

Two Edinburgh Residents are going to the United Nations' Palais des Nations Building in Geneva this week to address the UN's Aarhus Convention committee.

The reason for their invitation is that the committee feel there is a Prima Facie case to believe Edinburgh Council may have broken their own rules for ensuring proper Public consultation and involvement, over the Tram scheme.

- **The Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee of the United Nations have granted an ordinary Edinburgh Resident, Alistair Macintosh, a hearing over his concerns that the proper democratic process of consultation was set aside by the Council.**
- The committee are used to hearing cases involving expensive and high powered teams of lawyers in cases involving national governments. But they do also allow ordinary citizens to present a case—and in this case have been persuaded there is a prima facie case justifying a hearing in person.

All journalists following this case are well aware that the Residents opposition to the Tram project is far from a case of opposition to Trams themselves.

The residents fear the flaws in the Tram process mean clear, present and real dangers to health, building damage, degradation to the living environment, noise pollution and increased danger of accidents will arise in many hundreds

of residential streets as the blocking nature of the Tram project on traffic flows across the City becomes clear.

They believe that had proper public consultation as laid down been carried out in the beginning this state of affairs could have been avoided and a tram project designed that would be the Tram the City needs, and not the Tram the Council bureaucracy wanted in 2003 and has felt unable to compromise on since then..

**This failure to hold a proper Public consultation is at the root of both the failures of the project and the sense of grievance amongst the residents. The Aarhus Convention Committee holds a remit to investigate such failures of democratic process in signatory countries.**

Alistair Macintosh, a former Research Engineer with the M.o.D now retired, has exhausted the avenues within Scotland to have his case heard and has spent many months in contact with the Aarhus Convention Committee seeking to convince them that this denial of natural justice, especially in regards to environmental matters, is a just and suitable subject for them to consider.

- That this prestigious committee is now prepared to devote a day to this case is a tremendous achievement by Alistair who has pursued this avenue of redress completely on his own for many months.

He is being accompanied to Geneva by Dr Ashley Lloyd another of the resident's group continuing to try and bring their concerns to the wider Edinburgh public.

Ashley and Alistair have no funding, though the group is has been mandated by a large group of West End residents. it is itself is very small, and made up of ordinary people, not affiliated to any political party or sponsored in any way at all, and the trip is being paid for by the pair themselves initially (hopefully there are UN rules and provisions for legitimate and receipt supported expenses that may eventually cover the cost). So instead of Business Class and 5 star hotels they are flying Budget airline on Wednesday and staying in an ordinary hotel that night, intending to walk briskly to the Palais des Nations the following morning.

The hearing begins at 10.30am on Thursday and is planned to last all day.

*There are a set of pictures that can be downloaded directly from this link and are royalty-free when used in connection with this story NB the pictures of Alistair and Ashley are recent the 4 views of Shandwick Place (now empty) and Great Stuart Street/Ainslie Place (now congested) are file images, but representative of the situation now..*



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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

The website of the Aarhus Convention with an explanation of the remit of the Committee, and the reasons for it's existence, case studies etc can be found at:

<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/introduction.html>

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