



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

25
—YEARS—
Bliadhna



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

A community celebration

Hosted by the Mayfield and
Easthouses Development Trust



Introduction

As part of our activities to mark the Parliament's 25th anniversary, we visited the Lothian 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.

During our visit with Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust we had good discussions about community funding, support for older people, dignified access to food and many other things. 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 led 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 last visit of eight. The Scottish Parliament's Participation & Communities Team developed a programme of community engagement in collaboration with communities. The approach was to involve communities in the development of activities and to hear from people in ways that suit them best. For the eighth regional day, we were introduced to Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust (MAEDT) by Midlothian Community Action. We worked in partnership with MAEDT to hold events which were friendly and inclusive and involved people who may not usually engage with the Scottish Parliament. Nourish Scotland hosted a public diner (lunch) to mark the end of the programme and to continue the community discussions. 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.

Attendees

Presiding Officer: Rt Hon Alison Johnstone

Members of the Scottish Parliament: Colin Beattie, Sarah Boyack, Foysol Choudry

Mayfield & Easthouses Development Trust: Sharon Hill

Nourish Scotland: Abigail McCall

Scottish Parliament Staff: Claire Bennet, Laura Blair, Mark Brough, Julianne Buchanan, Andrew Cowan, Jennifer Griffin, Rachel Hunter, Ewan Masson, Rosario Mastrocinque, Kate Smith, Ali Stoddart

Graphic Notetaker: Jenny Capon from More Than Minutes

Participants: 65 people took part over the course of the day, including community members and representatives of organisations advancing equalities.

At the Pavilion we met with; CAT Team - adults with disabilities, Garden Volunteers, Men's Shed, Criminal Justice (Community Payback Team), Midlothian Climate Hub.

At the Hub and Pantry we met; customers - including those recently arrived from overseas, Midlothian Pantry Network, Dalkeith CAB - to show VERA.

The Marketplace event was opened by singing from a group of children from Mayfield nursery who help in the MAEDT garden. Groups attending included: VOCAL, Ageing Well

Walking Group, Andy's Man Club, Midlothian Foodbank, Midlothian Family Support Group, Community Council, Nourish Scotland.

Lunch was attended by: Ageing Well Walking Group, Midlothian Family Support Group, McSence, Andy's Man Club, MAEDT Volunteers, local residents, local Mosque, Midlothian Climate Hub, Midlothian Community Action, Mayfield Primary School Parents Council, Midlothian Pantry Network, Mayfield Church.

Mayfield and Easthouses Community Development Trust MAEDT

The MAEDT Pavilion and Community Garden is situated in Mayfield Park in Midlothian. It was born from a redundant bowling green. MAEDT was given access to the building and disused bowling green in 2014 and has transformed the space into a community café and garden for community growing and a multi-use space for all ages and abilities.

The Pavilion has three activity spaces that local people and organisations can hire to run a range of activities to benefit the people of Mayfield and Easthouses. They have constructed a large shelter in the garden space that local groups, including children's groups can hire. They offer a range of activities aimed at community engagement including regular volunteering opportunities within the garden. Citizens Advice bureau hold drop-in clinics weekly, VOCAL drop ins and Skills Development Scotland sessions are offered monthly. There are litter picks in the local park and work with local schools and nurseries.

A monthly community dig is held in the garden encouraging local people to assist in the continued development of the garden site. The Wheelbeing Hub Bike Project is based in the garden which promotes the use of bicycles for all, and the local Men's Shed is based in the garden, meeting twice each week to build, blether and support each other.

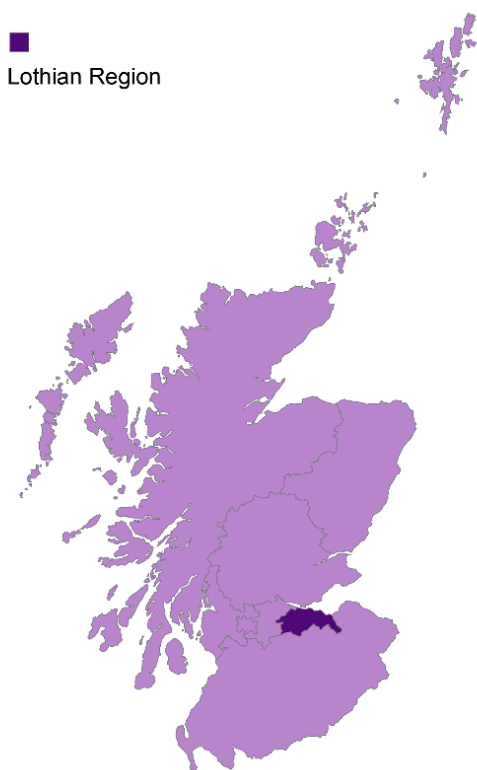
The MAEDT Office (a shop front in Bogwood Court, Mayfield) hosts a Pantry and a Satellite Foodbank. This includes other services – crisis supports such as food, finance, equipment, help at Christmas and school holidays.

Nourish Scotland

Nourish supported the visit by hosting a Public Diner. They are currently running a national consultation on the proposal for public diners – publicly supported restaurants serving healthy, tasty, affordable meals to the general public. The lunch used this model of a Public Diner to help facilitate conversations and added to the celebration of the community.

Format of the Visit

The day began with a visit with MAEDT to the Pavilion and Café in Mayfield Public Park and then to their Hub and Pantry. We met service users, volunteers and staff. Following this there was a marketplace event at Mayfield and Easthouses Community Church Hall to meet a range of groups and projects from the area. Finally, we went to Mayfield Community Club for lunch with different community members. Nourish Scotland hosted a public diner.



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

What we Heard

Participants were asked to name one word they think of in relation to the Scottish Parliament



Have you ever been involved in the Scottish Parliament?

Activity	Number of people
Watched a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	8
Visited the Scottish Parliament website.	9
Visited the Scottish Parliament.	10
Followed the Scottish Parliament on social media.	3
Spoken to or contacted one of their MSPs.	10
Attended a Scottish Parliament event in their community.	9
A family member has attended an education session at Holyrood or in school.	1
Given views to a committee.	4
Signed a Petition.	10
Attended an exhibition or event at the Parliament.	6
Other	1

We asked about legislation that had made an impact.

Devolution - 1999 the first meeting of the Scottish Parliament

- *National pride and increased political engagement*
- *Very open place for everyone.*

Standards in Scotland Schools Act 2000

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

- *This is an amazing and radical act that changed so much for communities. We could go further.*
- *Forward thinking policies (along with Smoking Ban 2022).*

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

- *We all need to play our part.*
- *I feel this has been diluted despite its grave importance.*
- *I would love for this to be acted on faster, without removing targets.*

The Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill 2013 – Votes at 16

- *This is amazing, brings more power to young people who will be the most affected.*
- *My child is more responsible than some adults.*

The Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012

- *Issues need full attention to be tackled.*

The Community Empowerment Act 2015

- *Will lead to the Pavilion Asset Transfer.*
- *Amazing Act.*
- *Could do even more.*

Social Security Scotland Act 2018 - Scottish Child Payment

The Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2020

- *This meant so much as a survivor of child abuse. Scotland leading the way.*

The Period Products (Free Provision Scotland) Bill 2021

- *Such good work to prevent poverty.*

National Concessionary Travel Scheme 2022- Free bus travel

- *Unintended consequence – anti social behaviour, should be free only during school times.*
- *Phenomenal.*
- *Amazing transformation for so many people.*

What would you like to see in the future?

- *More post legislative scrutiny.*
- *Committee reports should have more weight.*
- *Committees are underpowered.*

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

Key Areas of Concern

Social Welfare and Support

- Re-vamp of Disability Payments: Improving financial support for disabled individuals.
- Increased Funding for Grassroots Community Groups: Strengthening local communities.
- Longer-term Third Sector Funding: Providing stable funding for community organisations.
- Dignified Access to Good Food: Ensuring everyone has access to nutritious food.
- Universal Public Restaurants: Establishing public dining spaces for all.
- Funding for Local Pantries: Supporting food distribution networks.
- Universal Basic Income: Ensuring a safety net for all citizens.

Health and Wellbeing

- Wellbeing Clinics: Nurse-led clinics addressing health and financial issues.
- Mental Health Services: Reducing wait times and improving access to mental health care.
- Healthcare Access: Ensuring timely access to GPs, especially for elderly patients.
- Addiction Support: Providing help for families affected by addiction.

Rights and Equality

- Trans Rights in Law: Clarifying and supporting dignity for trans individuals.
- Trans People's Right to Safe Places: Ensuring safe spaces for trans individuals.
- Women's Rights: Protecting and promoting women's rights.
- Human Rights: Upholding and advocating for human rights.

Community and Infrastructure

- Further Investment in Community Spaces: Enhancing communal areas.
- Town Centre Regeneration: Revitalizing local town centres.
- Inclusive and Accessible Play: Ensuring play areas are accessible to all children.
- Developing Infrastructure Alongside New Housing: Building necessary infrastructure to support new housing developments.

Environmental and Sustainability

- Land Reform: Implementing effective land reform policies.
- Carbon Capture: Investing in technologies to capture carbon emissions.
- Renewables and Energy Efficiency: Promoting renewable energy and energy-efficient practices.
- Single-use Plastic Reduction: Eliminating plastic packaging in shops.

Education and Youth

- School Infrastructure: Addressing issues with school buildings and ensuring promised schools are built.
- Child and Adult Mental Health Services: Improving mental health support for all ages.
- Support for Young Children and Teens: Providing more help and opportunities for youth.
- Anti-social Behaviour Action: Tackling disruptive behaviour in communities.

Governance and Trust

- Trust Issues with Government: Building trust between citizens and government.
- Honesty and Transparency: Ensuring clear communication from government officials.

Poverty and Inequality

- Cost of Living: Addressing the rising cost of living.
- Poverty and Inequality: Working towards reducing poverty and inequality.
- Support for WASPI Women: Addressing pension issues for women affected by changes in retirement age.

Miscellaneous

- Support of Palestine and Divestment from Israel: Advocating for international human rights.
- Community Development: Fostering community cohesion, safety, and security.
- Technology Safety: Ensuring safe use of technology.

What are the barriers to engaging with the Scottish Parliament?

Financial and Logistical Barriers

- Cost of visiting the parliament
- Childcare and distance Issues
- Time constraints for Third Sector Organisations

Psychological and Social Barriers

- Social anxiety
- Perceived lack of impact
- Cultural barriers

Knowledge and Information Barriers

- Lack of knowledge about MSPs and their roles
- Unclear directions for getting involved
- Unclear routes for asking questions

Procedural and Accessibility Barriers

- Time-consuming and complicated processes
- Accessibility of consultations
- Limited contact methods with MSPs

Representation and Diversity Barriers

- Lack of representation for the Third Sector
- Lack of diversity in participation
- Health and age Barriers
- Age and health issues

Political Concerns

- Concerns about UK parliament interference

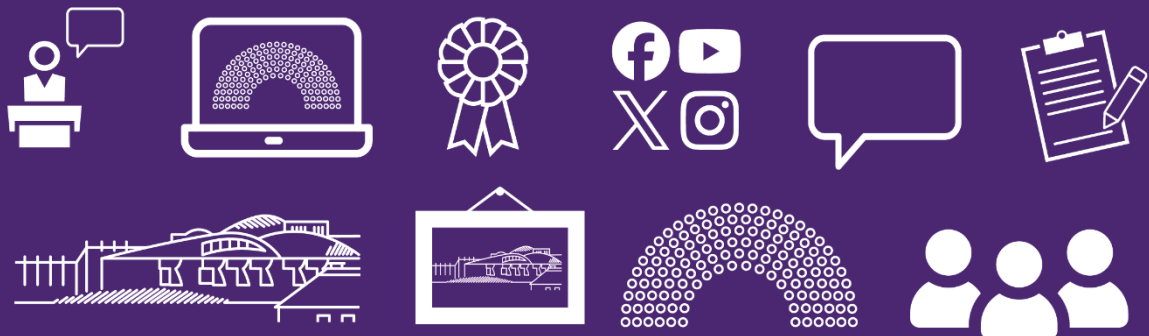


What would help you get involved?

- **Dedicated Third Sector Contact**
Establish a dedicated MSP or committee focused on third sector issues to ensure their voices are heard and their contributions are valued.
- **More Time and Support for MSPs**
Provide additional support and resources for MSPs to help them manage their workload and reduce the potential for abuse.
- **Increased Say on the future of adult and children with ASN (Additional Support Needs)**
- **Compensation for Third Sector Contributions**
A system where third sector organisations are compensated for their time and contributions to consultations and workshops.
- **More Physical Events**
Organize more community events and public engagements to increase visibility and direct interaction with the public.
- **Community Role Models**
Champions who can encourage and support public engagement.
- **Visibility of Impact**
Clearly communicate how public opinions and contributions have influenced decisions and policies.
- **Increased Visibility and Approachability**
Enhance the visibility of MSPs and Parliament activities within communities and ensure MSPs are approachable and accessible.
- **Information – How is this important to me? Why should I get involved? Solution:**
Provide clear information on why public involvement is important and how individuals can get involved in various capacities.
- **Communication and Clearer Ways of Getting Involved**
Regular Updates and Communication. Use email newsletters and other communication channels to keep the public informed about ongoing activities and opportunities for involvement.
- **Physical Hubs**
An easier to find hub (physical) or site that gives opportunities to get involved.

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

Activity	Number of people
Giving views to a Committee either verbally or in writing.	6
Visiting the Scottish Parliament.	3
Attending a Scottish Parliament event in their community.	12
Attending an event or an exhibition in Parliament.	6
Watching a debate or committee at Holyrood or on TV/online.	4
Follow the Parliament on Social Media.	2
Speaking to or contacting one of their MSPs.	6
Visit the Scottish Parliament website.	3



If you are an organisation, how do you involve and engage people?

As a development trust that operates within a defined geographical area, we facilitate groups, events and 1:1's where people can come together and work with each other on local and personal issues. We run a number of projects and initiatives with a poverty alleviation focus, pantry, CAB, volunteering, re-use shop, bike repairs, Men's Shed, gardening, community café.

We are involved in local and county wide forums and encourage participation via voting, community council contact your councillor /MSP etc. We work with people face to face mostly and contact via social media etc.

We believe in local help for local people by supporting each other, working together and sharing our endeavours. Everyone has value.

MAEDT

We provide emergency food parcels for people in crisis. All our customers are referred from different agencies and charity organisations.

Midlothian Foodbank

Facebook remains our largest communication tool but we are aware that doesn't reach everyone. We work with local shops, development trust and library to display hard copies of posters and documents. We've even used local radio.

Mayfield and Easthouses Community Council

Meaningful Participation Panel. This is a panel of 12 people with different experiences and background who advise us how to meaningfully engage people in our work. These panels are involved also in local decision making (Council)

Nourish Scotland

We engage with community groups. We run meetings where we listen to their needs and facilitate communities to come up with their own solutions. We then do our best to execute these solutions. We build relationships with many of the community groups which really supports the community work and makes it enjoyable.

Midlothian Climate Action

Meeting with individuals in the Community – ‘in person’ locality staff (Vocal) attend events (hosted by other organisations) to meet carers.

Vocal

Outreaches in community. Attend events with all other agencies. Awareness raising events in the community.

Dalkeith CAB



For MSPs, how do you involve and engage people?

Community Engagement is vital to our work, so local voices are heard.

Sarah Boyak MSP

I love engaging with people and make the Parliament accessible to all.

Foysol Choudry MSP

I meet people in the constituency regularly. I encourage people to get in touch and stay in touch.

Colin Beattie MSP

Evaluation

Feedback was taken in person at the end of the Marketplace event and the lunch.



26	enjoyed the event.
22	learned something new about the Parliament.
17	would like to get involved with the Parliament in the future.
18	feel more confident to get involved with the Parliament.
14	better understand how to to get involved with the Parliament.

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 with some of the participants, 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.](#)





Images from the visit



Images from the visit



**Images from
the visit**