



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

25
—YEARS—
BLIADHNA



Join In
Gabh Pàirt

25th Anniversary Regional Day Latha Roinneil 25mh Ceann-Bliadhna

A community conversation

Monday 31 March 2025

Hosted by Cumbernauld and Carbrain
Community Hub



Introduction

As part of our activities to mark the Parliament's 25th anniversary, we visited the Central Scotland region to meet with local people to chat about what the Parliament means to them. We were keen to get a good understanding of what their expectations are for the future and how we can better engage with local people. That's what the Parliament is here for - to improve the lives of people in Scotland. It's important that we hear from people directly.

Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub hosted the day. We visited New College Lanarkshire Cumbernauld Campus, Cumbernauld and Carbrain Hub and then held a community celebration at Cumbernauld Trinity Parish Church. Over the day we had discussions about issues like the cost of living, transport and support for students to access College. We had really good, lively conversations.

The meetings have given us a much better understanding of what people expect and how we can carry these conversations on in the future to make sure the Parliament is delivering all it can for people. My thanks to everyone who took part.



Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP
Presiding Officer



Scottish Parliament 25th Anniversary Regional Programme

The Presiding Officer is leading a regional programme of visits to each of the eight Scottish Parliamentary regions to mark the 25th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament. This was the seventh visit of eight. The Scottish Parliament's Participation & Communities Team has developed a programme of community engagement in collaboration with communities. The approach is to involve communities in the development of activities and to hear from people in ways that suit them best. For the seventh regional day in the Central Scotland Region, we worked in partnership with Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub. Together we aimed for events which were friendly and inclusive and involved people who may not usually engage with the Scottish Parliament. We know that not everyone can easily engage with Parliament. We're exploring ways to connect with more people, so that they can have their say in the work we do.

This report outlines the event that took place in Cumbernauld with Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub.



Attendees

Presiding Officer: Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP.

Members of the Scottish Parliament: Stephanie Callaghan MSP, Jamie Hepburn MSP, Stephen Kerr MSP, Monica Lennon MSP, Gillian Mackay MSP, Collette Stevenson MSP.

Scottish Parliament Staff: Mark Brough, Stuart Buchanan, Andrew Cowan, Julianne Buchanan, Caroline Vevers, Rosario Mastrocinque, Emmanuelle Le Coz, Laura Black, Sophia Simpson, Kate Smith.

Graphic Notetaker: Jenny Capon from More Than Minutes

Participants: 150 people took part over the course of the day.

- At New College Lanarkshire we met with students from the Supported Learning Department.
10 students took part in the Makaton choir
10 Barista students took drinks orders and served the Members.
45 students from the Supported Learning Department took part in a question-and-answer session.
- 27 people took part in the visits at the Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub. We met with staff, volunteers, service users and Cumbernauld Community Piping Group who piped us from the hub to Cumbernauld Trinity Parish Church.
- 85 people met us at Cumbernauld Trinity Parish Church. These were: local people, community members, volunteers, and groups working closely with Cumbernauld & Carbrain Hub: Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council, Carbrain Parent Council, Carbrain Community Events, Club at the Hub (young people's LGBT group), Cumbernauld Community Piping Group, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Care, Cumbernauld FM, Craigieburn Community Garden, Cumbernauld Baby Bank, Cumbernauld Family Centre, Kildrum Community Council, North Lanarkshire Ethnic

Minority Association, North Lanarkshire Recovery Community, St Margaret's Parent Council, Tony's Safe Space (suicide prevention group), Watch us Grow (people with ASN), St Margarets Primary School, Condorrat Primary School (8 pupils), Kilsyth Primary School (6 pupils), Kilsyth Academy (3 pupils), students from the supported Learning Department from New College Lanarkshire Cumbernauld Campus (this included some of people from the visits above).

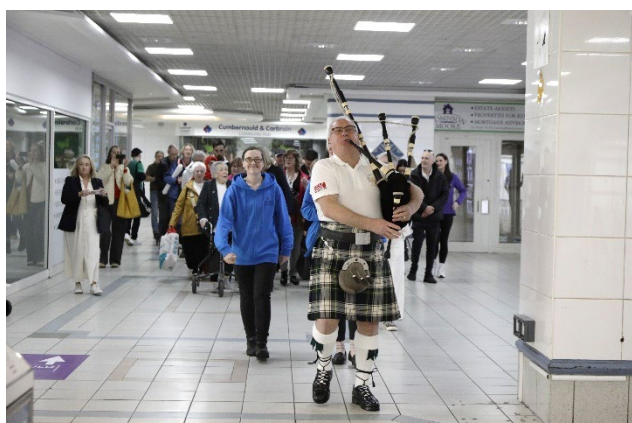
As well as: Neve Macauley MSYP for Cumbernauld & Kilsyth, North Lanarkshire Councillor Anne Ballinger, Councillor James McPhilamy, Councillor Willie Goldie.

Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub group partners the Corra Foundation.

Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub

The hub's origins began with a small women's group based in Carbrain Primary School. The group had dreams of creating a community space – something that the area lacked and desperately needed. Through support from the People in Place programme, the group started building their vision. The hub, the communities it engages with, and the services within, have grown substantially and continue to adapt to meet the needs of the local communities that they engage with on a day-to-day basis.

Within the hub, they run a range of services and groups, all aimed at bringing people together, reducing poverty and isolation, and creating a sense of community. These include a community pantry, free community fridge, free period products, men's group, wellness group, adults arts and crafts group, women's group, LGBTQ+ youth group, bagpiping classes, breakfast club and baby massage. They work in partnership with a variety of organisations including Social Security Scotland and North Lanarkshire Disability Team who run drop-in sessions within the hub every second Thursday. The hub also hosts elected members' surgeries.



Format of the Visit

Working with Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub, we planned two visits and a community event. Our joint aim was to create an inclusive, friendly and welcoming visit. The events are apolitical and intended to consider the role and purpose of the Scottish Parliament and celebrate community activities.

The day began with a visit to New College Lanarkshire Cumbernauld Campus to meet with students in the Supported Learning Department, followed by a visit to Cumbernauld and Carbrain Hub to meet with staff, volunteers and service users. Finally, we went to Cumbernauld Trinity Parish Church for a community celebration involving groups and projects who work closely with the Hub. This was an opportunity to hear about community initiatives and to have informal conversations in a dynamic setting with community and Parliament stalls

Visit to New College Lanarkshire Cumbernauld Campus

- Students in the Supported Learning Department performed in their Makaton Choir.
- Barista students took drink orders from the Members, prepared the drinks and served them.
- Students in the Supported Learning Department took part in a question-&-answer session.

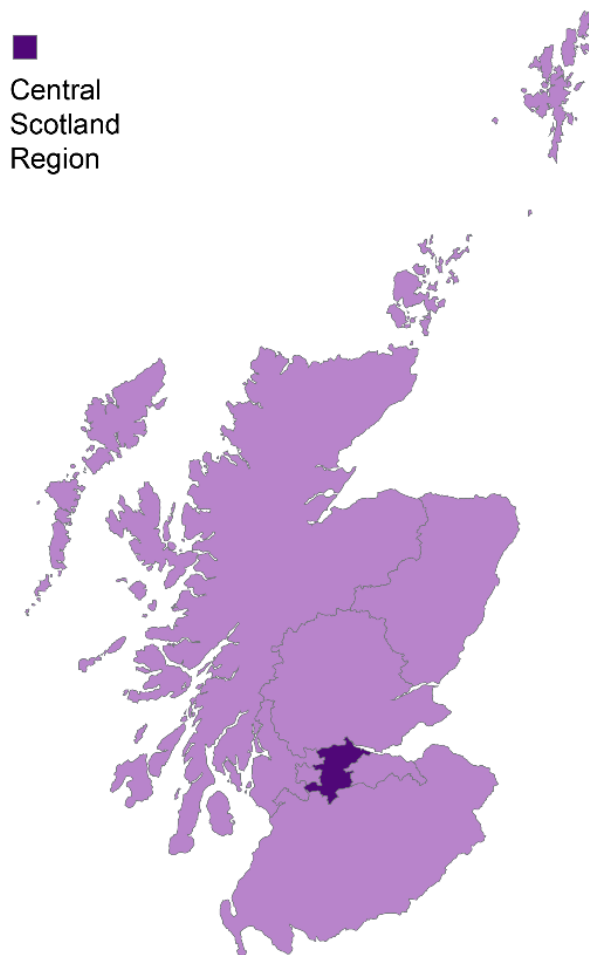
Visit to Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub

- We met with staff, volunteers and service users in the hub to hear about the services they deliver to the community; these include a community pantry, free community fridge, free period products, men's group, wellness group, adult arts and crafts group, women's group, LGBTQ+ youth group, bagpipin classes, breakfast club, and baby massage.
- Cumbernauld Community Piping Group then piped the group from the hub, through the shopping centre to Cumbernauld Trinity Parish Church.

Community Celebration at Cumbernauld Trinity Parish Church

- North Lanarkshire Recovery Community musicians welcomed us.
- Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub, the Presiding Officer and MSPs gave introductions.
- We enjoyed lunch which was prepared by a local Ghanaian caterer.

- The event was marketplace style with stalls which had questions and interactive activities. There was also a 'conversation living room'.
- A graphic notetaker captured what was said.



Central
Scotland
Region

You can [view a short video](#) from the day on X

What We Heard

Participants at the community event were asked to name one word they think of in relation to the Scottish Parliament.



What we asked

What has the Parliament done in the last 25 years that means something to you?

We used a visual timeline that people could put comments on regarding past laws that they thought were important. They highlighted:

- 1999 - Opening of the Scottish Parliament – Devolution
- 2003 – Land Reform - *Access to land, stop house building.*
- 2012 – Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol - *Very helpful.*
- 2015 - The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act - *Communities need more say, this needs more power.*

People also commented:

- Covid briefings were good and the Covid Inquiry.
- Accountability – more (people) engaged in politics since 2014
- Recent years politics seems to have been bogged down (or media portrays other focus) would be good to return to a competent efficient Government.

What would you like to see in the future?

- Engage people at a young age through youth work.

- No Royals opening Parliament.
- A wider range of background of MSPs and fewer parties – more independent voices.

What are the key issues in your area that you feel should be addressed/prioritised?

- Funding for the community – especially to less important (smaller) charities. (Funding for Lanternhouse Theatre).
- Support for young people – youth clubs and activities; cinema, nursery and more support, more equipment for schools.
- Transport – free bus travel for those on an Adult Disability Payment, bring back the removal of peak times, ferries.
- Homelessness and housing.
- Support for single parents.
- Mental health – more help for mental health.
- Health – improve access to GPs, NHS, free prescriptions, health inequality.
- Independence.
- Pensions.
- Cost of living.
- Seeing Scotland thrive – education, healthcare, communities.
- Substance misuse - re-hab; more consumption rooms, right to recovery, drug consumption rooms.
- Wealth inequality.
- Trauma/adversity awareness.
- More holistic opportunities for health.
- More power into our communities.
- Elections not coming fast enough.
- Protection for minority groups.
- Vaping – stop people vaping indoors, underage sales of vapes and protect children from marketing (such as through flavours).
- Seeing different types of animals in the zoo.
- More movies.

Have you ever been involved in the Scottish Parliament?

Activity	Number of people
Watched a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	10
Visited the Scottish Parliament website.	10
Visited the Scottish Parliament.	9
Followed the Scottish Parliament on social media.	7
Spoken to or contacted one of their MSPs.	11
Signed a petition.	7
Has a family member who attended an education session at Holyrood or in school.	6
Given views to a committee.	3
Attended an exhibition or event at the Parliament.	7
Attended a Scottish Parliament event in my Community.	8



How would you like to get involved and raise the issues that matter to you with the Parliament?

Activity	Number of people
Giving their views to a Committee either verbally or in writing.	4
Visiting the Scottish Parliament.	12
Attending a Scottish Parliament event in their community.	7
Attending an event or an exhibition in Parliament.	8
Watching a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	8
Visiting the Scottish Parliament website.	5
Speaking to or contacting on of their MSPs.	8
Follow the Scottish Parliament on Social Media.	4
Other ways	2



What are the barriers to engaging with the Scottish Parliament?

In order of prevalence:

- Full disclosure criminal record check.
- Priorities of politicians.
- What's the point.
- Worried about getting judged or not heard.
- Cost of SP when built.
- More visibility in the community.
- Physical barriers. Not mental health but on benefits, can I be involved without losing benefits.
- More help for mental health.
- Sports – not trying to do new things.
- It's not for people like us – no confidence – worried not know enough.
- School age and where we live.
- People don't know what is going on and how it relates to them.
- Financial barriers – transport
- Feeling like it's not for us.
- Time factor.
- They don't come to us MSPs (not clinics).
- Generic responses.
- Need more info/education about what Parliament does.
- Time restrictions - office hours.
- Don't think it's worth it, will make any difference.
- People trust charities/youth workers so more partnership.
- Lack of representation.
- Specific opportunities to get involved.



As a group or an organisation, how do you involve and engage people?

- School visits/engagement.
- I donate to the food bank.
- Volunteer.
- Volunteering and peer support.
- Outreach community events.
- Partnership working.
- Partnership working with GP and job centre.
- Social Media.
- Incentives for giving feedback.
- The volunteers are from the community – I know everyone.
- Impact surveys.
- Drop in – friendly face.
- Questionnaire – in person or email (talking is better).
- Get the MSPs to come talk to us.

For MSPs, how do you engage or involve communities in your work?

- Engage with young people- more through youth action/youth council

Going Forward

The learning from the programme will be used to improve how the Parliament involves people.

We will do this by:

- Reviewing the issues raised and the outcomes from the programme at the Participation and Communities Team Communities Conference in summer 2025.
- Producing a Community Engagement Strategy by autumn 2025.
- Feeding into the review of the Scottish Parliament Public Engagement Strategy in 2025/26.

The Graphic Notes produced at each of the events will be displayed in the Parliament in 2025.

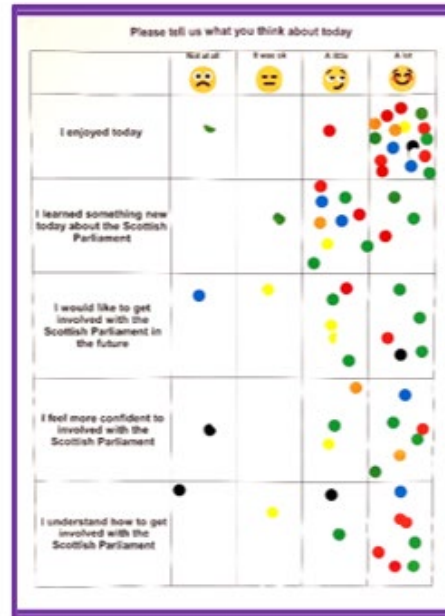
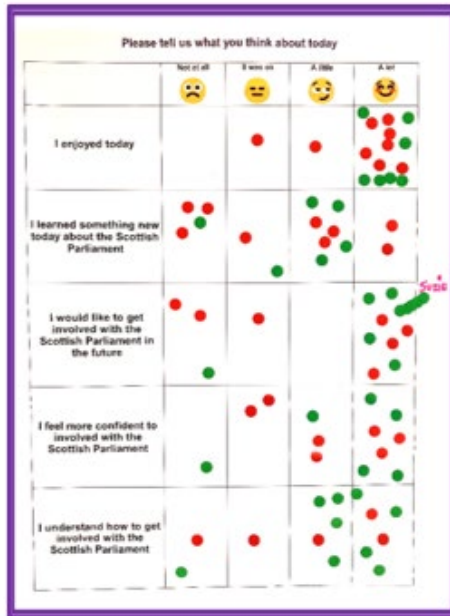
The reports, videos, graphic notes and resources from the programme can be viewed [on the Scottish Parliament website.](#)

For further information please contact PACT@parliament.scot



Feedback

Feedback was taken in person at the end of the marketplace event at the Church.



33

enjoyed the event.

21

learned something new about the Parliament.

23

would like to get involved with the Parliament in the future.

19

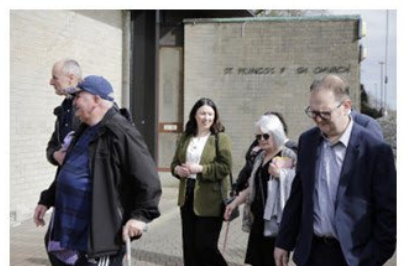
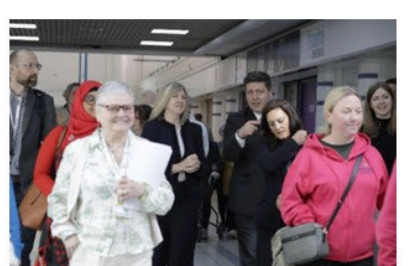
feel more confident to get involved with the Parliament.

20

better understand how to to get involved with the Parliament.



New College Lanarkshire visit



Cumbernauld and Carbrain Hub visit



Community Celebration – Cumbernauld Trinity Church



Community Celebration – Cumbernauld Trinity Church