

CSPP Summary of Events January – June 2015

Details of events hosted by the CSPP in the first six months of 2015, with links given to related reports and information.

An Evening in Conversation with David Torrance

On Thursday 18th June 2015 the Centre for Scottish Public Policy held an evening in conversation with writer and broadcaster David Torrance.

The event took place in the convivial atmosphere of Henderson's at St. John's in Edinburgh, with a diverse audience attending. Those who came along were able to ask David about his analysis of political developments and the current constitutional debate in Scotland, as well as giving their own views and thoughts on the topics raised.

You can read a short report of the evening in multimedia format on [Storify here](#).

Women in Technology

On Thursday 11 June the Centre for Scottish Public Policy held an event with Microsoft Scotland about 'Women in Technology', which focused on how to encourage more women to pursue careers in both Information Technology and the wider STEM areas. This took place in Microsoft's Edinburgh office, and saw the participation of stakeholders from various organisations and sectors concerned with the issue.

The event was attended by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training, who heard directly from girls and young women pursuing or considering careers in IT. In addition, the occasion was marked by Microsoft formally signing up to the Scottish Government's [Business Pledge](#), which requires employers to pay the Living Wage, among other conditions.

You can read the full report of the day on [Storify here](#).

Community Empowerment Bill

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, set to launch in June 2015, has implications for local government, service providers, community groups and third sector organisations.

On Tuesday 24th March the CSPP and PAS (Planning Aid for Scotland) held a forum in Edinburgh with members and stakeholder organisations to discuss the proposed legislation. The forum acted as an initial awareness-raising meeting to share views on the Bill, what it could achieve, and the Bill's implementation. We're now all talking about further ideas to support a potentially very exciting piece of legislation.

Scottish Land Reform: a conversation with Andy Wightman

On 24 February at Henderson's in Edinburgh the CSPP hosted a conversation on Scottish land reform with Andy Wightman, author of *The Poor Had No Lawyers*.

It was a well attended and interesting event examining land ownership and land reform, with Andy Wightman pointing to the lack of a national land policy in Scotland and the need for local authorities to know what land they own.

The diverse audience asked a range of questions on community land rights, the role of local authorities and more. The evening was received with positive feedback, with one audience member later tweeting, "Thanks to CSPP Scotland and Andy Wightman for a great discussion event last night on Land Reform. Fascinating speech and great Q&A session".

The CSPP continues to examine the issue of land reform in Scotland, bringing together stakeholders to evaluate the potential of the proposed [Community Empowerment Bill](#), which includes provisions for the community's right to buy important local land and buildings for community development.

Scottish Home Rule: a conversation with Margaret Smith and Ben Thomson

On 20 January in Edinburgh the CSPP hosted an evening with members of the Campaign for Scottish Home Rule to discuss the meaning of Home Rule and the prospects for such constitutional arrangement.

Invited speakers Margaret Smith (Director of Caledonian Public Affairs and former three term Liberal Democrat MSP) and Ben Thomson (Chair, Reform Scotland) described the notion of Home Rule to audience members, which was followed by a wide ranging discussion on issues such as the challenges of fiscal responsibility and funding public services, the question of which further powers should be devolved to Scotland, and wider international implications of greater autonomy for Scotland.

The Campaign for Scottish Home Rule highlighted the latter issue in the discussion, tweeting, "Is this the end of the nation state? The next generation acts global, but want local control".

Following the discussion, you can read our chair Richard Kerley's [blog post](#) examining the issue of federalism in the UK.