



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01587

Name of petitioner

Arthur McFarlane

Petition title

Scottish Civic Forum

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reinstate the Scottish Civic Forum and to fund the Forum at a level which will allow it to develop and succeed as an instrument of social cohesion and democratic governance in Scotland.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have spoken to numerous like-minded members of the public on how we can have the Scottish Civic Forum reinstated. The consensus of opinion is that the Forum can only be reinstated through actions of the Scottish Parliament and that the appropriate approach to the Scottish Parliament is by way of a public petition. I have also contacted my constituency MSP who advised that if I submit a public petition calling for the reinstatement of the Scottish Civic Forum he will give it his support.

Petition background information

The Scottish Civic Forum was set up in 1999 as part of an initiative to comply with one of the Scottish Parliament's founding principles, namely, that power should be shared among the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and the people of Scotland.

However, the Parliament placed a funding restriction on the Forum with the expectation that by 2005 the Forum would have succeeded in attracting the bulk of the funds which it required to continue operating from other sources.

In the event, the Forum was unable to meet the Parliament's funding expectations for it and was forced to request further financial support from the Parliament. Despite that request and the best efforts of a number of MSPs to persuade the Parliament to afford the Forum the funds it required to continue operating, the Parliament refused to grant the requested financial support.

Thus in 2005 the Scottish Civic Forum found itself without the funds to continue operating and had to close its doors some six years after it opened them. Following the demise of the Scottish Civic Forum, two public petitions seeking to re-secure its former public funding were lodged and considered by the Public Petitions Committee. These petitions were closed without the requested funding being secured.

However, from speaking to the general public, it would seem that most Scots outside of

the Parliament were never aware that such a thing as the Scottish Civic Forum ever existed, much less that it could be reinstated.

Also, much has changed in the political climate of Scotland over the last decade. The people have clearly found a new passion for their rightful involvement in the affairs of their country and are looking for ways to employ their energies in building the fair, inclusive and prosperous country which everyone with Scotland's interests at heart wants.

Equally clear is that there are presently deep divisions among the people, which will have to be overcome before we can get down to the serious work of building the Scotland of our aspirations - since that will undoubtedly require us all to work together.

It therefore follows that we need a way to come together – even with people holding very different views from our own – to find our common ground; and once we have found that common ground, to then decide how we can proceed to build this country into something much better than it is now.

In short, we need a national forum which is accessible to everyone in Scotland; which is under the control of the people of Scotland; which sets its own agendas; which is free to devolve in whatever way best allows it to serve the needs and aspirations of our country and our society; which cooperates with and receives the cooperation of the Scottish Parliament and Government; and which receives the funding it needs in order to function to its fullest capacity from the public funds of the people of Scotland.

I therefore propose that a reinstated Scottish Civic Form with adequate funding and powers will best provide the means whereby all of our people who wish to and are able to can come together to build the Scotland of our dreams.

The people of Scotland have placed our trust in the Scottish Parliament. I now call on the Members of Scottish Parliament to show their faith in the wisdom and fairness of the Scottish people and grant this petition.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01587>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

27 / 11 / 2015

Comments to stimulate online discussion

It is clear that there is presently an urgent need for some means, which allows the people of this country to come together to pull our energies and mental resources in

order to find solutions to the problems which face our country. I know of no such means in existence today. The Scottish Civic Forum, under the control of the people of Scotland, could set its own agenda, devolve as circumstances require, be a credit to the people and greatly assist the Scottish Parliament in its work. It just needs the Scottish Parliament to show the same faith in the people as the people have shown in it.