



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 Shetland Community Bike Project

Monday 26 August 2024  
Lerwick Town Hall



## Introduction

As part of our activities to mark the Parliament's 25th anniversary, we visited the Highlands and Islands 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 with Shetland Community Bike Project at the Town Hall in Lerwick, we had good discussions about issues like transport, housing, stigma and support for substance misuse. We've had a really 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**



Credit: Jenny Capon, More than Minutes

# Scottish Parliament 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Regional Programme

The Presiding Officer is leading a regional programme of visits to each of the eight Scottish Parliamentary regions to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Scottish Parliament. This was the second visit of eight. The Scottish Parliament's Participation & Communities Team is developing a programme of community engagement in collaboration with communities. The approach is to involve communities in the development of activities and to hear from people in ways that suit them best. For the second regional day, we worked in partnership with Shetland Community Bike Project and Voluntary Action Shetland. 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 Shetland with Shetland Community Bike Project.

## Attendees

**Presiding Officer:** Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP

**Members of the Scottish Parliament:** Ariane Burgess MSP, Edward Mountain MSP, Emma Roddick MSP, Beatrice Wishart MSP

**Shetland Community Bike Project:** Caroline Adamson, Neil Leask, Yoel Howard

**Voluntary Action Shetland:** Ayesha Huda, Wendy Hand

**Scottish Parliament Staff:** Mark Brough, Stuart Buchanan, Sarah Campbell, Ewan Masson, Kate Smith

**Graphic Notetaker:** Jenny Capon from More Than Minutes

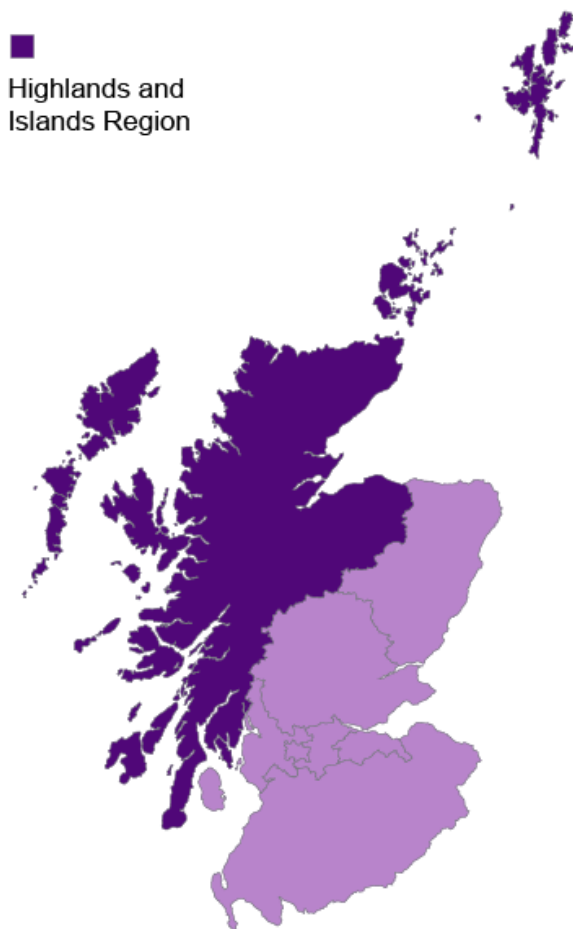
**Participants:** 28 people attended, including service users/participants, volunteers, staff and board members.

### Shetland Community Bike Project

Shetland Community Bike Project was established in 1999 as a SCIO. Originally set up by Caroline Adamson, the project was for people with barriers to work. This covers lots of issues and problems people may have regarding returning to work or working for the first time. The project gives people purpose, responsibility, training and a wage. Barriers to employment include drug & alcohol abuse, criminal convictions, Alzheimer's, mental health problems. Most people are on low incomes and have experienced multiple barriers.

## Format of the Event

- The event was a joint 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.
- Shetland Bike Project, the Presiding Officer and MSPs gave introductions.
- The event was marketplace style with stalls around the room with interactive activities. Each stall displayed a question.
- 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.



## What we asked

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

- The opportunity to vote for independence.
- Given us hope.
- 'The Smacking Ban' - The Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act. This impacted me personally by impacting on the outcome of a family court case that I was involved in. It affected my whole family in a positive way.
- 'Free Period Products' – The Free Period Products (Scotland) Bill – It has provided a benefit for those who struggled to provide.
- Free bus travel – The National Concessionary Travel Scheme - free bus travel for all those under 22 – Young Scot Card.

## What is working well now?

- Health care and free prescriptions.

## What would you like to see in the future?

- Energy transmission costs – cheaper prices for Shetland.
- Human rights.
- Wind farms – more financial benefit to islands. Such as helping with energy costs – gives money to those in need.
- More support to small local crofters - to help with the housing crisis in Shetland. Meaning that young people don't return.
- Improve transport links ie. NorthLink and costs.
- College still being offered on the island.
- Local opportunities to ensure that young people return to the island.
- Embrace liberated models of public service.
- Move on from new public management model.

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

### Transport

- Cheaper travel, sort the ferry.

### Reducing stigma

- Reduce stigma for substance use and improve funding (for support).

### Longer term strategies

- Longer term funding is required.
- Think long term and stop being reactive.

### Other priorities:

- Too much emphasis on legalisation rather than new ways of working.
- Equity.
- Adult education (IT skills).
- Long term funding for services.
- Island proofing legislation – consultation.
- Allow local development. Huge centralisation and over monitoring, micromanagement.
- Energy transmission costs.

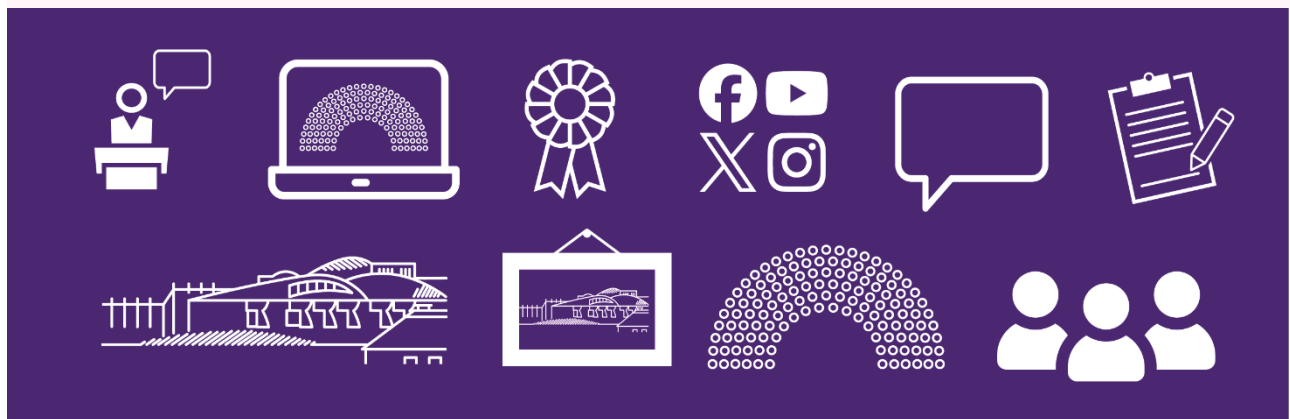
## What are the barriers to engaging with the Scottish Parliament?

- Distance them and us.
- Location – island life.
- Transport – Loganair – ferries.
- Time out of work.
- Hybrid meetings.
- Costs.

- Accommodation, time off work travel.
- Disempowered.
- Education – not taught in schools (about the Parliament and how to engage).
- Stigma.
- Digital – connectivity, inclusion, skills.

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

Activity	Number of people
Giving views to a Committee either verbally or in writing.	3
Visiting the Scottish Parliament.	2
Attending a Scottish Parliament event in their community.	4
Attending an event or an exhibition in Parliament.	1
Watching a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	2
Follow the Parliament on Social Media	1
Speaking to or contacting on of their MSPs.	2





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

- Word of mouth x 2.
- Face to face.
- Email and phone.
- Website - making it more accessible.
- Social media.

## 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.](#)

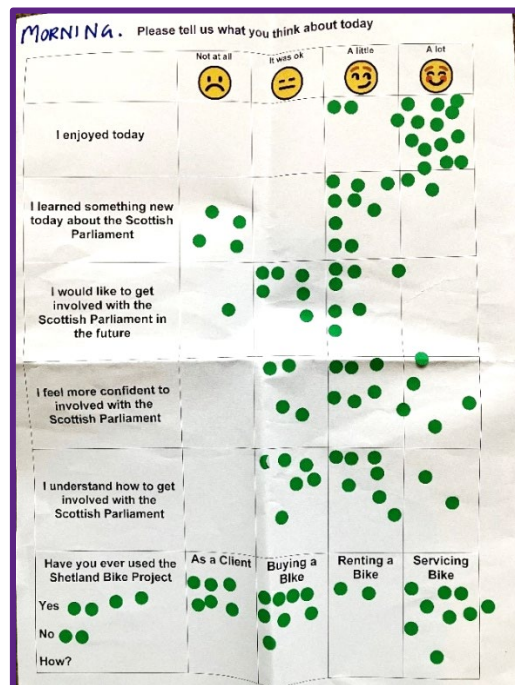


MSPs meeting with event guests.

Clockwise from top right: Emma Roddick MSP, Ariane Burgess MSP, Beatrice Wishart MSP, Edward Mountain MSP

# Feedback

Feedback was taken in person at the end of the event with 15 people out of the 28 completed a sticky dot evaluation.



Of the people who completed the evaluation:

