

PEOPLE & PARLIAMENT

RESHAPING SCOTLAND ? THE PEOPLE SPEAK

This report was originally published on 10th March 1999 in the run-up to Scottish Devolution. It has now been scanned into digital format, December 2012. The thoughts of some 500 groups of ordinary Scottish people on the brink of Devolution in 1999 may still be relevant to today's debate about Scotland's future however one intends to vote at the referendum in 2014. As the People & Parliament group has long since disbanded, our report is posted here at the personal website of one of the original steering committee members who drafted the Full Technical Report on which this short Executive version is based. Such posting does not, however, imply ownership of the process, and the copyright of this material is open for general use.

Link for downloading this Executive version:

www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/1999-people-and-parliament-exec.pdf

Link for Full Technical Report in PDF

www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/1999-people-and-parliament-full.pdf

Link for Full Technical version in HTM sections including questionnaire forms:

www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/1999_p&p/summary.htm

**The report of the
People & Parliament project**

PEOPLE & PARLIAMENT

RESHAPING SCOTLAND? THE PEOPLE SPEAK

People & Parliament is an independent project set up in 1997 by a small group of eleven ordinary citizens, all living in Scotland and from a variety of backgrounds. It is not linked with any commercial business or political party. In 1998 28,000 leaflets were distributed, inviting people from all over Scotland to share their vision of what our country's future should be like. The project asked people to form groups to discuss three issues:

ISSUE

1

"WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO..."

ISSUE

2

"BY THE YEAR 2020 WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE
A SCOTLAND IN WHICH..."

ISSUE

3

"WE THEREFORE EXPECT OUR PARLIAMENT TO
WORK WITH PEOPLE IN WAYS WHICH..."

A TIME FOR CHANGE

"We are acutely conscious that much of the world is watching us and wishing us well. We must not waste this opportunity. We must do all we can to get it right."

These are the words of one of the 450 Groups, from all over Scotland, who took part in "People & Parliament" and sent in their responses. They came from cities, towns and rural areas, from highlands and lowlands, from east and west, north and south - and from most sectors of society. If there was any bias or weighting, it was the success in hearing the voices of so many groups representing those usually voiceless, marginalised or excluded - the unemployed, disabled, youth, pensioners, ethnic minorities ("the new Scots") and others.

The words used were as variable as the participants - but a single message comes through with a compelling clarity of insight, consistency, conviction, humour, and passionate intensity.

There is deep frustration with our fragmented society, and a feeling of anger and disconnection with the present system of government and politics. Based on this, there is a profound longing for a new kind of politics and society that will listen to, care for, respect and share with, all our people - rooted in a strong sense of national identity and community, and the vision of a renewed nation in which all count and none are excluded.

This is reinforced by the recurrent theme, that the people of Scotland must now learn to take responsibility for their own destiny - and mistakes - and overcome the tendency to blame others. The strong desire for a better society and community is constantly linked with the need for greater participation and partnership in power. Improvement needs empowerment.

That is the vision by which Scotland's Parliament will be judged. Our new political servants will ignore that message at their peril. They need to earn the respect and trust of the people, so dangerously eroded at present.

The people clearly hope and expect that the Members of our new Parliament, and others in positions of influence and power, will grasp the unique opportunity to develop a new culture of openness, accountability and participation; that their conduct will demonstrate their readiness to share power, and to encourage a participative democracy, in which the people really are partners in the development of policy.

Will it work? Will the new Parliament be, as the Government's Consultative Steering Group said, "the central institution of a new political and community culture", or will the high hopes of "People & Parliament" be disappointed, and turn again to cynicism?

People expect and long for, something different. There will never be a time of greater opportunity than now. The task of creating a new level of democracy, and finding practical ways in which people can really participate, will not be easy. No task could be more important, more worthwhile, or more likely to give Scotland a distinctive role in the Europe of the new Millennium.

One youth group ended their response like this...

"We don't believe any of these comments will make a difference - so please prove us wrong"

Will we? Can we?

WHAT NOW?

With the publication of this Report and its presentation to the people of Scotland the "People & Parliament" process is complete.

The hopes and expectations it reveals so strongly and consistently, remain!

These will be met only if there is real change both in politics and in civil society, in the parliament and the people!

- 1) The high expectations for the Members of Scotland's Parliament, and for a new kind of politics, seem to demand a new attitude of service and accountability, probably defined by a positive and distinctive Code of Conduct and Job Description.

- 2) The universal demand for participation and sharing in power, can only be met by the development of new institutions, or the strengthening and redefinition of existing ones, in Scottish civil society at all levels; local, regional and national, which will have the authority to monitor how Scotland's Parliament lives up to the expectations of the people.

Whether these can be achieved is the central question facing us now. The answers we give will determine whether Scotland's new Parliament belongs to the people, and is the central political institution of a renewed democracy for a new era.



(Canon) Kenyon Wright,
Convener.

on behalf of the "People & Parliament" Steering Group.

Section 1

PEOPLE & PARLIAMENT

WHAT WAS DONE - AND WHY ?

Between April and December 1998, "People & Parliament " leaflets were distributed throughout Scotland, through Voluntary Agencies, Unions, Local Authorities, Industry, Churches, Educational bodies and individuals.

The leaflet invited people to form a small group to express and share their hopes and fears for the nation's future - and to recognise the unique opportunity of the moment..

"Once in many generations there comes to a people the chance to take their destiny into their own hands, to say with confidence who they are and what they want, and to reshape their society in line with their vision. That time has come for Scotland."

The aim was to stimulate people to grasp this opportunity to deepen and broaden the debate.

A deeper debate meant getting behind the short-term political arguments, to the common perceptions and values in Scotland today, the aspirations for the future, and ideas about making that vision a reality.

A broader debate meant bringing in those who feel excluded, powerless or marginalised, and whose views are not usually heard.

Cynics said it would not work. We were told that the effort involved in organising a group, in guiding a 3-hour meeting, and in completing and returning a Response Form, was too demanding.

In the event, the number of responses, the wide range of groups and their quality, left us encouraged and with a renewed respect for the integrity of the peoples of Scotland, and for what Nigel Tranter called their "obstinate awkward identity".

- To date, over 450 Group Responses have been received (and are still arriving).
- Virtually all parts of Scotland were represented, and a cross-section of society.
- Many groups were from sectors of society who often feel excluded - unemployed, homeless, pensioners, disabled, ethnic minorities.
- BT ran a parallel programme for their employees, with over 1000 responses.
- At least 3500 people took part directly in the whole exercise.
- Responses also came from national and local organisations claiming to represent a further 6800 people.
- Conferences were held for local organisations, in cooperation with the District Councils, in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth.
- Fife Council promoted the study through its Citizenship Commission.
- The "Big Issue" reprinted the questions, and also set up groups for the homeless.

In addition, the Steering Group received many reports of the use of the leaflet and questions in Conferences and Groups, even when the Response Form was not returned.

Each group was asked to discuss three questions, and to return a response sheet with three statements, in a Freepost envelope provided.

The questions, and statements, were carefully chosen and tested with some 40 pilot groups.

- The first was designed to reveal common values, identity and self-understanding.
- The second attempted to articulate long-term aspirations and vision for Scotland.
- The third tried to discern how people saw the opportunity of the new Parliament to rethink and reshape the relationship between government and the governed.

The Questions and Statements to be completed, were...

QUESTION
1

Describe what living in Scotland means to you.

From your answers find out what the group cares about most.

Now complete "WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO....."

QUESTION
2

What is your vision and hope for Scotland as it could be in about 20 years time ?

Now complete "BY THE YEAR 2020 WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SCOTLAND IN WHICH....."

QUESTION
3

To bring about our vision, how can Scotland's Parliament listen to your voice, and represent your views ?

Now complete "WE THEREFORE EXPECT OUR PARLIAMENT TO WORK WITH THE PEOPLE IN WAYS WHICH....."

(These questions have proved an effective method of stimulating lively discussion. They may be freely used by any group or organisation.)

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS ?

Many of the concerns expressed (which are summarised in the next section, and can be verified in detail in the Full Technical Report available separately) were neither surprising nor unexpected. They confirmed from a broader, more popular and less "organisational" base, the findings of the extensive Consultation Exercises undertaken by the Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament (CSG) set up by the Scottish Office, which demonstrated the consensus on the need for Scotland's Parliament to be open, accessible, accountable and participative.

The surprise comes in the honesty, passion, consistency and commitment with which the same deep insights, longings and hopes come from groups from every corner of Scotland - from city and country, from haves and have-nots, from the comfortable and the excluded.

A Freephone line was set up to provide information and support. Many of the calls received were not, as we had expected, because of difficulties in understanding or organising - but rather because of the suspicion that "People & Parliament" might have some hidden agenda - some political, religious, commercial, ideological or other axe to grind! When we were able to reassure people that the Steering Group had no such motives, that their confidence would be respected, and that our only aim was to help the new Scotland grow, then they were ready to share their deepest feelings, hopes and fears, to an extent that was profoundly moving and humbling. (Details of the Steering Group and organisation of "People & Parliament" are given on the inside back cover.)

A Summary of results, largely in the words actually used by various Groups, follows - and a Full Technical Report with a detailed analysis of all the results is available.

Section 2

“LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK.....”

The following pages will give a broad sense of the responses made from all over Scotland to each of the 3 questions.

Groups were not asked, as happens in many studies, to indicate their response to prepared statements presented to them for approval or disapproval. They were asked to think, to discuss, and to share their views in their own words.

Each section begins with a statement (in bold type) which presents one of the principal ideas coming through from a significant number of responses.

Where this is marked with a star (*) the idea was particularly persistent, widely felt, and strongly presented.

The numbers used will allow those who wish to verify the results or to get more detail, to compare these directly with the “Table of Indicative Statements” in the Full Technical Report, which uses the same numbering system. It also includes a “Table of Origins” listing all responses.

VALUES AND SELF-IMAGE - what we care about & think of ourselves

QUESTION
1

WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO ?

***1.1.....TAKE REAL PRIDE IN OUR NATION’S HISTORY, NATURAL BEAUTY, TRADITION AND CULTURE, BUT NEED TO LEARN FROM OUR FAILURES AND MISTAKES**

The identification with Scotland and pride in the nation were strong, even in groups which were not ethnically of Scottish origin. This was often linked to an appreciation of the natural beauty and wildness of the country, especially the Highlands. At the same time, there was widespread awareness of the failures and ambiguities in our history, and the need to learn from these.

“We take pride in our country, its history, its beauty, its culture and its freedom. We are aware however of its growing problems in homelessness, lack of resources for health and education, and the violence and intolerance produced by class division and the unequal sharing of opportunities and facilities”

(National Ecumenical Womens Group)

“We fear the reduction of our country to a product or theme-park”
(Mixed Glasgow group)

“We have a long history, with many many mistakes to learn from”
(Small Fife Group)

"We believe in tradition, but don't want to be left behind"

"We value Scotland for its quality of life because of open spaces, clear air, mountainous landscapes, wildlife and sense of community - where you feel you belong, where you can make a difference, where you count and have local cultural identity"

(Dundee Group)

"There is a spaciousness which can be experienced either where we live, or within a reasonable distance. This space is able to help keep things in perspective, and gives peace"

(Family in Kilmarnock)

"We want a better quality of life for all, and boat races on the Clyde"

(Govan Group)

*** 1.2..... PUT THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY BEFORE THE INTERESTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL**

There is a consistent affirmation of the importance of community and society, and commitment to an egalitarian view of society which rejects individualism (often identified with the values of Thatcherism!).

"We tend to be parochial in view of being most interested in the welfare of our family, our community and our society, in that order"

(Perthshire Community Council)

"throughout our history, we have cared deeply about our community, and nature, and have had a strong strain of ethical concern in our nature"

"We are hospitable and value to live in a safe country with a strong community spirit - but have to be careful not to lose it"

(Glasgow Group)

"We have pride in Scotland's heritage that speaks to us of the value of community, of a friendly family-orientated society, of the importance of good education and health services"

(Dundee Group)

"We value friendliness and the sense of community and dry sense of humour"

(Aberdeen Group)

*** 1.3.....HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY, WHILE RECOGNISING THE FEARS AND HOPES OF AN INCREASINGLY MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-FAITH SOCIETY.**

There was virtually universal affirmation of the importance of Scottish identity, even when local identities were also held to be important. At the same time, many groups stressed their feelings of rejection and alienation, and their hopes for identity to be multi-cultural.

"We have a distinct national identity as well as district and local identities"
(Glasgow Ecumenical Group)

"We value distinctiveness of Scottish society as against any culturally imposed culture of international sameness"
(a Community Council in Glasgow)

"We would like to keep our own identity, as we feel our country is becoming too Americanised"
(Glasgow Group)

"Identity is often forgotten. We are often grouped with the English nation in sporting events ... if we win, but not if we lose !"
(Schoolchildren in Aberdeenshire)

"Although having some Celtic, British and European identity, we are Scottish first, and resent what is perceived as English interference in our affairs"
(A Group of disabled people in Edinburgh)

"We have different needs from London, and do not approve of imperialism. We don't want to be submitted to something like Mrs Thatcher ever again"
(Group of biologists in Edinburgh)

"Despite centuries of amalgamation we retain a sense of national identity based on a traditional regard for equality, social justice and universal education"
(Glasgow Church group)

"Now I am disabled nobody wants to know me"
(an Edinburgh woman)

"Muslim women are excluded because Islam is viewed as a religion rather than a complete way of life"
(Muslim women in Edinburgh)

"We are split along religious lines - Catholic and Protestant."

"The perception still exists that there is a Highland/Lowland abyss"
(Gaelic-speaking professional group, Stornoway)

"respect the rights and aspirations of other linguistic and ethnic minorities - equal opportunities in the new Scotland for all people and their respective geographic rights"
(Gaelic-speaking professional group, Stornoway)

"As overseas students, we view Scotland as a home from home with friendly locals among a multicultural society"
(Group of students in Edinburgh)

"We are of the Jewish faith and identify with Scotland as our home. We see Scottish society as one which respects and values people from all religious and cultural backgrounds"
(Group of teachers in the West of Scotland)

We are Muslims " who want to live in Scotland with dignity and like to contribute for the social, cultural, economic and environmental development of this beloved land. We want to promote peace, harmony and equality in the wider society of the UK. We wish to maintain religious freedom and cultural identity in a multi-cultural society without harming others' religious values and beliefs"

(Muslim group in Glasgow)

"We love to live in Scotland in peace. We, as asylum seekers and refugees, feel that we have been excluded and marginalised by law in this country, and this is not fair. We would love to contribute into the Scottish society, and want to feel being part of it"

(Scottish Refugee Council group)

As African women, " we feel like strangers, unnoticed, unseen, unheard, alienated, dehumanised, invisible in the scheme of affairs but visible enough for racial attack and with the fear that this may increase with Scottish independence... We fear anti-English feeling will be turned against ethnic minorities when the English are gone. Sometimes the nationalist feeling is so strong that one wonders how minorities will fit into the new Scotland."

(African Women in North East Scotland)

- * 1.4..... SEE OURSELVES AS "CANNY, TOLERANT, HUMOROUS, HONEST, EDUCATED, CIVILISED, FAIR, TALENTED, INVENTIVE, CREATIVE, TRUSTWORTHY AND LOVERS OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE" - BUT CONVERSELY AND PARADOXICALLY, ARE AWARE OF OUR MANY FAULTS AND OUR LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM.**

The responses revealed a rather self-congratulatory and complacent image of Scottish character, but many were nevertheless often conscious of flaws and shortcomings, and especially a lack of confidence in our own abilities.

"We are friendly, tolerant, creative, open, wild, egalitarian, all "Jock Tamson's bairns", canny, generous, optimistic, pessimistic, contradictory"

(Glasgow Church group)

"We are proud, independent, friendly, caring, but slow to express personal feelings."

(Anonymous)

"We value our directness and sharpness but acknowledge that there can be aggressiveness that needs resolution."

(Quaker Group, Fife)

"we have suffered as a people, and feel hard done by"

(Mixed Glasgow group)

"We drink too much alcohol, are both defeatist and creative"

(Occupational Therapy Group, Central Scotland)

"The Scottish character has been described as hardy. The harsh climate probably contributes to this"

(Community Council group, Ayrshire)

"We care about how people portray us. We don't run about in kilts"
(Glasgow Secondary School Class)

"We love Irn-Bru"
(Teenagers in Central Scotland)
(The makers of this soft drink would be gratified by the frequency with which it appears as a national icon!)

"We are a strong inventive, intelligent people who can overcome most obstacles when the odds aren't stacked against us we have let a small minority dominate our lives for too long"
(Fife Group)

"We have a sense of humour but are dour, we travel (well), drink, dance, moan and have fun, have hang-ups about the English, and love our country"
(Mixed Group, Glasgow)

"We are a people who want truth, openness and honesty"

"We are a people who are deeply divided, but who are attempting to define themselves in a positive and inclusive manner"
(Group in an Edinburgh Community Centre)

1.5 VALUE AND TAKE PRIDE IN, OUR PUBLIC SERVICES IN EDUCATION, HEALTH, TRANSPORT, HOUSING, LAW-AND-ORDER, BUT REGRET THE PERCEIVED DECAY AND DECLINE IN THEM.

The feeling that Scotland's public services, in health, education and law, are something to be proud of (and often compared favourably with our southern neighbours) , exists paradoxically side by side with strong feelings that these services are in decline and need to be rescued and revived..

"We are saddened as we watch our ancient education system - and hence our social and political institutions - sink year by year into the morass. Education should be the most important concern of the human race, next to organised religion"
(Group of Education professionals in Glasgow)

"Health is a most important concern"
(Women's group, Edinburgh)

"Housing is a social necessity for all and as such should be a high priority in any new Scottish Parliament"
(Aberdeen Group)

"We need a good quality legal system giving justice to everyone and recognising the European Human Rights Bill"
(Group from an Edinburgh Community Council)

"We value the inclusive traditions of our country in the fields of education, health and the building of local communities, while we fear the erosion of what were once treasured characteristics of our society. We seek the resurgence of this inclusiveness, with opportunities for everyone to participate, with a special emphasis on the encouragement and enabling of young people"

(Ecumenical Study Group, Glasgow)

1.6 ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE STRONG, BUT SOCIALLY AWARE AND ACTIVE.

A few groups took pride in Scotland's tradition of enterprise and financial acumen, but many were concerned for the state of farming and fishing, for our traditional industrial base, and for the social responsibility of business.

"We should expand our international financial skills"

(Anonymous)

"There should be more accountability by large employers to the community and workforce"

(Group on a training course)

*** 1.7..... FEEL DISEMPOWERED, AND OFTEN SOCIALLY EXCLUDED AND DEVALUED THROUGH POVERTY, ETHNIC ORIGIN, DISABILITY, AGE**

Reflecting the fact that "People & Parliament" deliberately attempted to reach groups usually excluded from consultation, there was considerable emphasis on various types of social exclusion, and the feelings of alienation and disempowerment that result.

"We are a people who feel they belong to Scotland, however we feel alienated and isolated from the consultation process, as we are invisible to the statutory organisations"

(Group in a Women's Health Centre, Glasgow)

"We want to be treated better, especially by professionals who make the decisions"

(Adults with learning disabilities, Glasgow)

"We are insecure and have high levels of unemployment. We can't control our own economy"

(Adult Education Group, Edinburgh)

"As women, we have experienced inequality in greater proportions"

(Group of women working in community care, Glasgow)

"We feel women who wish to rear their own children should be sufficiently rewarded by the state. Their worth in the rearing of future working generations should be recognised as equal to manufacturing, processing food, etc."

(Group of women in Glasgow)

" An increasing proportion of the people are retired and within the group considered as "ageing". They are of course ordinary citizens still in full possession of their intellectual faculties. This group ... is effectively disenfranchised due to the fragmentation of ministerial responsibilities, and is not adequately represented as a group in its own right"

(Group of elderly people in Renfrewshire)

"We want the white community to be tolerant and accepting to people coming from different parts of the world. We are concerned about the education that our children receive, and the problems of racism they face in schools, including bullying,"

(Women from minority ethnic groups in Edinburgh)

"We must restrict the tolerance of alcohol abusers, and the increasing acceptance of illegal drug use"

(mixed group in Fife)

*** 1.8ARE DISILLUSIONED WITH POLITICIANS AND THE WAY THEY OPERATE NOWADAYS, BOTH ON A LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL**

Even stronger than feelings of social exclusion, and closely related to it, there was a recurrent and powerful emphasis on the depth of disillusionment and alienation felt from the political process, and cynicism about politicians and cosmetic "consultation".

"We are alienated from the political process"

"There is a great deal of apathy about Parliament, but not about Scotland"
(Professional/Technical Group, Glasgow)

"We feel unable to engage in the current party political or socio-political issues which affect us, due to disempowerment through a lack of education and awareness, resulting in a cycle of ignorance"

(Group in Glasgow)

"Many of our politicians at all levels and in all parties are of poorer quality"
(Professional/ Technical Group, Glasgow)

"We value democracy and genuine decision-making at the lowest possible level"

(A Charter 88 group in Edinburgh)

"Our awareness of disadvantage has been sharpened by the remoteness of existing central government and an accompanying sense of powerlessness"
(A mixed group in Ayrshire)

"We have self-respect and confidence in our ability to play a constructive role, and therefore wish to be consulted on decisions and actions which may affect our lives. We deplore the apathy that seems to exist, people regarding themselves as victims rather than important and respected members of society, and we deplore the corruption and sleaze which abounds in government and politics, much preferring to admire our leaders for their honesty and integrity"

(A Perthshire Community Council Group)

"We value a genuine culture of citizenship"

(Charter 88 Group, Edinburgh)

1.9BELIEVE OUR NATION COULD BE GREAT AND INFLUENTIAL, NOT IN POWER OR WEALTH, BUT IN VISION AND SPIRIT, AND COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN EUROPE AND INTERNATIONALLY.

Many groups demonstrated their conviction that Scotland's character and history fitted her in the future, as in the past, to make a distinctive and important contribution to the life of Europe and beyond

"We have the historic ability to be extraordinary"

(A Dundee group)

"We feel close to Europe, not isolated on the edge"

(Stirling Church & Nation Group)

"We see all humanity as our brothers and sisters, who cherish their rights, welfare and freedom as fiercely as our own; who see our access to self government as our entry into the community of nations. Mind you, some of us are narrow-minded tight-fisted parasites ! "

(Community Council, Nairn)

"We are acutely conscious that much of the world is watching us and wishing us well. We must not waste this opportunity. We must do all we can to get it right"

(Retired Professional Women, Edinburgh)

QUESTION

2

BY THE YEAR 2020, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SCOTLAND IN WHICH

2.1..... BOTH THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE ARE RESPECTED AND SUSTAINED

Several groups stress the importance of a Scottish agenda and solutions, if we are to achieve "Sustainable Development" (caring for both the environment and all our people). The need for reform in land ownership, use and tenure, is also a recurring theme.

"the impact on the environment is taken into account in all decision-making, particularly in the development of sustainable transport systems, the impact of genetic engineering, resource use and waste minimisation"

(Friends of the Earth, Aberdeen)

"priority is given to organic farming methods"

(Dundee Greenpeace Group)

"the environment is acknowledged as paramount in sustainable development"

(Moray landowners and managers)

"salmon and local sea trout in the river Clyde."

(Glasgow group)

"More trees"

(Glasgow group)

"the right to roam enshrined in statute"

(Church group in Invernesshire)

"the power of landowners reduced"

(Biologists in Edinburgh)

"Land belongs to communities, the people being tenants unto their own democratically accountable control"

(Ecologists in Invernesshire)

"Return the land to the people who live and work on it, giving them security of stewardship as long as they keep the land in good heart"

(Retired Teacher)

"A Scotland drug-free and nuclear-free"

(Group with learning difficulties, Ayrshire)

"Long term quality of life is more important than short term economic gain"

(Ecumenical Group in Edinburgh)

"a vibrant nation, with a high involvement of all citizens, an acceptance of all being equal, and an acceptance of responsibility for ourselves and our communities"

(Life Distance Learning Group, Edinburgh)

*** 2.2 WE WILL HAVE BUILT A COMMUNITY THAT CARES FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.**

Many groups stressed the need to foster a new community spirit which puts the needs of people, and not just personal gain, at the centre.

"A community in which the song of the curlew counts for more than the clink of cash; ... in which Wallace, Burns, Keir Hardie and John McLean would be happy to live. And cask-conditioned Scotch Ale in every pub !"

(Community Council, Nairn River)

"there is a mind-shift, and people start to express this sense of identity and create communities in richly diverse bio-regions"

(Social and Ecological Activists in Edinburgh)

"Town centres can once again be a centre for the community with a real sense of identity"

(Edinburgh Church Group)

"Children are nurtured, their talents developed, where they live and are brought up in quiet loving homes where violence and aggression are a thing of the past, and where income is channelled into their development instead of into the local pub"

(Aberdeen group)

"By 2020, the Scottish people should have rediscovered the power of communities, whether they be of neighbourhoods, workers, families, churches or others"

(Strathclyde Catholic Chaplaincy group)

"We hope we will foster/rekindle a sense of community"

(Mixed Group, Perth)

"small communities to thrive again, with schools, post offices, transport etc."

(Peace & Justice Group, Falkirk)

"regard for others, as opposed to the survival of the fittest, imbued in our young people"

(Justice and Peace group in a Glasgow church)

2.3 SCOTS RESPECT AND VALUE MORE FULLY PEOPLE FROM OTHER BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES, INCLUDING THE ENGLISH

Many groups felt that Scottish identity, though strong and real, must be pluralistic and inclusive, confident and secure enough to include the distinctive contribution of many races, religions and traditions, and no longer defined by being "against" anybody.

"A society free from religious or any other persecution and in which bigotry is a thing of the past"

(Stirling Church & Nation group)

"No discrimination on account of colour, faith or origin"

(Glasgow Asian group)

"The divisions have been bridged as far as possible, the chip on the shoulder no longer hinders ambition and self-achievement, our identity is secure without being turned against others,

(England especially)" (Students, Aberdeen)

"Gaelic has a national, public profile contributing to Scottish and international plurality and tolerance; and in which there is right for all throughout Scotland to Gaelic education"

(Group of Gaelic learners)

"a Scotland in which refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed, not treated like common criminals A Scotland which welcomes immigrants as a means of encouraging multi-ethnicity and diversity, as a way of importing talent to make up for the talent which emigrates"

(Strathclyde University Catholic Chaplaincy group)

2.4 THERE IS CARE FOR ALL IN NEED, AND A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Though many of the aspirations expressed so strongly for a better and fairer Scotland, may seem somewhat utopian, they clearly express deep longings for change towards a more egalitarian society.

"A Scotland in which all people are valued and respected"

(Parents of deaf children, Glasgow)

"All people treated with equal respect, especially disabled people"

(Aberdeen Church Group)

"More help for carers"

(People with learning difficulties, Ayrshire)

"volunteering is valued"

(Group from the Voluntary sector, Perthshire)

"No high-rise flats; full employment; no pollution; no child or animal abuse; peace and justice with fair employment and rewards; high standards of education for all children; safety; elderly to have free telephones and TV licences; higher state pensions, and a quality of life where everyone has someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to"
(Glasgow Group)

"the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in all its 30 Articles is agreed to and adhered to; a Scotland which has by 2020 addressed positively the issues of homelessness, unemployment, drugs, land reform, prison overcrowding,.... A Scotland which is open to other nations and ethnic groups, refugees!"

(Religious group, Glasgow)

"A future in which we have found new ways of "being a man" in Scotland; where boys can grow up with sensitivity and creativity rather than role models that promote destructive male values"

(Steering Group Response)

"a Scotland in which children are celebrated, not ignored"

(Strathclyde University Catholic Chaplaincy group)

*** 2.5.....SOCIAL COHESION IS SUSTAINED BY EFFICIENT AND CARING PUBLIC SERVICES, IN EDUCATION, HEALTH, TRANSPORT, AND LAW-AND-ORDER**

Groups emphasise the importance of these services, and frequently link them to the desired development of social inclusion.

"Improved funding through less waste and fairer taxation for NHS, Education and Local Council"

(Anonymous)

"concept of education for life is properly resourced"

(Aberdeen group)

"the education system challenges the prevailing money culture by valuing people through giving them opportunities for critical questions and reflection"

(Edinburgh group)

"Education designed to help individuals realise and develop their own potential and value within society women in particular"

(Dundee group)

"through a remodelled national curriculum, by 2020 all aspects of Scottish heritage ..given proper priority, through greater emphasis on Scottish history"
(Strathclyde University Catholic Chaplaincy group)

"the importance of the arts is recognised and properly supported"

(Strathclyde University Catholic Chaplaincy group)

"the re-emergence of a health service affordable to all, and not dependent on charitable activities ..."

(Glasgow, Justice and Peace group)

"A return to the principle of a health service free at the point of need. We are willing to pay more taxes provided the revenue is properly used, based on social justice and Scottish cultural priorities"

(Ayrshire Group)

"Better use of resources in the health service, a less top-heavy management, and greater value given to human resources."

(Women's Group, Fife)

"A halt to privatisation"

(Church group of senior citizens, Glasgow)

"The dire social standards and housing in estates like (ours) are finally removed, and social stability established"

(Aberdeen Group)

"Investment in our rail network"

(Stirling Church Group)

"an integrated transport system with reduced atmospheric pollution, providing services throughout the country, especially to rural and island communities"

(Edinburgh Church Group)

"essential services such as health, police, water, sewerage, electricity and gas are controlled by directly elected and accountable local councils"

(Community Councillors, Fife)

"a more therapeutic criminal justice system, more open prisons, alternatives to prison, more police on streets"

(People with learning difficulties)

"all nuclear weapons are a fading memory"

(Edinburgh group)

"women who wish to rear their own children should be suitably rewarded by the State"

(YWCA Womens Group, Glasgow)

"Treat us better than we are treated today"

(People with learning difficulties)

2.6..... ENTERPRISE IS ENCOURAGED AND BUSINESS GIVEN INCENTIVES

Though economic concerns are not as strongly represented as social and political concerns, a number of groups did express concern for healthy industrial and business development.

"Build up manufacturing industries again"
(Edinburgh Group)

"More encouragement for small businesses"
(Community Council, Fife)

"Larger proportion of Scottish-based industry"
(Mixed group, Aberdeen)

"Peripheral areas have access to the same economic and social opportunities as the major population bases"
(Gaelic-speaking group, Stornoway)

"Sustainable economies that are locally accountable"
(Dundee Group)

"No fat cats"
(Group of young and elderly from a Fife Community Centre)

"Development and growth, but not at the expense of social responsibility"
(Church and Social Group, Aberdeen)

* 2.7.....POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND HOMELESSNESS ARE ELIMINATED, AND ALL PEOPLE TREATED AS HUMAN AND VALUABLE.

Again, the recurrent and consistent emphasis on the need for Scotland to be a caring society, comes through strongly.

"more help for carers"
(People with learning difficulties, Ayrshire)

"the eradication of poverty - physical, spiritual, emotional"
(Ecumenical group, Glasgow)

"a country where young and old are more integrated within the community"
(Fife group)

"All people within our communities valued as equal citizens regardless of ability, and where equal access to all aspects of life in our communities is an agreed priority for public policy"
(Housing Association staff, Glasgow)

"to see a Scotland in which none are disenfranchised, no-one sleeping rough or dependent on charities for food and clothing"
(Dundee group)

"We would like to see Scotland as a caring society, which may involve lowering the standard of living of all people for the benefit of the needy and deprived"

(Anonymous)

"where violence against women, and abuse of power to control or limit others' lives, is socially and legally unacceptable"

(Women's Group, Fife)

"young people to have job security and be involved members of our society. They are NOT at present"

(Group of teenagers and elderly, Fife)

*** 2.8 THERE IS A NEW KIND OF POLITICS TO RUN SCOTLAND, OF WHICH THE PEOPLE CAN REALLY FEEL "OWNERSHIP"**

The persistent feelings of alienation and disillusionment referred to earlier, result in a strongly expressed hope for a new kind of politics which all Scots can genuinely feel belongs to them.

"All power is a service"

(Glasgow Women's Group)

"People are empowered to take part in the political process."

(Stirling Church & Nation Group)

"adversarial politics have been buried and diversity is welcomed as a constructive benefit towards building a true consensus acceptable to all Scots"

(Iona Community Group, Stirling)

"Service as the driving force of attitude and action and humility and humour replacing pride and bitterness in the media and in all confrontations"

(A family, Ayrshire)

"We have a government we can own and trust because it is open and consults and takes on board what people say"

(Mixed group, Aberdeen)

"a drastic reversal of the trend towards dictatorial government control (of local councils) and a firm commitment to a healthy, democratic local control by locally elected representatives with adequate powers and financial resources"

(An Inverness group of senior citizens)

"meaningful consultation and debate rather than meaningless and exclusive forms and rituals"

(Fife group)

"representatives should reflect the people not the party"

(Episcopalian Church group)

"Scottish people should be more politicised, taking control of decisions that affect their lives"

(Fife group of youth and elderly)

2.9..... SCOTLAND TAKES HER FULL PLACE IN EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

The emphasis on Scottish identity, is matched in many groups, by a strong conviction that Scotland has a distinctive contribution to make internationally.

"Take a lead in Europe and the world in terms of human rights, and representative structures which are responsive"

(Glasgow Church group)

*"People will have come to understand who they are and what they are...
The old rules and laws that were of a past era no longer apply to them"*

(Nairn Community Council)

We hope "we can reach out to other countries in their times of need"

(Anonymous)

"Scotland will support peace and understanding world-wide"

(Dundee group)

"make a strong and successful Scottish contribution to the world-wide movement for the eradication of unpayable debt burdens on impoverished countries"

(Justice and Peace Group, Glasgow)

All this would be assisted by "a World Cup win"

(Group of teenagers at a Stirling church)

OUR PARLIAMENT - how we want the new political culture to work

QUESTION
3

**WE THEREFORE EXPECT OUR
PARLIAMENT TO WORK WITH THE
PEOPLE IN WAYS WHICH ?**

*** 3.1..... ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ALL OUR PEOPLE, AND BUILD A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY.**

The expectations for Scotland's Parliament, and for what it can achieve, are far-reaching and high (perhaps too high ?)

"The aim of government is not the retention of power but the will to serve the needs and wishes of all people in Scotland"

(Poverty Alliance staff, Glasgow)

"a long term perspective which looks far beyond the term of office of elected members"

(Students, Invernesshire)

"fair, inclusive, public, helpful, approachable, auditable and caring"

(Supporters of Edinburgh University Settlement)

"protect our natural heritage, to espouse traditional Scottish values, to safeguard our uniquely Scottish forms of law, education and health provision, to be accountable to the people, and to uphold peace and justice"
(Soroptomist International, Falkirk)

"create a culture in which children are valued"
(Disabled people, Edinburgh)

"actively discourage the break-up of families"
(Scottish Pakistani group, Glasgow)

"a radical transforming agenda - no excuses"
(Mixed group, Glasgow)

"protect our natural resources and work to improve the environment"
(Family and neighbours, Renfrewshire)

"support the Gaelic dimension as a sustainable and meaningful component of the Scottish identity"
(Gaelic speaking professional, Stornoway)

"We therefore expect our Parliament to work with the people in ways which have never been heard of !"
(School group, Glasgow)

*** 3.2 ENSURE THAT MEMBERS OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT WORK TOGETHER MORE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AND LESS ALONG PARTY LINES**

The high expectations for the Parliament extend to the behaviour, qualities and attitude of its Members. There is a persistent demand for conduct that is different from that experienced in the past - more open, less party-oriented and more answerable to the people.

"The job of an MSP is regarded more as service to society than a highly paid career leading to power over the people"
(Community Council, Perthshire)

"People who serve in Parliament should be brave, confident and honest"
(A group of 7-year olds, Glasgow)

"There should be strict Codes of Conduct for MSPs"
(Family group, Argyll)

"We would expect Parliamentary 'Ministers' to remember the meaning of the word and to realise that they are 'servants'"
(Presbytery Committee, Aberdeenshire)

"All MSPs should demonstrate accountability first to the people"
(Iona Community group, Stirling)

"MSPs should hold, not only surgeries for individuals, but also a series of public surgeries in strategic parts of their territory"
(Dundee group)

"shun party politics, bigotry, discrimination, nepotism, sleaze, corruption"
(Anonymous)

" the recognition that the established authoritarian axis is redundant in solving the problems..... the hierarchy has long been writing the wrong script and getting overpaid "
(Scottish Tree Trust)

"Parties working more in alignment with each other for the good of the people"
(Glasgow Braendam Link)

"politicians should be genuinely accountable to their constituents and not at the mercy of party whips"
(Anonymous)

"The image that should come across should be contemporary and down-to-earth, not elitist and pompous"
(Strathclyde University RC Chaplaincy group)

Some suggest that there should be a maximum term for MSPs, or for Ministers

"MSPs should represent us, not party lines ... consulting with community groups on their own grounds should become part of the legislative process"
(Adult Education Group, Edinburgh)

"The electorate should have the ability to remove them as well as elect them to office"
(Episcopal Church Group, Glasgow)

"Remember that most of us want this to work !"
(School group, Glasgow)

*** 3.3TALK LESS AND LISTEN MORE, AND FIND WAYS OF WORKING WITH THE PEOPLE ALL THE TIME, NOT JUST AT ELECTIONS.**

The word "listen" appears with striking frequency, reflecting a clear desire to find ways in which the people can be heard and can influence the development of policy.

"Work WITH the people, not FOR the people"
(Mixed group, Glasgow)

"People should be listened to"
(Group of elderly people, Fife)

"Not just consulting but listening"
(Glasgow Families group)

"Listen to the ordinary people, and not be only available to the lobbies of industrial, farming, fishing, and commercial interests."
(Scottish Tree Trust, Glasgow)

"Talk with us, not at us"

(Glasgow Families Group)

"giving all Scots ownership of Parliament and politics in a way that is genuinely participatory"

(Charter 88, Edinburgh)

"encourage people to feel that they own it"

(Peace and Justice group, Falkirk)

"Above all we want the Parliament to be accountable to us, to be honest in its dealings with us, and to protect the country we are so rightly proud of"

(Unemployed Womens group, Fife)

"devise forms of local participative workshops on issues so that regular consultation with ordinary people becomes a valued part of the informing of the Parliament"

(Ecumenical group, Glasgow)

"We would welcome a phone-in service to Parliament or our MSP in which we could simply make our comments on various issues - Press 1 for Education, 2 for Industry, 3 for social services etc."

(Family, Kilmarnock)

Groups offered an extensive range of practical ideas on achieving participation, including:

- Clear information flows;
- Accessible buildings;
- Committees meeting all over Scotland;
- a televised monthly public forum in different areas;
- local community forums which MSPs should be obliged to attend and explain and discuss their actions;
- a Glasgow Peoples Festival every year;
- Mock Parliament days on different issues to shadow the Parliament;
- a Mini Parliament in all areas made up of young people;
- a strong central Non Government Agency accessible to all minorities;
- MSPs to visit schools regularly and systematically;
- a greater and clearly defined role for Community Councils;
- a strong and well organised civil society and institutions of social partnership;
- use of simple language, and new technologies;
- locally based training for democracy;
- the development of a "Senate" or 2nd chamber;
- a written constitution;
- a Bill of Rights;
- a Contract between people and parliament.

3.4.....FIND WAYS OF ENSURING THAT MORE MARGINAL GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETY ARE PROPERLY REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT.

Some groups hoped that, either through the parties or as independents, people representing the more excluded or marginalised sectors of our society could be elected to Parliament.

"Why not MSPs who are independent"

(Muslim women, Edinburgh)

"a Parliament not governed by the policies and doctrines of political parties..... There would be open debates on principles and free votes on all policies and laws."

(a Community Council, Perthshire)

*** 3.5ENSURE THAT ALL OUR PEOPLE, AND ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG, ARE PROVIDED WITH POLITICAL EDUCATION IN HOW THE NEW INSTITUTIONS WILL WORK, AND HOW ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION CAN BE REALISED.**

There is a strong emphasis on the need for more information and education, especially of the young, and especially in the new situation in Scotland, so different from that experienced in the past.

"A programme of political education should start as soon as possible"

(Mixed group in Glasgow)

"invest money in their local people to bring them to a level in which they can articulate themselves and understand the language of the Parliament"

(an ethnic minority women's group, Edinburgh)

"civics needs to be taught in schools, , not as part of the modern studies course but as a core subject for all pupils"

(Strathclyde Catholic Chaplaincy group)

3.6DEVELOP GOOD COMMUNICATION, BOTH THROUGH MODERN AND TRADITIONAL METHODS, BETWEEN PARLIAMENT AND ITS MEMBERS AND THE PEOPLE.

A number of groups put forward ideas on how the new Parliament could communicate more effectively with the people, ranging from the best use of the Internet, to more traditional media.

"As adults with learning difficulties, we would like to know more how government works, have got rights, would like to be listened to ... would not like to be let down"

(Adults with learning difficulties, Fife)

"Leaflets should be in ethnic minority languages"

(Chinese community workers)

"Copies of all documentation, legislation etc., should be immediately placed in all public libraries ... Regular newscasts should be prepared for distribution to all Scottish households. Development of an Internet site can be expected to be of major importance."

(Dundee group)

"Short on rhetoric; and strong on action"

(Borders Environment Partnership)

3.7.....DEVELOP GOOD MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOTH PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

"Help young people who have the potential to become employers so that they are able to generate employment, instead of having to depend on foreigners coming to build factories"

(Aberdeen group)

3.8DEVELOP A CONTRACT OR COVENANT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHICH SAFEGUARDS THEIR POWERS AND BRINGS THEM INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH PARLIAMENT, AND WHICH DEVELOPS THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS.

Some groups, including several Community Council groups, were concerned that the devolution of power should continue to the level of District Councils and Local Communities.

"continue the process of devolution further down to the regional level"

(Group interested in environmental issues, Invernesshire)

"further devolution of power, especially to deprived urban and rural areas. The Parliament should act as banker and provider of resources and expertise, and let communities decide for themselves how to use the resources"

(Stewarton professional group)

"Community Councils should have more impact"

(Strathclyde University Catholic Chaplaincy group)

3.9DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND ENSURE THAT SCOTLAND, BOTH BY EXAMPLE AND INFLUENCE, STANDS FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM FOR A WORLD DIVIDED BY POVERTY AND AFFLUENCE

Here again, there is a sense that Scotland has a distinctive and positive role to play in international and European affairs, and can make a real contribution to finding solutions to some of the most pressing global problems of poverty and oppression.

"We feel we should look seriously at how we relate to our world neighbours, to improve the lot of the poorest in the world"

(Bathgate Church group)

"The Parliament should work to make and maintain good relations with all other countries, including the imminent neighbour, England"

(Womens Group "many non-Scottish who now live in Scotland")

"increase the peoples' self-esteem, and give them a sense of place in a multicultural world dependent on a fragile biosphere"

(Group of environmentalists)

Section 3

HOW DID IT HAPPEN ?

ORIGIN & STEERING GROUP

By the autumn of 1997, it was clear that the next 18 months to the coming of the Scottish Parliament provided a unique window of opportunity for people to reflect on the kind of nation they live in and want to see, and what they expect of their new Parliament and its members.

Eleven people - ordinary citizens living in different parts of Scotland, and from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds - formed a Steering Group to plan and carry out the "People & Parliament" process. Two were born in England, one in France, and eight in Scotland, one from an ethnic minority community. The group was independent of any organisation, political, commercial or religious.

At first, the group had no resources other than the commitment of each member. One member agreed to act as Honorary Co-ordinator, while another was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust through the Edinburgh Centre for Human Ecology, to work part time with "People & Parliament" Others were active in distributing leaflets and promoting groups through the various networks to which they belonged.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

All decisions were made collectively, on the development of the leaflet, methods of working and analysis, and approaches for funds. The success of the project was partly due to the generous response to our appeals, and the support received in finance and equipment, from several donors, who are acknowledged on the inside back cover.

We reported regularly to the Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament set up by the Scottish Office, and their website (under "CSG Papers") includes a report on "People & Parliament" (www.scottish-devolution.org.uk)

The results depended on the willingness of large numbers of people to give significant time, in existing groups across Scotland, including disability forums and ethnic minority groups, and many informal groups set up especially for the purpose.

METHODOLOGY

The basic method, described in Section 1, was tested by a pilot study in April 1998 carried out by staff and students from Edinburgh University, the Craighead Institute in Glasgow, and members of the Steering Group. 200 people in 40 groups were involved in different areas, and the results enabled the Steering group to refine the questions and to start the main process in June 1998.

With three reprints, eventually some 28,000 leaflets were distributed through a wide range of educational, voluntary sector, union, and other networks, including

- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- Association of Scottish Community Councils (ASCC)
- Local Authorities
- Workers Educational Association (WEA)
- Community Service Volunteers (CSV)
- Various Churches
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
- UNISON Scotland
- Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
- Environmental Groups
- Voluntary Sector Groups (especially representing marginalised sectors)
- "The Big Issue in Scotland" (which reprinted the leaflet in a summer issue)

When required, the Craighead Institute, Glasgow, Scottish Human Services (SHS), Edinburgh, and the Centre for Human Ecology, Conroy Associates, Glasgow, provided professional and administrative support.

The Councils of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth & Kinross, hosted "People & Parliament" Conferences for local groups, in the autumn of 1998. Fife Council conducted the process through its own "Citizenship Commission" and Highland Council referred it to their Youth Parliament.

Many other organisations incorporated the material, or used the questions, in their own programmes, or held local conferences.

From July 1998, a Freephone facility provided any help or information needed.

The method of analysis is described in the detailed Technical Report (available separately)

This report or a summary is being sent to all candidates for the Scottish and European Parliaments, Westminster and European MPs for Scottish constituencies, and others concerned, and to all groups who took part in the project.

In March 1999, Conferences to present and discuss results, and the implications for the new Parliament, are being held in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Glenrothes, and Inverness.

The Technical Report can be ordered from
Hanna Maan, SHS, 1a Washington Court, Washington Lane, Edinburgh, EH11 2HA.
Telephone 0131 538 7717 Fax 0131 538 7719
Price £4.00 per copy including postage

PEOPLE & PARLIAMENT

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MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP

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Betty Wright	Voluntary Sector & Church work
Kenyon Wright	Scottish Constitutional Convention & Consultative Steering Group

* indicates members of the registered People and Parliament Trust

“The People & Parliament project has proved to be a significant way of bringing out the common values and the high expectations of the people.

I have shared in its development at every stage, welcome its findings, and commend this Report to all who care for the future of Scotland”

Lord Macfarlane of Bearsden KT

“Time and time again it seemed like the end,
but the obstinate awkward identity always
overcame and survived.

The Creator surely never made anything so odd,
contrary, intriguing and unlikely as
the Scot ever to let it fizzle out ?

One day the same Scots are going to reach out
and take their destiny into their own hands again - and
that will be the day !”

Nigel Tranter, “The Story of Scotland”, 1987