

# 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".)

Academic with expertise in a relevant subject

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

Masters Degree in Cultural Heritage from the University of Aberdeen. Did my masters dissertation on the Witch Trials, in particular the Forfar witch trials 1661-62. I was the researcher for Angus Archives witch walks and I organised witch remembrance church services and have upcoming heritage projects on the Angus 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).

Shaun Wilson

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 have studied the witch trials at an academic level, I covered the context behind them and studied the 'confessions' of the Forfar Witches. These were people who were victims of panic and hysteria. This apology isn't just to women who were accused, but to the men and children too. These people were accused because they were catholics, old of a poor social class, or in the case of the Forfar witch trials belonged to a group who have historically been marginalised, The Roma Travellers. All these people deserve an apology. All victims of injustice deserve an apology and the victims of the witch trials are no different.

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.

*No Response*

## 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.**

As someone who works in the cultural heritage field, the witch trials are a popular aspect of the history of Angus. Witch Walks sell out and events are well attended! Embracing heritage, no matter how dark can boost engagement in local heritage. By investing in local heritage it's a good way to boost tourism and engage people more with their local towns/cities ect. Pay a little more to see better benefits down the line

## 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?

Slightly positive

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

Most obviously this is massive for women, a great in justice done to them on such a large scale. However 3 in 20 witches in Scotland were men (Goodare, 2005). The reality is that the victims were from all genders, were likely catholic or non-conformist, poor or had learning difficulties that weren't known of back then.

## 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?

In my 2022 dissertation 'youth engagement in local heritage' I spoke with young people in Angus (15-29 year olds). The sample had a great interest in dark heritage and the witch trials, and would love to see more witch heritage in Angus. The Witch trials are a piece of history that many find interesting and are willing to engage with. This is significant as it helps boost interest in young people about history and heritage, which is great for the tourism sector, but also it's something that the sample felt should be remembered so they can learn from the past and not bury it because some find it insignificant or too dark.

## 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)?

*No Response*