

# 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.**

Woman in Scotland

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).

Helen Morrison

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

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

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

I fully support the bill for all the reasons clearly highlighted in the proposal document supporting this consultation document:

Injustice does not have an expiry date. This would right a wrong committed by the State in Scotland.

Nobody can be a witch they were just women and men.

Nobody was in league with the devil.

The law was used disproportionality against women especially those that were vulnerable in a variety of ways.

It is part of our collective history that needs addressing and recognizing.

It brings it to the public's awareness within Scotland and also sends a message to those countries that are still supporting or ignoring that people are suffering under similar accusations today.

It may help to address/highlight the misogyny that women suffer today.

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.

This legislation is required. I understand legally there is no other way that this could be achieved.

However, I also think this is part of a number of measures that all support achieving the goals I detailed in my answer to number 1. That includes a national memorial were we can recognize and reflect on the wrong that was done by these mainly women and some men.

Details of answer to 1.

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## 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.**

There are no direct actions or reactions required if this bill is passed.

The victims and their families lived so many hundreds of years ago. There is nobody we can compensate for this miscarriage of justice.

If we reduce misogyny we could bring a financial benefit to Scotland and its economy. We could empower women and men to understand our collective history and women could be understood to and empowered to achieve more.

## 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**

This will have a very positive impact on equality. It is very much a gender imbalance women's issue with 84% of those accused being women and most of those were executed or had their lives negatively impacted. The remaining 16% of men were generally not directly accused of being a witch they were identified due to a close relationship with an accused woman.

Women were not allowed to speak in court, defend themselves or considered equal to men at the time of the Act. This has changed and needs recognition of how far we have come. Therefore how can a conviction be held up against a woman under the Witchcraft Act if she and all her female friends and relations were unable to defend her.

Women were tortured sexually by being stripped, having all their bodily hair shaved off and then some had 3 inch mental pins forced into their sexual organs. This was done by an all male group which would have been extremely traumatic and then the confession she gave under these conditions was used to convict and execute her. We need to be honest and own up to our past and make this right not sweep it under the carpet.

Women lost their businesses, homes, families, communities and ultimately their lives and some of the lives of their loved ones around them. Men did not suffer this fate in the thousands.

## 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?

Yes it can impact on creating a strong, healthy and just society. History is a long time and although this may seem a long time ago in the perspective of our human history it was yesterday. Not fulfilling this pardon would be like Germans and the world not acknowledging the wrong that was done to the Jews in the Second World War. Our State executed thousands of women in fear of the devil, we can stand up today with the understanding that this was wrong and continues to be wrong across the world for those continuing to suffer the same accusations and fate.

It is painful and confusing for a society to admit it was wrong but that does not mean it should not admit it. It will be seen by some as a negative but for all those under represented groups it will be celebrated as a positive. Some of those in power will still follow the same attitudes and conditioning that led to this miscarriage of justice and we must be the voice of those 4,000 accused and 2,500 executed that they were not in league with the devil doing his work in our communities they were just ordinary folk trying to get by in life as best they could.

## 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 am happy to support this work in any way I can. I feel it is important at this time for those that were effected, died. It is important at the moment with what is happening to women globally #SEEME and Roe V Wade. For the future it is important for our sons and daughters to understand womens history fully. Good luck and thanks for getting it this far.