

Festival of Politics 2024

30 May 2024

Reference: SPCB (2024) Paper 43

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the SPCB on the planning and preparations for the 2024 Festival of Politics, in particular the partners, ticketing and programme.
2. At its meeting on 9 November 2023 the SPCB agreed this year's Festival of Politics would be held during the week beginning Monday 19 August. To mark both the 25th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament and the 20th anniversary of the Festival this year, it will run for five days between Monday 19 and Friday 23 August.
3. As with previous Festivals, the SPCB agreed an overarching partnership with the parliament's think tank Scotland's Futures Forum. The SPCB also agreed that we should build upon internal and external partnerships including a request to committees and cross-party groups to submit panel suggestions.

Issues and Options

Partnerships

4. As well as the partnership with Scotland's Futures Forum, this year also continues the partnership established last year with Scottish Youth Film Foundation (SYFF), the charity that aims to improve the life outcomes of young people in Scotland through film. The group of young filmmakers recruited from across Scotland will be based at the Festival for the duration where they will interview panellists and broadcast a daily round-up magazine programme live from the Scottish Parliament.
5. We are also pleased to confirm that a new partnership with Healing Arts Scotland (HAS). This is a Scotland-wide celebration of the role of the

arts in health and wellbeing spearheaded by Scottish Ballet and the Jameel Arts a & Health Lab's global campaign in collaboration with the World Health Organisation. The Festival of Politics will work with HAS, as well as last year's partner, the Edinburgh International Festival, to present a dance and music performance in the Parliament's Landscaped Gardens. The performance features a cast of community dancers, NHS staff and young performers with a line-up of pipers, classical and brass musicians.

6. Additional partnerships with Scotland's national arts organisations include Scottish Opera on a pop-up performance and the Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF) as part of an exhibition with the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP), both of which will take place in the Festival Café Bar.
7. Partnerships with the Consulate General of Spain in Edinburgh; the Cervantes Chair at the University of Edinburgh have been secured as part of the Presiding Officer In Conversation event with the architect, partner and widow of the visionary creative Enric Miralles, Benedetta Tagliabue. This event will also feature excerpts from an opera performed by world leading pianist and composer Roberto Cacciapaglia in the Debating Chamber. Additional *In Conversation with ...* invitations to various headliners will continue to be explored.
8. Further individual partnerships with a range of Scottish universities including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stirling; the Scottish Council on Global Affairs; the SYP and the Young Women's Movement (YWM); Scottish Older People's Assembly; the Law Society of Scotland; the Scottish Council on Bioethics; COSLA; the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights; the Royal Society of Edinburgh; the Centre for Responsible Debate, have all been secured or approached in order to maximise potential audience reach as indicated in the attached programme in **Annex A**.

Ticketing

9. As agreed by the SPCB at its meeting, the Festival will increase its ticket pricing structure for the first time since 2015 given the challenges on increased staffing and AV costs in the intervening years. For Festival panel events this will see a £1.00 ticket increase so formerly £4.00 concession tickets will become £5.00, and formerly full-price £6.00 tickets will increase to £7.50. For Debating Chamber events, as they have additional broadcasting and staffing costs, the current concession ticket of £6.00 will become £7.50 and the current full-price ticket of £8.00 will become £10.00.
10. To off-set these increases, the Festival will continue to offer each partner an allocation of 10 complimentary tickets to ensure that audiences who may not otherwise afford the ticket price can still attend. The Festival will

also offer the Festival database a special loyalty pass to access a fixed number of events at previous Festival prices.

11. The Festival will work particularly closely with the SYP and YWM to ensure that an additional allocation of complimentary tickets will be offered to ensure as many young people as possible can attend the day of three co-designed events on Thursday 22 August. Equally, the Festival is working with SYFF and their contacts with Modern Studies Higher students in Fife and West Lothian schools to offer complimentary tickets to attend panel events on Thursday 22 August.
12. The Festival will also continue to extend the SPCB suggestion from 2022 and continue to offer a free, tea, coffee or flavoured water to all ticket holders to enjoy post-event, considering the on-going cost of living crisis.

Festival Cafe Bar

13. The Festival Cafe bar programme will include three visual art exhibitions inspired by Festival panel events. The first is curated by Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament who selected artefacts from the National Library of Scotland to mark the SYP's 25th anniversary. These will be displayed for the first time during the Festival.
14. The second exhibition is a selection of banners, painting and artworks designed by a range of community artists working in arts and health contexts and supported by the International Teaching Artists Collaborative as part of HAS. Over 25 community groups including Big Noise Govanhill, Project Ability, to Dance for Parkinson's Inverness, contributed to the collective responses as stimuli were passed in a relay between groups across Scotland so that they connected and collaborated on the final national exhibition of work.
15. The third exhibition titled Scotland 2049, is the result of partnership between the SYP and EIBF, to create a vision of what Scotland will look like 25 years from now in 2049.
16. As with previous years, the Cafe Bar will host the Public Engagement Services Team who will run their successful Festival pop-up shop selling book titles by Festival panellists who will also take part in post-panel book signings. In addition, a free programme of entertainment including a special performance by Scottish Opera, choirs, ukulele bands, and dance is also planned.

Festival Closing Reception

17. To mark the Scottish Parliament's 25th anniversary and the panel discussions based around the anniversary that will culminate in an event

on Friday 23 August featuring several high-profile politicians and commentators, a post panel- reception is planned to which Members, panellists and audience members alike will be invited alongside Festival partners.

Public Engagement Strategy

18. The Festival of Politics aims to meet the Parliament's Public Engagement Strategy through engaging and partnering with a diverse range of organisations and audiences to create panel discussions and events. There is a continuation of last year's partnership with the SYFF, and the four co-designed Festival panel sessions with the SYP and the YWM (Consent; Sexism in the workplace; 25 Years of the Scottish Parliament – where are the young women?; and Mental Health and Young People. The Festival's partnership with the Climate Cafe also aims to engage with an inter-generational audience including a number of secondary school pupils from Fife and West Lothian. The partnership with Scottish Older People's Assembly will counter-balance the youth element and the Healing Arts Scotland partnership will further engage with audiences with neurological conditions as well as those with a range of health issues who find creative outlet through the arts and culture.
19. As in previous panels, a range of panels will be selected for BSL translation by the Scottish Parliament's BSL Officer to increase accessibility. Similarly, on the advice of the Parliament's BSL Officer, all BSL users will be allocated complimentary tickets to ensure there are no financial barriers to accessing the Festival.
20. In addition, a selection of Festival of Politics events will be uploaded to the Festival website and the Scottish Parliament's Festival of Politics YouTube channel later in August. Previous Festivals have demonstrated that this extends the post-event reach on audiences - with over 8,500 views from the 2023 Festival of Politics programme - and gives a longevity to the Festival out with the month of August.

Programme

21. The draft programme for the 2024 Festival of Politics is attached at **Annex A**. The draft programme contains details of proposed Festival events that have been or are close to being confirmed. The 2024 Festival will respond to the 25th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament; and issues related to the Parliament on responsible debate, standards in public life, young voices in the Parliament; as well as the 20th anniversary of the Holyrood building. Further panels will cover the role of the arts in our health and well-being through several HAS partnership events; and the role of artificial intelligence in our lives. Panels on housing, local

government, elections, geopolitics, and the climate are also included in this year's Festival programme.

22. Additionally, a planned In Conversation with Benedetta Tagliabue, the partner and wife of the late Enric Miralles, will also appear alongside pianist and composer Roberto Cacciapaglia in the Debating Chamber. The closing Festival event planned for the Debating Chamber will involve key politicians and commentators discussing the role of the Scottish Parliament in the last 25 years as well as looking forward to the next 25.
23. Following previous years' successful partnership with Cross-Party Groups (CPG) and committees, this year's programme reflects five CPGs who responded to the Festival's open call, with preference given to those CPGs who have never taken part in the Festival before. These include CPGs on Culture and Communities; Scotland's Games Ecosystem; Health Inequalities; St. Andrew's Day; and Space.
24. Members will chair all the CPG inspired panels according to their membership of the respective CPG. The majority of all other panels will also be chaired by Members who have specific committee knowledge and expertise of a panel subject area.
25. A Climate Café is also being proposed to take place on Thursday 22 August. This event would aim to create a welcoming, safe space within the Festival for an inter-generational audience to talk, learn and act on climate action. Climate Cafés began in rural Scotland and the model has now been adopted globally. Cafés across Scotland have included projects to reduce energy and waste costs, music events, fashion shows, dialogue with local authorities and collaboration. By hosting the Climate Café on Thursday 22 August, this would maximise the young audiences who may already be attending the co-designed panel events with SYP and the YWM as well as the Modern Studies school students attending from Fife and West Lothian as part of the SYFF partnership.
26. Although the programme will develop over the next few weeks it is hoped that it will not change significantly before it is launched in mid-June. If there are any major amendments, we will discuss and agree these with the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Presiding Officer.

Communications activities

27. The Parliament Communications Office will co-ordinate and deliver a communications plan which will use a number of platforms and techniques to raise awareness of the event. This will include engaging web and digital content, social media, email marketing and paid for advertising. It will include a mobile-friendly website along with a printed programme and other collateral to attract our core audiences.

28. As the Festival is all about issues, our key strategy underpinning this will be to try and effectively reach those who are interested in the themes and topics we're discussing. We'll do this by working with Festival partners and other stakeholders to utilise those existing networks.

Governance

29. The 2024 programme has followed the same development model as previous years through discussions with the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Presiding Officer.

Publication Scheme

30. The Paper and Annex should not be published until the 2024 Festival of Politics programme is announced in mid-June.

Next Steps

31. Following approval by the SPCB, officials will continue to progress the Festival programme. Wider communications to announce the launch of the Festival will take place in June 2024.

EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS TEAM
MAY 2024

Festival of Politics 2024 programme

Monday 19 August

Dementia - the power of dance and personalised playlists

In partnership with Healing Arts Scotland

1.45pm – 3.15pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

The arts have powers to positively impact people living with dementia without posing negative side effects or risk. Research demonstrates that participatory art forms empower the artist in everyone, moving beyond a diagnosis and offering a window of expression, creativity, and joy, taking the whole person into consideration and improving quality of life for people living with dementia and their families. Join the panel to discuss the science behind the power; the first-hand experience; and how carers and families can also benefit. *There will be a 15-minute taster dance session as part of this panel. No dance experience required.*

Chair: Jeremy Balfour MSP, Convener, Cross-Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing

Panellists:

- Michael Timmons, Executive Director, Playlist for Life
- Magdalena Schamberger, founder Hearts & Minds, creative collaborator
- Lisa Sinclair, Dance Health Manager, Scottish Ballet
- Willy Gilder, Time to Dance attendee, former BBC journalist, living with Alzheimer's

Healing Arts Scotland performance with Edinburgh International Festival

In partnership with Healing Arts Scotland and Edinburgh International Festival

4.00pm – 4.45pm

Landscaped Gardens

FREE

Join this incredible free performance to mark Healing Arts Scotland's country-wide week-long activation, celebrating and advocating for improved physical, mental and social health through the arts. This one-off event marks the partnership of Scottish Ballet, Jameel Arts and Health Lab and the World Health Organisation and features a new dance created by Scottish Ballet performed a cast of community dancers, NHS staff and young performers with a line-up of pipers, classical, and brass musicians outside The Scottish Parliament.

In Conversation with Benedetta Tagliabue with a performance by Roberto Cacciapaglia

In partnership with The Consulate General of Spain and The Cervantes Chair at the University of Edinburgh

5.00pm – 6.30pm

Debating Chamber

£10.00/£7.50

Join the **Presiding Officer** in conversation with architect **Benedetta Tagliabue**, partner and widow of the visionary creative Enric Miralles, who along with their own EMBT and fellow Scottish architectural company, RMJM, designed the Scottish Parliament building. This event will also feature excerpts from the opera 'Mai per Atzar' (Never by Chance) originally staged for the inauguration of the EMBT studio in Barcelona in 1997, will be performed live by world leading composer and pianist **Roberto Cacciapaglia** in the Debating Chamber of the Scottish Parliament. Join us for this unique celebration of creativity.

Tuesday 20 August

The power of age-friendly communities and the arts

In partnership with Healing Arts Scotland and Scottish Older People's Assembly

10.45am – 12.15pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

With one million people across the UK describing themselves as 'chronically lonely'; the issue of social isolation affects all generations. However, radical new intergenerational communities are springing up across Scotland and creating new spaces and opportunities for people of all ages to, live, work and play together. Hear about the benefits of this social cohesion and the role of the arts in bridging social divides, building trust, combatting ageism and inequality.

Chair: Christine Grahame MSP, Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Panellists:

- Marie Oliver, CEO, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire
- Dr Jill Sonke, Research Director, Center for Arts in Medicine, University of Florida

Who controls AI - the legality and ethics?

In partnership with The Law Society Scotland and the Scottish Council on Bioethics
11.00am – 12.30pm
The Holyrood Room
£7.50/£5.00

While the Bletchley Agreement marked the first global AI safety summit, AI is the most complex and challenging of human creations and is becoming more powerful and consequential to our lives daily. While politicians aim to shape and regulate AI, it is a handful of big tech companies in the driving seat. So, who is factoring in accountability and genuine deliberation by the public? How do we regulate without stifling innovation? Who defines what is ethical and non-ethical AI and how do we ensure democratic global buy-in on any regulations?

Chair: Maggie Chapman MSP, Scotland's Futures Forum

Panellists:

- Dr Dan McQuillan, Creative and Social Computing, Goldsmiths University, author *AI for the People*
- Sheila Webster, President, The Law Society Scotland
- Steph Wright, Head of Scottish AI Alliance

Health Creators: Health Inequalities in Scotland

In partnership with the Cross-Party Group on Health Inequalities
11:30am – 1:00pm
Committee Room 4
£7.50/£5.00

How do we work together to create good health for all? Health inequalities mean that people living with social, economic, physical disadvantages are more likely to experience ill-health and die earlier. Join the panel discussion to explore the right to health, barriers, and access to health services as they specifically impact race, prison population and poverty, as well as the role data plays in tackling health inequalities.

Chair: Brian Whittle MSP, Chair, Cross-Party Group on Health Inequalities

Panellists:

- Tejesh Mistry, Chief Executive of Voluntary Health Scotland
- Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland
- Danny Boyle, Parliamentary and Policy officer at BEMIS Representative Poverty Action
- Maree Aldam, Chief Executive, Amma Birth Companions
- Peter Kelly, Chief Executive, Poverty Alliance

What is local government for?

In partnership with COSLA
3.15pm – 4.45pm
Committee Room
£7.50/£5.00

It is responsible for a vital range of services for people and businesses in a designated area: from social care, schools, housing to licensing and even pest control. Yet amidst rising demand for services and increasing divergence between core funding and needs, local governments are ringing the emergency bell on financial resilience. However, lessons can be learned from local governments in Italy, Japan, Germany, and some English counterparts, who are all looking to more radical and imaginative solutions as well as ensuring the health of local democracy.

Chair: Ariane Burgess MSP, Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

Panellists:

- Councillor Prof Steven Heddle, Vice-President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).
- Professor Donna Hall, Chair POssAbilities, former CE Wigan Council (online)
- Adam Lang, Director, Carnegie UK
- Dr Jonathan Carr-West, CE, Local Government Information Unit (online)

Home sweet home?

In partnership with the University of Glasgow
3.30pm – 5.00pm
The Holyrood Room
£7.50/£5.00

The transformation of housing appears to have moved from provision of a warm, safe, and secure 'home' to 'private asset' in the last forty years. Fuelled in part by a rising demand for private housing while the state's role as a direct provider of social housing has declined. The Scottish Government declared a 'housing emergency' for a range of complex reasons and there's been a 130% increase in the last decade of children in temporary accommodation. It's time for radical solutions. Join the panel to discuss compulsory sales, land tax values and public land.

Chair: Graham Simpson MSP, Convener, Cross-Party Group on Housing

Panellists:

- Kwajo Tweneboa, social housing campaigner, author of Our Country in Crisis
- Professor Ken Gibb, Professor in Housing Economics, University of Glasgow
- Alison Watson, Director, Shelter Scotland

Place and Displacement: reconnecting to the world through the arts

In partnership with Healing Arts Scotland
5.30pm – 7.00pm
The Holyrood Room
£7.50/£5.00

Forcibly displaced populations have surged around the world due to everything from conflict to climate crisis. Forced displacement generates health-related challenges like shelter and food to broader psychosocial issues of trauma, whose effects can have intergenerational impacts. This panel will discuss how the arts have been used to help reconnect forcibly displaced peoples cope with their new circumstances, process their sense of loss, and begin the journey to imagining a more hopeful future.

Chair: Clare Adamson MSP, Convener, Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Panellists:

- Christopher Bailey, arts and health lead of the World Health Organization
- Sangeeta Isvaran, dancer, social worker
- Dr Dave Caesar, Interim Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Wednesday 21 August

AI and creativity

In partnership with Scotland's Futures Forum
10.45am – 12.15pm
Committee Room
£7.50/£5.00

Creativity is seen as a uniquely human quality but with generative AI, does this mean a core human facet is under threat? Machines can generate art, music, literature and apparently many of us can't tell the difference between human or machine creativity. While creatives globally fear cuts to earnings and jobs, new technology is now another face-off. And what of authorship and privacy? Are creative humans still relevant or is generative AI an overhype?

Chair: Maggie Chapman MSP, Scotland's Futures Forum

Panellists:

- Professor Frauke Zeller, Professor of Human Computer-Interaction and Creative Informatics at Edinburgh Napier University
- Rosie Castle, Campaigns Manager, Edinburgh International Festival
- Michelle Thomson MSP, Convener of the Cross-Party Group on Music

Why do we need whistle-blowers?

In partnership with Edinburgh Napier University
11.00am – 12.30pm
The Holyrood Room
£7.50/£5.00

What motivates whistle-blowers to disclose official information, corruption, or fraud to a wider public? Despite risk to reputation, livelihood and even life, whistle-blowers will work with investigative journalists to bring to light illegal activities that would otherwise go undetected. What protection does our legal system afford such individuals and what of the 'bad leakers' who are motivated to disclose information for personal political or financial gain and no regard to public interest?

Chair: Ann Packard FRSA

Panellists:

- Georgina Halford-Hall, CEO Whistleblowers UK
- Iain G Mitchell KC,
- Dr Eamonn O'Neill, Associate Professor in Journalism, FHEA, Edinburgh Napier University

Launching Scotland's ambitions

In partnership with the Cross-Party Group on Space
11:30 – 1.00pm
Committee Room
£7.50/£5.00

As Norway, Sweden, and Germany all prepare for launch activity this summer, the question we must ask is how ready is Shetland's Spaceport, or indeed other Scottish Spaceports for launch? What is required to ensure readiness and what will this mean for Scotland's and UK economy, and how are we in Scotland placed to leverage this as much as possible?

Chair: Colin Beattie MSP, Convener, Cross-Party Group on Space

Panellists:

- Alan Thompson, Skyrora
- Yvette Hopkins, Executive, Shetland Space Centre

Jobs and the Just Transition – back to the 80s?

In partnership with the University of Aberdeen

1.00pm – 2.30pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

One in five UK jobs will reportedly be impacted by the move to a greener, cleaner economy with thousands of livelihoods and communities tied to 'old' industries at stake. What can the 1980s miner's strike teach us as we move through a 'just transition' and ensure communities dependent on fossil fuels don't face the same challenges? Is the close working between government, business, investment, and a local approach creating high-quality jobs and employment for a green economy in Scotland?

Chair: Claire Baker MSP, Convener, Economy, Fair Work Committee

Panellists:

- Professor Tavis Potts, Personal Chair, Dean for Sustainability / Just Transition Lab, University of Aberdeen
- Dr Ewan Gibbs, Lecturer in Global Inequalities, University of Glasgow
- Nicky Wilson, National Union of Mineworkers

Are standards in public life *really* declining?

In partnership with University of Stirling

1.15pm – 2.45pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

With the Scottish Parliament marking 25 years, it is timely to discuss the public's view of everyone in public life such as politicians, the media and the justice system when it comes to perceptions of honesty, integrity, and ethics. Join the panel to discuss the lessons to be learned from history in light of the Victorian's radical changes initiated in their reforms of standards in public life, and find out how political, social, and cultural changes can bolster the perceived decline of standards in the 21st century.

Chair: Martin Whitfield MSP, Convener, Standards, Procedures, Public Appointments Committee

Panellists:

- Dr Ian Cawood, Associate Professor in History, University of Stirling
- Philip Rycroft, former civil servant and academic at Edinburgh University and the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at Cambridge University.
- Dr Elisabeth Loose, John Smith Centre, University of Glasgow

US Elections – Trump or Biden 2.0?

3.15pm – 4.45pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

With November heralding a tight and heated battle between current Democratic Party incumbent President Biden and Republican Party candidate Donald Trump back for a possible second term in The White House, Americans are apparently concerned about the fitness and ethics respectively of both candidates. With everything from the economy to the Middle East influencing voting intentions, how will November's election play out and what will the impact be for the rest of the world?

Chair: Clare Adamson MSP, Convener, Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Panellists:

- Jason Buxt, Partner, RXN Group
- Robert Moran, Partner, The Brunswick Group
- Nomia Iqbal, Washington DC, North America correspondent BBC (ONLINE)

Making amends for Empire - has Scotland done enough?

In partnership with Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

3.30pm - 5.00pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

Colonial profit and participation are embedded in the history of Scotland. Join us to hear about ongoing work to address the history of Scotland's involvement in transatlantic slavery and Empire and to explore whether enough is being done to confront and atone for Scotland's imperial past.

Chair: Foysol Choudhury MSP, Convener of Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice

Panellists:

- Dr Stephen Mullen, Lecturer in History, University of Glasgow
- Zandra Yeaman, Curator of Discomfort, the Hunterian, University of Glasgow

Thursday 22 August

Global politics in 2024 – testing times ahead?

In association with the Scottish Council on Global Affairs

10.45am – 12.15pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

2024 looks to be a nerve-wracking year for geo-politics. From tensions and conflict stretching from the Ukraine to Israel/Palestine and Sudan, the continued rise of India – and China, with an unprecedented number of global elections, including those in the U.S., those in the global power hot-seats must also consider a climate crisis, populism, and the impact of AI in what looks like an increasingly polarised world. Join the panel to discuss the issues and possible solutions.

Chair: Clare Adamson MSP, Convener, Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Panellists:

- Professor Peter Jackson, Chair in Global Security, University of Glasgow
- Jason Boxt, Partner, RXN Group

Consent

In partnership with Young Women's Movement and the Scottish Youth Parliament

11.00am – 12.30pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

Every young person should know what healthy relationships are, what they look like both in-person and online. Join the panel to discuss how young people can be supported in their understanding of healthy relationships, safe spaces and consent.

Chair: TBC

Panellists:

- Professor Kirstin Mitchell, Equally Safe at School, University of Glasgow
- Lucy Allan, Young Women's Movement
- Hannah Brown, Young Women's Movement

GameApocalypse Now: can games solve Scotland's digital skills crisis?

In partnership with the Cross-Party Group on Scotland's Games Ecosystem

11:30 – 1.00pm

Committee Room 4

£7:50/ £5:00

Prior to starting school many children play, love, and learn from digital games. Then... we lose them. Instead of building the next generation of creators and developers, and despite addressing the digital poverty gap, substantive digital industry skills remain in crisis. Could videogames be the secret weapon to ensuring Scotland's new generation of digital pioneers?

Chair: Michael Marra MSP, Deputy Convener, Cross-Party Group on Scottish Games Ecosystems

Panellists:

- Dr Amanda Ford, Lecturer, West College & Founder of the Scottish Games Education Network
- Jade Law, CEO, WarDog Studios

Sexism in the workplace

In partnership with Young Women's Movement and the Scottish Youth Parliament

1.00pm – 2.30pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

A survey by the Young Women's Trust this year found that half of the women surveyed between 18 and 30 years old have experienced discrimination in the workplace. Join the panel to discuss how structural challenges ranging from microaggressions to verbal put-downs and blocked opportunities, impact women in the workplace, and how positive leadership and zero tolerance can ensure everyone feels safe and empowered at work.

Chair: Alannah Logue MSYP, Convener of the SYP Culture and Media Committee

Panellists:

- Claire Reindorp, Chief Executive of Young Women's Trust report
- Jack Anderson MSYP

Not the end of the world?

In partnership with The Rowett Institute, University of Aberdeen

1.15pm – 2.45pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

Doomsday predictions that the end of the world is nigh due to the climate crisis can be a dream for climate deniers. Yet, data tells us a rethink on everything we've ever been told about the environment, biodiversity and plastics is overdue. While the problems are huge, it may be that rapid technology, significant societal transformation and a sharp narrative turnaround could have the world back on track to achieve true sustainability for the first time in history. Join the panel to discuss the reality and the potential solutions.

Chair: Ben Macpherson MSP, Deputy Convener, Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Panellists:

- Professor Baukje de Roos, Rowett Institute, University of Aberdeen
- Anne Marte Bergseng, ClimateXChange, University of Edinburgh

Reading between the lines: information literacy in the 21st century

In partnership with Royal Society of Edinburgh and Childlight, Global Child Safety Institute, University of Edinburgh

3.15pm – 4.45pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

We are bombarded by information that competes for our attention or money. Our own information is used to channel this to us in ways that we might not want. Loss of control over our own information can lead to believe in false narratives that harm other people, and ourselves. Young people need tools to control their own information and to separate fact from fiction. This session asks: how can we nurture responsible and ethical consumers of information in the digital age?

Chair: Professor Martin Hendry, Vice Principal, University of Glasgow and Royal Society Edinburgh Fellow

Panellists:

- Zoe Lambourne, Associate Director of Strategy, Childlight,
- Dr Fiona McNeill FRSE, Reader in Computer Science Education, University of Edinburgh
- Angela Balakrishnan, Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs, Information Commissioner's Office
- Jason Boxt, Partner, RXN Group

25 Years of the Scottish Parliament – where are the young women?

In partnership with Young Women's Movement and the Scottish Youth Parliament

3.30pm – 5.00pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

Women represent 52% of the Scottish population but only 46% of MSPs. The democratic deficit is obvious and the calls for political change include the Presiding Officer, whose audit into how women are represented in the Parliament kickstarted a series of initiatives to address the issue. Join the panel to discuss what needs to be done in the next 25 years to break down barriers to political participation and increase representation.

Chair: Gillian Mackay MSP, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Panellists:

- Professor Meryl Kenny, Professor of Gender and Politics, University of Edinburgh
- Grace McCabe, Young Women's Movement
- Ellie Craig MSYP
- Cllr Kayleigh O'Neill, Edinburgh City Council

Join the Climate Café at the Festival of Politics

11.00am – 1.00pm and 2.00pm – 4.00pm

FREE

Welcome to the pop-up, safe space to chat and act on climate change. No need to be a climate expert as all perspectives are welcomed in a very inclusive space. Free refreshments and biscuits. See Festival website for more information.

Friday 23 August

Mental Health and Young People

In partnership with Healing Arts Scotland and Scottish Youth Parliament

10.45am – 12.15pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

A World Health Organisation report evidenced 3000 global studies as supporting the belief that engaging with the arts and creativity has a positive impact on people's mental health. What is the potential of the arts to relieve stress, build resilience, support identity and empowerment, and develop vital social connections among young people? How and who is using music, dance, visual art, drama and creative expression to better incorporate the art forms into health and healing for young people experiencing mental health issues?

Chair: Maya McCrae MSYP

Panellists:

- Fiona O'Sullivan, The Haven at Edinburgh Children's and YP Hospital
- Dr Jo Inchley, Co-lead, Schools Health and Well-being Network, University of Glasgow
- Sangeeta Isvaran, dancer, scholar, social worker

AI - Deep fake politics

In partnership with Scotland's Futures Forum

11.00am – 12.30pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

From Keir Starmer to Mayor Sadiq Khan and the Slovenian elections – they've all been targeted by such convincing deep fake AI generated content that politicians and the public alike are alarmed by the deceptive misinformation and its potential to destabilise democratic systems. With a UK election looming and a political communications industry poised to adopt new generative AI technologies at scale, who exactly is at the helm in establishing responsible norms on reliability, privacy and accountability on political communication?

Chair: Maggie Chapman MSP, Scotland's Futures Forum

Panellists:

- Jason Boxt, Partner, RXN Group
- Robert Moran, Partner, Brunswick Group
- Hannah Perry, Lead researcher digital research hub at DEMOS

Raising the curtain on St Andrew's Day

In partnership with the Cross-Party Group on St Andrew's Day

11:30 – 1.00pm

£7.50/£5.00

Join the discussion on looking back and looking forward to the significance of St Andrew's Day. Understand the history and adoption of Scotland's national day and explore how we can increase the relevance, resonance, and opportunity provided by having a patron saint celebrated by both Scotland and internationally.

Chair: Michelle Thomson MSP, Convener of the Cross-Party Group on St Andrew's Day

Panellists:

- Denis Canavan, Former Labour MP and Independent MSP

Incel culture

1.00pm – 2.30pm
Committee Room
£7.50/£5.00

The rise of misogynistic influencers and ‘incel’ (involuntary celibate) culture where ideologies of blame, distrust and hatred towards women have gained huge traction online. From incel slang to misogynistic memes and fake statistics there is an increasing risk of young men and boys being radicalised through their identities as men, with the impact being felt by young women. Why are so many young men seduced by this toxic masculinity, what are the policymakers doing and what tools are educators and youth workers using to address this?

Chair: TBC

Panellists:

- Clare Duffy, *playwright, and Artistic Director Civic Digits, Many Good Men production*

Think local, act global? - international cultural ambition in perilous times

In partnership with the Cross-Party Group on Culture and Communities
1:15pm – 2:45pm
£7.50/£5.00

Working on the global stage allows Scotland to showcase its creativity and wield influence. However, in a world grappling with post-pandemic challenges, Brexit repercussions, climate crises, and shrinking budgets, international working is increasingly difficult. How can Scotland’s culture sector fulfil its global ambitions during unpredictable times?

Chair: Foyso Choudhury MSP, Convener on Cross-Party Group on Culture and Communities

Panellists:

- Alex Reedijk OBE FRC, General Director, Scottish Opera
- Dr Lynne Hocking, Chair of Applied Arts Scotland and textile artist
- Dr Anthony Schrag, Reader of Arts Management and Cultural Policy, at Queen Margaret’s University, Edinburgh and practising artist

Elections in 50 Countries

In partnership with the University of Glasgow

1.15pm – 2.45pm

The Holyrood Room

£7.50/£5.00

This year sees over 2 billion voters going to the polls across the globe including America, the UK, India, Taiwan, and Russia. What are the implications for geopolitics, human rights, economies, and international relations of these elections? What are the implications for the millions of voters taking part in presidential and legislative ballots that may not always be free or fair or void of disinformation and manipulation, and where does this leave healthy democracy?

Chair: Jackson Carlaw MSP, Convener of Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

Panellists:

- Professor Nicola McEwen, Director, Centre for Public Policy, University of Glasgow
- Mark Diffley, Founder and Director, Diffley Partnership
- Jason Boxt, Partner, RXN Group

Responsible Debate

In partnership with the Centre for Responsible Debate

3.15pm - 4.45pm

Committee Room

£7.50/£5.00

As the Scottish Parliament marks 25 years it is inevitable that we think of debate as a medium through which politicians reach decisions. But very often it is the way people and politicians alike debate that shapes those decisions. As the world becomes more polarised it is becoming clearer that the way we debate and discuss important issues is preventing us reaching solutions. How can we debate and discuss in a way that deals with the important challenges facing us?

Chair: Ben Macpherson MSP

Panellists:

- Dr Alice Konig, University of St Andrews, co-chair RSE Young Academy Scotland
- Quintin Oliver, conflict and referendum specialist
- Hanna Dushkova, lawyer, Scottish Mediation Board member
- John Sturrock KC, founder and senior mediator, Core Solutions

The Scottish Parliament at 25

In partnership with Scotland's Futures Forum

4.00pm – 5:30pm

Debating Chamber

£10.00/£8.00

Established with optimism, ambition and an aim to do things differently, and based on principles of accountability and transparency, the Scottish Parliament has passed world-leading legislation and imbued a self-confidence in its electorate since 1999. So, what are its strengths and achievements and where can it do better? Join this esteemed panel to both look back, but more importantly, to look forward to the next 25 years, exploring the constitutional, national and global challenges facing the Scottish Parliament and how it remains relevant to Scotland.

Closing Reception

Festival Café Bar

5.30pm - 7.00pm