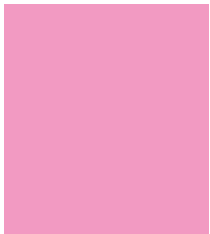




The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Join In

Gabh Pàirt



25th Anniversary Regional Day Latha Roinneil 25mh Ceann-Bliadhna

A community conversation

Hosted by Glasgow Council for the
Voluntary Sector

Monday 30 September 2024
Albany Centre, Glasgow



Introduction

As part of our activities to mark the Parliament's 25th anniversary, we visited the Glasgow region to meet with local people to chat about what the Parliament means to them. We were keen to get a good understanding of what their expectations are for the future and how we can better engage with local people. That's what the Parliament is here for - to improve the lives of people in Scotland. It's important that we hear from people directly.

During our visit to Glasgow, we had good discussions about lots of issues – such as inequalities and accessibility and that the Parliament should get out into the community more. We had a good, lively conversations.

The meetings have given us a much better understanding of what people expect and how we can carry these conversations on in the future to make sure the Parliament is delivering all it can for people. My thanks to everyone who took part.



Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP
Presiding Officer



Drawn by Jenny from MORETHANMINUTES

Willowacre Trust
Charitable subsidiary of West of Scotland Housing Association

GCVS Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector

The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

25 YEARS - BLIADHNA

Credit: Jenny Capon, More than Minutes

Regional Programme of Community Engagement

The Presiding Officer is leading a regional programme of visits to each of the eight Scottish Parliamentary regions to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Scottish Parliament. This is the third visit of eight. The Scottish Parliament's Participation & Communities Team is developing the programme of community engagement alongside community organisations. A day of events is being held in each region throughout 2024 and 2025. The approach is to involve communities in the development of activities and to hear from people in ways that suit them best. For the third regional day, we worked in partnership with Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector and Willowacre Trust. Activities were developed collaboratively aiming to hold events which were friendly and inclusive and involved people who may not usually engage with the Scottish Parliament. We know that not everyone can easily engage with Parliament. We're exploring ways to connect with more people, so that they can have their say in the work we do.

This report outlines the event in Glasgow hosted by Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector.

Attendees

Presiding Officer: Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP

Members of the Scottish Parliament: Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP, Patrick Harvie MSP, Bill Kidd MSP, Paul Sweeney MSP, Annie Wells MSP.

Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector: Deborah Carline, Samantha McDonald, Martha Siwale.

Scottish Parliament Staff: Gillian Baxendine, Claire Bennet, Jane Cooper, Michael Weir, Nick Connolly, Andy Cowan, Jen Griffin, Kate Smith.

Graphic Notetaker: Jenny Capon from More Than Minutes.

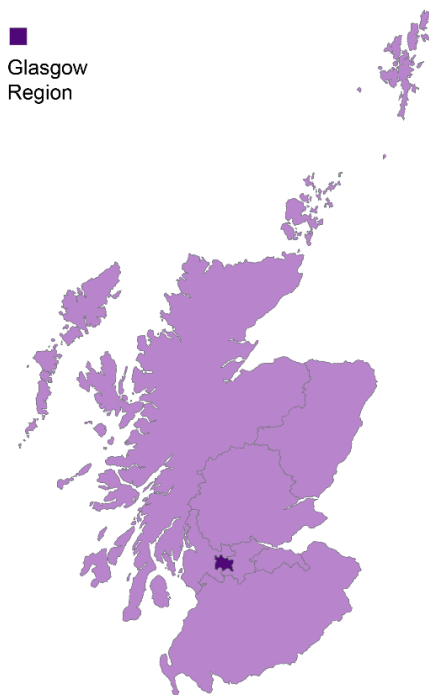
Participants: 25 people attended including service users/participants, volunteers and people from:

Organisations supporting people to attend included: Nemo Arts, Empower Women for Change, Good Vibrations, Community Connectors, Enable, Women on Wheels, Weekday Wow Factor and NHS.

Format of the Event

- Nemo Arts delivered a participatory Taiko drumming workshop. The activity aimed to support people to feel comfortable and at ease.
- Interactive activities were displayed around the room asking participants questions.
- People explored a range of questions and shared ideas in small table conversations facilitated by the Presiding Officer, MSPs and staff.
- After the workshop everyone enjoyed sharing lunch together.

A Graphic Notetaker captured what people said.



You can [view a short video](#) from the day on X

What we Heard

Participants were asked to name one word they think of in relation to the Scottish Parliament.



We Asked:

What has the Parliament done in the last 25 years that means something to you?

- Free prescriptions.
- Free bus passes.
- Free student fees.
- Marriage equality.
- Vaginal mesh implant changes.
- Leadership through COVID.
- It doesn't feel like the Parliament has affected me at all. It doesn't feel like it is for the people.
- Minimum Pricing on Alcohol – won't make any difference.

What would you like to see in the future?

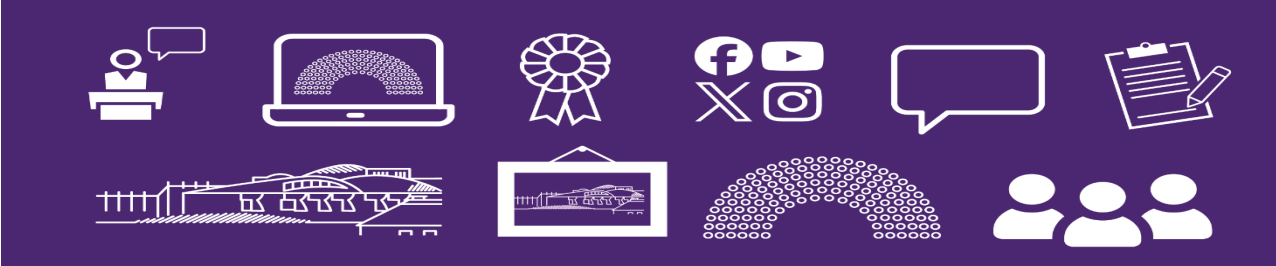
- If you ask people for their views, follow up.
- Cross Party Groups be better integrated into parliamentary business.
- The National Concessionary travel scheme be means tested.
- Free concessionary travel for people with mental health issues.
- More representation from Asian people – use positive discrimination.

Lived experience

- Ask ordinary people their views, not just 'experts'. Listen to people.

Have you ever been involved in the Scottish Parliament?

Activity	Number of people
Watched a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	3
Visited the Scottish Parliament website.	2
Visited the Scottish Parliament.	3
Followed the Scottish Parliament on social media.	1
Spoken to or contacted one of their MSPs.	3
Attended a Scottish Parliament event in their community.	3
A family member has attended an education session at Holyrood or in school.	1
Given views to a committee.	2
Attended an exhibition or event at the Parliament.	1



What are the key issues in your area that you feel should be addressed/prioritised?

Asylum Seekers

- Free travel for refugees and asylum seekers. Don't feel that the Scottish Parliament is here for them – the Scottish Government scrapped the free bus pass for asylum seekers.
- Scottish Government should work more closely with Mears Group (Home Office accommodation provider for asylum seekers).
- Living conditions and support needs a massive improvement.

Safety

- Improve the safety of women and asylum seekers.

Carers

- COVID vaccine for carers.

Environment

- Change to local companies for environmental impact.
- Food system.

Improve the inclusivity and visibility of marginalised groups

- Autism acceptance or provide practical support such as essential support for housing, travel, and guardianship. This does not exist and to navigate help and support is a full-time job.
- Equitable service delivery for ethnic minority people.

Older people

- Age Scotland and SOPA feel that there should be an older person champion in every local authority.
- The 4th national democratic strategy recommends 'meeting centres' for people early in their dementia journeys but there is a lack of NHS support for that – see Weekday Wow Factor Tuesday group.

Transport

- Elderly people should get a free pass for trains.
- People with learning disabilities should have access to free bus passes.

Addressing inequalities

- Anti racism training in universities and workplaces.
- University scholarships for minority groups.
- Asian women's needs.
- Women's health.
- Diversity and equality.
- Better autism awareness.

Addressing drug misuse

- Access to drug testing and safe-use centres.

Addressing poverty

- There is no consistency in benefit applications.

Health and social care

- Reduce paperwork it's killing the NHS and its patients.
- Improve social care.
- Mental health equality.

Other issues

- Scotland's involvement in Palestine – how can we influence Westminster.
- A global Scotland.
- Learn from individuals with long COVID.

Issues not within power of the Scottish Parliament

- Street lights are not replaced.
- Roads are poor.
- The right to protest peacefully on all matters.
- Free Sudan, Palestine, Congo, Ukraine, Lebanon and Yemen.

How would you like to get involved and raise the issues that matter to you with the Parliament?

Activity	Number of people
Giving their views to a Committee either verbally or in writing.	1
Visiting the Scottish Parliament.	1
Attending a Scottish Parliament event in their community.	1
Attending an event or an exhibition in Parliament.	1
Watching a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	0
Visiting the Scottish Parliament website.	0
Speaking to or contacting one of their MSPs.	1

What are the barriers to engaging with the Scottish Parliament?

Confidence

- Confidence and skills e.g. public speaking.
- Trying to navigate system – feeling forgotten.

Accessibility

- Getting to Edinburgh (visual problems).
- Bottom-up approach is often difficult to navigate and feel heard.
- Accessible information.
- Individualised (listen to person and don't stereotype).
- Not having someone to come with you.
- Making content accessible (not overload).
- Language barriers.
- Feeling no one cares e.g. autism.

Equality

- Gap between people who want to participate and those who do.
- Not seeing representation in the organisation.
- People with learning disabilities not being listened to.

Knowledge and information

- Knowledge and education of democracy and participation is not universal.
- Not knowing what the Scottish Parliament is and what the UK Parliament is.
- Knowing how to get involved.
- Organisations know people but don't know how to get their voice heard in the system.

Follow up and trust

- Broken promises.
- System is inconsistent – hard to trust.

If you are an organisation, how do you involve and engage people?

- Surveys
- Events to get peoples views and experience on specific issues.
- Listen to identify themes that matter to people.
- Build trust so people feel confident.
- Post project surveys and polls, next time how ca we improve.
- WhatsApp groups and word of mouth.
- Social media outreach and engagement.
- Self-advocacy forums.

- Campaigns.
- Group and individual conversations.
- Conversations.
- Partnership working.
- Ask service users what they are most in need of.
- Invite MSPs to meet the people we work with.

Going Forward

The learning from the programme will be used to improve how the Parliament involves people.

We will do this by:

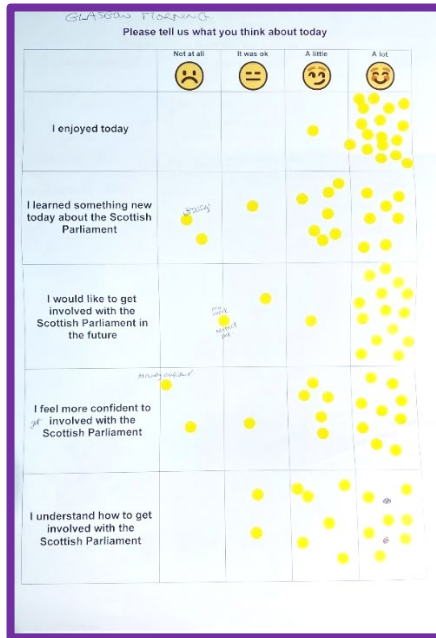
- Reviewing the issues raised and the outcomes from the programme with some of the participants, at the Participation and Communities Team Communities Conference in summer 2025.
- Producing a Community Engagement Strategy by autumn 2025.
- Feeding into the review of the Scottish Parliament Public Engagement Strategy in 2025/26.

The Graphic Notes produced at each of the events will be displayed in the Parliament in 2025.

The reports, videos, graphic notes and resources from the programme can be viewed on the [Participation and Communities Team page on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Feedback

Feedback was taken in person at the end of the event with 17 people out of the 25 who attended completing a sticky dot evaluation.



17	enjoyed the event.
14	learned something new about the Parliament.
15	would like to get involved with the Parliament in the future.
14	feel more confident to get involved with the Parliament.
15	better understand how to to get involved with the Parliament.

The following additional feedback was received

What went well?

- Meeting my MSP, planning future meetings
- Great to meet with MSPs – given lots of information.
- Friendly staff
- Helpful staff
- Welcoming staff

What could be better?

- Having roundtable conversations
- Multiplying such events in the future
- Maybe group chats with feedback from groups

Any other comments?

- Lovely food Thanks
- Lunch was excellent very much appreciated