

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.

I'm a woman 'of a certain age' who has wrongfully been described as a witch, just as the women who were tried and executed as witches were (thankfully without the execution part for me.)

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).

Julie Gibbons

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.

Misogyny is an increasing problem for all women. It's an aspect of public life that contributes to many women not stepping into roles with a higher profile, for instance. On an everyday level, all women live with a constant threat - from men. We are sexualised or haggified. It's as if we cannot exist as people, but as characters. Throughout the world, we are still being persecuted as witches. We are tired. We are ancestrally haunted by these crimes. We are still paying with our lives. The bill for pardon would help towards our ancestral healing as well as making a difference in our everyday. It is time to right a heinous wrong, before we slip into more of a Handmaids Tale scenario - if we are to follow the USA. I researched the names of the (mainly) women who were executed as witches here in my home region of Lanarkshire. Those names were the names of my mum, my aunts, my grandmother, my great grandmother. These women were women. We know now that there were no Devil's orgies. Please can we help lay their memory to rest? And help lay a path to a better future?

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.

A pardon is something that everyone can understand. It is a high profile action from the top of the land. It takes the matter from opinion to action. How else can we right the wrong from today? From the pardon, we can move forward and make further amends.

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

This is beyond my expertise.

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

Beyond an initial negative reaction from that sector of society who are unshiftingly biased, this will continue to have a positive effect, especially for those who are already othered in society. A great deal of the impact will be unconscious - for both those suffering and for those who are simply unaware and whose actions

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unconsciously arise from these crimes committed so long ago. Positive action in this way will speak a message loud and clear that intolerance for fake reasons will be met with resistance at all levels.

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?

Our children deserve a sustainable future. This includes changing perceptions and this Bill would help this.

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 is so long overdue. We cannot let this opportunity pass us by. Please look to what's happening in the world today regarding women and other penalised groups of people to know it is time to take action and right this wrong.