieve something across the whole of Scotland. Callum is so young but has taken so much time to lodge a petition, so we should give him the opportunity to come and give evidence before us. I would also like to write to all the key stakeholders—COSLA, Zero Waste Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Sustainable Scotland Network

**Paul Sweeney:** I concur that it would be great to have Callum before the committee to give evidence. It is commendable that he is so passionate about the issue at such a young age.

The petition campaigns for an incredibly practical measure. Yesterday, I was speaking with children at Thorntree primary school in Glasgow with my colleague Ivan McKee. The members of their eco-schools committee raised similar concerns around how they could take practical steps in their school to reduce their carbon footprint and improve environmental efficiency. The petition touches on a very live issue and on concerns that are shared by lots of young people across Scotland.

Callum is perhaps a bit of a pioneer, because his petition shows that the petitions committee should be accessible to everyone, including those of a young age. If young people are learning about politics and discussing issues at school, the petitions committee is potentially a useful way for them to engage with Parliament. In more ways than one, Callum has done us all a great service. I would be really happy to invite him to speak to the committee about what we can consider doing to amplify the issue.

**Alexander Stewart:** I also commend and congratulate Callum on his endeavours. He is someone of a young age who has such a passion, and he has not only created a huge opportunity for his own school, but extended that. We on this committee are very much obliged to have him here to explain his views and to give him a platform to talk about his passion.

The petition raises a very live issue in relation to COP26. The idea of trying to encourage young people at primary school to be involved in eco-committees has been a real success. I think that Callum will be a real pioneer for the future. I look forward to hearing from him when he has the opportunity to come here.

**The Convener:** I think that we are agreed on that. Sue Webber, do you know which school Callum attends? I do not see that information anywhere.

**Sue Webber:** He is at Dedridge primary school in Livingston.

**The Convener:** That school has a very active campaigner on the ground.

We would love to have Callum come to the Scottish Parliament. That will be no challenge to him at all, after he takes on the world at COP later this week.

As well as inviting Callum to come to the Parliament to give evidence in support of his petition, I propose that we invite some of the stakeholders to join us on that occasion to explore the issues raised in the petition in some detail. However, in the first instance, we should write to them to get some idea of their views on the issues that have been raised. Are we all agreed on that?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*