



our  
**vision**  
Imagining Scotland's Future



The Church of Scotland  
Church and Society Council



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## Introduction

The 2012 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland agreed that the Church should remain impartial in regard to its position on Scottish independence. However, being impartial does not equate to passivity. That same Assembly instructed its Church and Society Council to help the Church to engage at civic, political and local level with questions related to the constitutional future of Scotland, particularly how independence might impact on the poorest and most vulnerable people.

The Church and Society Council has made a commitment to making theological, ethical and spiritual contributions to public policy and decision-making with a bias to the poor, speaking for the Church of Scotland on these issues, speaking truth to power and bringing to that voice the authenticity of congregational experiences. Running 'Imagining Scotland's Future: Community Consultations' is one manifestation of that commitment.

We believe that it is vital to encourage public participation in this momentous decision about Scotland's constitutional future. With willing folk and offers of host churches from across Scotland, we set about running a series of community consultation events under the banner of 'Imagining Scotland's Future'. We sought to create safe spaces for dialogue for people to think together about what values they want to underpin Scottish society and what shared vision we can aspire to. It is not the place of the Church to tell people what Scotland would be like as an independent nation or how that would compare with remaining in the UK. However, through this series of community events, the Church was seeking to understand the values that our communities hold, and reflect them in the public debate. This report is the culmination of that process. Presenting our findings allows us to share just some of the hopes, ambitions and aspirations of the people across Scotland who took part.

What we found was reassuring but not surprising. When asked to imagine Scotland's future, the 'big picture' visions were positive and aspirational. However, what is interesting is that when discussions focused on what would take these aspirations forward, the adversarial frames that dominate political and media discourse were largely absent; instead we found a deep concern for our neighbours, a focus on the local community, the future of children and young people, and a longing for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

We were enthused by what we heard, and our desire to hear the voices of the communities that we serve will not stop on 18 September 2014; the Church believes that 'Imagining Scotland's Future: Our Vision' can form part of a wider movement across Scottish civic society to revitalise our democracy, whatever the outcome of the referendum.

### **Rev Sally Foster-Fulton**

Convener, Church and Society Council, The Church of Scotland

## The Process

In February 2013 the Church and Society Council supported So Say Scotland to host the Thinking Together Citizens Assembly, which ran a process inspired by the Icelandic model of a Citizens Assembly<sup>1</sup>. From this experience a simplified event was made available for congregations to facilitate community-wide discussions in a neutral, safe space. It was intended as a method of opening up discussion on the values folk want to see in Scotland in the future by focusing on 3 questions:

1. **What values are most important to you for the Future of Scotland?**
2. **How can we make Scotland a better place to be?**
3. **How do we put our aspirations into action?**

These were explored in three structured sessions using small groups to first discover what individuals' answers were and then, through discussions and conversation, finding common ground and prioritising those values and ideas. It was stressed that this was not a discussion about which way to vote in the referendum; indeed, participants were encouraged to move beyond a polarising yes / no discourse for the duration of the event.

Sitting in small groups, after a period of quiet reflection, individuals wrote their own answers to the first question on cards, before sharing what they'd written in the group. Group members were encouraged not to see their answers as views to be defended but ideas to be shared, contributing to a collective group response. Each group then worked together to prioritise their top three values. These formed the basis of the next stage but all the values from each group also were used to form a value word cloud which gave a very immediate visual representation to the group of their collective values.



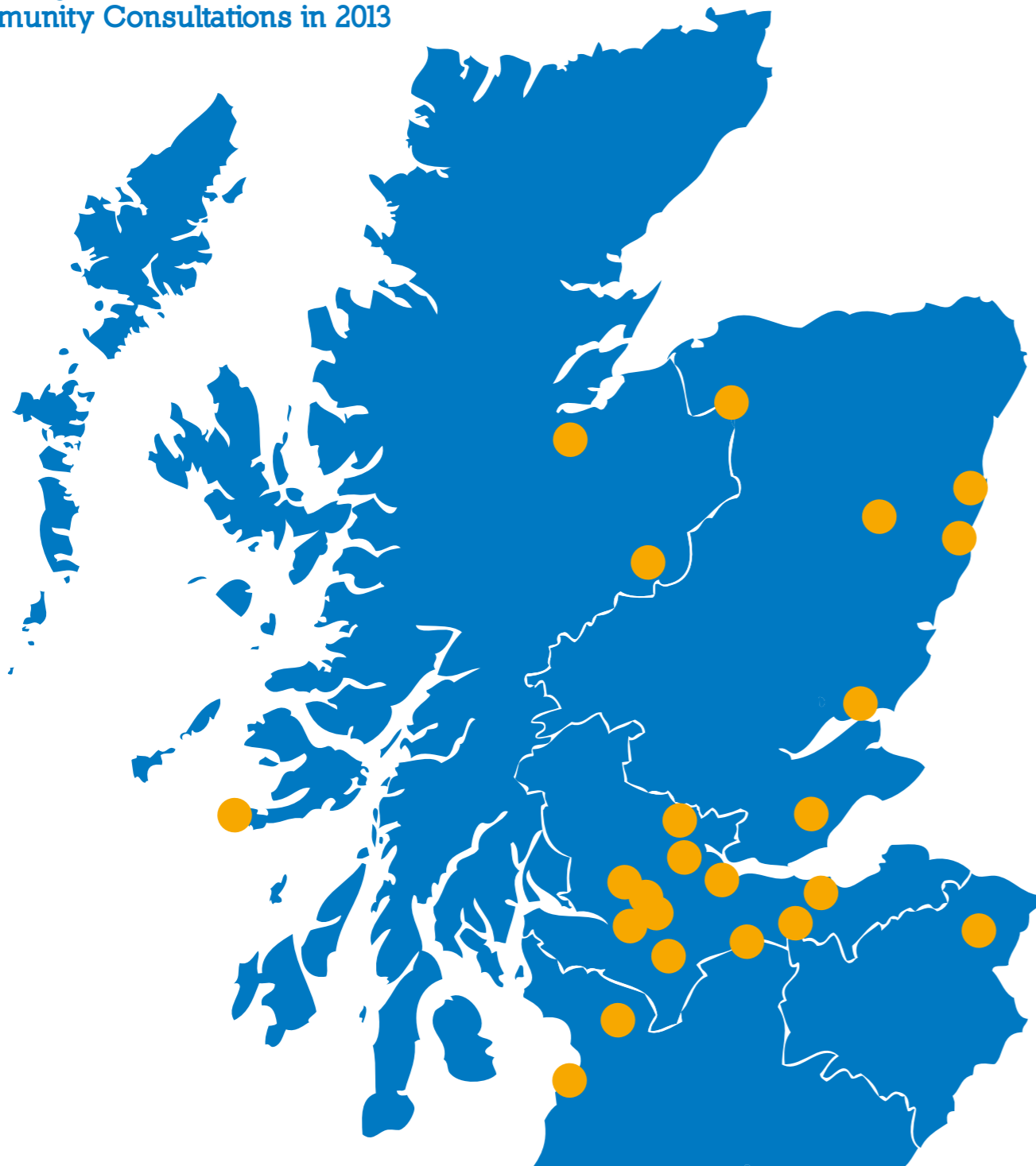
The second stage asked each individual to think what a Scotland built on the values they had identified would look like. This created a vision, or idea, of what is meant by a value-based nation. These again were shared in the group. The group then looked for common ground amongst these ideas and gave each collection of common ideas a theme. Each group again prioritised their themes. The top three themes of each group were gathered and the whole meeting then prioritised those ideas.

The final session focused on those prioritised ideas and asked groups to think about what decisions would need to be taken to make those ideas a reality. Every group worked with a theme from a different group. This meant that they had to deal with the challenge of competing priorities that decision makers always face as well as trying to express their vision in practical action. Their conclusions were captured in short sentences, some of which are reproduced in speech bubbles in this report. What we can include here is a fraction of the 290 separate conclusions reached through discussion.

This document tells something of the story of that picture. It is deliberately narrative in style and qualitative in its reflections. It is how people, voters, citizens, across the country would like their neighbourhood and their nation to be in the future. The challenge to those offering either constitutional scenario is to say how their position will make these ideas a reality, grounded, as this document is, in the experiences of the communities that are the living reality of our Nation.

<sup>1</sup>. hosted by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) at their annual event, The Gathering, at Glasgow's SECC.

## Imagining Scotland's Future: Community Consultations in 2013



### Participants

We ran 32 events, reaching communities across the country; from Moray and Aberdeen to Ayrshire and the Borders. Over 900 people took part in the process. People of all ages took part, and we were particularly delighted to be able to run an event at the Church of Scotland's National Youth Assembly which drew around 120 participants aged 17-25 from across Scotland. Many people who took part were associated with their local church, but not exclusively. Some events were advertised to church members and users of the church premises, others were ecumenical (involving other Christian groups in the community), and others were advertised more widely, for example in local newspapers, attracting people from the community who self-identified themselves as not having a regular Church connection. Although the sample was not a balanced demographic, it is, we would suggest, not unrepresentative of the communities we visited, and certainly provides an interesting picture of Scotland at the grassroots.

**The strength of the consultation events was the way in which everyone was invited to contribute their ideas and opinions, and then to work collaboratively to organise and prioritise. This meant that no-one was excluded from the process, and that it was hard for the loud and confident people to drown out those who were quieter or not so used to speaking their mind in this sort of group.**

They were also terrific fun. One of the hardest tasks was to keep the agenda moving along as people were enjoying the conversations. Many people could have stayed much longer to talk about the important issues facing their lives, Scotland and the world in the years to come. We've opened a hidden seam of riches with these events, and the value of the contributions from those who have attended will fuel the ability of the church to continue to speak with the authenticity and integrity of its members.

Geographically, economically, socially diverse – many parts of Scottish life contributed to Imagining Scotland's Future. Church led, but for all; values which are universal, not sectarian or exclusive. Being open about our beliefs whilst being open to others'. It has been the Christian church at its best in a modern, pluralist society and the context of the referendum debate has made it all the more exciting.

David Bradwell, Facilitator

# our findings

## Our Findings: **Methodology**

By asking the same questions at every event, we had a structure that enabled us to collate and compare the data from each event, knowing that the same three questions had formed the basis of discussion. Beyond the three standard questions, however, participants were given no set topics to discuss. Where there are issues that frequently came up in conversation at multiple events, therefore, we can make some assumptions that these are issues that are of particular interest.

The primary focus of the events was about offering a space for people to discuss their values, aspirations and hopes (and fears) with each other, and therefore this was never intended to be a scientific study. The majority of events were run in churches where someone had invited the Church and Society Council to run an Imagining Scotland's Future event, and, with the exception of a small number of events, these were organised as standalone events. Participants, therefore, were either self-selecting by directly choosing to participate in an event hosted by a local church, or by attending a regular meeting of a group which had invited the Church and Society Council to run an Imagining Scotland's Future event as part of a regular meeting. No specific demographic data was collected from participants who engaged with these events and therefore this limits the extent to which the information can be used to draw comparisons or conclusive findings.



Nonetheless, this is not to deny the richness and vast amount of information that was amassed from over 900 participants, all of whom brought experience, ideas, creativity and vision to the discussions that they took part in. During the events 3,741 ideas were generated and grouped into 617 themes. All contributions were welcome; everyone's opinion valued. As the process was small-group focused, it can be assumed that there will have been some degree of social desirability bias; that is, people will self-censor in order to write something that they think will be acceptable to the group at large. Nevertheless, there are many instances where groups have clearly struggled to come to a consensus on matters. These struggles, where apparent in the data, have been included in the report. It means that we cannot draw neat conclusions or make definitive statements, but it is an honest and real reflection of the participants' experiences of these events.

Everything written down at each event was typed up or scanned and recorded electronically. Qualitative data analysis package NVivo10 was used to assist in organising, classifying and analysing the data. However, it is important to note that there are no attempts to make statistical inferences from any of the findings, for the reasons set out above. Rather, this report attempts to summarise the types of discussions which were held up and down the country during this series of events; identifying areas where there was recurring concern, and pointing out innovative and creative suggestions that emerged<sup>2</sup>. This is a review of public consultations; not an attempt to reach wide-ranging conclusions about the opinions of people in churches across Scotland.

The following sections give an overview of the types of discussions that were had at Imagining Scotland's Future events; establishing commonly held views, identifying where there was agreement and disagreement, and highlighting just some of the many interesting conversations that participants had.

<sup>2</sup>. References to the number of events which discussed any given topic relate to themes rather than ideas or values.

## Our Findings: Values

At the initial phase of the process, participants were asked to focus on one-word or very short phrases which would encapsulate their thoughts on the values that are important for them. As we emphasised at the beginning of the process, this was not a poll on which way participants would be voting in the referendum; this question was intended to stimulate thinking and debate on a longer-term vision for Scotland.

Looking across all 32 events, we aggregated the over 4000 values that participants shared, and ran a count<sup>3</sup> which identified the commonly used words (and associated words):

### Top Ten Values:

**1. Equality 2. Fairness 3. Justice 4. Education 5. Respect 6. Honesty 7. Community 8. Opportunity 9. Compassion 10. Tolerance**

The dominance of values which focused on the relational, rather than the personal, was overwhelming. Tackling poverty was the most frequently expressed value which had any economic content, but it was not until #53 on the list that the term "prosperity" appears, the first indication of a value that is associated with wealth and money. Indeed, the references to wealth and money expressed within this section are overwhelmingly directed towards rethinking attitudes to money and a need for a redistribution of wealth to narrow the gap between rich and poor in society as a whole, rather than aspirations for personal wealth and individual gain. Ahead of any mentions of money or wealth, however, were other values which focused on faith, peace and the environment.

Given that the question asked was "what values are important to you for the future of Scotland?", this presented participants with the opportunity to be as personal as they wished to be when considering their own responses. The fact that this still yields a result which primarily focuses on community, relational and Christian values rather than something more focused on the individual is an emphasis that is lacking in the dominant discourse surrounding the referendum debate.

<sup>3</sup>. Using Nvivo10 software, Word Frequency count was run to include stemmed words



### **“Honest and Fairer Taxation”<sup>xvi</sup> / “Joy of tax”<sup>xvii</sup>**

Half of all the events prioritised themes or ideas about tax. The ideas suggested range from “lower tax”<sup>xviii</sup> and “basic rate of 10% on all workers money”<sup>xix</sup> to “implement progressive taxation policies to fund redistribution of resources for improving public services”<sup>xx</sup> and “Introduce a fairer tax system that promotes the idea that it is our civic duty to pay tax (not avoid it)”<sup>xxi</sup>. By far the greatest number of ideas proposed a redistributive taxation system, some offering radical solutions such as “justice through sharing, denial of privilege, equality of outcome – not only of opportunity”<sup>xxii</sup> and “raise inheritance tax to 100% as a means of contributing to equality of opportunity for a new generation”<sup>xxiii</sup>. However, it was clear from the overwhelming majority of ideas that the current tax system is unsatisfactory and should be improved.

### **“Work, Investing In, and Valuing, Every Person”<sup>xxiv</sup>**

A strong concern about the availability of work and training for young people infused many of the themes about employment. There was a desire for more apprenticeships which links strongly to discussions about development of industry. In comparison there were few mentions of older workers with the exception of this suggestion “employment for the young rather than extending the pension age”<sup>xxv</sup>. Another clear priority was full employment, including calls for “meaningful economic activity”<sup>xxvi</sup>, “jobs that match people’s abilities”<sup>xxvii</sup> and “more jobs outside public sector”<sup>xxviii</sup>. On the same subject there was also a call to “bring back old attitudes to work”<sup>xxix</sup> to “make sure that work pays”<sup>xxx</sup>, challenges to zero hours contracts<sup>xxxi</sup> and a call to “de-centralise: don’t have all the opportunities in the Central Belt”<sup>xxxii</sup>. There were repeated calls to close the gap between rich and poor including through salary caps for the highest earners and living wage for all workers. In order to achieve these aspirations there were also a range of suggestions about being more creative: “encourage creativity, invention and entrepreneurship”<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

### **“Make the country competitive, with high skills, enterprise and good training”<sup>xxxiv</sup>**

Investment in business, in terms of attracting business to Scotland, increasing exports and supporting small business was seen as important; some ideas looked to the past – “try to find a way to make Scotland a manufacturing country again”<sup>xxxv</sup> and some to the future – “instituting better tech. industry growth”<sup>xxxvi</sup>. Within these themes there was a recurrent expectation that there should be investment in the development of renewable energy. The need for active wealth creation was acknowledged in themes from Dunfermline. Integrated into these themes was a suggestion that there should be more state control of industrial policy “industry NOT relocating abroad (penalties if required)”<sup>xxxvii</sup>, “ensure the banks are lending cash to the small/large businesses to create employment”<sup>xxxviii</sup>, “invest in science and technology”<sup>xxxix</sup>. Related to this is the suggestion that there should be better links between government and business to provide apprenticeships. Brief mentions were also made of the need for transport infrastructure and social enterprise with several ideas around “respecting values”<sup>xl</sup>.

*There should be a salary cap,  
Since 'twixt rich and poor there's a gap,  
Tax the rich till they rage,  
Pay just a living wage,  
And we'll put Scotland  
back on the map!*

Glasgow West End Churches

*A balanced industrial and  
economic base, providing  
genuine + long-term  
opportunities for all ages  
paying a living wage and  
provides exchequer revenue to  
fund a fairer benefits system.*

Aberlour Parish Church

*Invest in new and innovative  
ideas and ventures. Recapture the  
creative and inventive spirit that  
enhanced the whole world.*

The Abbey Church, Dunfermline



What's struck me about the five events I took part in was both their diversity and yet also their commonality. There was very much a local theme in each reflecting that area's history and hopes, yet also some common concerns expressed at every event; keeping communities strong, making sure local voices are heard, being willing to see things differently, keeping the politics out of politics.

It inspired me that the same group could say "we fear our economic future as the last of the 6 major employers that this town, Kilmarnock, was built on has gone and we want to know how we can have a local economy that means our children don't have to travel to find work. Otherwise our community will suffer in the long run" and at the same time be upbeat and open enough to declare that a strong nation needs "vibrancy in all of life, not just its economics".

I knew that these events had done something different when it became clear that a common response was how much participants felt that the process offered the space to disagree and debate, share their story and search for their own answers without feeling their commitment to their nation or their community was being judged. As one already committed voter said, "I've been to many meetings to hear what my side have to say about what the other side think, but this is the first time I've known real dialogue about what others actually believe."

That perhaps is the biggest challenge these events have brought; how can we share what we believe in ways that enhance our relationships rather than force us just to take sides. For as one person put it to me, whatever happens on 18th September, we are still going to have to live together as neighbours in this nation of ours.

Ewan Aitken, Facilitator

## Our Findings: Theological Reflection

The Market Square of 1st century Palestine was very like the Job Centre of 21st century Scotland. It was where people went to get work. And if they did not find work then they and their families went hungry. This insight helps to make sense of the story that Jesus told (Matthew 20) of how those who were employed for just one hour got the same take-home pay as those who had been slaving away in the vineyard all day. It was less to do with the work that they had done than their need to have enough to get by on.

We face a series of inter-related and growing problems in our society. Work is not equally distributed across our society. There is a growing chasm between high wages and low wages. Increasing numbers of people, even if they are in work, do not have enough to get by on. And many seeking work no longer find our Job Centres caring and compassionate places.

Surprisingly, to some, Jesus talked an awful lot about money and about our right relationship towards it. He understood that greed and the insatiable desire for more gets in the way of our relationships with others, with our planet and with God.

The themes of Jubilee and the redistribution of wealth permeate Old and New Testaments. The fact that such redistribution rarely happened terribly effectively – maybe the Early Church is an exception – is no reason for us not to continue to aspire for a fairer and more equal society. It is rather about us recognising at an individual and structural level what the Bible calls sin and committing ourselves to do our best to overcome it.

When we think about economics we tend to think primarily about financial transactions. However, in its Greek derivative (oikonomia) it is about 'household management' or the interrelationships between people. When Christians are looking for the most perfect illustration of the economy they find it in the inter-relationship within the Trinity: the love-filled relationship and commitment between God as Father (Parent), Son and Spirit.

## Our Findings: Public Services

This chapter collects all of the themes relating to public services. This chapter has been arranged in order of the most commonly discussed theme, with the most frequently discussed appearing first.

### **“Education is the house in which Justice dwells”<sup>xii</sup>**

Education was one of the most popularly discussed topics, occurring in 30 out of our 32 events, covering a wide spectrum of ideas. Equal access to education was the dominant theme; ensuring “a place where all have the opportunity to meet their full potential”<sup>xiii</sup> was identified as an important thread underpinning many of the ideas about education. There is an acknowledgement that the current situation in Scotland is not one of equality, and addressing this was obviously very important to the participants; this was explored in a number of different ways.

Free education in Scotland was widely endorsed, although this was nuanced, with some endorsing free education “at all levels”<sup>xiii</sup>, or “pre-school to undergrad”<sup>xiv</sup>, with a recognition that additional resources would be required to accommodate an ever-increasing number of people accessing further and higher education<sup>xv</sup>. Attitudes to private education were largely negative, with calls to “ban private schools”<sup>xvi</sup>; whilst others used private education as a benchmark, aspiring to “give every child an excellent education to the same level as current private schools”<sup>xvii</sup>.

Segregation along religious lines, through the well-established system of denominational and non-denominational schools, was identified by several participants as a barrier to true inclusivity in the Scottish education system.<sup>xviii</sup> However, the place of religion within Scotland’s schools was otherwise recognised to be important: many stressed the need for a broad education which exposed children to a range of values, including religious beliefs, to promote tolerance and understanding amongst the young<sup>xix</sup>. Learning from international experience, whilst retaining the uniqueness of the Scottish system was felt to be important<sup>i</sup>.

Equality of opportunity is therefore seen to be crucial; but equality of outcome was a contested concept. A person-centred approach which met the individual needs and aspirations of each child and young person in Scotland was felt to be crucial: “raise aspirations, especially for girls”<sup>ii</sup>, “no child left behind”<sup>iii</sup>. Lifelong learning was identified as another aspect of this sense of individual personal development<sup>iiii</sup>. An aspiration that “manual skills are valued as much as academic education”<sup>lv</sup> encapsulates another strong thread of recognition of the need for “less emphasis on academic ability. Use the talents of those whose hands can speak – apprenticeships.<sup>lv</sup>” Making school relevant for all is, therefore, felt not just to be about working to increase academic successes. The link between appropriate education and fulfilling employment is, therefore, an important connection made by participants.

### **Health and Community Care: “Promote spiritual, mental and physical health”<sup>lvi</sup>**

These themes were discussed at 22 out of 32 events. The NHS is clearly regarded as a powerful tool in meeting healthcare needs in Scotland already, but there was a recognition that this can only continue with adequate levels of resources: “Less reliance on charity funds for health services”<sup>lvii</sup>; “hospices should be state funded”<sup>lviii</sup>. Again, similarly with other themes, there is a concern that whilst the ideal should be “equal provision of good health advice and care”<sup>lix</sup> across the country, there are others who would welcome an unequal allocation of resources: “investing more in health services particularly in deprived areas”<sup>lx</sup>.

Care, particularly of the elderly and the disabled, was at the forefront of participants’ concerns in this policy area. Improving the quality of care<sup>lxi</sup>; ensuring that this care remains free<sup>lxii</sup>; and delivering this care with respect<sup>lxiii</sup> were the most frequently stated hopes in this regard. Supporting and valuing those who are carers<sup>lxiv</sup> is also recognised to be important.

Scotland’s poor health record and particularly problems with alcohol and drug abuse were noted to be areas in which improvement is most needed.

Awareness about issues such as mental health<sup>lxv</sup> and sex education were recognised by participants at National Youth Assembly, as were issues about which schools should be better equipped to provide education which reduces stigma: “really good compulsory sex education for all young people”<sup>lxvi</sup>. In addition to good quality healthcare, personal responsibility was also recognised: the promotion of physical activity and healthy eating were frequently noted as being important in encouraging people to lead healthy lifestyles.

### **Defence/Trident: “Rethink peace-keeping as being equal to ‘defence’”<sup>lxvii</sup>**

Although issues relating to defence policy were selected as a top theme only once, just under half of the events had some discussion of this topic. The dominant theme running through many of the ideas here were in favour of less spending on defence and more focus on peace: “pursue a peace-making foreign policy”<sup>lxviii</sup>. The ambition to “establish a prominent place on the world’s stage”<sup>lxix</sup> was explored, and there were various suggestions, which ranged from leaving NATO to focusing on humanitarian aid. There was some recognition of the benefits of compulsory military service to individuals, but this was definitely a minority view amongst those expressed within this area.

Most references also made some reference to Trident and broadly fell into two categories: 1) the specific desire to remove Trident from Scotland “no nuclear weapons on the Clyde”<sup>lxx</sup> and “nuclear-weapon free Scotland”<sup>lxxi</sup>, although this was tempered with some pragmatism: “get rid of nuclear weapons (but after finding a way to replace the massive job losses that would entail)”<sup>lxxii</sup> and 2) a more general opposition to nuclear weapons “developing a non-nuclear defence policy”<sup>lxxiii</sup>. This was not a unanimous position, however, with some support for retaining nuclear defences: “Make sure we keep Trident”<sup>lxxiv</sup>.

### **Welfare State: “Adequate, appropriate and respectful welfare”<sup>lxxxv</sup>**

Specific mentions of welfare and benefits were fairly infrequent, with themes being identified in just 9 out of 32 events, but what was spoken of was fairly unanimous in the need for a fair and “decent”<sup>lxxxvi</sup> welfare system that ensures that “everyone would have basic needs met”<sup>lxxxvii</sup>. The main groups on which participants focused on were children “create a good welfare/benefits system to ensure no child is hungry or cold”<sup>lxxxviii</sup>; the elderly<sup>lxxxix</sup>; and the disabled<sup>lxxx</sup>. The relationship between employment and welfare was noted, primarily that there shouldn’t be a reliance on benefits as an alternative to work. There was some discussion about the need to “help citizens develop resilience to enable them to cope with issues”<sup>lxxxxi</sup>. The overarching sense was that a functioning welfare state that was a support for the vulnerable was crucial to a caring society: “People [should] have hope of rising out of benefits trap and regaining independence and dignity”<sup>lxxxii</sup>.

### **Criminal Justice System: “Justice, Trust, Respect”<sup>lxxxiii</sup>**

Fair access to the criminal justice system was a key concern when considering policy in this area. However, when considering attitudes to those who had been convicted of crimes, attitudes were more mixed as to whether the correct balance between punishment and rehabilitation is currently being achieved, with some participants advocating a stronger emphasis on rehabilitation<sup>lxxxiv</sup> whereas others focused on a need for a more robust attitude to crime: “‘Punishment means Punishment’: discourage wrongdoing (drugs etc.) by creating a more punitive attitude to wrongdoing”<sup>lxxxv</sup>.

### **The Media: “Have real debates in media not just Yes / No mudslinging”<sup>lxxxvi</sup>**

References made to the media were largely directed towards suggestions for change: participants hope for “genuinely free press”<sup>lxxxvii</sup> accountable to the people, and the feeling was that there is currently too much desire for negative stories; a positive outlook was cited as an improvement that would be roundly welcomed. Others simply suggested that less attention should be paid to the media. The general sentiment, therefore, was of dissatisfaction with the current situation.

### **“Potholes et al”<sup>lxxxviii</sup>**

This small but important set of themes which were gathered from multiple events indicated that seemingly minor improvements, such as having less litter on the streets or filling in potholes in the road were considered important enough to be expressed by participants as a practical way of making Scotland better. Is this perhaps indicative of a need for more accessible means of local people raising local-level issues?

It was a privilege to facilitate sessions of “Imagining Scotland’s Future”. Initially I was nervous that the events would turn into a Yes/No squabble. All of the events I attended had a positive tone; looking for a thriving, inclusive future for Scotland. I was impressed by the high participation rate. The people attending the events did take the time to think and write and then share their views in the discussion stages.

At one event one person wrote “deal with drug and alcohol problems”. This single statement got enough votes to become a theme for the third stage - implementing the themes. The group working on this theme felt there was much that could and should be done given sufficient priority. The group felt it was important to raise the topic for further work. What a demonstration of the importance of listening to the individual!

Recently on holiday I have been asked about the referendum and I have been describing our events. The response has been surprising as my friends comment that they wish they had the chance to voice their values and visions for the future.

I hope all the work leads to a wider debate and informed voting at the referendum.

Sheena Wurthmann, Facilitator

## QUALITY CARE FOR ...

- Early Years
- Children and young adults
- The sick and disabled
- The elderly and the carers

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Presbytery of Duns

CHANGED ATTITUDES TO INVESTING  
FAIRLY IN COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY.  
"SOCIAL INVESTMENT PAYMENT"  
RESPONSIBILITY + ACCOUNTABILITY  
TRUSTING IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Colston Milton Parish Church

## Our Findings: **Theological Reflection**

Jesus' statement that the 'poor will always be with you' (Mark 14:7) is frequently taken as a reason why we should not be overly concerned with issues of injustice and poverty. To understand it in this way is both to fail to grasp the context in which Jesus said it and also his wider ministry in which he deliberately identifies himself with the excluded and marginalised (Matthew 25:31ff).

When Jesus accepted the anointing of his body while visiting a leper's home, he was thanking a marginalised woman for her act of adoration and generosity as she prepared his body for burial. He was speaking harshly to those who were offended by the woman, by the leper and by Jesus being there in the first place. It was less about accepting the inevitability of poverty than about challenging those who refused to accept the hospitality, generosity and insight of the excluded. It was, of course, also about worship and the worship of those who choose to hold nothing back.

One of the most consistent statements of Pope Francis, a statement embodied in his actions, is that we must become a 'Church of the Poor'. It is not enough for the Church to speak up on behalf of the excluded. Rather we need to identify with and take that mantle upon ourselves. The Incarnation – God in Jesus becoming a human being – is the exemplar of how God has already made that choice.

There is much to be lauded about our public services: our education system; our health system; our welfare system; and our criminal justice system. It is too easy to criticise structures which continue to make life better for thousands every day. At the same time, however, our current delivery of public services is clearly not as effective as it could be. In some cases, tragically, we appear to be actively retreating from our commitment to the poorest and most marginalised.

The danger of the way that public services are currently developed and delivered is that they are frequently designed by those who do not use them and criticised by those who do not want to pay for them. For example, those on benefits are blamed for being caught in a welfare trap which others designed for them to fall into. Those leaving prison determined to 'go straight' frequently find themselves pushed and pulled from one bit of bureaucracy to another until they fall down the cracks and end up 'back inside'.

God sees the world differently because he deliberately chooses to see it from the location of those at the margins. What would our schools, our GP surgeries, our submarine bases and our potholes look like if we did the same? Indeed, what would our churches look like as well?

**SOCIAL CARE**  
Society seeks to achieve fairness for all ages  
through appropriate training, investment in  
people and money to do the job correctly.

Netherlee Parish Church

**EDUCATION**  
An education system which is ethical in nature,  
nurturing individuals and thus promoting positive  
attitudes and challenging stigma and discrimination.  
One which recognises education as a life-long  
endeavour and empowers each individual, giving them  
the skills to reach their full potential and encourage  
others within their communities and beyond!

National Youth Assembly

## Our Findings: **Nurturing Inclusive Communities**

### **“Community Spirit”<sup>lxxxix</sup>**

There were repeated ideas around the importance of community with themes being identified in 28 out of the 32 events. It was felt necessary to “encourage understanding through shared experience”<sup>xc</sup>, “build relationships”<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup>, and “be more neighbourly”<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> along with a commitment to “caring for the most vulnerable in society: Christian love in action”<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup>. Ideas covered a spectrum with simple suggestions that individuals or small groups could carry out immediately such as “more smiling faces”<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> and “speak to each other”<sup>xc<sup>v</sup></sup> right through to calls for government or other organisational initiatives to support communities such as “provide places for old people to go and meet more people in the area”<sup>xc<sup>vi</sup></sup>, “more places for children to go in small places”<sup>xc<sup>vii</sup></sup>, “more venues for indoor activities at reasonable cost”<sup>xc<sup>viii</sup></sup>, and “keep running events that bring people together such as the Olympics”<sup>xc<sup>ix</sup></sup>. There were a few references to intergenerational community building such as “creativity will happen when young and old find the time to enjoy each other’s company”<sup>c</sup>. There were some more specific strands of thinking included in these themes; the encouragement of volunteering, a need for good policing, and references to local food production. Faith was highlighted in a number of ideas including “by continuing to share our faith with others, to be there when others think they do not need us”<sup>ci</sup> and a call to “be brave telling people what the church does in Scotland”<sup>c<sup>ii</sup></sup>.

### **“Try to bridge the gap between them and us”<sup>c<sup>iii</sup></sup>**

There was a strong current of ideas about equality and diversity in our communities ranging from the very simple, and often repeated, idea of respect and tolerance to more political ideas such as “low barriers on immigration”<sup>c<sup>iv</sup></sup>. Specific ideas included “working together on common issues affecting society, putting aside our differences for everyone’s benefit”<sup>c<sup>v</sup></sup>. More generally there were ideas about what positive relationships would look like – “don’t pull people down and disrespect them for not being like you”<sup>c<sup>vi</sup></sup> and “celebrate ethnic diversity in Scotland”<sup>c<sup>vii</sup></sup>.



## COMMUNITY

New relationships, forged together,  
Striving towards a community goal.  
All are included, all religions and races,  
Making a difference all as a whole.  
Including the elderly, including the young,  
Breaking barriers to start life anew.  
With mutual respect, all an open mind,  
We can be better than ever we knew.

National Youth Assembly

## A COMMUNITY

A place of old and new, a sea  
of different races, development  
continually evolving, somewhere  
where respect resides.

Sow seeds in and by the community.  
Allow it to grow with nourishment  
from the government.

Boghall Parish Church

### “National Pride”<sup>cxviii</sup>

The words ‘pride’, ‘confidence’ and ‘celebrate’ occurred frequently among ideas seeking to emphasise the already positive nature of Scottish identity – “remind all Scots (and others) that for 450 years we have tried to make Scotland a better place”<sup>cxix</sup>. Some of these ideas were about creativity and culture, including “keeping the Gaelic language”<sup>cx</sup> and aspiring for Scotland to be “a nation that enjoys tradition and innovation”<sup>cxii</sup>. Self-belief and “a culture of positive thinking”<sup>cxiii</sup> also featured in these ideas alongside some ideas about the nature of the political system that is necessary to be a proud nation under the theme “personal, relational and governmental engagement: creating a civic structure which encourages confidence in participation”<sup>cxiii</sup>.

### “Local and Global”<sup>cxiv</sup> / “Celebrate Scotland’s Influence in the World”<sup>cxv</sup>

Some participants clearly saw Scotland as a part of the international community with the responsibilities and opportunities that this presents – Scotland should be an “independent, prosperous part of the community of nations, taking responsibility in the world”<sup>cxvi</sup>. There were suggestions for “increased international aid”<sup>cxvii</sup> and taking an “international role in standing up for the oppressed”<sup>cxviii</sup>. There was a feeling that Scotland could learn from our neighbours, especially in Scandinavia. These were primarily aspirational statements linking local communities to global issues - Scotland should be an “outward looking, tolerant, fair, prosperous and dynamic country”<sup>cxix</sup>.



LOVE, HOPE & FAITH

Christian values underpinning society

TALKING, LISTENING, SHARING & CARING

Old High St Stephen's, Inverness



Church of Scotland Church and Society  
Conference, Edinburgh

Be brave in fostering  
inclusive communities  
where people of all  
generations work  
respectfully together  
to develop a suitable  
future for Scotland.

Carrick Knowe Parish Church

## Our Findings: **Theological Reflection**

Theology and history remind us of the ambivalence of concepts of national pride and identity; it is not long since Scottish and Presbyterian identity were bound up with each other (with that link stoutly defended by a church resisting diversity), and the theology of a chosen people can easily drift into the theology of Holy Willie – “here’s tae us, wha’s like us”. Yet there is a genuine aspiration here to a fresh sense of who we are, in ourselves and in our world; how can a sense of who we are in relation to God fuel that wider vision?

Perhaps an answer comes from where we find our sense of identity. In Christ we are forgiven, set free from the drive to justify ourselves by scapegoating and to assert our identity by excluding; we are called to build a house (community) where “all God’s children dare to seek to dream God’s reign anew”<sup>4</sup>.

Perhaps T S Eliot still captures best the role faith can play here when he asks:

*When the Stranger says: “What is the meaning of this city?  
Do you huddle close together because you love each other?”  
What will you answer? “We all dwell together  
To make money from each other”? or “This is a community”?  
Oh my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger.  
Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions.”*<sup>5</sup>

For “city” read “nation”, and there is a profound challenge here to the currently narrow economic focus of the referendum debate. The values and, even more, the lifestyle and practices of the kingdom are creative of community; what public policy form do these take?

4. Marty Haugen: All Are Welcome (Hymn 198 in CH4)

5. Eliot: Choruses from The Rock

## Our Findings: **A Sustainable and Connected Scotland: Transport, Energy, Environment and Infrastructure, Environmental Stewardship**

### **Promotion and celebration of our beautiful environment**<sup>clxxvii</sup>

A strong theme running through the contributions made about the environment was recognition of the beauty of Scotland's natural environment, and that the resources within it should be protected: "protect our wild landscape"<sup>clxxviii</sup>; "preserve green leisure areas"<sup>clxxix</sup>. Access to the countryside for all, and an appreciation of "the beauty of surroundings / environment"<sup>clxxx</sup> was felt to be important whilst others focused on the need for regeneration of urban areas: "create more urban engaging public space"<sup>clxxxi</sup>. Whether urban or rural, many applied the term 'environment' in a more immediately local sense. Responses which were grouped together here focused on aspects of making the local area a more "pleasant environment"<sup>clxxxii</sup> in which to live. Much of this related to cleanliness, "pride in our environment (litter intolerance!)"<sup>clxxxiii</sup>, or aesthetics: "Colour- window boxes, hanging baskets, planters – and management thereof"<sup>clxxxiv</sup>; "Improving the environment where people live, e.g. poor housing and closed shops that are areas that look so neglected"<sup>clxxxv</sup> but also a sense of security and comfort were also noted as being vital to making healthy and secure living spaces: "Less violence so no-one fears to be on the streets alone."<sup>clxxxvi</sup>; "build housing for health – not wealth"<sup>clxxxvii</sup>. Others, however, broadened their concern to the global level: "Consider and address local & world effects of global warming & climate change". Land reform was touched on by some participants, exclusively in a positive way, i.e. the need to address the issue of who owns Scotland's land.

### **"Eco-aware: recognise finite resources of the earth – recycle, reuse"**<sup>clxxxix</sup>

The need for careful stewardship of our natural resources, therefore, was recognised as being paramount: "Better awareness of impact of our actions on our environment – individual and corporate"<sup>cx</sup>. Reducing consumerism<sup>cxci</sup>, being aware of your own carbon footprint<sup>cxcii</sup>, and being proactive about learning about insulation<sup>cxci</sup> and energy efficiency<sup>cxci</sup> measures were all suggested, as well as more strict compulsory laws on recycling. Local food production and encouraging the consideration of minimising food miles were also discussed<sup>cxci</sup>. The focus here was largely on individual responsibility<sup>cxci</sup>, but some highlighted the benefits of organised action: "a Scotland responsible for the future can come through really developing climate change attitudes. The Eco-Congregation project in the churches is a good model."<sup>cxvii</sup> One group at National Youth Assembly used the opportunity to think of innovative ways to get people thinking about their own environmental impact; noting the impact of sanitary products being sent to landfill they encouraged women to look at more environmentally-friendly products: "Free mooncup for every woman: save hundreds of landfill km<sup>2</sup>".<sup>cxviii</sup>

### **Energy: Renewables, Investment and Policy-making**

The majority of contributions which were grouped into this category were broadly in favour of exploring renewable energy sources, and, crucially, ensuring that there is an increase in investment for these new technologies: "greater investment in "greening" Scotland".<sup>cxix</sup> Although most participants who chose to discuss this area were enthusiastic about renewable energy sources, specifically wind, wave, hydro,<sup>cc</sup> biofuel etc.: "Less focus on offshore and more focus on other natural resources we have as a nation and the rest of the UK"<sup>cci</sup>; opposition to wind farms also came through as another contribution to the debate about renewable energy. One group at Portobello had a suggestion which would seem to strike a balance between these two positions, suggesting to "devolve 'power' i.e. small wind turbines for houses and districts – not wind farms"<sup>ccii</sup>

There was also some discussion about energy security and the need for energy prices to be "competitive" was mooted<sup>cciv</sup>. More radical proposals such as renationalising utilities<sup>ccv</sup> were also suggested, and this came up more than once. Beyond decisions about energy generation and energy security, some were keen to see a wider consideration for 'green' decision-making more generally: "Engaging in environmental issues in all aspects of the economy ([e.g.] building, jobs, transport)"<sup>ccvi</sup>

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

Connections are important. Whether it is transport or internet connectivity<sup>ccvii</sup>, participants felt that the need to be connected both within Scotland "Have more links between town and country; urban and rural"<sup>ccviii</sup> and internationally<sup>ccix</sup>, is something to be highlighted and improved. Public transport and the need for the extension of affordable public transport, particularly in less central areas also emerged as an important issue for participants. This centred around three key 'asks': more public transport, making better connections particularly between urban and rural areas<sup>ccx</sup>; cheaper and more affordable public transport<sup>ccxi</sup>; less focus on cars in policy-making and more attention on healthier forms of transport including walking and cycling<sup>ccxii</sup>. However the discussion was not exclusively about public transport, with (at the same events where public transport was discussed) references to potholes and ensuring that road repairs were carried out<sup>ccxiii</sup>. This attention again to the very local is telling.



A Co-ordinated approach towards infrastructure, including our natural resources and global communication for all

St Michael's Parish Church, Edinburgh

*All things bright and beautiful  
All creatures great and small  
if we don't look after them  
we will lose them all*

Old High St Stephen's, Inverness

Create a strong, confident sustainable economy by: decentralising where appropriate, having values - led resource management, enabling enterprise, undertaking an international outlook.

Kilmarnock

## Our Findings: **Theological Reflection**

We all want Scotland's future to be a good one but what constitutes 'good' regarding the environment? In an early biblical reflection concerning creation, we're told "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." (Genesis 1: 31) Good in what ways? Perhaps it was merely aesthetically pleasing, a beautifully contrived structure, enabling interplay and interaction between elements of creation; humankind and other species, and between these sensate creatures and their non-sensate environment. On the other hand, perhaps we could also recognise the ways in which creation sustains humankind and other creatures, bringing a social and economic perspective.

Some participants in Imagining Scotland's Future rightly recognise the beauty of Scotland's natural environment, others its potential for regeneration. Sometimes these perspectives fit together neatly. At other times potentially they clash, as arguments over wind farms illustrate. How will a nation or a community recognise and acknowledge legitimate but sometimes competing perspectives? What means will be employed to resolve competition or conflicts, that give due weight to the different perspectives?

Some of Jesus' words suggest that God's concern for creation extends to a deep level, taking into account both the need to sustain its inhabitants, providing food for the birds, and its beauty, as seen in the wild flowers (Matthew 6: 26, 28) It's certainly legitimate to address 'practical' issues and advocate practical actions with regard to a community's future, which for us includes matters such as transport, energy and re-use of resources. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah, painting a positive picture of the future for those rebuilding Jerusalem (Isaiah 65: 18-25), includes child and adult mortality, housing and land ownership, and fair working practices, but all orientated to the bringing of gladness, rejoicing and joy (65: 18).

Beauty and practicality are not competitors, the one seeking to exclude the other, but essential elements in a shared future.



## Our Findings: **Good Government**

In 29 out of 32 events there was discussion of good government, and ideas ranged from a strong sense of dissatisfaction with the status-quo to specific suggestions as to how to create better governance. Of all the ideas put forward during events the comments made under this heading were the most negative, angry and emotional. In many events these themes were present, but not classed as the most important to discuss, perhaps suggesting that people are not optimistic about the possibility of change. There was a clear sense that all is not well with our democratic system. This feeling reaches beyond the immediate lobbying and financial scandals and challenges the nature of the relationship between national government and local communities; the nature of the party political system and the type of person we want to see representing us. A number of ideas were directly related to the Referendum on Scottish Independence and advocated independence or remaining in the Union. These have not been expanded on here, as we sought to look beyond the polarising question of yes or no during our events.

### **“Truth and Public Life”<sup>cxx</sup>**

The greatest preponderance of ideas were around the linked themes of integrity, accountability and transparency of politicians. The tone of these ideas was mixed with some cutting and angry comments while others were positive and offered solutions – however, there was an overwhelming feeling that there was an unacceptable lack of integrity and accountability. Ideas included “MPs to be made accountable – fired if need be”<sup>cxxi</sup>, “there is integrity by government when it makes promises: no false promises”<sup>cxxii</sup>, “creativity will happen when politicians speak the truth when asked, so we and they can trust each other”<sup>cxxiii</sup>.

It was noticeable during these events that many participants making such comments did suggest, verbally, that they did not intend these comments to be applied to their own elected representatives who they knew to be honest and committed public servants. There appears to be a disconnection between personal experience of elected politicians and beliefs about the political system.

### **“The Government needs to listen to people”<sup>cxxiv</sup>**

#### **“Listen to the people of Scotland, their views and visions of their country”<sup>cxxv</sup>**

There were recurring calls for politicians and the Government to listen to all people, more specifically there were challenges to the public engagement processes currently being used, “Stop saying you consult on policy when it clearly doesn’t happen”<sup>cxxvi</sup> and a call for “real community consultation”<sup>cxxvii</sup>. However, some existing systems were mentioned positively such as “enhance the role of [the Scottish Parliament Public] Petitions Committee”<sup>cxxviii</sup> and there was acknowledgement that it was necessary for citizens to “engage with the democratic process: challenge the MPs/MSPs”<sup>cxxix</sup>.

### **“Personal Service”<sup>xxx</sup>**

With the basic premise being a need for “better politicians”<sup>cxxxi</sup> there was less agreement about what this would look like. There was a strong theme about “taking money out of politics (as an undue incentive/influence)”<sup>cxxxii</sup> and having “politicians really care, and go the extra mile”<sup>cxxxiii</sup> tied in to suggestions that there should be “fewer ‘professional’ politicians”<sup>cxxxiv</sup> and more politicians with life experience and specialist knowledge e.g. with “industrial sense”<sup>cxxxvi</sup> and politicians with “good core values”<sup>cxxxvii</sup>. From an alternative perspective there were also a few ideas in favour of career politicians and getting young adults actively involved in politics. One idea argued that the solution was “through personal service: be prepared to stand for office, party membership etc.”<sup>cxxxviii</sup>

### **“Dissent & Citizenship”<sup>cxxxix</sup>**

Building on the concept of personal responsibility for good government were a range of ideas around citizenship and the media – “change begins with me/us”<sup>cxl</sup>. Suggestions included citizenship education in schools and volunteering as part of the National Curriculum. There were a number of ideas about voting including the suggestion of “mandatory voting in local and national elections”<sup>cxli</sup>. Some of the calls for integrity among politicians were also applied to the media; however there was also a clear view that the media had a role to play in encouraging open debate.

### **“More democratic and radically different government”<sup>cxlii</sup>**

Moving beyond calls for integrity in public life and better listening from government some ideas suggested greater changes to the current system – “strive to establish a more visionary and properly democratic form of government”<sup>cxliii</sup> or “Participative democracy fuelled by learning and sharing”. There were a number of ideas relating to the party system within politics from all perspectives; “dismantle the party political system”<sup>cxliv</sup>, “retain a system with many political parties”<sup>cxlvi</sup> and “a more transparent way of electing leaders”<sup>cxlvii</sup>. There were a number of calls for “a written constitution decided by the people”<sup>cxlviii</sup>, one phrased in the language of bringing our constitution into the 21st century.<sup>cxlix</sup>

### **“Devolve power and responsibility to local communities”<sup>cl</sup>**

One of the key themes coming out of discussions about good governance was about how to “bring decision making close to people”<sup>cli</sup>. These ideas were a mix of formal and informal suggestions including “devolve more power to local government to make decisions about local areas”<sup>clii</sup> and “promoting/encouraging inclusive community against dominance of ‘central belt’”<sup>cliii</sup>. There were more general calls for “local answers to local problems – improved democracy”<sup>cliv</sup> and involving more people in decision making.

### **“Better Government structures”<sup>clv</sup>**

Some of the ideas offered were about the civil service and processes rather than politicians themselves. There were two calls for public ownership with particular reference to energy<sup>clvi</sup>. There was a desire for “less preventative red tape”<sup>clvii</sup>, “more communication between organisations, e.g. hospitals, doctors’ surgeries and social care: working together”<sup>clviii</sup>. Specifically in relation to public sector budgets were ideas about “values-led budget management”<sup>clix</sup> and “devolution of budgets to local area/region”<sup>clx</sup>.

### **“Ethical direction from Government”<sup>clxi</sup>**

There were a wide range of ideas about what ethical underpinning we wanted for our government systems. These ideas were varied and include; “politicians working for the Common Good rather than against one another”<sup>clxii</sup>, a courageous society that tackles problems imaginatively”<sup>clxiii</sup>, “picket and pray”<sup>clxiv</sup>, “I want a country where the basic needs of people are considered strategically, not ad-hoc”<sup>clxv</sup>. There were social justice themes running through many of these ideas.

## **Our Findings: Theological Reflection**

The Bible is, to say the least, ambivalent about government in its various forms; for example, in the Old Testament, kingship sometimes carries a stamp of divine approval (even, perhaps, ordination) but at others it is seen as an attempt to supplant God’s sovereignty. It would be hard, therefore, and arguably dangerous, to argue for any one structure as the divinely approved system. Yet that is not to say that such structures are irrelevant from a faith perspective. As Jim (now Lord) Wallace has recognised: “The theological perspective and history of the Church of Scotland was influential in reviving and promoting the idea of the Claim of Right – the concepts of a limited sovereignty and a popular sovereignty, politicians exercising power as a gift of the people”<sup>6</sup>. The Scottish Parliament was designed with an intention of embodying many of the ideas above; perhaps the comments suggest that it hasn’t felt like that in practice. Has a perspective rooted in God’s sovereignty (and Christ’s Lordship) still got a contribution to make here, or has it lost the resonance it found 25 years ago?

Subsidiarity – the principle, rooted in Catholic Social teaching that “nothing should be done by a large more complex organisation which can be done as well by a smaller and simpler organisation”<sup>7</sup> – may similarly lose some of its bite as the attempt to embody it in the EU feels stunningly bureaucratic. Might it yet have something to say in safeguarding the position of social institutions (faith communities, local authorities, trades unions, the voluntary sector) from the dominance of central governments and “market forces”?

As in the church, the initial commitment people bring to politics can slip through the fingers of party loyalties and institutionalism. Politicians are people, i.e. riddled with human frailty yet created children of God; at the same time they are good, fallen and to be redeemed, as are their institutions. Within that theological realism, can we help design structures of power that nurture integrity rather than party tribalism?

6. J Wallace: Making All Things New or A Blast From The Past in J McKay (ed): Christian Faith and the Welfare of the City, CTPI, Edinburgh, 2008, p10

7. D Bosnich: The Principle of Subsidiarity, in Religion and Liberty 6.4

Politicians who have power/finance to make decisions to improve communities AND who are close enough to that local community for their responsibility/accountability to be meaningful.

Boghall Parish Church

Better Governance  
We are the government and the politicians are our employees. At regular local meetings they are held accountable and dismissal not unusual.

Netherlee Parish Church

I was initially intrigued by the idea of discussing Scotland's future without discussing the referendum in 2014. But that has been the real strength of this series of events. We have not become bogged down in a YES/NO debate. Rather they have enabled those attending to take a step back and be more open and creative in their thinking. I was involved in a number of events both as a participant and as a facilitator. As facilitator it was really inspiring to hear some of the ideas that people had. At one event I was particularly taken by a suggestion given that whatever the outcome of the referendum that Scotland should strive to be a good small country. That is to say not to be obsessed by having a seat at every table or being bigger than we really are. But simply to be good at what we do and succeed in that.

At another event I led there were a number of people who attended who had chosen to come to the event rather than attend a meeting of the local YES campaign group. They thought it would be good to come and hear from a broad range of views rather than sit in a room with like-minded people.

Sadly one of the constant themes in the discussions I was part of was a lack of trust and respect for our politicians. And so I hope that the report will be well received and that politicians will listen to what people from across Scotland, across age groups, across social demographics have to say about the kind of Scotland they want to live in. Because no matter whether we continue as part of the Union or become an independent country we should be striving to be the nation that its people aspire to be – not what our politicians tell us we should be.

Shuna Dicks, Facilitator

## Our Findings: **Live Out the Gospel: Societal Values**

Given the focus on identifying values in the first stage of the process, it is unsurprising that at every event this remained a topic for discussion in the latter stages of the process. This chapter focuses on how people relate to one another, and the values that underpin these relations.

### **“A more Christian society”<sup>clxvi</sup>**

The need to pray for Scotland and to share the teaching of Jesus through evangelism, “a desire for God’s Lordship”<sup>clxvii</sup>, is identified by some as integral to Scotland’s future. Others place the emphasis on the practical outworking of the Christian faith in Scotland, with a strong sense that Christians should not be afraid to play an active role in their communities. There are particular references to examples of good practice already occurring, such as tackling poverty through the Poverty Truth Commission and local church action; the Eco-Congregation Scotland movement encouraging action on climate change; and the work done by churches in tackling sectarianism. Continuation, extension and replication of these types of projects are encouraged. ‘Christian values’ such as love, hope, tolerance and forgiveness are also frequently cited.

### **“Welcoming Different People to the Table”<sup>clxviii</sup>**

Religion, race, ethnicity, disability, gender and sexual orientation should not affect how people are treated in Scotland: “we’re a’ Jock Tamson’s bairns”<sup>clxix</sup>. Continuing and improving the welcome extended to strangers, and particularly to asylum seekers and refugees, was a theme often explored by groups.

### **“Love God and love your neighbour as yourself”<sup>clxx</sup>**

Whilst variations of the phrase “love your neighbour” appear in the data from several events, including “Putting other people first: Love Your Neighbour”<sup>clxxi</sup>, other groups wrestled with the sense that as well as loving others, a sense of self-worth first is crucial. One such example was a discussion in a group at Colston Milton about the need for job security and the anxiety caused by people seen to be outsiders perceived to be taking jobs from local residents. What began as an outpouring of frustration was heard by the rest of the group as a tangible example of the need not only for empathy for the ‘other’, but for a sense of your own value within society. This need for self-belief was mirrored in contributions from other groups, and, in turn, a need for “listening at all levels of society”<sup>clxxii</sup> is considered vital in how people relate to one another.

## **Social Justice**

The majority of the discussions in this area were aspiration-led, rather than offering practical policy suggestions, but aspirations to end poverty, particularly child poverty, homelessness and inequality were at the forefront of many discussions. Several groups focused on the need for economic redistribution, whilst others related social justice issues to attitudinal change, in particular critiquing unfair or ill-researched media portrayals of vulnerable societal groups. “Replace stigma with fact regarding poverty, immigration, substance abuse, violence, mental illness and disability”<sup>clxxiii</sup>.

### **Equality of Opportunity?**

Opportunities for equal access to education, healthcare, fair treatment in the criminal justice system, physical activity, and the employment market were amongst the key areas identified. Whilst many stressed this need for equality as crucial, others took a more nuanced view, stating a need to “recognise the value of difference in a society that cherishes equality”<sup>clxxiv</sup>.

### **“Individual & Collective Social Responsibility”<sup>clxxv</sup>**

There is a sizeable body of thought which relates to the need to recognise that alongside rights come responsibilities, and this should manifest itself as an obligation on the individual to take responsibility for their well-being. However, others focus on a shared social contract, emphasising the value of volunteering for the good of others, particularly the elderly, the lonely and the vulnerable. At several events these ideas were held in tension within the same group.

Compassionate systems ...  
... compassionate people.

Glasgow Presbytery

We want a Scotland where the  
first thing is to encourage  
people to feel fully human by  
recognising their creativity  
and imagination as a  
foundation to their well-being.

Colston Milton Parish Church

Christians breaking out of  
comfort zones, reaching out  
to others, seeking common  
values in the community and  
sharing our common humanity.

Glasgow Presbytery

## Our Findings: **Theological Reflection**

Is there a difference between asserting that we are all “Jock Tamson’s bairns” (a phrase itself possibly rooted in the kirk), and defining ourselves as “bairns o’ Adam”<sup>8</sup>, or God’s children? ACTS<sup>9</sup> has offered a series of Biblical reflections on the values inscribed on the Scottish Mace – justice, wisdom, compassion and integrity<sup>10</sup>; clearly, each can be seen as having Christian roots, but does that mean faith has something distinctive to say on each, or do churches simply reflect wider social attitudes? How might something distinctive find wider resonance and could the Poverty Truth Commission<sup>11</sup> with its challenge “Nothing about us, without us, is for us” be a good example here?

Relationships are central to Christian ethics, and many of our key words are descriptive of a quality if not a structure of relationship. It is in relationship with God and with others that we find self-worth. In a time of privatisation we may see this as purely a matter of personal morality, but how do personal relationships relate to public policy? How would policy oriented to enhancing the quality of relationships differ from one appealing to individual choice in a “free” market?

It is as easy to be scathing about the variety of views in the church that would be embraced under the concept of a “Christian society”, as it is about the varied wider views of the “common good” or even “social justice”. And we should be theologically wise about our ability to persuade ourselves that what suits us is socially just; bankers are not unique in persuading many – for a time – that their bonuses served the common good that is subsumed in GNP. Yet none of this realism escapes the prophetic calling to speak truth to power, and the clear injunction that nations are to be judged by their care for the most vulnerable, in whom we encounter Christ the scapegoat.

8. Hamish Henderson: Freedom Come All Ye

9. Action of Churches Together in Scotland: [www.acts-scotland.org](http://www.acts-scotland.org)

10. ACTS ‘Values for Scotland?’ materials, [http://www.acts-scotland.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=505%3Atest&catid=64%3Ahome-page-contents&Itemid=74](http://www.acts-scotland.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=505%3Atest&catid=64%3Ahome-page-contents&Itemid=74)

11. [www.povertytruthcommission.org](http://www.povertytruthcommission.org)


Imagining Scotland's Future sounds like a pretty big exercise and indeed it was. Logistically and imaginatively it stretched the resources of participants but has left us with a treasure trove of ideas and aspirations that can enrich the devolution debate.

Those of us that took part in the exercise, either as facilitators or otherwise, felt we were taking part in a process that has challenged everybody to think a little more deeply about the issues behind the headlines and attention grabbing sound-bites. It required all participants to come out of comfortable preconceptions to discuss the big question: what kind of Scotland do we actually want to live in?

The answer to this question in all the groups in which I participated was positive and encouraging: we want a Scotland that is more caring and more equal than the country we live in right now. The way this conclusion was repeatedly expressed in different settings and in different groups strongly suggests it is not a chance result. Nor is it likely that this message is related to how people will vote. Participants who hold diametrically opposed views on independence and will vote in opposite ways may well share the same positive vision. It does suggest that under the cynicism there are aspirations that are generous and altruistic. It also highlights the shallowness of media reporting of the referendum debate.

In the debate there are real and justifiable concerns about jobs, public services and our future well-being, under either the status-quo or an independent Scotland, but these concerns did not dominate the debate in churches or other groups who took part in the exercise. Rather, Imagining Scotland's Future opened up a new seam of positive thinking about the future, a seam of thought hidden away for all these years under geological layers of media deposited cynicism!

Adrian Shaw, Facilitator



*our*  
**conclusions**

## Conclusions

Rather than an individualistic ‘what’s in it for me?’ approach to considering the future of Scotland, this process afforded participants the opportunity to share ideas, to discuss, deliberate and on occasion, to disagree.

A process which was deliberately designed to firstly ask people to reflect personally and then to come together as a group is the key to the findings which we now present.

This report cannot do full justice to the vast amount of information shared, but in a sense, that is of secondary concern. The experience for the participants of sitting down and sharing together was invaluable.

### Thematic Conclusions

As stated earlier in the report, this document is a review of consultation events. The challenges highlighted below emanate from the outputs of the events held around Scotland. As such, this section should not be interpreted as the stated policy of the Church of Scotland beyond the commitment to engage people in the debate about the future of Scotland whilst remaining impartial on the outcome of the referendum.

What this section aims to do, therefore, is present some challenges for both sides of the referendum debate to take into account.

### Values

The values that participants identified as being important to them for the future of Scotland focussed on the relational rather than the personal. For participants in these events it is clear that the Referendum, and indeed wider questions about the future of Scotland, were about far more than the simple question “what is in it for me?” Discussion in the media has examined the idea that being £500 better off or worse off would affect how people vote in the referendum. This consultation clearly found that participants wanted to see values at the heart of public discourse and were not making their decisions on the basis of financial gain or loss. Congregations across Scotland are deeply concerned about fairness, justice and sharing for their communities as a whole.

**Challenge:** all participants in the national debate are asked to reflect on how their proposals are rooted in values and to ask ‘What kind of Scotland do we want to live in?’

### Economy and Employment

There is a recognition that a modern, successful economy needs a degree of regulation and limits to be placed on free market forces. This sits within the context of a widespread belief that people want to work and business models should be more focussed towards the employee and businesses should be more value driven. There was a willingness to consider alternative and more progressive models of taxation to build a better society.

**Challenge:** all participants in the national debate are asked how they would develop financial structures which value social justice.

### Public Services

Participants offered robust support for well-resourced and competently delivered public services:

- Equality of opportunity in education was seen as crucial. A person-centred approach was valued with the intention of raising aspirations and this was set alongside personal development through lifelong learning. There were calls for less emphasis on academic education and more apprenticeships.
- In relation to health greater state funding, including for hospices, was called for. Clear demands for equality of service were made alongside equally clear calls to invest in targeted resources for deprived areas. The quality of care, particularly for the elderly and disabled was a priority as was the need to ensure such care was delivered respectfully.
- Defence and Trident were discussed in just under half the events, largely focusing on a need for a reduction of spending on defence and more focus on peace. Of those who mentioned nuclear weapons, the majority opposed them, both in Scotland and beyond.
- While the welfare state was not at the forefront of participants’ discussions, where it was mentioned there was a desire for a fair and decent system which gave people the hope of rising out of benefits to regain independence and dignity.

**Challenge:** all participants in the national debate are asked to acknowledge the importance of well-resourced public services which reflect the values of our society.

### Nurturing Inclusive Communities

Community was considered important; both in terms of how people behave towards one another and the availability of resources, particularly venues, within communities. These social assets were recognised as an existing strength within our communities and the basis for building a better society. A strong sense of national pride was expressed; this was in the same context as calls for equality and diversity to be respected. The idea of community expressed was global as well as local with a desire to learn from our international neighbours and play our part in the international community by providing aid and standing up for the oppressed.

**Challenge:** all participants in the national debate are asked to consider the implications of their policy proposals on the development of strong and diverse communities locally and internationally.



### **A sustainable and connected Scotland: Transport, Energy, Environment and Infrastructure**

Once again the focus was on the local; appreciating the beauty of immediate surroundings and including the environment as a focus of urban regeneration. Personal responsibility was seen as important in the areas of recycling and energy efficiency; the work of the ecumenical movement Eco-Congregation Scotland was referenced as a way of encouraging people to change their attitudes. There was strong support for development of renewable energy sources with some caution around wind-farms. Transport was a clear theme in discussions with a desire for better and more affordable public transport as well as a change in focus from cars to healthier forms of transport such as cycling and walking.

**Challenge:** all participants in the national debate are asked how they will make sustainable development a key consideration in decisions about Scotland's future in particular in relation to planning decisions, renewable energy and infrastructure.

### **Good Government**

Dissatisfaction with the political system featured strongly in Imagining Scotland's Future events. The greatest preponderance of ideas were around the linked themes of integrity, accountability and transparency of politicians. There was a desire to be able to hold politicians accountable between elections and for the party system to be less powerful. A positive vision of the politician as public servant was expressed and there was a corresponding sense that the general population should take more responsibility for the nature of politics for example exploring such ideas as mandatory voting.

There were calls for more radical changes to the current system:

- a desire for more participative democracy and the creation of a written constitution decided by the people, and
- far greater local decision making capacity; these calls represented more than just an enhancement of existing local government structures.

**Challenge:** all parties in the national debate are asked to work to revitalise and increase trust in our democratic structures by listening to the people of Scotland, and creating space for fresh forms of local democracy.

### **Live Out the Gospel: Societal Values**

The need to pray for Scotland and to share the teaching of Jesus is identified by some as integral to Scotland's future. Others place the emphasis on the practical outworking of the Christian faith in Scotland, with a strong sense that Christians should not be afraid to play an active role in their communities. 'Christian values' such as love, hope, tolerance and forgiveness are also frequently cited alongside the concept of loving your neighbour.

**Challenge:** all participants in the national debate are asked to acknowledge the essential role of communities of faith in contributing to our nation and to ensure that our place is acknowledged in future constitutional discussions.

### **What happens next?**

This report marks the end of one aspect of the Church of Scotland's engagement with the lead-up to the referendum. However it is by no means the end of its involvement.

The Church and Society Council is committed to ensuring that congregations across Scotland are supported to carry on having conversations about Scotland's future, not only in the coming months, but beyond.

Churches traditionally have hosted many of the hustings events in the run-up to elections, and we expect that some may choose to continue in this practice. We will be making resources available to assist in the preparation of those events, as well as providing speakers to church groups about the findings from the 2013 Imagining Scotland's Future events.

We also are producing a 'how to' guide for churches to provide details as to how to run an Imagining Scotland's Future event in their own community.

The findings from this report may not provide scientifically verifiable data, but they do give an indication of the kinds of issues that people in communities are concerned, excited, curious and hopeful about. Going forward, it is the intention of the Church and Society Council to continue to engage in the public debate in considering what kind of Scotland we want to see in the future, and how we make that a reality.

## Acknowledgements

**The Church and Society Council are grateful to the following churches and groups for hosting Imagining Scotland's Future events:**

- Aberlour Parish Church
- Abernethy Presbytery
- Banchory West Church
- Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial Church
- Boghall Parish Church
- Carrick Knowe Parish Church
- The Church of Scotland in Portobello and Joppa
- Colinton Parish Church
- Colston Milton Parish Church
- Dalkeith: St Nicholas Buccleuch Parish Church
- Dunblane Council of Churches
- The Abbey Church, Dunfermline
- The Presbytery of Duns
- East Kilbride Westwood Parish Church
- Edinburgh: Morningside Parish Church
- Glasgow Presbytery
- Glasgow West End Churches Parish Grouping Council
- Girvan South Parish Church (on behalf of the Presbytery of Ayr)
- Glenrothes: Christ's Kirk
- Iona Community event run on Iona
- Iona Community Regional Plenary, Stirling
- Jordanhill Parish Church
- The Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting, Aberdeen
- Murrayfield Churches Together
- Netherlee Parish Church
- National Youth Assembly
- New Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock, the Howard centre and St John's Church Onthank (jointly hosted)
- Old High St Stephen's, Inverness (run jointly with the Community Responsibility Committee of Inverness Presbytery)
- Penicuik North Kirk
- St. Michael's Parish Church, Edinburgh
- Church of Scotland Church and Society conferences, Edinburgh and Stonehaven

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## Endnotes

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| I. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery                       | XXXVI. Idea, NYA   | LXVII. Theme, Murrayfield   |
| II. Idea, Colinton                                | XXXVII. Idea, Glasgow West End   | LXVIII. Idea, Dalkeith  |
| III. Theme, Glasgow Presbytery                    | XXXVIII. Idea, East Kilbride   | LXIX. Idea, Glasgow West End  |
| IV. Theme, Boghall                                | XXXIX. Idea, Colinton  | LXX. Idea, Banchory West  |
| V. Idea, NYA                                      | XL. Idea, Church and Society Meeting, Edinburgh  | LXXI. Idea, NYA   |
| VI. Idea, Bearsden                                | XLI. Speech Bubble, Duns   | LXXII. Idea, Portobello and Joppa                                       |
| VII. Idea, Portobello and Joppa                   | XLII. Idea, Church and Society Meeting, Edinburgh  | LXXIII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  |
| VIII. Idea, NYA                                   | XLIII. Idea, Carrick Knowe   | LXXIV. Idea, Girvan   |
| IX. Idea, Portobello and Joppa                    | XLIV. Idea, Edinburgh St Michael's   | LXXV. Idea, Carrick Knowe   |
| X. Theme, Portobello and Joppa                    | XLV. Idea, NYA   | LXXVI. Idea, East Kilbride  |
| XI. Theme, Portobello and Joppa                   | XLVI. Idea, Iona Community Regional Plenary, Stirling                                    | LXXVII. Idea, Glasgow West End  |
| XII. Idea, Iona Community                         | XLVII. Idea, Penicuik  | LXXVIII. Idea, Boghall  |
| XIII. Idea, Church and Society Meeting, Edinburgh | XLVIII. Ideas, NYA, Glasgow Presbytery   | LXXIX. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial                        |
| XIV. Idea, Glasgow West End and others            | XLIX. Ideas, Kilmarnock, Colston Milton, Glasgow Presbytery, Glasgow West End and others | LXXX. Idea, East Kilbride   |
| XV. Idea, Glasgow West End                        | L. Idea, Aberdeen  | LXXXI. Idea, Dunblane   |
| XVI. Theme, Abernethy Presbytery                  | LI. Idea, Inverness  | LXXXII. Idea, Banchory West   |
| XVII. Idea, Dunblane                              | LII. Idea, Banchory West   | LXXXIII. Theme, Glasgow Presbytery                                      |
| XVIII. Idea, NYA                                  | LIII. Ideas, Carrick Knowe, Dunfermline, Kilmarnock and others                           | LXXXIV. Ideas, Dalkeith, Glasgow Presbytery, NYA                        |
| XIX. Idea, NYA                                    | LIV. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial   | LXXXV. Idea, Glasgow West End   |
| XX. Idea, Portobello and Joppa                    | LV. Idea, Glenrothes   | LXXXVI. Idea, Iona Community, Iona Community Regional Plenary, Stirling |
| XXI. Idea, Dunblane                               | LVI. Theme, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  | LXXXVII. Idea, Inverness  |
| XXII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery                    | LVII. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  | LXXXVIII. Theme, Jordanhill   |
| XXIII. Idea, Iona Community                       | LVIII. Idea, Dunfermline   | LXXXIX. Theme - Dunfermline   |
| XXIV. Theme, Glasgow Presbytery                   | LIX. Idea, Jordanhill  | XC. Idea, NYA   |
| XXV. Idea, East Kilbride                          | LX. Idea, NYA  | XCI. Idea, Banchory West  |
| XXVI. Idea, Boghall                               | LXI. Ideas, Carrick Knowe and others   | XCII. Idea, Colinton  |
| XXVII. Idea, East Kilbride                        | LXII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery   | XCIII. Idea, NYA  |
| XXVIII. Idea, Dunfermline                         | LXIII. Idea, Inverness   | XCIV. Idea, Dunfermline   |
| XXIX. Idea, Dalkeith                              | LXIV. Idea, East Kilbride  | XCV. Idea, Colinton   |
| XXX. Idea, Girvan                                 | LXV. Ideas, NYA  | XCVI. Idea, NYA   |
| XXXI. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery                    | LXVI. Idea, NYA  | XCVII. Idea, NYA  |
| XXXII. Idea, Colinton                             |  | XCVIII. Idea, Girvan  |
| XXXIII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery                  |  | XCIX. Idea, NYA   |
| XXXIV. Idea, Dalkeith                             |  | C. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery   |
| XXXV. Idea, East Kilbride                         |  | CI. Idea, NYA   |
|   |  | CII. Idea, Carrick Knowe  |

CIII. Idea, Boghall  
 CIV. Idea, Banchory  
 CV. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CVI. Idea, NYA  
 CVII. Idea, Girvan  
 CVIII. Theme, NYA  
 CIX. Idea, Church and Society Meeting, Edinburgh  
 CX. Idea, NYA  
 CXI. Idea, Morningside  
 CXII. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CXIII. Theme, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXIV. Theme, NYA  
 CXV. Theme, Girvan  
 CXVI. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CXVII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXVIII. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CXIX. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CXX. Theme, Inverness  
 CXXI. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXXII. Idea, Dunblane  
 CXXIII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXXIV. Theme, C&S conference, Edinburgh  
 CXXV. Idea, NYA  
 CXXVI. Idea, Dunfermline  
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 CXXX. Theme, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXXXI. Idea, Murrayfield  
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 CXXXIV. Idea, Abernethy Presbytery  
 CXXXV. Idea, Jordanhill  
 CXXXVI. Idea, Kilmarnock  
 CXXXVII. Idea, Abernethy Presbytery

CXXXVIII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXXXIX. Theme, Portobello and Joppa  
 CXL. Idea, Abernethy Presbytery  
 CXLI. Idea, Iona Community  
 CXLII. Theme, Portobello and Joppa  
 CXLIII. Idea, Portobello and Joppa  
 CXLIV. Idea, Iona Community Regional Plenary, Stirling  
 CXLV. Idea, Milton  
 CXLVI. Idea, Colinton  
 CXLVII. Idea, Colinton  
 CXLVIII. Theme, Penicuik  
 CXLIX. Idea, Netherlee  
 CL. Idea, Colston Milton  
 CLI. Idea, Duns  
 CLII. Idea, Iona Community Regional Plenary, Stirling  
 CLIII. Idea, Inverness  
 CLIV. Idea, Glenrothes  
 CLV. Theme, Glasgow West End  
 CLVI. Both ideas – Portobello and Joppa  
 CLVII. Idea, NYA  
 CLVIII. Idea, NYA  
 CLIX. Idea, Kilmarnock  
 CLX. Idea, Murrayfield  
 CLXI. Theme, Netherlee  
 CLXII. Idea, Glasgow West End  
 CLXIII. Idea, Morningside  
 CLXIV. Idea, Iona Community  
 CLXV. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CLXVI. Idea, Penicuik  
 CLXVII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CLXVIII. Idea, Portobello and Joppa  
 CLXIX. Idea, Girvan  
 CLXX. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CLXXI. Idea, Morningside  
 CLXXII. Theme, Glenrothes  
 CLXXIII. Idea, NYA  
 CLXXIV. Idea, Aberdeen  
 CLXXV. Theme, Duns

CLXXVII. Idea, Jordanhill  
 CLXXVIII. Idea, Aberlour  
 CLXXIX. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CLXXX. Idea, Banchory West  
 CLXXXI. Idea, Milton  
 CLXXXII. Idea, East Kilbride  
 CLXXXIII. Idea, Jordanhill  
 CLXXXIV. Idea, Glasgow West End  
 CLXXXV. Idea, Boghall  
 CLXXXVI. Idea, Glasgow West End  
 CLXXXVII. Idea, Portobello and Joppa  
 CLXXXVIII. Idea, Glasgow West End  
 CLXXXIX. Idea, Banchory  
 CXC. Idea, Colinton  
 CXCI. Idea, Iona Community  
 CXCII. Idea, Glasgow West End  
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 CXCIV. Idea, Colinton  
 CXCV. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXCVI. Idea, Dalkeith  
 CXCVII. Idea, Glasgow Presbytery  
 CXCVIII. Idea, NYA  
 CXCIX. Idea, Aberdeen  
 CC. Idea, East Kilbride  
 CCI. Idea, Abernethy Presbytery  
 CCII. Idea, Glasgow West End Churches  
 CCIII. Idea, Portobello and Joppa  
 CCIV. Idea, Dalkeith  
 CCV. Idea, Edinburgh St Michael's  
 CCVI. Idea, Boghall  
 CCVII. Idea, Murrayfield  
 CCVIII. Idea, Duns  
 CCIX. Idea, Bearsden Westerton Fairlie Memorial  
 CCX. Idea, Inverness  
 CCXI. Idea, Dunfermline  
 CCXII. Idea, Colston Milton  
 CCXIII. Idea, Inverness, Dunfermline

## Your Notes

