

Public Petitions Committee
Thursday 8 October 2026
4th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

PE2214: Officially annually recognise 23rd of August as Wallace Day in honour of Sir William Wallace

Introduction

Petitioner David Reid

Petition Summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to officially declare and promote the 23rd of August as "Wallace Day" in honour of Scotland's national hero Sir William Wallace who was judicially executed in London on the 23rd of August 1305 as a result of defending Scotland's sovereignty.

Website <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2214>

1. This is a new petition that was published on 18 June 2026.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 1,345 signatures have been received on this petition.
4. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered.
6. The Committee has received a submission from the Scottish Government which is set out in **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

7. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
October 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2214: Officially annually recognise 23rd of August as Wallace Day in honour of Sir William Wallace

Petitioner:

David Reid

Date published:

18 June 2026

Petition summary:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to officially declare and promote the 23rd of August as "Wallace Day" in honour of Scotland's national hero Sir William Wallace who was judicially executed in London on the 23rd of August 1305 as a result of defending Scotland's sovereignty.

Previous action:

The Society of William Wallace has a current change petition with over 2600 signatures supporting the initiative: <https://c.org/Msn9GQdVRm>.

Additionally, we have met with Michael Matheson MSP in 2025 who suggested taking this route.

On the 13th of November we met with and discussed this issue with the then Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Angus Robertson at Holyrood.

We have promoted the case at events and on social media as well as letters of support from Dr Murray Cook and Professor Richard Orme.

Background information:

Sir William Wallace is Scotland's national hero.

In 1296 he led the cause to secure Scotland's sovereignty from England's overlordship and restore Scotland's place in Europe.

In 1297 he secured a national and monumental victory with his co-Commander Andrew de Moray at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

In 1298 he was declared High Guardian of Scotland and protector of the realm.

Between 1299 and 1301 he spent time in mainland Europe fighting for Scotland's sovereignty.

In 1305 he was betrayed and captured resulting in his judicial execution at Smithfield on 23rd August.

His impact on Scotland's history thereafter has been huge, from Bannockburn to Prestonpans. In the 1800s a huge wave of monuments to Wallace were erected and in 1995 Hollywood dedicated a full film to his story.

Additionally, stats indicate tourist numbers could increase as a result of the declaration of a national Sir William Wallace day.

Annexe B: SPICe Briefing



Scottish Parliament
Information Centre
Ionad Fiosrachaidh
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2214: Officially annually recognise 23rd of August as Wallace Day in honour of Sir William Wallace, lodged by David Reid

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

[William Wallace](#) (c.1270–1305) was a Scottish knight and military leader who rose to prominence in 1297 during resistance to the rule of King Edward I of England and the First War of Scottish Independence. The petitioner, David Reid, asks the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to "officially declare and promote" 23 August as "Wallace Day," marking the anniversary of Wallace's judicial execution at Smithfield, London, in 1305.

The [Society of William Wallace](#), a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation established to uphold William Wallace's memory, already runs an annual "[Wallace Day](#)" event on the Saturday nearest 23 August. The Society is separately running a [Change.org](#) petition with the same aim as [PE2214](#).

The petition claims that a national Wallace Day could increase tourist numbers without citing specific surveys or figures. There is some independent support for underlying visitor interest in Wallace-related heritage. Stirling Council reported [144,200 visitors to the National Wallace Monument in 2025–26](#), the highest figure since records began.

How other commemorative days are recognised

Commemorative days in Scotland can be marked in different ways — through sustained civic and cultural practice alone, or with the added status of a bank holiday. Not every day commemorating a significant figure carries statutory recognition. Burns Night, for example, [began in 1801 as a grassroots commemorative gathering](#) and spread across Scotland and internationally by imitation. It is now occasionally acknowledged by the [Scottish Parliament through agreed motions](#), and the Scottish Government regularly acknowledges Burns Night with a [letter to Scotland's diaspora from the First Minister](#) and [Ministerial attendance at Burns Night suppers](#).

[St Andrew's Day](#) is considered Scotland's national day, observed in honour of St Andrew the Apostle, Scotland's patron saint, whose feast date it marks in the Christian liturgical calendar. It gained formal bank holiday status in 2007, through the [St Andrew's Day Bank Holiday \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#), which amended [schedule 1 of the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971](#) to add the day as a bank holiday in Scotland.

How bank holidays are created

The designation of bank holidays is a devolved matter. Bank holidays are created under the [Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971](#) and are days on which financial dealings may be suspended. They include days specifically listed in the Act (as amended), as well as days proclaimed by the King.

[Section 1\(3\) of the 1971 Act](#) gives the King the power to appoint additional bank holidays by Royal Proclamation. The King acts on advice from the [Privy Council](#), of which, the First Minister of Scotland is a member. This power was most recently used to designate [15 June 2026 as a bank holiday](#) marking the Scotland's men's football team competing at the FIFA World Cup for the first time in 28 years, following a proposal from First Minister John Swinney MSP.

Public holidays

In addition to national bank holidays, local authorities in Scotland set their own [public holidays](#), which vary from area to area and have no statutory basis. Unlike bank holidays, which are the same across Scotland, public holidays are decided by each local authority based on local tradition, usually in consultation with local businesses.

There is no automatic entitlement to paid leave for bank or public holidays.

Key Organisations and relevant links

- [William Wallace - National Wallace Monument](#)
- [William Wallace, Guardian of Scotland | The Royal Family](#)
- [The Society of William Wallace](#) (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC045959)
- [Bank and public holidays - House of Commons Library](#)

Courtney Aitken
SPICe Researcher
20 July 2026

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C: Written Submissions

PE2214/A: Officially annually recognise 23rd of August as Wallace Day in honour of Sir William Wallace

Scottish Government written submission, 23 September 2026

Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.

The petition calls on the Scottish Government to officially declare and promote 23 August each year as "Wallace Day" in honour of Sir William Wallace.

The Scottish Government recognises the significant role that Sir William Wallace has played in Scotland's history and national story. However, the Scottish Government does not have an established policy framework for the creation of new nationally recognised commemorative days. There is also currently little evidence of widespread public support (petition currently has 1,268 signatures), or a clearly defined proposal for how such a day would be observed.

Historically, commemorative days have generally emerged through public and community-led participation over time, rather than being created by government at the outset. The examples of Burns Night and St Andrew's Day demonstrate different models of development. Burns Night evolved through longstanding cultural practice and community participation without a formal statutory basis, while St Andrew's Day is supported through specific legislation establishing a bank holiday.

The Scottish Government has previously advised the Society of William Wallace that further clarity would be required regarding the purpose, format and expectations of any proposed Wallace Day, including how it would be celebrated at local and national level and any associated resource implications. At present, there is no dedicated provision within the Culture Directorate available to support a new national day of this nature, and no policy framework setting out criteria for official recognition of commemorative days relating to individual historical figures.

While the establishment of a Wallace Day is possible in principle, the Scottish Government's view is that any proposal would need to demonstrate substantial and sustained public support and be supported by a clearer proposition regarding delivery, purpose and demonstrable outcomes before support could be considered.

What, if any, action is the Scottish Government currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

Scottish Government officials have engaged directly with representatives of the Society of William Wallace to discuss their proposal. Officials met with the Society on 23 April 2025 and the then Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture met representatives on 13 November 2025. During these discussions, advice was provided on approaches that could help build support for the concept of a Wallace Day.

Officials have also undertaken exploratory work to identify relevant examples and approaches, including consideration of the development of Burns Night and St Andrew's Day as recognised Scottish celebrations. This work has informed discussions with the Society regarding potential options for increasing public awareness and participation.

The Scottish Government has encouraged the Society of William Wallace to continue developing the proposal through community-led activity, including engagement with relevant heritage organisations, museums and local communities.

Officials have indicated a willingness to continue engaging with the Society and to provide advice where appropriate as the proposal develops.

No decisions have been taken to establish, formally recognise or promote a Wallace Day, and no legislative or policy work is currently planned for that purpose. Similarly, no timescale has been agreed for consideration of formal recognition.

Is there any further information the Scottish Government wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which would assist it in considering this petition?

The Scottish Government recognises Sir William Wallace as an important figure in Scotland's history and acknowledges the commitment of those promoting greater public awareness of his legacy.

The Committee may wish to note that there are different forms of national recognition. Some observances, such as Burns Night, have become established through cultural tradition and widespread public participation rather than through formal government designation. Conversely, St Andrew's Day has a specific statutory basis through the St Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Act 2007.

The Scottish Government's engagement with the Society of William Wallace has focused on encouraging the development of public support and community participation as an initial step. The Government's position has been that any consideration of formal recognition would benefit from stronger evidence of sustained public interest, a clearer understanding of how any national observance would operate in practice, and consideration of any associated financial or policy implications.

More broadly the Cabinet Secretary and senior officials have worked with NRS, The National Archives and the UK Government to secure a future loan to NRS of the Wallace Letter, given it is one of only two surviving documents with a direct personal connection to Sir William Wallace and is of considerable historical significance.

Culture and Historic Environment Division