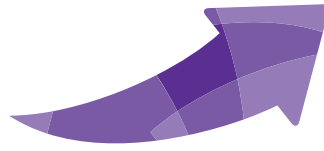




The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Scotland's Futures Forum  
Fòram Alba air Thoiseach

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2021 | 22**

Looking beyond  
the electoral  
horizons.



# Introduction

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**Scotland's Futures Forum is the Scottish Parliament's futures think-tank. We work across the political parties and beyond to stimulate debate on Scotland's long-term future.**

**Our work involves bringing together diverse groups of people to consider the effect of policy decisions and potential policy decisions on Scotland's long-term future. Our aim is to inform MSPs and others and to enable them to look beyond the electoral horizons.**

In 2021–22, the Futures Forum made the transition to a new session of the Scottish Parliament. Our board membership refreshed after the elections in May 2021, and we worked to establish new partnerships with parliamentary committees and other partners in the new political context.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to be felt, with in-person events only restarting at end of the reporting year, in March 2022. Like other organisations, we adapted our approach, supporting online events where possible and carefully returning to in-person events as regulations allowed.

## **For further information on our work:**

- > visit our website  
[www.scotlandfutureforum.org](http://www.scotlandfutureforum.org)
  - > follow us on Twitter  
[@ScotFutures](https://twitter.com/ScotFutures)
  - > get in contact  
[ScotlandsFuturesForum@parliament.scot](mailto:ScotlandsFuturesForum@parliament.scot)
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# Democracy

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As the Scottish Parliament's think-tank, the future of democracy is a key part of our work. Democracies are not static and must respond to shifts in society. A key focus for us in 2021–22 was how Scottish democracy can meet the challenges of the next 20 years in order to build a fair and sustainable Scotland for future generations.

Having showcased the work of the Citizens Assembly of Scotland in February 2021, we explored other innovations and issues in a series of events and research reports on the three themes of environment, technology and participation.

## Scotland's Climate Assembly

In August 2021, we held a panel discussion with members of the Climate Assembly and members of the Children's Parliament who supported its work. The Assembly made recommendations on how Scotland should change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way.

With both the Parliament and the Government committed to giving citizens more direct input into decision making, our event enabled MSPs and officials to explore with Climate Assembly members both the process and the outcomes of their work.

## Code Red for Parliaments

Held during COP27 in Glasgow, this event brought together parliamentarians, advisers, climate justice advocates and academics to explore how Parliaments must evolve to deliver their functions in the context of a Code Red for humanity.

Four expert speakers from different perspectives shared their thoughts with an international audience on the key questions facing Parliaments and elected representatives at all levels.

With the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, we later published a report to draw together our learning and outline a pathway for Parliaments to consider.

## Future Generations Commissioner

In March 2022, we hosted a seminar on governing for future generations, featuring a presentation by Sophie Howe, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

With the Scottish Government exploring a future generations commissioner, and Sarah Boyack MSP since lodging a proposal for a wellbeing and sustainable development commissioner, this event explored what Scotland can learn from what is happening elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

These events form part of a larger project on democracy, which has continued beyond the reporting year.

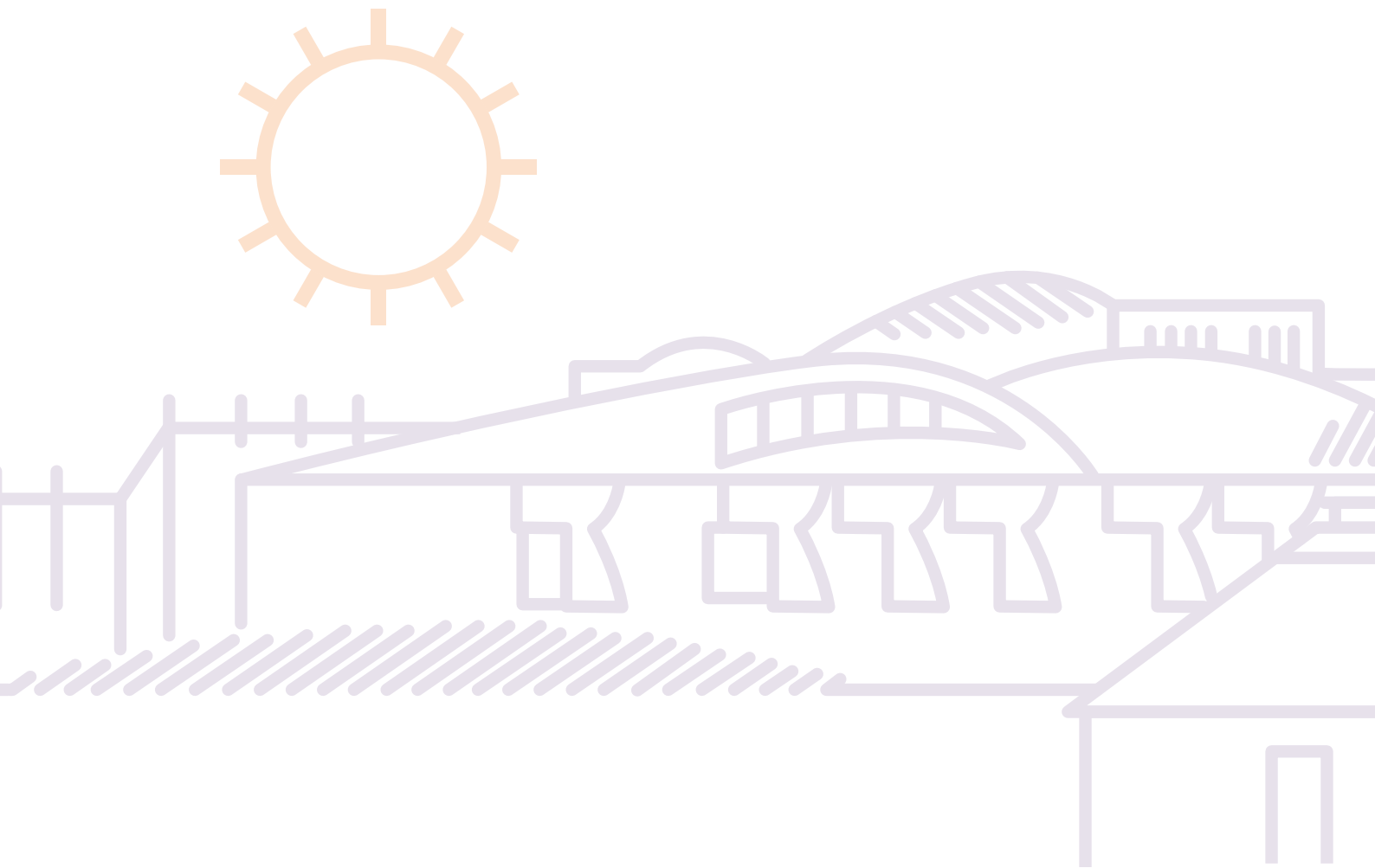


# Education Futures

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In conjunction with our long-term partner, **the Goodison Group in Scotland**, we hosted two seminars for the Education, Children and Young People Committee on future challenges and opportunities for education.

The first seminar explored the question of who should run Scotland's schools in a time of change. What roles should the different people take? The second seminar (our first in-person event since 2020) explored what the significant environmental, technological and societal change that we expect means for our education system more broadly and how it can best respond.



# Festival of Politics

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In October 2021, we were delighted to continue our partnership with the Scottish Parliament's Festival of Politics.

Bringing together academics, writers, policymakers, businesspeople and politicians, the festival debated what action needs to happen to tackle the climate emergency. Taking place over five days, the free online panel sessions were themed around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and explored the impact of climate on other issues such as poverty and inequality.

As a precursor to the festival, we held a debate on Scotland in 2045 in September 2021. Hosted by the Parliament's Presiding Officer, the discussion featured economist Katherine Trebeck, author James Robertson, and campaigner Zarina Ahmad.



# Gaelic week |

## *Seachdain na Gàidhlig*

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To mark Seachdain na Gàidhlig (Gaelic week) in 2022, we published a series of Gaelic blogs specially commissioned for the occasion. The blogs picked up on a vision shared in our event on the future of Gaelic in 2019 of a Scotland where “Gaelic is visible and audible in public life, with Gaelic routinely used for non-Gaelic issues.”

To support this vision, and to provide food for thought on our shared future, we published blogs on various aspects of Scotland in 2045 from the point of view of a range of Gaelic speakers. Subjects included community empowerment, rewilding, sustaining island communities and even some darkly comic dystopian fiction.

The blogs were supported by the Scottish Parliament’s Gaelic Officers and were designed and promoted as Gaelic-first content on our website, with English-language versions published later.



# Who's involved?

The work of the Futures Forum is guided by a Board of Directors drawn from within and outwith Parliament. The following directors served during 2021–22:

- > **Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP** (resigned 13 May 2021)
- > **Alison Johnstone MSP** (appointed 20 May 2021)
- > **Claudia Beamish MSP** (resigned 13 May 2021)
- > **Maggie Chapman MSP** (appointed 28 June 2021)
- > **Maurice Corry MSP** (resigned 13 May 2021)
- > **Sir Andrew Cubie CBE** (resigned 4 October 2021)
- > **Diarmaid Lawlor** (appointed 6 September 2021)
- > **Louise Macdonald OBE**
- > **Stuart McMillan MSP**
- > **Sarah Munro**
- > **Esther Robertson** (appointed 6 September 2021)
- > **Alex Rowley MSP** (appointed 28 June 2021)
- > **Brian Whittle MSP** (appointed 28 June 2021)

Susan Duffy, Group Head of Engagement and Communications in the Scottish Parliament, served as Company Secretary. Rob Littlejohn, the Head of Business, and Audrey Gray, who provides administrative and events support, were employed on secondment from the Scottish Parliamentary Service.

# What's next?

For 2022–23, we will develop our work on democracy, collaborating with our partners at the Festival of Politics to explore questions of representation, technology and sustainability within our democratic future.

We will also continue our work with parliamentary committees to support longer-term thinking and inform their work programmes.

Finally, we will initiate our major programme for this session of Parliament.

Website [www.scotlandfutureforum.org](http://www.scotlandfutureforum.org)

Twitter [@ScotFutures](https://twitter.com/ScotFutures)

Email [ScotlandsFuturesForum@parliament.scot](mailto:ScotlandsFuturesForum@parliament.scot)