



Contents

[**Foreword
by the
Presiding
Officer**](#)

[**The Move
to
Holyrood**](#)

[**The
Opening
Ceremony**](#)

[**Parliament
at Work**](#)

[The Chamber](#)

[The
Conveners'
Group](#)

[The
Committees](#)

[**Influence
at Home
and
Abroad**](#)

[**Engaging
with the
Public**](#)

[e-democracy](#)

[Visitor](#)

[Services](#)

[Public](#)

[Information](#)

[Gàidhlig/](#)

[Gaelic](#)
[Education](#)
[Service](#)
[Outreach](#)
[Service](#)
[SPICe](#)

[Contact](#)
[Details](#)



Foreword by the Presiding Officer

[Contents](#)

Moving in, moving on

On 9 October 2004 our new Scottish Parliament at Holyrood was formally opened by Her Majesty The Queen.

The day brought together the whole community of the realm – People, Parliament and Palace – in joint celebration of our new Scottish democracy.

We are now privileged to work in a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a place where 1,000 years of history in the Royal Mile fuses with the primeval landscape of Holyrood Park.

We meet in a building designed specifically for the participative forms of governance of the 21st century. It is a special place, which our architect Eric Miralles said should be for 'shared conversations', not 'sterile confrontations'.

We are a working Parliament occupying a work of art. Our new home continues to win architectural prizes, and so far more than 420,000 people have come to see it for themselves.

Our prime purpose, however, is to determine, debate and decide the issues of devolved Scottish life – and to scrutinise the £25,000 million of Executive programmes in Scotland this year.

This annual report sets down what we have done to achieve these goals during the period 7 May 2004 to 1 July 2005.

Now we have moved in, it shows how we are moving on.



George Reid

The Rt. Hon George Reid MSP

[The Move to Holyrood](#)





The Move to Holyrood

[Contents](#)

This year saw the historic move of the Parliament into its custom-built home at Holyrood.

Over 100 individual projects and many changes in procedures and processes were required to make the new building work efficiently from day one. These took into account the change in scale of operations as well as the new visitor and events functions, and ranged from the small-scale procurement of items such as wheelchairs to setting up completely new services such as the crèche and public tours of the building.

On Monday 3 August 2004 the first Parliament staff moved into their new offices. Throughout the first weeks of August the remaining staff and contractors moved in and set up services. In all over 1,000 staff, contractors, MSPs and their staff and media personnel moved. To ensure that business could start effectively and that services for visitors were running properly, a series of tests were carried out to check that staff were up-to-speed with the new facilities and procedures.

Following small-scale tests during the second week of August, the full live test took place on 18 August. This involved staff playing the part of MSPs in the Chamber while members of the public were invited to come and test the public parts of the building, including the Chamber gallery. The exercise was vital to ensure that the building was ready to operate as a fully functioning and accessible parliament.

Members and their staff had moved out of George IV Bridge by 20 August and started arriving at Holyrood on 30 August, in time for the first business to begin on 7 September.



[The Opening Ceremony](#)





The Opening Ceremony

[Contents](#)

On Saturday 9 October, tens of thousands of people from across Scotland and the world came to Edinburgh for the official opening of the new Scottish Parliament building in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen.

The day began with street entertainment along the Royal Mile, while crowds awaited the 'Riding', a procession first held in 1520 and carried out for nearly 200 years to mark the opening of each session of the old Scots Parliament.

The first formal part of the ceremony took place in Parliament Hall, the home of the old Scottish Parliament, with speeches from the Presiding Officer, the Lord President of the Court of Session and party leaders in the presence of The Queen. The guests included MSPs, Consul Generals, Lord Provosts, Provosts and leaders of all Scotland's councils, representatives of the armed services, legal profession and NGOs, religious leaders from across Scotland and the general public via a ballot from every region of Scotland.

These guests then joined over 1,000 people from every constituency and region in Scotland for the historic Riding down the Royal Mile to Holyrood, interspersed with 16 colourful banners from Scotland's eight regions, made by different community groups. Guests included 'local heroes' nominated by MSPs for their work in helping other Scots either locally or nationally. The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, accompanied by the Presiding Officer, First Minister and the Rt. Hon Lord Provost of Edinburgh, observed the Riding from a dais in front of the City Chambers building.

When the Riding arrived at Holyrood, all the guests entered the new building to watch the official ceremony either in the Chamber itself or live on plasma screens.



On arrival at Holyrood, The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, was escorted around the building by the Presiding Officers before entering the Chamber to the Royal Scottish National Orchestra playing Aaron Copeland's Fanfare for the Common Man. The Chamber event featured performances from the BBC Young Musician of the Year 2004, violinist Nicola Benedetti; singer-songwriter Eddi Reader; Liz Lochhead, reading a poem penned by Scotland's poet laureate Edwin Morgan especially for the occasion; and speeches from the Presiding Officer, The Queen and the First Minister.



The day was a huge success for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament – reflected by the enthusiastic approval received from performers, guests, spectators and others from around the world in the days, weeks and months following the opening.

The climax was a rendition of Robert Burns' Auld Lang Syne led by Eddi Reader with MSPs and guests joining in and reaching across aisles to join hands.

Following the ceremony, The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh met guests and staff, and The Queen unveiled the 'Honours of Scotland' sculpture crafted by Graham Stewart and gifted by the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh.

[Parliament at Work](#)





Parliament at Work

[Contents](#)

The Chamber

The Chamber is the focal point for the Scottish Parliament's business, including debates on a wide range of political issues, policy proposals and legislation. Each week at Question Time, the Chamber also hosts lively sessions when MSPs can probe the First Minister and other Scottish Ministers on topical issues.

Schedules for meetings of the Parliament are proposed by the Parliamentary Bureau on a business motion. Once approved, this forms a rolling programme of business for the following two weeks. The membership of the bureau includes the Presiding Officer, who chairs the meetings, and representatives from each of the main political parties and the Independents' Group.



The Hub

During the week of 17 May 2004, the Parliament met in The Hub in Edinburgh, while the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland returned to the Parliament's temporary home at the Assembly Hall on the Mound. Debates on Scotland's marine environment; skills and continued learning; major events and festivals in Scotland, and the Children's Hearings review, together with the usual Question Time slots, were held during three full days of parliamentary business.



Debates

During the past year the Executive led debates in the Chamber entitled:

- skills and continued learning
- tackling drugs misuse
- a celebration of volunteering
- ambitious, excellent schools
- improving family law in Scotland

- fisheries
- making the most of Scotland's forests
- towards a green jobs strategy

and other topics across a wide range of social, political and economic issues.

Debating time is also allocated to non-Executive political parties on the basis of the proportion of seats held. Debates led by the other political parties have included the following subjects:

- school meals
- the centralisation of health services
- ID cards
- Iraq
- firearms legislation
- energy policy
- supermarkets and the Scottish food chain
- the right to protest at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles.

On 11 April 2005, MSP seats in the new Chamber were for the first time occupied by members of the public, health providers, professionals and campaign groups who took part in a public debate on the future of the National Health Service. The debate, sponsored by the Health Committee, was chaired by the Deputy Presiding Officers and followed a similar style to parliamentary debates.

The Chamber also played host to the first Independents' Group debate on 13 April 2005, on meeting the needs and aspirations of people in Scotland. The purpose of the debate was to allow MSPs to speak on as wide a range of topics as possible.

Committee Debates

Parliamentary committees are also allocated debating time to allow them to bring issues to the attention of a wider audience. In the past year there have been 12 committee debates in the Chamber, covering such diverse issues as:

- the relocation of public sector jobs
- renewable energy
- dental health services
- past institutional child abuse
- replacing the Members' Interest Order
- new procedures for Member's Bills.



The Independents' Group is made up of four MSPs (Dennis Canavan, Margo MacDonald, Campbell Martin and Dr Jean Turner) who are not members of a political party, together with the only MSP for the Scottish Senior Citizens' Unity Party (John Swinburne).

Ministerial Statements

Ministerial Statements normally consist of a 10-minute statement followed by 20 minutes for questions from members. There have been 22 Ministerial Statements on a wide range of topics, including:

- the local government finance review
- future arrangements for cross-border students
- creating safer communities
- smoking
- institutional child abuse
- a sexual health strategy
- the Tsunami disaster
- dentistry.

Members' Business

Members' Business is held at the end of each meeting of the Parliament and allows individual members from any party or group to highlight an issue that may not receive prominence in other proceedings. It is often used to raise a particular constituency or regional matter or to highlight an awareness-raising event. The member whose motion has been selected opens the debate and a minister responds, following contributions by other members. Examples of such debates include:

- the Argyll and Clyde Clinical Review
- National Construction Week
- affordable housing in North-east Fife
- stamping out racism in football
- Citizens Advice Week
- the future of Clydeside shipyards
- Commonwealth Week: Year of Africa
- responsible deer management.

Time for Reflection

Business in the Chamber begins each week with Time for Reflection, giving people of different faiths and beliefs the chance to share their thoughts with the Parliament. Representatives from a wide range of religious groups and faiths and those of no faith have taken part in Time for Reflection. These include:

- The Dalai Lama
- Dr Alison Elliot, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
- Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh
- Christine Riddoch, Diocesan Youth Officer, Diocese of Paisley
- Imam Habib Ur Rahman Rauf, Central Mosque, Glasgow
- Very Reverend Graham Forbes, Provost of St Mary's Episcopal



Cathedral, Edinburgh

- Mr Graeme Sinclair, Deaf Action
- Laura Anne Teece, pupil from John Ogilvie High School, Hamilton
- Miss Irene Jovaras, Joint Co-ordinator of the Focolare Movement in Scotland.

Bills Introduced (21)

These bills were introduced to the Parliament between 7 May 2004 and 1 July 2005. Some are still being considered, but others have been passed. They are listed in order of date of introduction. Once they have been passed it takes about one month before they receive Royal Assent and become Acts of the Scottish Parliament. There is a list of Acts on page 14.

Water Services etc. (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Fire (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Baird Trust Reorganisation Bill (Private)
Transport (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Council Tax Abolition and Service Tax Introduction (Scotland) Bill (Member's)
Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Budget (No.2) (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Abolition of NHS Prescription Charges (Scotland) Bill (Member's)
Family Law (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Licensing (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Housing (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
St. Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Bill (Member's)
Human Tissue (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
Environmental Levy on Plastic Bags (Scotland) Bill (Member's)



Legislation

Bills are the main type of legislation dealt with by the Parliament. A bill is a draft law, and can be either public – seeking to change the general law – or private – seeking powers for a particular individual or organisation that are in excess of or in conflict with the general law.

A total of 21 bills have been introduced since 7 May 2004. Bills are normally only passed after full public consultation and debate in the Parliament, both in committee and in the Chamber. Some examples of bills that became acts during the past year are:

- the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Bill, which sought to address disruptive, antisocial conduct in communities
- the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill, which introduced a proportional representation system for local government elections
- the Breastfeeding etc. (Scotland) Bill, a Member's Bill that makes it an offence to prohibit breastfeeding in public places
- a private bill which allows for the re-opening of a railway between Stirling, Alloa and Kincardine.

Acts (17)

There have been 17 bills which have received Royal Assent and become Acts of the Scottish Parliament between 7 May 2004 and 1 July 2005. Of these, one was a Private Bill, one was a Member's Bill and 15 were Executive Bills.

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Act 2004 (Private)
Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
School Education (Ministerial Powers and Independent Schools) (Scotland) Act 2004 (Executive)
Breastfeeding etc. (Scotland) Act 2005 (Member's)
Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)
Water Services etc. (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)
Budget (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)
Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)
Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)
Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)
Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Parliamentary Questions

Question Time gives members the opportunity to question the Executive



Since May 2004, 16 bills have been introduced by the Scottish Executive, covering areas such as the Gaelic language, management of offenders and the banning of smoking in certain enclosed areas. There have been four Member's Bills introduced, covering such issues as the reform of local government taxation and the abolition of prescription charges. One private bill has also been introduced, the Baird Trust Reorganisation Bill.



on topical issues and is often a highlight of the parliamentary week. In March 2005 the management of Question Time was changed. Members now submit their names for random selection, instead of submitting questions as in the previous system. Only the 30 members whose names are selected submit questions.

The proceedings for First Minister's Question Time remain unchanged, with six topical questions from party leaders and backbench MSPs being selected by the Presiding Officer for answer by the First Minister.

Any question not reached during any of the question times receives a written answer, which appears in the weekly Written Answers Report. This report contains all the answers to written parliamentary questions, which are also published daily on the Parliament's website.

Motions

A motion is one of the means by which members can initiate debate or propose a particular course of action. Any MSP can lodge a motion and all motions lodged are published in the Business Bulletin the following day.

Motions for debate are lodged in accordance with the business programme agreed by the Parliament. Amendments to these motions can also be lodged and the Presiding Officer selects which amendments will be debated.

The majority of motions are not intended for debate. These motions are lodged for a variety of reasons, such as drawing attention to a particular topic, seeking support for a cause or highlighting a particular event.

A wide variety of motions were lodged this year on a range of topics. Some of those lodged, but not debated, include:

- action on skin disease
- national police memorial
- centenary of Barnardos
- World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day 2004
- launch of osteoporosis mobile scanner in Coatbridge.

[Back to Top](#)

[The Conveners' Group](#)



Question Time gives members the opportunity to question the Executive on topical issues and is often a highlight of the parliamentary week.





**Conveners' Group
Convener:
Trish Godman**

The Conveners' Group

The Conveners' Group is made up of the conveners of the committees in the Parliament. The group is convened by Trish Godman, one of the Deputy Presiding Officers, and held its first meeting in this parliamentary year on 20 May 2004.

The group provides a forum where committee conveners can meet to discuss matters of mutual interest. It also facilitates liaison between the committees, the Parliamentary Bureau and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.



During the year the group has continued to promote accessibility and participation in the work of the committees. Before the move to Holyrood it took a keen interest in and was consulted on the facilities to be provided in the new committee rooms. The enhanced broadcasting facilities and extended public galleries have made committee proceedings in Edinburgh accessible to a much wider audience.

The group has also continued to support initiatives that take the work of committees outside Edinburgh. It has given its approval for committees to hold meetings, undertake fact-finding visits and host events designed to encourage people to contribute to their work in rural and island communities as well as in towns and cities the length and breadth of Scotland. The group is also working to ensure that the committees are properly equipped to publicise their work

through local,
national and
specialist media.

In early March the
group organised
seminars for
members to enhance
their skills for
scrutinising the
Executive's policy
and administration,
and these were well
received by the
participants.

It has been a busy
year for the
Conveners' Group
and it looks forward
to continuing its role
as a forum where
conveners can
discuss matters of
interest across the
committee system.

[The Committees](#)



The Committees

The first committee meeting in the new Scottish Parliament building took place on 14 September 2004.

The accommodation at Holyrood provides a vastly improved working environment. In total there are six committee rooms. All have ample room for public viewing.

The committee tables have been specially designed and are an integral part of the building's architecture. All the committee rooms are fitted with broadcasting equipment that allows meetings to be transmitted on both television and the internet. These improved facilities help to make the committees more accessible to stakeholder groups and the general public.

The work of the committees is at the heart of the Parliament, taking evidence from witnesses, scrutinising legislation, and conducting inquiries into the policy and administration of the Scottish Executive.

The work of the committees is at the heart of the Parliament, taking evidence from witnesses, scrutinising legislation, and conducting inquiries into the policy and administration of the Scottish Executive. As can be seen from the reports of the individual committees, the aim is to ensure that a wide range of people can contribute to this important work.

There are two main types of committee, mandatory ones required by the Standing Orders such as the Audit Committee, and subject committees such as the Education Committee. During the year, there were 541 committee meetings in total, lasting nearly 1,066 hours. The committees considered 28 bills and worked on 38 inquiries. The committees continue to work in partnership with the public. They heard from a total of 2,228



[Audit Committee](#)

[Communities Committee](#)

[Education Committee](#)

[Enterprise and Culture Committee](#)

[Environment and Rural Development Committee](#)

[Equal Opportunities Committee](#)

[European and External Relations Committee](#)

[Finance Committee](#)

[Health Committee](#)

[Justice 1 Committee](#)

[Justice 2 Committee](#)

[Local Government and Transport Committee](#)

[Procedures Committee](#)

[Public Petitions Committee](#)

[Standards and Public Appointments Committee](#)

[Subordinate Legislation Committee](#)

[Private Bill Committees](#)

witnesses in the course of their work.

The following pages give a flavour of the work of each committee. More details can be found in the annual reports of the individual committees. These are published on the committee pages of the website. Details of each committee's remit, membership, public papers of committee meetings and agendas can also be found there.

[Influence at Home and Abroad](#)





Influence at Home and Abroad

[Contents](#)

The Parliament engages with events and debates taking place elsewhere, on the UK and European stages and beyond, in order to understand and influence those decisions that affect Scotland.

The Parliament also promotes Scotland, and the Scottish approach to democracy, in external relations initiatives around the world, working with the Scottish Executive and other partners.

In April a cross-party delegation of MSPs visited the United States and Canada to celebrate Tartan Week, a series of events and meetings held to promote Scotland and build links with legislatures, business and other organisations across the Atlantic. The highlight of this year's Tartan Week celebrations was VisitScotland's Scottish Village in Grand Central Station, New York, which showcased Scotland as a place to live, learn, work and holiday. Subsequently, members of the delegation met with political and business leaders in New York, Washington and Québec to discuss policy issues and areas where the economic and cultural links between the three countries could be enhanced.

Shortly before the Parliament moved to its new home, the Dalai Lama of Tibet led Time for Reflection in the Chamber. He also spoke with MSPs, a cross-section of religious leaders and school children from across Scotland.

Nearly 150 delegations from fellow parliaments across the world have visited since May 2004. Relationships with leading European regions have been consolidated, with MSPs meeting delegations to discuss and share aspects of policy and legislation. Several groups also visited from the 10 new member states of the European Union, with which Scotland is seeking to build stronger links.

In May, the Presiding Officer was a keynote speaker at the Summit of Regions and Cities held in Wroclaw, Poland. This conference, organised



by the European Union's Committee of the Regions, addressed key themes emerging from the increased importance of regional parliaments in the European context. The Presiding Officer drew on the experience of Scottish devolution to develop the theme of how decentralisation can contribute to strengthening European citizenship, growth and cohesion.



MSPs played an increasing part in the British Irish Interparliamentary Body. This organisation brings together representatives of legislatures within the UK and Ireland to develop policy on mutually relevant issues, such as cross-border European Funding Programmes.

Links with Commonwealth partners continued to develop, with members and senior officials in the Canadian and Australian federal and regional parliaments visiting Holyrood to share experiences.



To coincide with the UK Government's 'Year of Africa', the Scotland branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association organised a cross-party delegation of six MSPs to Malawi and South Africa. The delegation met with Scottish NGOs that are working towards achieving some of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, in particular the reduction of poverty, the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and the promotion of free quality education for all. The delegation was struck by the drive of people in these countries who are working to overcome tremendous problems. In its report back to the Parliament and the Executive, the delegation made a series of specific recommendations whereby Scotland can play a role in supporting Malawi's development.



The Parliament hosted a Conference for Africa in May 2005 to debate the findings of the Prime Minister's Commission for Africa. The conference brought together a range of speakers from African nations and NGOs, and was addressed by the Presiding Officer; the First Minister; Sir Bob Geldof of Commission for Africa; Salil Shetty, Director of the Millennium Development Goals Campaign, United Nations Development Programme; and Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General and CEO, CIVICUS. The event was one of nine taking place in the Scottish Parliament during 2005 on the role Scotland can play in Africa.

Our website contains information about the work of the Parliament with the wider world, and about the visits and organisations through which we maintain and develop links.

[Engaging with the Public](#)





Engaging with the Public

[Contents](#)

e-democracy

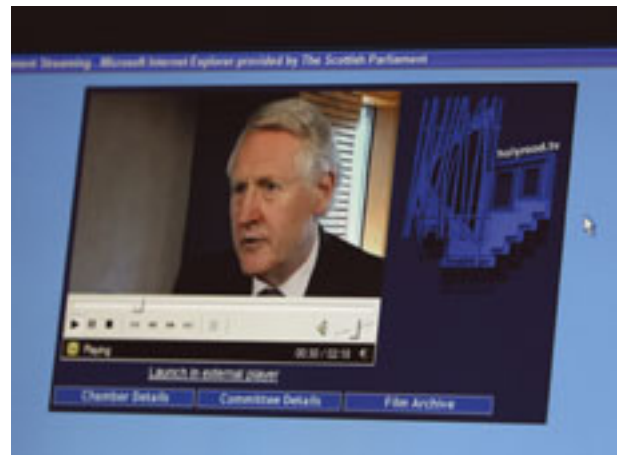
On the Parliament's move to Holyrood, its webcasting service was redesigned and rebranded as www.holyrood.tv. With live coverage from the Chamber and all of Holyrood's committee rooms, plus an online archive of all these sessions, [holyrood.tv](http://www.holyrood.tv) is the most comprehensive parliamentary webcasting service in the world.

One particularly innovative aspect of this service is the online biographical films of MSPs. These were made by the broadcasting office in conjunction with SPICe (Scottish Parliament Information Centre), and allow the public a chance to find out more about their representatives.

The website was also revised and redesigned this year to make it easier to navigate and more accessible. New features include enhanced MSP pages, improved content on how to engage with the Parliament, pages on the Holyrood building, and more information available in different languages.

Committees have also continued to build on their experience in this field. For example, the Enterprise and Culture Committee has produced an online questionnaire to collect views on its inquiry into Scottish football. The Environment and Rural Development Committee hosted an online discussion forum for its inquiry into climate change to capture the diverse views on the subject and to seek contributions from the general public as well as experts. The Local Government and Transport Committee hosted an online forum on the Licensing (Scotland) Bill.

The Public Petitions Committee has nominated the Parliament's e-petitions system for an eEurope award on eGovernment at the Ministerial eGovernment Conference that is being hosted jointly by the UK



Presidency and the European Commission in Manchester in November 2005. The Parliament's innovative work in this area has also continued to attract interest from a number of other parliaments and legislatures. For example, the German Bundestag, following a visit to the Scottish Parliament, is piloting an e-petitions system based on the Scottish Parliament system for one year from May 2005. Similarly, following a visit to the Scottish Parliament, the New Brunswick Legislature in Canada's Commission on Legislative Democracy has recommended the introduction of an e-petitions system.



e-democracy is also about helping take the Parliament to local communities. Using video-conferencing facilities, the Outreach Service team organised a virtual surgery in Broughty Ferry in November 2004. A dozen representatives of local community groups came together in the local library and, using a live two-way video link, put questions to Dundee East MSP Shona Robison.



Members are implementing new developments themselves. A current project will see all MSPs equipped with wireless devices. These will improve the accessibility of MSPs to the public as well as providing an effective mechanism to enhance information delivery to members themselves. The Parliament has also recently embraced broadband technologies to improve communication channels with members' constituency offices. The initiative equipped more than 100 local offices throughout Scotland with a broadband connection.

The Parliament has become a 'must see' for the people of Scotland and for visitors to Edinburgh.

Visitor Services

In July 2004 the doors closed on the Visitor Centre and shop at the Mound. In five years it had welcomed 30,000 people a year, around 150,000 overall.

On 7 September 2004 the doors at Holyrood opened and 150,000 visitors were welcomed in the first 16 weeks. It is clear that the Parliament has become a 'must see' for the people of Scotland and for visitors to Edinburgh. To the end of June 2005, the total visitor figure was over 420,000.



The Scottish Parliament welcomes visitors seven days a week. A dedicated Visitor Services team support visitors who wish to participate in parliamentary business and those interested in exploring the Parliament's new home.

All visitors can access the building and, in the public areas, they can view an exhibition about the Parliament and make use of the shop, public café and Visitor Information Desk. The Parliament also offers a crèche

for people with child care responsibilities who want to take part in parliamentary business. Visitor Services advance-book free tickets for committee meetings in Edinburgh and around Scotland, and for the Chamber public gallery. It administers a signing-in process that supports meetings such as the cross-party groups and events, as well as welcoming MSPs' and staff visitors.

The Scottish Parliament shop has originated a Holyrood brand to sell alongside the Scottish Parliament's official logo. The graphic is based on the iconic MSPs' office windows and is available on pens, china, mugs, t-shirts and confectionery. Visitors can buy a wide range of high quality branded goods from the Parliament shop as a reminder of their visit. The Holyrood building postcards are a bestseller, with nearly 50,000 sold.

The guided tours service runs on days when there is no parliamentary business and has attracted a tremendous public response. Over 30,000 people visited in the two weeks of October recess. Analysis of visitors shows that schools and community groups are visiting during the week, with families and tourists spending time at weekends and during recess. One in five visitors chose to take a guided tour.

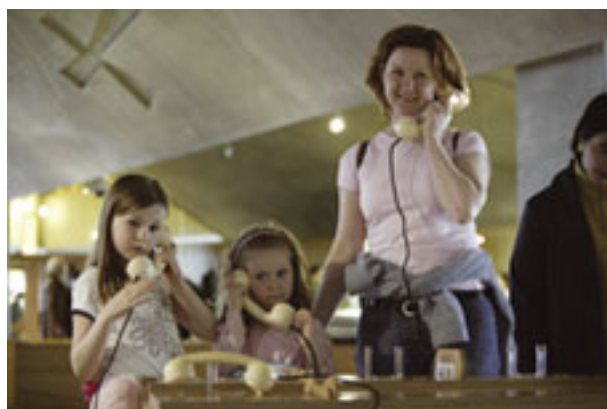
Public Information

The Public Information Service answers enquiries from the public and provides information about the Scottish Parliament, its membership, business and procedures.

The interest generated by the Parliament's move to Holyrood led to a substantial number of enquiries this year, doubling the usual number received in the autumn. The telephone enquiry line handled over 95,000 calls in the period from May 2004 to June 2005 and responded to over 12,000 detailed enquiries.

The Public Information Service responds to written enquiries in any language and can provide information in a number of formats.

A range of new publications were produced to provide information to visitors about the new building and explain how the Parliament works. In view of the variety of languages spoken by Scottish citizens and the huge international interest of the building to tourists, the three lead publications were printed in various languages and formats. Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi and Urdu translated leaflets now sit alongside the French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian leaflets produced for the Parliament's tourist visitors. Braille, audio and large-print versions are also available free of charge and an update to the British Sign Language



video is under way.

Gàidhlig/Gaelic

The Parliament's Gaelic Officers provide a range of services to the Gaelic community, MSPs and parliamentary staff. In 2004-5, a wide range of information and education publications and up-to-date online parliamentary news in Gaelic were produced. The Gaelic information content on the Parliament's new website was extended and the Gaelic media were provided with information and interviews. A series of events were arranged with the Education Committee around the theme of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill and its legislative process. There were a number of educational sessions in the Parliament for Gaelic learners and speakers as well as visits to Gaelic communities, groups and schools throughout Scotland from Lanarkshire to Lewis. The Gaelic Service also represented the Parliament at the Royal National Mòd and other major Gaelic public events.

Education Service

Since May 2004 over 8,000 young people have visited the Parliament through the Education Service. Of these, 57% were from primary schools, 36% from secondary schools and 7% from further education colleges, universities or community groups. Education Service visits focus on how young people can participate and make their views heard through debate, followed by the opportunity to question MSPs about current issues and their work in Parliament. A visit to the Chamber is the highlight at the end of the session, bringing to life what has been studied in the classroom.

The Education Service held 20 teacher seminars for both in-service and trainee teachers, attracting a total of 539 participants from across Scotland. Each day is designed to provide teachers with an insight into the workings of the Parliament and the services and resources available, to help give them confidence when teaching this topic. Feedback from these events has been very positive.

A new version of the Parliament's Education Pack was produced and sent to every school in Scotland, providing teachers with information on its work. For online visitors, the Parliament's website now offers an interactive section of activities and games such as jigsaws and word-searches, and an interactive picture of the Debating Chamber. Schools have also made an impression on the Parliament's Visitor Services. The Design a Postcard competition resulted in 2,500 entries and the eight



winners' postcards have been used in the Parliament to collect comments.

Outreach Service

The Parliament continues to deliver on its commitment to be open and accessible at a local level through a range of community outreach events across Scotland.

During 2004-05 the Outreach Service team held 28 events as far afield as Stornoway, Thurso and Dumbarton. A total of 1,400 people attended these sessions, representing a wide range of community groups and civic agencies such as community councils, voluntary and charity groups, senior citizens' clubs, youth associations and ethnic minority groups.

These public meetings aimed to raise awareness and understanding of what the Parliament is and how it works. Importantly, local communities and individuals are encouraged to become involved with and influence the Parliament. For example, MSP question-and-answer sessions give constituents the opportunity to raise local issues with their MSPs.

SPICe

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) supports the Parliament's research and information needs by providing an enquiry service, an impartial research briefing service, official documentation and an electronic, intranet-based, current awareness service. SPICe also provides a variety of other services including advice on freedom of information; records management; data protection; management of the Parliament's reference and Donald Dewar collections; and provision of a book leasing and inter-library loans service. It also has responsibility for the content editorship of the Parliament's website and intranet.

Last year SPICe contributed improvements to the content and arrangement of both the intranet and internet sites. In addition a new section has been added on each individual bill page, showing the progress of each piece of legislation; the accessibility of the research briefings pages has been improved; and a new series of Scottish Parliament fact sheets has been produced.

The opening of the Donald Dewar Room on 11 October 2004 was the culmination of three years of preparation of the material presented to the Parliament by Donald Dewar's children after his death. The collection, including books, photographs and newspaper cuttings, is now housed in a specially designed room in Queensberry House. This is a quiet working

area for MSPs, but on Mondays and Fridays it is accessible to the public by appointment, and over 2,000 visitors have already been shown round. Further details of the collection, including a catalogue, can be found on the Parliament's website.

[Back to top](#)

[Contact Details](#)





Contact Details

[Contents](#)

The Public Information Service can help you find out about the business, membership and procedures of the Scottish Parliament.



Public Information Service

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



Telephone 0131 348 5000 or **0845 278 1999** (local rate)

Textphone users can contact us on **0845 270 0152**.

Calls using the RNID Typetalk service are also welcomed.



Fax 0131 348 5601



Email sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk



Website www.scottish.parliament.uk

For information in languages other than English or in alternative formats (for example in Braille, large print or audio), please send your enquiry to the Public Information Service. We welcome written correspondence in any language.

Further information about the Scottish Parliament is available on our website:

www.scottish.parliament.uk