

Scottish Rural Parliament – January 2014 Newsletter

Happy new year!

Last year was an exciting one for us with the very first Scottish Rural Parliament happening in November.

Four hundred people actively engaged in the national event, presentations and discussions - not to mention enjoying some "world-class" entertainment.

Even more people took part throughout the year, holding or attending local Rural Parliament events, debating the issues on Twitter, entering photo competitions, participating in the Rural Innovators Awards and demonstrating how important, active and engaged rural Scotland is.

This year looks to be even more exciting as we move forward with a clear mandate and action plan for the next two years. We encourage you to become a member and vote at our first AGM in March to choose who the directors should be for the forthcoming year, or even to put yourself forward for election as a director.

Our action plan based on your recommendations and input will be released at the AGM and we will request a debate in the Scottish Parliament to consider the recommendations made.

We hope you will join us in our journey throughout 2015 and wish you all the best for the year.

Membership now open

We have just released membership forms so you can now 'officially' become a member of Scottish Rural Action, the body responsible for the Scottish Rural Parliament. At present the only members are the Directors of SRA and we now hope to encourage you to become a member.

Download a membership form from the website – see www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk/get-involved/

Membership is of the legally constituted organising body, Scottish Rural Action. As with other Rural Parliaments you can't become a member of the Rural Parliament itself, as it is not a legally constituted body (you aren't allowed to be a constituted organisation with the word 'Parliament' in the name). Scottish Rural Action has two objectives - organising the Rural Parliament and developing a rural movement. The direct parallels exist for our colleagues in Sweden and Estonia who can become members of 'Hela Sverige ska leva' (All Sweden Shall Live) and 'Kokudant' (Home Area), the bodies whom run the respective Rural Parliaments in those countries.

Members can be national organisations, community organisations (those with a local or regional remit) or individuals. Associate membership is also available for public bodies,

juniors (under 16) and others. To join, please fill in the form here and return as soon as possible to be able to vote at the first AGM.

To stand for election as a Director please submit your membership form and express your interest by the end of January. To find out more information about the role of Director please contact emma@scottishruralparliament.org.uk.

Save the date!

The first Annual General Meeting for Scottish Rural Action is on 6th March in Perth. Our Memorandum of Association is available on our website. To attend (as a member or observer) please email us at info@scottishruralparliament.org.uk. To become a member please see details on our website. To stand for election as a Director of Scottish Rural Action or for more information, please contact emma@scottishruralparliament.org.uk.

Rural Parliament 2014

Scotland's first Rural Parliament in November 2014 closed with a call for action to achieve a more empowered, connected and sustainable rural Scotland. Delegates agreed also to ask the Scottish Government to commit to a national conversation on local democratic renewal as a first step towards radical reform of local government that will bring power much closer to communities.

More than 400 delegates attended over the three days of the Rural Parliament, and in the final session agreed by an overwhelming majority that the Rural Parliament should continue, with the next full session taking place in 2016. Full press release available on the website.

For videos, presentations, reports and other information from the 2014 event please see <http://www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk/rural-parliament/>

Evaluation

The evaluation of the first Scottish Rural Parliament is very positive with 92% of people rating the event as very good or excellent. If you attended the national Scottish Rural Parliament in Oban 6th-8th January and haven't yet completed the evaluation form, please do so no later than 14th January: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/75MMXSC>

Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy

Cllr David O'Neill, Chair of the Commission, responded to the Scottish Rural Parliament's call for local democratic renewal with his support. To read his response our website news pages.

Rural Innovator's Award

Six amazing projects won their category in the Rural Innovator's Awards in 2014 and a public vote during the Rural Parliament determined an overall winner.... (drum roll please!)... Stramash!

Stramash is a successful and award winning social enterprise that delivers high social impacts and operates a sustainable business model. They use the outdoors to facilitate personal, social, emotional and educational development. The organisation delivers the only outdoor children's care apprenticeship scheme for young people in Scotland and is the largest provider of outdoor apprenticeships in the country.

To highlight the successes of Scotland's rural communities, Mairi Hedderwick author and illustrator, drew the 'World's Best Rural Community' based on the projects that were nominated and won in the different categories of the Rural Innovator's Awards. To see the illustration view our website.

Winners in each of the categories were: Braemar Community, iCycle, Badenoch Broadband & Comms CIC, Roots Design Workshop, Gatehouse Development Initiative and the Isle of Jura Community Shop. For more information see the website.

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The Gathering

The Scottish Rural Parliament will have a stand at this year's Gathering (<http://www.gatherscotland.org.uk/>) event, held at the Glasgow SECC from 25th-26th February. We hope to see you there.

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