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Foreword by George Reid, Presiding Officer

6 May 2004

When I was elected Presiding Officer in May 2003, I said that the job of Parliament is to delineate, debate and decide the issues of devolved life in Scotland.

This report records how, in the year since then, we have done so.

In summary form, it provides a snapshot of how the members of the Scottish Parliament have addressed a vast range of matters in both the Chamber and committees.

In doing so, we have been guided by our founding principles of Accessibility, Accountability, Equal Opportunities and the Sharing of Power. Throughout all our business we have endeavoured to work in partnership with the people of Scotland. We have taken oral and written evidence throughout the land, the better to inform our decisions.

That is right and proper, since our Parliament belongs to our people. I very much hope that this report will help them to decide how well we have engaged with the issues of building a better country.

That process of engagement has, over the past five years, been damaged by the continuing delays and rising costs of our new Holyrood campus. It is with real anticipation that we look forward, therefore, to moving into our new home in September 2004 and to its official opening by the Queen the following month.

At Holyrood we have a remarkable new parliament building – a fusion of art, engineering and architecture – rooted in the landscape of Scotland.

At Holyrood we face the challenge of working in a world class building on a World Heritage site.

We shall meet the challenge best through the clarity of our ideas, the scrutiny of our debate and the quality of the decisions we take.
Election Results 2003

Comparison between 1999 and 2003 Election results

The second General Election to the Scottish Parliament took place on 1 May 2003. Compared to the 1999 election, Labour and the SNP lost a total of 14 seats to the smaller parties and independents, while both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats maintained their level of representation.

Allocation of seats by first and second vote

Under the Additional Member System used for Scottish Parliament elections voters have two votes each. The first is to elect a constituency MSP and the second is for a regional MSP. Labour and the Liberal Democrats won most of their seats through their first or constituency vote. The SNP and the Conservatives won most, and the smaller parties won all, of their seats through their second or regional vote. Independent candidates won two constituency seats and one regional seat.

The Chamber

No party achieved an overall majority in the 2003 election. Labour won most seats (50) followed by the SNP (27), the Conservatives (18) and the Liberal Democrats (17). Representation from the smaller parties and independents increased significantly from a total of three MSPs in 1999 to 14. The ruling Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition, formed after the election, has 67 seats compared to the 62 of the other parties and independents.
The key elements of the Parliament’s decision-making processes were re-established in May.

The Parliamentary Bureau proposes the agenda for each meeting of the Parliament in what is called a ‘business motion’. Chaired by the Presiding Officer, the other members are representatives nominated by each party or group with five or more MSPs. Those who took their seats round the table at the first meeting of the new Parliamentary Bureau on 13 May 2003 were:

George Reid, Presiding Officer;  
Trish Godman, Deputy Presiding Officer;  
Murray Tosh, Deputy Presiding Officer;  
Patricia Ferguson, Scottish Labour Party;  
Fiona Hyslop, Scottish National Party;  
Alex Johnstone, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party;  
Euan Robson, Scottish Liberal Democrat Party;  
Mark Ballard, Scottish Green Party;  
Carolyn Leckie, Scottish Socialist Party;  
Fiona Hyslop, Alex Johnstone and Euan Robson stood down early in the session and have now been replaced by Bruce Crawford, Bill Aitken and George Lyon (substituting for Tavish Scott).

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB)

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is appointed under the Scotland Act 1998 to provide the buildings, staff and services needed by the Parliament to carry out its work. This includes the employment of all parliamentary staff, the construction of the Holyrood building, and many contracts for goods and services. The SPCB is also chaired by the Presiding Officer. The four other members are elected by the Parliament from its MSPs.

The four MSPs elected to the SPCB on 21 May were:

Robert Brown, Scottish Liberal Democrat Party;  
Duncan McNeil, Scottish Labour Party;  
John Scott, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party;  
Andrew Welsh, Scottish National Party.

The new corporate body held its first meeting on 27 May 2003.
In May 2003, the 129 people pictured above were elected as your MSPs. Of these, 73 were elected for a particular local area (known as a single member constituency) and 56 were elected to regional lists. Each of the eight regions represents a group of constituencies and has seven MSPs.

All the MSPs are listed here under their political parties, alphabetically by constituency and then by regional list.

Scottish Labour Party Constituency MSPs
Aberdeen Central: Lewis Macdonald
Airdrie and Shotts: Karen Whitefield
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley: Cathy Jamieson
Central Fife: Christine May
Clydesdale: Des McNulty
Clydebank and Milngavie: Karen Gillon
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth: Cathie Craigie
Cunninghame North: Allan Wilson
Cunninghame South: Irene Oldfather
Dumbarton: Jackie Baillie
Dumfries: Dr Elaine Murray
Dundee West: Kate Maclean
Dunfermline East: Helen Eadie
Dunfermline West: Scott Barrie
East Kilbride: Mr Andy Kerr
East Lothian: Mr John Home Robertson
Edinburgh Central: Mr Kenneth Macintosh
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh: Sarah Boyack
Edinburgh North and Leith: Susan Deacon
Falkirk East: Malcolm Chisholm
Glasgow Anniesland: Cathy Peattie
Glasgow Baillieston: Bill Butler
Glasgow Cathcart: Ms Margaret Curran
Glasgow Govan: Mike Watson
Glasgow Kelvin: Gordon Jackson
Glasgow Maryhill: Pauline McNeill
Glasgow Pollok: Patricia Ferguson
Glasgow Rutherglen: Johann Lamont
Glasgow Shettleston: Janis Hughes
Glasgow Springburn: Mr Frank McAvety
Greenock and Inverclyde: Mr Paul Martin
Hamilton North and Bellshill: Mr Duncan McNeil
Hamilton South: Michael McMahon
Kilmarnock and Loudoun: Mr Tom McCabe
Kirkcaldy: Margaret Jamieson
Livingston: Marilyn Livingstone
Midlothian: Mrs Mary Mulligan
Motherwell and Wishaw: Bristow Muldoon
Paisley North: Rhona Brankin
Paisley South: Jack McConnell
Stirling: Ms Wendy Alexander
Stirling: Hugh Henry
West Renfrewshire: Dr Sylvia Jackson
Western Isles: Trish Godman

Scottish Labour Party Regional List MSPs
Highlands and Islands: Maureen Macmillan,
North East Scotland: Peter Peacock
Richard Baker, Marlyn Glen
### Scottish National Party Constituency MSPs
- **Aberdeen North:** Brian Adam
- **Angus:** Mr Andrew Welsh
- **Banff & Buchan:** Stewart Stevenson
- **Dundee East:** Shona Robison
- **Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber:** Fergus Ewing
- **Moray:** Mrs Margaret Ewing
- **North Tayside:** Mr John Swinney
- **Ochil:** George Reid
- **Perth:** Roseanna Cunningham

### Scottish National Party Regional List MSPs
- **Central Scotland:** Linda Fabiani, Michael Matheson, Alex Neil
- **Glasgow:** Nicola Sturgeon, Ms Sandra White
- **Highlands and Islands:** Rob Gibson, Jim Mather
- **Lothians:** Fiona Hyslop, Mr Kenny MacAskill
- **Mid Scotland and Fife:** Bruce Crawford, Tricia Marwick
- **North East Scotland:** Richard Lochhead
- **South of Scotland:** Christine Grahame, Mr Adam Ingram, Alasdair Morgan
- **West of Scotland:** Campbell Martin, Mr Stewart Maxwell, Mr Bruce McFee

### Scottish Liberal Democrats Constituency MSPs
- **Aberdeen South:** Nicol Stephen
- **Argyll and Bute:** George Lyon
- **Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross:** Mr Jamie Stone
- **Edinburgh South:** Mike Pringle
- **Edinburgh West:** Margaret Smith
- **Gordon:** Nora Radcliffe
- **North East Fife:** Iain Smith
- **Orkney:** Mr Jim Wallace
- **Ross, Skye and Inverness West:** John Farquhar Munro
- ** Roxburgh & Berwickshire:** Euan Robson
- **Shetland:** Tavish Scott
- **Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale:** Jeremy Purvis
- **West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine:** Mike Rumbles

### Scottish Liberal Democrats Regional List MSPs
- **Central Scotland:** Donald Gorrie
- **Glasgow:** Robert Brown
- **Mid Scotland and Fife:** Mr Keith Raffan
- **West of Scotland:** Ross Finnie

### Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party Constituency MSPs
- **Ayr:** John Scott
- **Edinburgh Pentlands:** David McLetchie
- **Galloway and Upper Nithsdale:** Alex Fergusson

### Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party Regional List MSPs
- **Central Scotland:** Margaret Mitchell
- **Glasgow:** Bill Aitken
- **Highlands and Islands:** Mr Jamie McGrigor, Mary Scanlon
- **Lothians:** Lord James Douglas-Hamilton
- **Mid Scotland and Fife:** Mr Ted Brocklebank, Murdo Fraser, Mr Brian Monteith
- **North East Scotland:** Mr David Davidson, Alex Johnstone, Mrs Nanette Milne
- **South of Scotland:** Phil Gallie, David Mundell
- **West of Scotland:** Miss Annabel Goldie, Murray Tosh

### Scottish Green Party Regional List MSPs
- **Glasgow:** Patrick Harvie
- **Highlands and Islands:** Eleanor Scott
- **Lothians:** Robin Harper, Mark Ballard
- **Mid Scotland and Fife:** Mr Mark Ruskell
- **North East Scotland:** Shiona Baird
- **South of Scotland:** Chris Ballance

### Scottish Socialist Party Regional List MSPs
- **Central Scotland:** Carolyn Leckie
- **Glasgow:** Tommy Sheridan, Rosie Kane
- **Lothians:** Colin Fox
- **South of Scotland:** Ms Rosemary Byrne
- **West of Scotland:** Frances Curran

### Scottish Senior Citizens’ Unity Party Regional List MSP
- **Central Scotland:** John Swinburne

### Independent Constituency MSPs
- **Falkirk West:** Dennis Canavan
- **Strathkelvin & Bearsden:** Dr Jean Turner

### Independent Regional List MSP
- **Lothians:** Margo MacDonald
Every elected Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) must take an oath of loyalty to Her Majesty The Queen. Accordingly, at the first meeting of the Parliament after the general election all 129 MSPs took the oath. Of these, 26 were newly elected to the Parliament, including:

- Three members of the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party;
- Six members of the Scottish Green Party;
- Three members of the Scottish Labour Party;
- Two members of the Scottish Liberal Democrat Party;
- Five members of the Scottish National Party;
- One member of the Scottish Senior Citizens’ Unity Party;
- Five members of the Scottish Socialist Party; and
- One independent member.

The Chamber is where the Parliament meets to debate political issues and to decide on proposals for new laws. The Chamber is also where MSPs can question the First Minister and other Scottish ministers on a weekly basis.

The range of business considered in the Chamber is varied and wide. Debates during the past year covered topics including health, the environment, justice, culture, and transport, as well as many other areas of Scottish life.

In addition to normal business, there were other procedures which were necessary because of the election on 1 May 2003.

**Post-election Procedures**

Following a general election, the Parliament must ensure that the new parliamentary year is set up in line with certain rules and regulations.
A new Presiding Officer and two Deputy Presiding Officers were elected at the first meeting of the second session of Parliament. George Reid was the only candidate for the post of Presiding Officer and was duly elected. The Parliament elected Trish Godman and Murray Tosh as Deputy Presiding Officers.

All other post-election events took place in the Hub, Edinburgh’s Festival Centre. This was because the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was meeting in the Assembly Hall, which has been the temporary location of the Parliament’s Debating Chamber.

The new session also saw the election of the First Minister.

The candidates were:

- Dennis Canavan (Independent MSP);
- Robin Harper (Principal Speaker of the Scottish Green Party);
- Margo MacDonald (Independent MSP);
- Jack McConnell (Leader of the Scottish Labour Party);
- David McLetchie (Leader of the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party);
- Tommy Sheridan (Leader of the Scottish Socialist Party); and
- John Swinney (Leader of the Scottish National Party).

As more votes were cast for Jack McConnell than for all the other candidates combined, Mr McConnell was agreed as the Parliament’s nomination. His appointment was then approved by Her Majesty The Queen.

The Parliament also saw the election of new Scottish ministers and junior Scottish ministers.

In addition, MSPs elected four members of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB).
Time for Reflection

Normally the first item of business to be taken in the Chamber each week, Time for Reflection gives people of different beliefs and faiths the chance to share their thoughts and reflections with the Parliament. A wide range of religious groups and faiths have participated in Time for Reflection during the past year, with representatives from the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, the Free Church of Scotland, the Baptist Church, the Episcopalian Church and Scotland’s Muslim, Jewish and Sikh communities addressing the Chamber. There have also been contributions from people not representing any particular faith or religion.

Time for Reflection contributors included:

• The Right Reverend Professor Iain Torrance – Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland;
• Cardinal Keith O’Brien – Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh;
• Rabbi Moshe Rubin – of Giffnock and Newlands Hebrew congregation, who spoke in commemoration of National Holocaust Memorial Day;
• The Reverend Duncan MacLeod – Minister of the Free Church in Perth, who was the first person to deliver Time for Reflection entirely in Gaelic;
• Priya Sahi - a 5th year student from Grove Academy, Broughty Ferry; and
• Ravinder Kaur Nijjar - Convener of the Scottish Inter-Faith Council.

Ministerial Statements

Ministerial statements are used to tell the Parliament about urgent or topical subjects.

Once a minister reads out his or her statement to the Chamber, members can question the minister on what has been said. Examples of ministerial statements include:

• The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development’s statement on common agricultural policy reform;
• The Minister for Health and Community Care’s statement on the publication of Enhancing Sexual Wellbeing in Scotland: a Sexual Health and Relationships Strategy; and
• The Minister for Communities’ statement on charity law reform.

Did You Know?

There were 22 ministerial statements this session. Ministers normally speak for 10-15 minutes and then answer questions for a further 20 minutes.
Bills introduced [22]:

Robin Rigg (Offshore Wind Farm) (Navigation and Fishing) (Scotland) Bill (Private)

Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Bill (Private)

Education (School Meals) (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill (Member’s)

Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill (Private)

Nature Conservation (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Fire Sprinklers in Residential Premises (Scotland) Bill (Member’s)

Local Governance (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Breastfeeding etc. (Scotland) Bill (Member’s)

Budget (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill (Private)

Edinburgh Tram (Line Two) Bill (Private)

Tenements (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

Prohibition of Smoking in Regulated Areas (Scotland) Bill (Member’s)

Emergency Workers (Scotland) Bill (Executive)

School Education (Ministerial Powers and Independent Schools) (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Legislation

A draft law or bill is the main type of legislation dealt with by the Parliament. Bills are normally the result of a lot of public consultation and debate by the Parliament when it meets both in committee and in the Chamber. A total of 22 bills have been introduced in the past year. However, because it can take a long time to study the proposals and get feedback from interested parties, only a few of those have as yet been passed and are now Acts of Parliament.

Bills passed and granted Royal Assent (meaning they become acts) during the past year were the Education (School Meals) (Scotland) Bill, the Robin Rigg Offshore Wind Farm (Navigation and Fishing) (Scotland) Bill, the Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill, the Budget (Scotland) Bill and the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Bill.

Since May 2003, 13 bills have been introduced by the Scottish Executive, covering areas including National Health Service reform, antisocial behaviour, and the election of councillors to local authorities. There have been four members’ bills covering prostitution tolerance zones, fire sprinklers in residential homes, breastfeeding, and banning smoking in some public places. A total of five private bills have also been introduced.
Parliamentary Questions
Question Times are among the most popular events in the Chamber. The way they are carried out has changed in the past year.

In September 2003, First Minister’s Question Time was moved to a new time of noon on Thursdays, and its length was extended from 20 to 30 minutes. In March 2004, Question Time, where ministers other than the First Minister answer questions, was given a new start time of 2pm on Thursdays. It was also extended by 20 minutes to an hour. As well as general questions, MSPs have the chance now to quiz the Executive on particular policy areas such as health and justice during two thematic question periods each week.

Parliamentary Questions 7 May 2003 - 6 May 2004

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Lodged</th>
<th>Answered in Chamber</th>
<th>Received Written Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Question Time</td>
<td>2,366</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Minister’s Question Time</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 8,000 written questions were lodged for answer in the same period.
Debates

A wide range of issues were debated in the Chamber this year. The topics for most debates come from motions and amendments by the Executive or opposition parties, and independent MSPs. Subjects debated include:

- Scotland’s transport;
- Fuel poverty in Scotland;
- Protection of emergency workers;
- Young people;
- Scottish agriculture;
- Improving Scotland’s homes;
- The Scottish National Theatre; and
- The future of Scottish football.

Committees are also given time to discuss issues in the Chamber. Committee debates held during the past year include:

- The Procedures Committee debate about its inquiry into First Minister’s Questions;
- The Equal Opportunities Committee debate about mainstreaming equality in the work of the Scottish Parliament committees;
- The Environment and Rural Development Committee debates on rural development, and the national waste plan; and
- The European and External Relations Committee debate on the European Commission’s future work.
**Motions**

Any MSP can lodge a motion with the Chamber Desk about a matter which interests or concerns them. Some motions are lodged to bring attention to a particular topic. Others are lodged to congratulate members’ constituents or to seek support for a cause. All motions are printed daily in the Business Bulletin in the name of the MSP who lodged it. Other MSPs may add their names in support. Not all motions are intended for debate but some can be selected for Members’ Business by the Parliamentary Bureau.

Motions lodged this year were very wide-ranging. Examples include asthma in Scotland, epilepsy awareness, Young Musician of the Year Award, safety belts on school buses, recognition of kinship care and the horse racing industry in Scotland, of which the last two went on to be chosen for Members’ Business.

Often the subject chosen is about a particular constituency or region. Examples of such debates include:

- Maternity services in Caithness;
- Galloway Fisheries Inshore Exclusion Zone; and
- Concorde and the Museum of Flight.

Members’ Business is used to mark specific events too, including:

- European Week for Health and Safety;
- World Aids Day 2003; and
- The World Health Organisation’s Bone and Joint Decade.

General topics can be included in Members’ Business. Examples from the past year include:

- Wind farms;
- Scotch Whisky tax stamps;
- Rural rail services; and
- Obesity.

**Members’ Business**

Members’ Business, which comes after Decision Time at the end of each meeting, gives MSPs the chance to talk about issues that might not get prominence otherwise. During Members’ Business, the member whose motion has been chosen opens the debate and a minister will respond.
The Conveners’ Group is made up of the conveners of all the committees in the Parliament. It held its first meeting of the new session on 17 June 2003. The group is convened by Trish Godman, one of the Deputy Presiding Officers.

Like most of the committees, the group held an informal meeting to agree how it would work and what matters it would prioritise.

An important item of business was a presentation by the convener of the Equal Opportunities Committee on making sure committees remain aware of equal opportunities. As a result, equality issues are now built into the work of the committees.

The group was advised on scrutinising the Executive’s spending plans by the Finance Committee’s budget adviser.

An early item of business was to agree a reply to the Procedures Committee report on the Parliament’s founding principles. The convener of the Enterprise and Culture Committee spoke on behalf of the group in the Chamber debate on this report in February 2004.

The group approved a new document called Guidance for Conveners. Published on the Conveners’ Group page on the Parliament website, this gives advice on rules and practice in committees.

A Participation Handbook was approved, which offers practical help for committees who want to get in touch with the wider public.

It has been a busy year for the group. It looks forward to developing further its role as a forum in which conveners can discuss matters of interest across the committee system.

Did You Know?
A committee convener is the MSP who convenes and chairs a committee. He or she is chosen from the committee’s membership, along with a Deputy Convener. Appointments are made along agreed political party lines.
The Committees

The new committees were set up by the Parliament on 4 June 2003. They quickly got into their stride. By 11 June all committees had met and chosen conveners and deputy conveners.

There are two main types of committee: mandatory ones required by the Standing Orders (rules governing the way the Parliament works); and subject committees. The new subject committees cover the same range of topics as the previous committees. However, there have been a few changes to individual responsibilities. For example, transport is dealt with by a new Local Government and Transport Committee and the environment comes under the remit of the new Environment and Rural Development Committee. Culture is the responsibility of the new Enterprise and Culture Committee.

Did You Know?

Mandatory committees must be set up after each election. They have fixed roles and responsibilities. Examples of mandatory committees include the Finance Committee and the Equal Opportunities Committee. Subject committees examine particular areas of government such as health and education. Unlike mandatory committees, the number of subject committees and their roles and responsibilities may vary from one session to the next.

During the year, there were 417 committee meetings lasting nearly 825 hours. The committees considered 18 bills and carried out 34 inquiries. The committees continue to work in partnership with the public. They heard from a total of 1,446 witnesses representing 587 organisations this year.

The pages that follow give a flavour of the work of each committee and their membership at the end of this session. More details can be found in individual committee annual reports. These are published on the committee pages of the website. Details of each committee’s remit, membership changes, public papers of committee meetings and agendas can also be found there.

The committees in this session picked up where they left off in the last. They remain committed to working in partnership with the people and they continue to scrutinise the Executive in a thorough but fair manner.
Remit

The Audit Committee holds to account public sector bodies that spend taxpayers’ money. It does this by examining financial documents put before, or reports made to, the Parliament. These public sector bodies include:

- Scottish Executive departments;
- Executive agencies;
- Non-departmental public bodies;
- NHS boards and trusts;
- Further education colleges; and
- Water authorities.

Report

The Audit Committee makes sure public money is spent wisely. It does this by holding inquiries into subjects raised in reports by the Auditor General for Scotland. The past year was the committee’s busiest. The committee took evidence on more reports of the Auditor General than ever before.

The committee’s inquiries included an examination of the Individual Learning Accounts Scheme. The inquiry found that the scheme, which aimed to encourage adults back into further education, was fundamentally flawed.

The committee looked also at the prescribing of drugs by GPs. It concluded that more could be done to reduce waste and improve patient services. The committee published a report on the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC). It found that the SFEFC needed to do more to fulfil promises set out in earlier committee reports.

The committee took evidence on Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body’s accounts and the Auditor General’s overview report on the NHS in Scotland.

Evidence was taken by the committee from representatives of the Accounts Commission for the first time. This was in recognition of the increasing number of reports published jointly by the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission.

Finally, the committee continued to build links between other UK parliaments and assemblies by visiting the National Assembly for Wales.
Communities Committee

Remit

The Communities Committee considers a wide range of issues including:
• Antisocial behaviour;
• Housing and area regeneration;
• Poverty;
• The voluntary sector;
• Charity law; and
• Planning and building standards.

Report

The main focus for the committee this year was the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Bill. The committee thought it important to talk to local communities about their experiences of antisocial behaviour. Members visited Lossiemouth, Dundee, Stirling, Dumfries, Alexandria, East Kilbride, Edinburgh, Pollokshields and Royston to gather evidence before the bill was introduced. The committee also published a questionnaire on its web page. More than 100 people responded with their views on the issue. Wide-ranging oral and written evidence was considered before the committee agreed to the general principles of the bill.

The committee also looked at the Fire Sprinklers in Residential Premises (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1. This is a member’s bill which proposes that fire sprinklers are installed in certain types of residential properties that are considered to be at particular risk. After taking evidence, the committee welcomed a commitment by the Scottish Executive to make sprinkler systems compulsory in specific types of residential properties built in the future.

Other work carried out by the committee included the consideration and agreement of draft debt arrangement regulations. These introduce a system which will allow people to repay multiple debts with regular payments.
Remit

• Pre-school and school education;
• Children’s services;
• Social work;
• Young people; and
• Gaelic.

Report

The committee agreed that one of its most important functions was to examine the work of the Scottish Executive.

Before publishing a report on the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Bill, members visited schools across Scotland and met with parents of children who received learning support. The views of children, young people and parents were also sought at public events and through focus groups. More than 90 organisations gave written evidence and oral evidence was taken from 52 witnesses during seven committee meetings.

Following the Stage 3 debate on 1 April 2004 the bill was passed by the Parliament.

Committee members were concerned about reports published by the Scottish Executive and Edinburgh City Council on failures in social work departments. They agreed to carry out an inquiry into child protection. The inquiry focuses on progress made in implementing Scottish Executive recommendations outlined in its report, *It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright*.

Written and oral evidence is currently being taken for the inquiry. It is planned to publish a report in June.

The committee met and established links with youth groups and the Scottish Youth Parliament. The committee also hosted a visit from members of the Norwegian Parliament.
Enterprise and Culture Committee

Remit

The Enterprise and Culture Committee remit includes:
• Enterprise;
• Arts and culture;
• Lifelong learning (further and higher education but excluding school education);
• Sport;
• Tourism; and
• Renewable energy.

Report

The committee started the year by assessing the impact on Scottish universities of the introduction of variable tuition fees in England. Members sought the views of business and academic leaders before concluding that a substantial amount of extra money is needed from the Executive if Scottish universities are to remain competitive. Copies of the report, Scottish Solutions, were circulated to all Westminster MPs with Scottish constituencies.

Scotland has the best renewable energy resources in Europe. The committee’s second major inquiry this year focused on harnessing those resources to benefit the nation. The committee visited the Vestas-Celtic wind turbine factory in Campbeltown. As the Kintyre peninsula’s biggest employer, the plant provides work for more than 200 people. Members visited a wind farm and spoke to 60 local people about how wind energy affects their lives. Committee members also travelled to Denmark to learn about renewable energy. Overall, more than 150 individuals and organisations contributed to the inquiry.

The committee continues to monitor progress on previous work. For example, it has begun a short inquiry into broadband internet access in Scotland. It will look at whether or not the Executive’s targets for coverage are being met and the future benefits of broadband.
The committee dealt with subordinate legislation and petitions covering a wide range of topics. It also heard evidence from Scottish ministers on their priorities for the current presidency of the European Union.

The committee also commissioned external research to analyse how sustainable development is delivered in Scotland and elsewhere.

Did You Know?

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report). London: Oxford University Press, 1987

Biological diversity - or biodiversity - is the term given to the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms. The biodiversity we see today is the fruit of billions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of humans. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend.
Equal Opportunities Committee

**Remit**

The Equal Opportunities Committee considers and reports on equal opportunities both within the Parliament and Scotland as a whole.

**Report**

The committee met with a wide range of people involved in equal opportunities issues. It took evidence on proposals for UK legislation which would allow transsexual people to be legally recognised in their acquired gender. It also took evidence on UK legislation which would allow same-sex partners to register their partnerships and gain legally recognised rights and responsibilities.

One key area of activity was the committee’s investigation into the achievements and lessons of the 2003 European Year of Disabled People. It also looked at issues affecting disabled people in Scotland in general. As well as asking for written evidence, the committee met in Glasgow to listen to views of disabled people and carers for its forthcoming disability inquiry.

A well attended event, it was made up of a formal evidence session, an informal meeting with families and young people affected by disability and an open session during which participants were able to express their views on issues affecting disabled people in Scotland.

Informal meetings were also organised in Inverness and Fife to allow groups to talk over issues with the committee’s disability reporter. The committee later took evidence from the Minister for Communities and will consider all of this information when launching its inquiry in summer 2004.
European and External Relations Committee

Remit
The remit of the European and External Relations Committee is to consider and report on:
• Draft EU legislation and its implementation;
• Wider EU issues; and
• The development and implementation of the Scottish Executive’s external relations strategy and activities.

Report
The committee hit the ground running with the launch of three new inquiries.

The first deals with changes to European Union regional policy and what this will mean for Scotland. With hundreds of millions of pounds at stake, this is a very important matter.

The second inquiry is about how the Scottish Executive promotes our country worldwide through trade, tourism, culture and sports, including the Fresh Talent initiative, a scheme to encourage people from other countries to live and work in Scotland.

The final inquiry looks at how low-cost airlines in Scotland will be affected by the recent EC decision, which resulted in Ryanair reviewing its service to Charleroi airport in Belgium.

The committee continues to look at the EU’s proposed constitution. Members were pleased to take evidence from Dr Denis MacShane MP, Minister of State in the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (7 January 2004).

The committee also raised the profile of EU issues within the Parliament by sponsoring two debates in the Chamber, one celebrating the EU’s enlargement.

In March 2004, members attended the first formal meeting of the Network of Regional Parliamentary European Committees in the Catalan Parliament. They continue to forge links with sister committees across the UK’s parliaments and assemblies.

Finally, members carry on the tradition of welcoming visitors to the Scottish Parliament. Members were honoured to meet visitors as diverse as the Italian and Irish ambassadors and the governor of Colorado in the United States.
Remit
To consider and report on any proposals for public spending from the Scottish budget.

Report
As well as considering the 2004-05 budget and the financial implications of 14 bills, the committee carried out two major investigations in the past year.

After concerns were raised in committee about Scottish Water charges, members agreed to appoint Jim Mather and Jeremy Purvis to investigate. As well as considering written evidence, the committee took oral evidence from Scottish Water, the Water Industry Commissioner, Analytical Consulting Limited and the Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs. The committee’s report was published on 23 April 2004.

The committee also appointed Dr Elaine Murray and Fergus Ewing as reporters to look at the Scottish Executive’s policy on relocating public sector jobs. The investigation followed a petition about proposals to move Scottish Natural Heritage’s headquarters from Edinburgh to Inverness. After taking oral evidence from the Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services, the committee agreed to widen this investigation into an inquiry. As part of its inquiry, the committee met several relevant agencies and non departmental public bodies (NDPBs). Reporters also visited Dublin to learn more about decentralisation in Ireland. In addition, a questionnaire was posted on the committee’s web page. Public sector staff members were invited to fill it in, outlining their experiences of relocation. The committee is expected to publish its report in June 2004.
Remit

• Health; and
• Community care.

Report

The Health Committee started the new session with a day outwith the Parliament, which included a successful public meeting in Loch Melfort, Argyll. This gave members the chance to hear local people’s views on health matters. The committee also considered its work programme for the future, agreeing to hold an inquiry into staffing in the NHS. Following this inquiry, the committee will look at community care.

The committee’s busy legislative schedule took up much of its time. It considered the Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill and the National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Bill. The committee also sought evidence on two member’s bills: the Breastfeeding etc. (Scotland) Bill and the Prohibition of Smoking in Regulated Areas (Scotland) Bill.

Despite the heavy legislative workload, the committee managed to consider 26 petitions and 110 items of subordinate legislation, more than any other subject committee. The committee also considered the Executive’s 2004-05 spending plans. The committee and its adviser are in talks with the Executive about improving the supply of information about the £7,831 million health budget for 2005-06.
Remit

The Justice 1 Committee considers and reports on the civil and criminal justice systems, reform of civil and criminal laws and other issues that are the responsibility of the Minister for Justice. It also considers some functions of the Lord Advocate.

Report

The Justice 1 Committee plays an important role looking at the justice system. It concluded a detailed scrutiny of the way the High Court works. The aim is to ensure people involved in criminal hearings know what is going on. Other subjects such as revealing evidence early were also examined. People involved in criminal law, such as solicitors, gave their views during a seminar on the bill hosted by the committee. The committee also sponsored a debate in the Chamber on alternatives to prison sentences, which focused on community penalties.

In terms of civil law, the committee considered the European Commission’s green paper (a draft proposal) on settling disputes and its potential impact on domestic law. A video-conference with the lead official in Brussels helped the committee respond to the green paper.

Additionally, the committee launched an inquiry into how well prison rehabilitation programmes work. It also started to examine the first committee bill in the Parliament to become law (the Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001), to see if it is effective. The committee visited several prisons and courts across Scotland to meet and listen to the people who are affected by changes to the justice system.

Issues raised by the public through letters and petitions, including security of tenure and rights of access for hutters, dangerous driving and miscarriages of justice, were investigated by the committee.
**Justice 2 Committee**

**Remit**

The Justice 2 Committee considers and reports on the civil and criminal justice systems, the reform of civil and criminal laws and other issues that are the responsibility of the Minister for Justice. It also considers some functions of the Lord Advocate.

**Report**

The Justice 2 Committee, with the Justice 1 Committee, plays a principal role in scrutinising the justice system.

This year, members finished a detailed investigation of a draft law to provide better protection and assistance to vulnerable witnesses giving evidence in court (the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Bill). They heard from many organisations and individuals, including those who had given or were due to give evidence in court. The committee also considered evidence on the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Bill. The committee focused on how well the new powers would work and how they would impact on the current justice system. The findings of the Justice 2 Committee were reported to the Communities Committee.

The committee started taking evidence on plans for a UK Supreme Court and how it will affect Scotland. Parliamentary history was made when the Lord President came before the committee to give evidence. Members also began a review of an act passed in the first Parliament, the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act. Initial evidence was taken which will help the committee decide whether or not to go ahead with a review.

The committee started to look at the Tenements (Scotland) Bill. The bill is the final part of a package of reforms dealing with land ownership.

Additionally, the committee hosted a seminar on youth justice to help with its forthcoming inquiry into the issue.

The committee visited prisons and courts across Scotland to meet and listen to people affected by changes to the justice system.

Issues raised by the public through letters and petitions, such as the shoeing of Clydesdale horses, the Scottish Legal Aid Board, the welfare of minors and complainers’ rights were investigated by the committee.
Local Government and Transport Committee

Remit
The Local Government and Transport Committee looks at local government issues, which fall within the responsibility of the Minister for Finance and Public Services; and transport issues, which are part of the remit of the Minister for Transport.

Report
The committee had a busy year. It looked at the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill, the Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill and the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Bill. It has also held a mini inquiry into the rail industry in Scotland.

Much of the committee’s time was given over to the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill. Among other aims, the bill seeks to introduce the single transferable vote (STV) for local government elections in Scotland. This will give people the chance to vote for as many candidates as they like, in order of preference. Once election quotas are reached by candidates, their surplus votes are redistributed to second and subsequent choice candidates. The committee agreed to recommend that the Parliament approve its general principles. It is expected to begin Stage 2 scrutiny later in the year.

The committee’s consideration of the bill was preceded by visits to Dublin and Belfast where, in both cases, STV is already in use. The visits proved informative. During debates, members drew regularly on knowledge gained in Dublin and Belfast.

In July 2003, the Strategic Rail Authority announced it was to consult on its future strategy for railway maintenance and improvement. The Minister for Transport has also identified a number of important rail projects in Scotland, such as the re-development of Waverley Station in Edinburgh and rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports. The committee agreed to hold a mini inquiry on the rail industry in Scotland and took evidence from the Strategic Rail Authority and Network Rail.

As part of its mini inquiry, members of the committee visited the Forth Bridge to see bridge maintenance being carried out.
Remit
The remit of the Procedures Committee is to consider and report on the practice and procedures of the Parliament in relation to its business. This involves, in particular, recommending changes to the Standing Orders, the Parliament’s rule book.

Report
The committee began the session by launching a review of First Minister’s Question Time (FMQT), which it then followed with a wider inquiry into how questions are asked orally.

Recognising the popularity of oral questions, both with the media and the public, the committee conducted an extensive investigation into how, if at all, the current system could be improved. In addition to giving a questionnaire to people watching FMQT and Question Time (QT) from the public gallery, the committee, with the support of the Parliament’s Participation Services team, invited six community groups from across Scotland to visit the Parliament. Those invited then watched FMQT and QT and gave their views to the committee.

The committee thought that extending FMQT from 20 to 30 minutes and separating it from Question Time would give MSPs more chances to quiz ministers and hold them to account. The committee also recommended the introduction of a new thematic element to Question Time, with the focus on different ministers each week. Question Time was also extended from 40 to 60 minutes. These changes began on a trial basis, with a final review to be conducted before the summer.

The committee’s two other major inquiries were about the way laws are made. Its ongoing inquiry into non-Executive bills (primarily members’ bills) looks at whether a system for prioritising proposals for members’ bills is needed. The committee has also begun an in-depth inquiry into how long it takes bills to pass through the 3-stage process of parliamentary scrutiny. The committee asked for evidence from all those with an interest in the process and will report to the Parliament with its findings.

During this year, the committee also considered and made recommendations about emergency bill procedures and the temporary suspension of the Parliament’s Standing Orders.

Finally, the committee updated and re-issued the Parliament’s rule book, the Standing Orders.
Public Petitions Committee

Remit
The Public Petitions Committee looks at public petitions and decides what action should be taken.

Report
The Public Petitions Committee is widely regarded as one of the Scottish Parliament’s success stories in terms of encouraging people to get involved in politics. It continues to give individuals, community and pressure groups a chance to influence the Scottish Parliament.

On 27 November 2003, the committee, under the leadership of John McAllion MSP and Michael McMahon MSP, won the Committee of the Year Award 2003 at the prestigious Scottish Politician of the Year Awards.

Petitions considered
During the period of this report the committee considered 114 new petitions, covering a wide range of topics.

Many of these petitions were examined when considering bills, including the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Bill and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill. Some were part of other committees’ inquiries into subjects such as renewable energy, broadband technology, Scottish football and the European Year of Disabled People 2003.

Many petitions resulted in positive changes. For example, Historic Scotland improved guidance on grant applications after this was raised by the committee. The Scottish Executive promises that its forthcoming planning bill will include new rules about repeat planning applications thanks to the committee’s concerns.

e-petitioning
The Scottish Parliament is known throughout the world for encouraging modern, new ways to petition through its e-petitioner system. The first of its kind, the system allows signatures to be gathered via the Internet. Each e-petition has its own forum where visitors and signatories can discuss the petition and surrounding issues online. Following the success of a two-year pilot project with the International Teledemocracy Centre at Napier University, the e-petitioner system went live in October 2003 and was formally launched in February 2004.

Equality issues
Members backed the Equal Opportunities Committee guidelines on equal opportunities in the Parliament’s committees. It introduced an equal opportunities monitoring form, which all petitioners will be requested to complete when submitting a petition.

The committee published revised guidance on submitting petitions in the following languages: English; Arabic; Bengali; Cantonese; Gaelic; Punjabi; and Urdu. Braille and audio versions are also now available.
Remit

The Standards Committee is responsible for:
• Issues relating to the conduct of MSPs in carrying out their Parliamentary duties;
• The Register of Members’ Interests; and
• The Parliament’s Code of Conduct for MSPs.

Report

The Standards Committee started work on new legislation on members’ interests. The committee’s challenge will be to ensure that any proposal meets the Parliament’s obligation to be open and accountable to the Scottish people. The committee aims to introduce a bill in late 2004.

The committee is also responsible for overseeing the Cross-Party Groups (CPGs) in the Parliament. There are now 47 of these groups covering issues as diverse as the Scottish contemporary music industry and affordable housing. Many of them were set up in the first parliamentary session, which shows that CPGs deal with issues of real interest to both MSPs and the wider community. The Standards Committee will make sure the system continues to act as an important link between the Parliament and the public.

The committee intends to keep both the Code of Conduct and the way complaints are handled under review to ensure that they work well.

With the help of the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, Dr Jim Dyer OBE, the committee will check how the complaints process works. Where necessary, it will think about changing procedures to ensure that the public and MSPs are confident that complaints are being heard and taken seriously.

The committee continues to work with other parliaments and assemblies to improve standards in public life. In March 2004, following a request from the Standards of Conduct Committee at the National Assembly for Wales, the committee submitted written evidence on the complaints system of the Scottish Parliament.
Remit
The committee examines the legal soundness and the technical drafting of legislation made by the Executive under Acts of Parliament and considers new powers to make secondary legislation contained in parliamentary bills. It can also inquire into the general questions about powers to make subordinate legislation.

Report
The committee has met weekly since its first meeting on 10 June 2003. It works to tight timescales, publishing at least one report each week. It also reports on delegated powers in bills. The committee considers bills put forward by the Executive, MSPs and committees.

On 27 January, the committee agreed to launch a two-part inquiry into regulations in Scotland and plans for a statutory instruments bill. Statutory instruments are rules about how governments use powers. Each part is expected to last about a year, which would allow a further year for the passage of a statutory instruments bill before the end of this parliamentary session. The committee appointed an adviser, held its first evidence-taking session with witnesses and received written submissions. A committee delegation visited Westminster to meet a number of parliamentary scrutiny committees and held a seminar with members of the Regulatory Impact Unit and the Better Regulation Task Force in the Cabinet Office.

Between its regular scrutiny work and the inquiry, the committee looks forward to a very full session, which could well have a long-term impact on the way laws are made in Scotland.

Did You Know?
Subordinate legislation is the law made by a person or organisation, for example Scottish ministers, under powers granted to them by Acts of Parliament. Some examples of subordinate legislation are regulations, orders and local authority bye-laws.
The Private Bills Unit was set up in July 2003 because of the number of transport and works private bills expected this session. Private bills allow a promoter to have powers or benefits in addition to, or in conflict with, the general law.

The Robin Rigg Offshore Wind Farm (Navigation and Fishing) (Scotland) Act 2003 received Royal Assent on 1 August 2003, giving the promoter authority to interfere with navigation rights and fishing in order to build and maintain a wind farm in the Solway Firth.

The Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Bill was introduced on 15 May 2003. A total of 55 admissible objections were received. The Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Bill Committee held three meetings in Alloa to hear evidence at preliminary stage and, following its report, the Parliament agreed the general principles of the bill on 11 December 2003. The committee then considered written submissions and took oral evidence from the bill promoter and objectors at consideration stage.

The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 11 September 2003. Its main purpose is to authorise reconstruction of a railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank in the Scottish Borders. A total of 118 admissible objections were received. The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill Committee was set up to scrutinise the bill.

Two bills about building tram lines in Edinburgh were introduced on 29 January 2004. A total of 197 and 82 admissible objections were received for the Line 1 and Line 2 Bills respectively.
The Official Report is the authoritative record of what is said during all public meetings of the Parliament and its committees.

Training and development

Official reporters undergo six months’ training before they join the team. This year, two new reporters completed their training, which focused on building editorial skills to enable them to produce accurate reports of what MSPs and witnesses say on the vast range of subjects discussed in the Parliament.

We share best practice with fellow members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Reporting Association at an annual conference and during visits. This year, one of our reporters participated in an exchange with an official reporter at the Republic of Ireland’s Parliament, the Dáil. We also welcomed colleagues from the House of Commons and the National Assembly for Wales.

“Often the staff of the Official Report are the invisible heroes in the process.” Johann Lamont, Convener of the Communities Committee, 25 February 2004.
A day in the life of an official reporter...

It is Wednesday afternoon and I head up to the Chamber with the essential tools of the official reporter: tape, notebook and pen. We work to a tight rota of ‘turns’, covering five-minute periods in a debate. I am fourth on the list of 16 reporters who will record this afternoon’s proceedings. Once I am in the reporters’ gallery, I help my colleague by keeping my ears pinned and eyes peeled for interruptions. Then I am in the hot seat. I note down who speaks and when, and I send for members’ notes to clarify or confirm certain points. When my turn is up, a security officer whisks my request for notes to the appropriate member, to be returned to me by a reporter further down the list.

Back in the office, I start transcribing my turn, using the tape recording of proceedings. That should take 45 minutes. Our remit is to produce a substantially verbatim report of parliamentary proceedings. When I am happy with my turn, I e-mail it to the sub-editors and rejoin the list. The sub-editors check for accuracy and consistency before compiling all our turns into the Official Report at the end of the day. The Official Report of meetings of the Parliament is always available on the Parliament website by 8 am on the next working day.

Most of our work involves producing Official Reports of committee meetings. Today, I sat in on the Justice 1 Committee and produced a log of the proceedings. I listed who spoke when and noted useful information, clarifying it where necessary with clerks and witnesses. Other reporters will use the log to help them to transcribe their turns.

The committee was considering the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2. We have to be up to speed with parliamentary procedure as amendments fly back and forth. Reporters must know exactly what is going on because the Official Report is the authoritative record of legislative scrutiny and may be used in court to interpret ministers’ intent.

This year, my colleagues and I reported:

- 601 hours of committee meetings; and
- 302 hours of meetings of the Parliament.

We also produced:

- 19,120 columns of copy; and
- 8,604,000 words.

Did You Know?

A substantially verbatim report is one that is faithful to and keeps the flavour of the original speech, but which is edited to remove repeated phrases and to convey the speaker’s tone of voice or gesture.
Other Activities

**SPICe**

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), part of our Research and Information Group, provides a confidential and unbiased research and information service for MSPs and their staff (both in the Parliament and in constituency offices). It does the same job for the parliamentary committees and for the Parliament’s staff. We do this by supplying, producing and looking after a wide range of electronic and printed information.

The election in May meant that SPICe’s pattern of work took on a different shape at the start of the year. For example, as the first parliamentary session came to an end we published a paper summarising every bill looked at by the Parliament. After the election we produced a detailed and very well received paper about the 2003 election results. We also prepared a series of papers for all the subject committees in the Parliament introducing topics new to many committee members.

SPICe helped establish the Scottish Parliament Science Information Scheme. Launched in September, it puts MSPs in touch with 52 experts in Scotland’s science community, each established in his or her own field.

In October, the staff responsible for records management, data protection and freedom of information (FOI) within the Parliament moved to SPICe. They are working hard to make sure we comply with the Freedom of Information Act by the deadline of January 2005.

This year saw the publication of the first fully indexed CD-ROM of the Parliament’s proceedings for 1999-2000. This was made available to all Partner Libraries.

Work on the collection of material donated to the Parliament by Donald Dewar’s family is now almost complete. Items are catalogued, photographs are identified, and delicate artefacts are now preserved. Staff involved in this work also advised on the design of the room in Holyrood, which will house the collection.
Public Information and Visitor Services

Between May 2003 and April 2004, almost 30,000 people came to the Scottish Parliament Visitor Centre on George IV Bridge. Around 5,000 people attended committee meetings. The Chamber remains popular, with more than 26,000 people attending meetings there or coming in to view the building. In addition, around 27,000 people visited the Holyrood Building Information Centre. The Public Enquiry Unit handled around 79,000 calls and responded to almost 8,000 detailed enquiries in writing. It also launched a new local rate textphone number.

In June 2003, the Public Information Service launched its first multilingual publication, Making Your Voice Heard in the Scottish Parliament, to encourage people to take part in the parliamentary process. This publication is available in eight languages (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Gaelic, Punjabi, Scots and Urdu) as well as Braille, audio tape and in British Sign Language video format.

Gàidhlig / Gaelic

The Parliament’s Gaelic officers provide a range of services to the Gaelic community, MSPs and parliamentary staff. In 2003-04 our work included:

- Producing a wider range of documents, education materials and news releases in Gaelic;
- Increasing the Gaelic content on the Parliament website. It now has around 500 Gaelic pages, which receive around 14,000 hits each month;
- Visiting Gaelic communities, groups and schools throughout Scotland from Alloa to Ullapool;
- Participating in major Gaelic events and exhibitions nationally;
- Delivering tours and educational sessions in the Parliament for Gaelic learners and speakers and for Gaelic schools and community groups;
- Providing a Gaelic public information service, which receives around 100 enquiries per month; and
- Liaising with the Gaelic media.
**Education Service**

In August, a new education service leaflet was sent to every school in Scotland along with a copy of the 2003 election results wall chart. The response from schools was immediate. Education visits and teacher seminar programmes were booked up very quickly until the end of the academic year.

A total of 4,272 pupils and students came along on education visits. Of those taking part, a total of 51% were primary pupils, 46% were secondary pupils and the remaining 3% were further education students. Since the education service was set up in 1999 more than 20,000 young people have been involved in this programme. In October, we welcomed delegates from the Commonwealth Youth Summit, which was held in Edinburgh to coincide with the Commonwealth Education Ministers conference. Young people from across the Commonwealth enjoyed First Minister’s Question Time.

A series of 10 teacher seminars took place in the Parliament and two sessions happened outwith the Parliament. They involved a total of 241 primary and modern studies teachers as well as student teachers from Scottish universities.

New resources include:

- 2003 Election Results wall charts;
- Education packs, updated since the election;
- Get Elected, a snakes and ladders game; and
- Devolved Matters, a street scene poster.
**Partner Libraries**

The Partner Library Network continues to be an important gateway for people who want to learn more about the Parliament. We supply more information in CD-ROM and other electronic media to reflect the move towards e-access in public libraries.

The past year has seen a large growth in the number of community events held in partner libraries. We organised a series of successful events in Glasgow, Ayrshire and the Western Isles. These were attended by MSPs and focused on raising awareness among local communities about the different ways they can get involved with the Parliament. Important people who took part include: young people; voluntary organisations; residents associations; elderly groups; Gaelic speakers; and many others.

Partner library staff continue to receive training and advice to ensure that parliamentary information sources and materials are available to the public.

**Public Participation**

We employed a member of staff to help us forge links with voluntary and community groups across Scotland and to show people how to get involved with the Parliament. We produced a handbook, which will also help in our work building ties with the Scottish people.

We launched a training programme for community-based workers with two pilot workshops in Edinburgh and in Dumfries. The workshops aim to explain our structures and how we work in order to help communities to get in touch with different parts of the Parliament, especially our committees.

Participation events held this year included welcoming the Scottish Civic Forum to the Chamber. Held in November, this was an evening of debate about what the forum found out when it organised a series of ‘participation summits’. These events were to discover more about people’s experiences of and views on the Parliament during its first four years.
Our Place in the World

The Parliament recognises that Scotland is part of a much wider world. It needs to be able to understand and, where possible, to influence events and decisions made elsewhere – in London, Brussels and beyond – that affect Scotland.

We are working with the Scottish Executive and other partners to promote Scotland and the Scottish approach to democracy. At this time of tension across the world, we can help demonstrate the role of democracy. In particular, this year we shared our experience with representatives of the Palestinian Legislative Council and, as part of a South Caucasus regional peace initiative, with parliamentarians from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“It is very important for parliamentarians from different parliaments to meet and discuss the issues that affect them and to learn how each parliament addresses those issues. Scotland and Ireland have so much in common”
Ceann Comhairle (Speaker) on the occasion of a visit by a delegation from the Irish Parliament.

“…we can offer you our experience of civic Scotland and of a legislature which is pledged to working in partnership with the people.”
Presiding Officer to the South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative, Edinburgh.

The Presiding Officer welcomes the President of Barcelona Football Club to Holyrood
Regions and the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe. We are considering ways to reinforce our effectiveness in the EU, including the potential added value that a presence in Brussels could bring. Relations with leading European regions continue to strengthen.

The Presiding Officer gave keynote European speeches to meetings of both the Committee of the Regions and the Conference of Legislative Regional Assemblies of Europe. The Presiding Officer led a parliamentary delegation to events to promote Scotland in Catalonia, a vibrant region of Europe to which Scotland is now connected by direct flights.

Discussions continue about joint projects in research, information and broadcasting with the Catalan and Basque parliaments. Our links with Nordic partners continue to develop with MSPs working for closer ties between the Nordic Council and the British Irish Interparliamentary Body. We hosted a seminar with Nordic countries to talk about efficient ways of working in parliamentary

“As long as there is a devolved parliament in Scotland, I hope that it will not be insular, but will recognise that we are part of a much wider world.” The First Minister on the occasion of the election of the new Presiding Officer.

The Tartan Day celebrations centred on a colourful parade on New York’s 6th Avenue

The Presiding Officer was appointed to the Advisory Committee of British Council Scotland, recognising the role the Parliament can play in shaping the world’s awareness of Scotland and the United Kingdom.

Early in the new session MSPs were appointed to international organisations including the British Irish Interparliamentary Body, the European Union’s Committee of the

MSPs met with the Palestinian Legislative Council
committees. In May, the European Union welcomed 10 new member states. Parliamentarians from each of these states have visited us since 1999 to learn more about devolution. Significant links with the Estonian and Slovakian parliaments have developed and MSPs went to Poland as guests of the Polish government this year.

Members are active in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association with close links developing with Canada. MSPs marked the 200th anniversary of the Selkirk Settlers in New Brunswick in August 2003 and contributed to Tartan Day celebrations in Quebec and Ottawa. We welcomed the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the Rt. Hon. Don MacKinnon, as well as visitors from across the Commonwealth to the Parliament’s debate on freedom, to mark Commonwealth Day in March.

We received more than 100 delegations from fellow parliaments this year, including speakers, government ministers and other distinguished guests. In particular, MSPs were honoured by an address to Parliament by HM The Queen to mark the second session of the Parliament. HRH The Prince of Wales joined MSPs, parliamentary staff and people of Scotland at an ecumenical kirking of the Parliament, a kind of religious blessing, on the eve of the new session.

We aim to give as many people as possible the chance to be involved in the work of linking the Parliament to the wider world. Many addresses, seminars and other events are open to the public and our work is published on our website.
In June 2003, the First Minister, Jack McConnell and Presiding Officer, George Reid, commissioned Lord Fraser of Carmyllie to conduct an inquiry into the Holyrood Parliament building project. In addition, the Auditor General, Robert Black, would look at issues of financial propriety and value for money. Both these investigations are ongoing and have the full support and co-operation of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Holyrood Progress Group and everyone involved in the project. Lord Fraser is planning to report in September 2004.
Work on site continues. The Holyrood complex is made up of the MSP Building, Queensberry House, Towers, Canongate buildings, Press Tower and the Debating Chamber. The MSP Building and Queensberry House were finished in January/February. The remaining parts of the complex are being opened to us on a rolling programme, to let us install and test things like information technology systems before our planned move during the summer. Everyone involved in this project is working towards our August migration date. The Parliament will then meet in its new home in September.

Over the last 12 months it has at last been possible for the public to see parts of this continually surprising and often unique complex as it nears completion. We can see the original and extraordinary vision of the architect, Enric Miralles, transformed into a building which is already receiving national and international recognition. We look forward in the coming year to welcoming the people of Scotland into their Parliament’s new home.
How to contact us:

For more information on the Parliament you can visit our website www.scottish.parliament.uk
or contact the Public Information service:

📞 Telephone 0845 278 1999 (local rate) or 0131 348 5000.
The Parliament also has a textphone number 0845 270 0152 (local rate)
or 0131 348 5415
and welcomes calls from deaf and speech-impaired people using the RNID Typetalk service
(18001 0131 348 5000).

✉️ Fax: 0131 348 5601

✉️ Email: spinfo@scottish.parliament.uk


For information in languages other than English or in alternative formats (for example in Braille, large print, tape or various computer formats), please send your enquiry to
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