



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Joan McAlpine MSP
South of Scotland Region



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Dear Martin

Thank you very much for inviting me along to your meeting in Moffat last week. I was very impressed with the campaign and the expertise of the people in the room.

I was particularly interested in suggestions that the campaign focus on persuading the TransPennine service to stop at Beattock. As the service franchise is up for renewal in 2014, and we are told that it plans to increase the service with electrified trains, there does seem an opportunity. The reopened Beattock might well offer Transpennine some favourable PR too!

I would be more than happy to assist in any lobbying you want to do on that front. As a journalist myself I can also advise on media coverage. However the suggestion that the campaign focus on persuading the Scottish Government to back a brand new service involving the re-opening of several stations on the line does not seem to me credible. It would take too long, is hugely expensive and more complex. Reviving the iconic Beattock as a railway destination by getting an existing operator to stop there strikes me as much more achievable in the short to medium term.

In addition to persuading the train operator to stop, there is the question of station upgrade and maintenance. I will look into this at Holyrood to see what funds might be available and what support and encouragement could be offered by the Scottish Government. Parliament is in recess at the moment but I will get back to you within the next couple of weeks.

I had another look at the Auden poem Night Mail after meeting the group. It struck me that the lines referring to Beattock are rather appropriate for your campaign and would make a great t-shirt slogan beside the station livery you have already produced!

*Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.*

Very best wishes

Joan McAlpine MSP

Room M3.15, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Tel: 0131 348 6885
Constituency Office: Unit 7, High Street, Loreburne Shopping Centre, Dumfries, DG1 2BD
Tel: 01387 255334
Email: Joan.McAlpine.msp@scottish.parliament.uk