



Scottish Rural Parliament

A Rural Parliament for Scotland

What is a Rural Parliament?

A Rural Parliament is a 'bottom-up' process of involvement and debate between the people of rural Scotland and policy makers to enable better understanding, improved policy and action to address rural issues.

A Rural Parliament is not a formal part of government, nor is it a parliament in the sense of a legislative or decision-making body. It is a process that provides opportunities for people with an interest in rural communities to share ideas, consider issues and debate solutions.

Rural Parliaments allow people and decision makers to work together on priority issues to develop new and creative solutions. They strengthen the voice of rural communities and help them to influence the decisions that affect them.

When and where is it taking place?

Rural Parliaments usually take place on a two year cycle, with the main Rural Parliament events taking place every second year.

In between the main events, there is a process of involvement and debate taking place in communities that helps to set the agenda for the next Rural Parliament.

In Scotland the first Rural Parliament took place in November 2014 in Oban. In 2016 it will take place in a different location.

Why does Scotland need a Rural Parliament?

It is a unique opportunity for rural Scotland to have a stronger and more coherent voice.

At present Scotland does not have a single mechanism, inclusive of all interests and geographical areas, for enabling the collective interests of rural Scotland to be raised, debated and communicated to Government. This often results in issues being addressed sectorally or geographically, with no clear process for gaining a comprehensive, grass-roots view of rural issues.

Rural communities often face similar challenges and opportunities and this provides an opportunity for them to share

ideas and develop creative solutions to the challenges that are common across rural Scotland.

Rural Parliaments have been successful in other parts of Europe and there is now a European Rural Parliament which the Scottish Rural Parliament will be able to work with, giving rural Scotland a stronger voice at a European level too.

Co-Chairs of Scottish Rural Action

John Hutchison: Is a chartered civil engineer with experience in the private and public sectors on steel structures and the maintenance and construction of roads and bridges. He worked for 12 years in the second-tier position of Lochaber Area Manager for Highland Council where his responsibility



also included community development, gaining a commendation from Audit Scotland for his work on community planning. He has advised political campaigns and has direct experience of arbitration and in negotiating community benefit. John has been deeply involved in the community land movement and

is a director of Community Land Scotland. He presently chairs the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust. A Justice of the Peace for 27 years and an Honorary Sheriff, he is also the Chairman of Trustees of the West Highland Museum and Executive Director of Nevis Partnership. John speaks Gaelic and Scots.

Amanda Burgauer: is the Chair of GANDL Development Group, a voluntary organisation that works to improve life in 9 local villages and the founder of B4GAL Community Broadband, a community-owned charitable company offering superfast broadband to local residents. Amanda is passionate about rural affairs and vibrant, sustainable rural communities as reflected in her engagement with the local community and with issues such as land reform, affordable housing, transport and services, low wages and sustainable jobs.

