



ANNUAL UPDATE 2014

women's votes women's voices



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The Scottish Women's Convention aims to:

- enable women to influence policy in Scotland.
- ensure that issues important to women are considered at all stages of the policy making process

Development Manager's Report

Once again this has been a very busy year for the SWC.

The referendum really galvanised women in communities throughout Scotland. This was reflected in numbers attending the SWC Referendum events. Discussions focussed on diverse subjects such as employment rights, tax, Trident, defence and constitutional reform.

The organisation has grown in reputation as a result - with Government Ministers attending events and media coverage highlighting our work.

We look forward to continuing on this success and making sure that the voices of women are heard at this crucial time in Scotland's history.

SWC Staff

Development Manager

Evelyn Fraser

Events Organiser Isabelle Lannon
(retired March 2014)

Research Advisor

Lorna Kettles

Finance and Network Administrator

Mary Kerr

Support Officer

Samantha Ritchie

SWC Board of Directors

Agnes Tolmie (Chair)

Helen Adamson (retired February 2014)

Suzanne Conlin

Sarah Cumming

Patricia Donnelly

Julie Hall

Elspet Macintosh

Tanveer Parnez

Giri Polubothu

Chair's Report

This has been another successful year in the life of the SWC. With a very small team and a huge geographical area, the organisation met with record numbers of women as part of the Referendum roadshow programme.

The women attending were keen to have their questions answered by panel members - there was a real appetite for information and engagement with women throughout Scotland.

It is important, going forward, that this interest in Scotland's future is not lost.

The SWC will continue to engage with women the length and breadth of Scotland to ensure their voices are heard by those making decisions.

SWC ACTIVITIES 2014

Referendum Conferences

The SWC held a series of Conferences to give women the opportunity to discuss and debate the Scottish Referendum.

These events were held in: Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow (2), Greenock, Livingston and Orkney. An event was also held in Glasgow for young women.

Engagement with Better Together and YES Scotland ensured that there was a balanced panel of speakers. Participants were encouraged to take part in a Q & A session at each event and feedback from all involved was extremely positive.

Further Devolution - What Women Want

As part of the discussions on Scotland's future and to inform the Smith Commission, which is looking at further devolved powers for Scotland, a consultation event with women was held to discuss their priorities.

The discussions gave women the opportunity put forward their own views, concerns and opinions regarding the debate.

International Women's Day

The theme of the 2014 was *'What Women Want, What Women Need'*

This year's event celebrated women from various spheres of life coming together to tell their story about what woman want and need.

One of the most important ways of breaking down barriers is to listen to women and take on board what they really want and what they really need.

Women who attended thoroughly enjoyed discussing the issues and listening to the speakers.

"We are all here to celebrate International Women's Day – the achievements of women. What better achievement than supporting others."

"Really enjoyed the relaxed but informed discussions. Women's voices are always good to listen to!"

Geographical Information Groups (GIGS)

GIGs are continually being established throughout Scotland. Following SWC events, many women want to stay actively involved in the consultation process.

To date there are GIGs in 15 geographical locations throughout Scotland and a TIG (Thematic Information Group).

The SWC greatly appreciates the support of these groups when responding to consultations and surveys.

Members of these groups have helped the SWC promote their events and have also raised awareness of the organisation.

Networking

The SWC staff and Board spent a considerable amount of time and resource building networks during 2014. This is reflected in a 30% increase to numbers on our mailing list.

Almost 70% of women attending Referendum events were new to the organisation. Social media, word of mouth and the enews bulletin were the main sources of finding out about the organisation.

Our profile is building at a UK, European and International level with activities around CSW and CEDAW. The SWC Chair and Board members have represented the organisation at a number of high profile events including the meeting of Commonwealth Women and chairing an EHRC Conference on Equal Pay.

"I really enjoyed the conference and the debates. The panel discussed every question in great detail. I would like to thank all of the panel and SWC staff for giving me a chance to be with you all."

Briefing Papers

- CSW Agreed Conclusions, July 2014
- The Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee Interim Report on Benefit Sanctions, July 2014
- The Scottish Independence Bill Consultation, August 2014

"I enjoy the get together of women from all walks of life and the fact that they are non political. The SWC work very hard for women everywhere."

CSW 2014

The SWC continues to be members of the CSW NGO Alliance - a network of UK women's organisations who come together to coordinate reporting mechanisms for CSW.

The SWC is also part of the UK NGO Liaison group which informs the UK Government on issues around the CSW priority them as well as participating in Ministerial meetings.

The SWC produced a report in 2014 around the priority theme of the Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Agenda. Evelyn Fraser, SWC Development Manager, was invited to speak at a CSW parallel event in New York on the content of the report and the issues faced by women in Scotland.

Following CSW, the SWC attended follow up meetings in London to discuss progress made and outcomes from CSW.

The theme for 2015 is Beijing +20 - progress for women made since the 1995 World Women's Conference held in Beijing.

The SWC is, once again, producing a report of the position of women in Scotland.

Copies of reports from all SWC events, consultation responses and briefing papers are available to download from www.scottishwomensconvention.org

SWC Website & Social Media

The SWC's social media continues to grow and make significant progress in raising awareness about the organisation. Feedback from those attending events indicates that a number of women find out about events on Facebook, Twitter and the website.

Social media has become a key tool in the SWC building networks and raising awareness. Work will continue to develop these networks and reach more women. Since the beginning of 2014, Twitter followers have doubled and the number of 'likes' on Facebook have increased by 100%.

The SWC's social media platform allows the organisation to reach out to more people and raise awareness about key issues which effect women in Scotland.

"Really appreciate this, excellent!"

"A very good event overall."

Young Women's Network (YWN)

Last year, the SWC held an event for young women called 'A False Sense of Perfection' - bringing together young women from different areas throughout Scotland to discuss sexualisation, the impact of social media and pressures to conform.

This year, the SWC concentrated on giving women a voice during the referendum campaign. A event was held in Glasgow offering young women from throughout Scotland the opportunity to raise their issues and concerns with both campaigns.

Roundtable discussions have focussed on Modern Apprenticeships, the pressures on young women to conform to stereotypical roles and images as well as employment opportunities for young people.

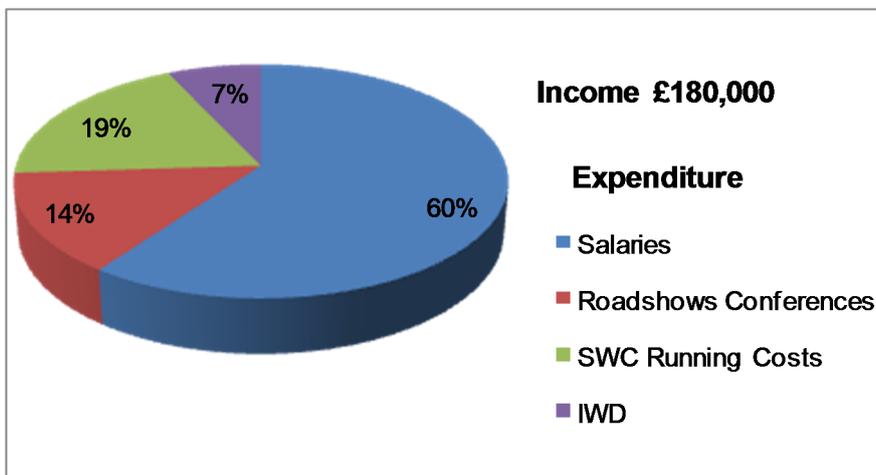
The YWN also attended Freshers events at Glasgow City College and the SECC. Raising the profile of the organisation is important in ensuring young women become involved in the consultation process and having their voice heard by key decision makers.

Consultation Responses

- Response to the Scottish Government's proposed Violence Against Women Strategy, February 2014
- Response to the Scottish Government Consultation 'Women on Boards: Quality through Diversity', May 2014
- Response to the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill, September 2014

Other Activities

- The SWC enews bulletin is distributed monthly to the mailing list and other interested parties. The SWC mailing list has continued to grow with an increase of over 30% on 2013.
- The SWC has been invited to speak at a number of external events including local and national meetings,
- Holding stalls and networking activities at STUC Equality Conferences as well as local activities throughout Scotland has raised the profile of the organisation.
- The Young Women's Achievement Award was presented to five young women from a project facilitated by North Ayrshire Women's Aid.
- Media activity has increased with a number of local and national press pieces as well as radio and TV interviews around the work of the organisation and the priorities for women.



Summary of Accounts April 2013 - March 2014

Thank You!

The SWC would like to extend our thanks to:

- Wylie and Bisset Chartered Accountants.
- Thompsons Solicitors, UNITE the Union, Unison, GMB Union, Thomas Tunnock Ltd, Walkers Shortbread, Women's Fund for Scotland, TIGER Glasgow
- Sean Feeny and the team at Hampden Advertising for prompt, quality printing.
- Last, but never least, all of our volunteers who have handed out bags, facilitated tables, taken coats, taken notes and generally supported the work of the SWC over the last year.

Your contribution is always greatly appreciated.

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