

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.

Am currently studying for a masters in Scottish Heritage at Aberdeen University and as part of this have been researching the Scottish Witch trials

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).

Fiona Seivewright

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 think this is a timely response to address a historic wrong.

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 recognition in law is an appropriate and necessary step. It provides official and national acknowledgement of a major miscarriage of justice that has been omitted from the national memory and should be remembered and addressed.

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.

This is a symbolic gesture and as such would not involve significant monetary costs. It is more about setting out what we accept of our past and what we could not tolerate in our own society today, or in others across the world

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

Misogyny persists and is routinely seen as the cause of the top stories in the media, from Sarah Everard to the Me Too movement. In order to take part in these discussions as a nation we must look back to our past and accept that we are not perfect and steps we took to rid ourselves of historic wrongs. This is a wonderful opportunity to achieve this

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?

This law is all about creating a just society in Scotland and hopefully setting an example for others to follow. Historical wrongs such as the witch trials, slavery and the persecution and prosecution of homosexuals cannot simply be swept under the carpet. In order that we can move forward as a nation and participate on an international level we must show that we can have the strength and integrity to admit when we got it wrong. It would be hypocritical for us to criticise maltreatment of others if we cannot look at our own past just as critically.

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)?

This bill would be so inspiring to so many people of all ages across Scotland. Throughout the witches of Scotland campaign, people (mostly women) have been moved to investigate the past in their own areas. They have educated themselves on the issues and become passionate about the accused witches. This has been a life changing revelation to many including myself and an official pardon, to those of us so inspired by this campaign, is the most logical and needed next step in the process. Scotland is a proud nation but not a perfect one. This could be a defining moment in our history when we say that, while this was considered acceptable to those in the 16th to 18th century, it is, and never will be, acceptable in Scotland again.