

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

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).

Eleanore Dykes

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 am fully supportive of the proposed bill to pardon witchcraft convictions in Scotland because I believe that those of us who are alive today can give our voices to the voiceless dead. I am from the United States, and just recently the last convicted witch of the Salem Witch Trials, Elizabeth Johnson Jr., was officially

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

exonerated. These official pardons and exonerations help clear innocent victims' names and are important as a means of public apology and recognition of wrongdoing for this grave and historic miscarriage of justice. I believe it can also bring some healing to the descendants of those who were killed and persecuted in the name of witchcraft, or who today might identify with the victims.

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 of the authority and legality this measure would lend to a pardon. Such a pardon should not be met with only contrite or contrived words, but through action, and I believe this measure would also set a valuable and important precedent and speak truth to patriarchy.

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?

some increase in costs

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Any financial implications of this proposed bill would likely be minimal and could be incorporated into existing budgets. Presently, this proposed bill does not include any call to create a national monument to memorialize those people in Scotland who were convicted as witches under the Witchcraft Act 1563. This proposal is only for a piece of legislation and the only direct implication the proposed bill would have would be pardoning those convicted under the Witchcraft Act 1563.

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

The majority of the accused and victims of witchcraft executions/burnings were women. Formally pardoning them of their supposed "crimes" and restoring their names to innocence would, I believe, be a positive step forward for women and advancing gender equality. The witch trials also often targeted those who were "othered" by society - women who were single, older, poor, childless or outspoken, or perhaps due to differences in religion, disability, or mental health - and punished them for it by torture, imprisonment, and death. The sexist and misogynistic attitudes that allowed these atrocities to occur still exist today, and so I believe this bill would serve as a confrontation and challenge of patriarchy views and send a clear message that this sort of toxic culture towards women was not acceptable then, and it is not acceptable now.

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?

Although society has made improvements towards women's rights and equality (such as the right to vote and increasing inclusion in the workplace), much progress still remains if we are to achieve true gender equity. For example, while more women have increasingly entered into male dominated roles and arenas such as law, politics, finance, and leadership, misogynistic and sexist attitudes that have persisted across time continue to pose a barrier for women's advancement. In order to achieve a just and sustainable society, we must recognize that these misogynistic views - which were in part responsible for women being convicted under the Witchcraft Act 1563 - are wrong, antiquarian, and actively harmful to women. Passing this bill would signal a decisive condemnation of the misogynistic views that have been used as justification for persecuting women throughout history and could set an example around the world.

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)?

None.