



# 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 event 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 is taking place this year and will culminate in an event from 6-8th November 2014 in Oban. In two years time 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 geographic 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.

