

# Proposed Witchcraft Convictions (Pardons) (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to pardon all those convicted under the Witchcraft Act 1563.

The consultation runs from 23 June 2022 to 15 September 2022

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation Document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

*No Response*

## About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.  
Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

**Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation.**

Lifelong interest in history, particularly women's history, as well as historical beliefs regarding folk magic & witchcraft.

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

*No Response*

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).

(Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Jennifer Wight

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number.

We will not publish these details.

**Aim and approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").**

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (Please note that this question is compulsory.)

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

I strongly believe that officially clearing the name of all those convicted of "witchcraft" is long overdue. This is both because those accused were innocent of any crime & also, as the proposed Bill states, I think it will have a positive impact on the present too in helping tackle sexism in Scotland & modern witchcraft accusations abroad.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

I think legislation is required because too much time has passed for these aims to be pursued through the criminal justice system as both the accused & their immediately affected relatives have all passed on. Therefore a legislative pardon is the most practical & effective way to proceed.

## Financial Implications

Q3. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

no overall change in costs

**Please explain the reasons for your answer.**

I don't foresee pardoning those convicted under the Witchcraft Act having any major financial impact on the present as it would be a symbolic act that challenges ideas, stereotypes etc.

## Equalities

Q4. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Positive

**Please explain the reasons for your response including the impact on people with particular protected characteristics**

It would hopefully have a positive impact as it would send a strong message that singling people out based on perfectly innocent characteristics such as gender, religious beliefs, disabilities etc is completely unacceptable.

## Sustainability

Q5. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? (If you do not have a view then skip to next question)

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

I think the proposal would have a positive impact on achieving a just society for future generations. This is because putting out a strong message that the Witch Trials were completely unjust & unacceptable is an important step towards making sure something like that doesn't happen again. It will also hopefully encourage people to examine themselves for any prejudices & biases they need to work on getting rid of personally.

## General

Q6. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

I think the proposed Bill is excellent overall & I really hope it will become legislation. There's just one wee detail I'd like to comment on that I noticed when reading the consultation document: it states that the last Witch Hunt in Scotland took place in Paisley in 1697 - this was indeed the last hunt that ended in a mass execution, not just in Scotland but the whole of Western Europe. However, there were other subsequent trials & executions of individuals in Scotland which are believed to have continued until as late as 1722, with the last being Janet Horne executed up in Dornoch. I know this is only background information that likely wouldn't affect the actual Bill itself, but I still feel it important to point out so that we acknowledge as many known victims as possible.