

# ANNUAL UPDATE 2015



## 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

Another busy year with lots of activities taking place throughout Scotland.

Women have become more vocal - wanting their voices heard and needing their issues and concerns taken forward.

With the General Election and then the Scotland Bill being debated, the SWC has ensured that women's voices are at the heart of the way forward.

We have continued to build up local networks and ensure that women in communities, both urban and rural, have an opportunity to contribute.

2016 brings new challenges with the Scottish Parliament elections. The SWC will continue to engage and use women's voices to influence policies.

## SWC Staff

### Development Manager

Evelyn Fraser

### Research Advisor

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### Admin Assistant (from May 2015)

Ann Scullion

## SWC Board of Directors

Agnes Tolmie (Chair)

Suzanne Conlin

Sarah Cumming

Patricia Donnelly

Julie Hall

ElsPET Macintosh

Tanveer Parnez

Giri Polubothu

## Chair's Report

A busy and successful year has gone by with record numbers attending all SWC events.

Growing on last year's Referendum successes, the SWC roadshows attracted new women to the discussions with very positive results.

Conferences have grown with more women wanting to participate, have their voices and opinions recorded.

The decision makers must listen. That is the job of the SWC. Women need to be heard.

## SWC ACTIVITIES 2015

### Roadshows

The SWC roadshow programme engaged with women in Falkirk, Benbecula, Nairn, Ullapool and Hamilton

Women attending events were asked about:

- their experiences of work and family life;
- what support is needed at national and local level to enable women to become more active in community and political participation;
- the key priorities for women in the local area.

Feedback from all the roadshows was very positive, with over 70% attending an SWC event for the first time.

### International Women's Day

The theme for 2015 was '*Act Local, Think Global*'.

Once again, over 380 from throughout Scotland celebrated in the Scottish Parliament.

Speakers included - Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister; Miriam O'Reilly, Former BBC Presenter; Ruth Wishart, Journalist; Saima Lawson and Emma Park.

Delegates were also given an opportunity to contribute through a question and answer session.

This events builds friendships year on year with women meeting up, talking and having the time to relax from busy schedules.

### Hustings Conference

Prior to the General Election in May 2015, the SWC held a Hustings event. By bringing representatives of the 6 main political parties together, those attending were able to ask questions important to them prior to the vote.

Women recognised the important of this vote and asked questions around issues such as welfare reform and employment legislation which remain reserved to Westminster.

*"A great example of how to behave and respect each other's views."*

### Networking

Networking remains a crucial part of SWC activities. It is imperative to the success of events that links are made in communities throughout Scotland.

The SWC continues to develop Geographical Information Groups (GIGs). This enables a link to be made directly between the organisation and designated areas throughout Scotland. When quick responses are required, GIGs allow the SWC to reply using accurate information.

## 50/50 Conference

2015 marked the 25th anniversary of the launch of the 50/50 Campaign for equal representation.

This conference reflected on the work carried out during the 1980s and 1990s, led by trade union women, which saw the first Scottish Parliament with a high number of women MSPs.

Speakers also talked about the need for the campaign to continue as the number of women in public life have fallen over the past decade.

## Older Women Conference

Older women make a great contribution to Scotland's economic and social prosperity. They are, however, often dismissed as being less enthusiastic, more demanding and less productive.

This conference focused on women in employment, in the media and as carers.

Discussions and feedback also contributed to the Scottish Older Women's Commission report.

## CSW 2015

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

The SWC produced a report around the priority theme of Beijing +20. A delegation attended CSW and raised the profile of women in Scotland in this international arena.

By being involved in the Alliance, the SWC is invited to meetings in London with UK Government Ministers and officials.

## Young Women's Conference

This conference brought together young women from throughout Scotland. It focused on employment and the sexualisation of young women.

Speakers, discussions and workshops enabled those attending to gain a better understanding of the impacts of poor employment practices, social media and peer pressure.

*"The quality of speakers and discussions were excellent. It was good to be able to draw on women's diverse experiences and backgrounds."*

*"I really enjoyed the roundtable discussions."*

## Briefing Papers

- The Scotland Bill (June)
- Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee Inquiry into Women and Welfare (June)

## SWC Website & Social Media

There has been a substantial increase in social media activity throughout the last year, resulting in a change in the way in which women find out about SWC activities. Feedback confirms that more women are engaging via social media. This has proved a valuable tool when reaching out and encouraging women to become involved in activities.

The website is a valuable resource for those wanting to find out about the work of the organisation. Over the next funding period, the website will be updated to provide an easier to navigate and mobile friendly site which will encourage more people to visit.

## Consultation Responses

- Scottish Parliament Justice Committee Call for Evidence on the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Bill, February
- Scottish Parliament Devolution (Further Powers) Committee Call for Evidence on 'Scotland in the UK: An Enduring Settlement', March
- Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee Inquiry into Women and Welfare, March
- Commission on Local Tax Reform, June
- Scottish Government Consultation on Equally Safe - Reforming the Criminal Law to address Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, August
- UK Parliament Scottish Affairs Select Committee Call for Evidence into the Committee's workplan, August
- Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee Call for Evidence on the Future Delivery of Social Security in Scotland, August
- Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee Call for Evidence into Work, Wages and Wellbeing in the Scottish Labour Market, August
- Scottish Government Consultation on the Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy, September
- Scottish Government Consultation on Devolved Powers over Employability Services in Scotland, October
- Scottish Government Consultation on Future Social Security Powers for Scotland, October
- Scottish Parliament Justice Committee Call for Evidence on the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill, November
- Scottish Government Discussion on A Fairer Scotland, November

Copies of reports from all SWC events, consultation responses and briefing papers are available to download from [www.scottishwomensconvention.org](http://www.scottishwomensconvention.org)

## Other Activities

- The SWC enews bulletin is distributed monthly to the mailing list and other interested parties. This list continues to grow due to networking and events.
- The SWC continues to be invited to speak at external events, including national and international meetings, talking about the work of the organisation and the views of women in Scotland.
- The Young Women's Achievement Award was presented to Clemency Crow from Wick in Caithness. Clemency was selected from a record number of nominations.
- The SWC has been involved in work around the Fairer Scotland discussion and, as well as attending events to put forward the views of women, has hosted events for the Scottish Government around key policy areas.

## Thank You!

The SWC would like to extend our thanks to:

- Wylie and Bisset, Chartered Accountants.
- Thompsons Solicitors, UNITE the Union, GMB Union, Communication Workers Union (CWU), Glasgow Taxis and Thomas Tunnock Ltd,
- 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.**

## Funding

The SWC continues to receive core funding from the Scottish Government. This enables the organisation to undertake the activities recorded in this report as well as finance salaries and running costs.

The main objective of the SWC is to engage with women in communities throughout Scotland to ensure that their voices are heard by key decision makers. Continued funding will guarantee that this process continues, particularly in light of the further devolved powers proposed under the Scotland Bill.

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