

# **Festival of Politics at Holyrood next month**

The Scottish Parliament will host the Festival of Politics next month from 10 to 13 October, and will become the first parliament to host a recording of the BBC's Question Time.

The other parts of the programme include debate, music, comedy and film with Dame Margaret Hodge, historian Professor Emeritus Sir Tom Devine OBE, Professor Mary Beard and Lord Michael Heseltine all taking part.



Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh is pictured with an oversized copy of the 2018 Festival of Politics Programme in the debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh. Photo – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

Topics will include Brexit, technology, foodbanks, disability and housing with the anniversary of the end of the First World War being noted along with suffragettes and the #metoo campaign.



Speaking as the Festival's programme was launched, the Presiding Officer the Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP said:  
"The Festival of Politics is an opportunity for Parliament to really open its doors to the people of Scotland so they too can debate the big issues, while sitting in the heart of Scotland's democracy.

"This is our most ambitious programme yet featuring award-winning authors and academics such as Professor Mary Beard and Darren McGarvey, political grandees Lord Michael Heseltine and Dame Margaret Hodge MP, and poets such as Ben Okri. There is something which will appeal to everyone.

"This year as part of the Festival of Politics, we will also become the first UK legislature to host the BBC's flagship political programme, Question Time, from our Debating Chamber. For many fans of the show this will be the final opportunity to come and watch David Dimbleby in the chair of this long running and much loved political programme."

This year's Festival will also feature two thought-provoking exhibitions. The original artwork from the pioneering *We Shall Fight Until We Win* graphic novel which celebrates women gaining the vote in the UK will be on display. This will be displayed beside *Never Such Innocence* a powerful collection of artwork and poetry created by school children in response to the First World War.

Events include:

#### **Wednesday 10 October**

##### **Brexit – Armageddon or Miracle?**

15.45 – 17.15, £6.00/£4.00

On 29 March 2019 the UK will leave the EU, ending 46 years of membership. What will the repercussions be on trade, investment, immigration, employment and security? Join our chair Rachel Sylvester, The Times, and panellists Professor Graham Gudgin, Briefings for Brexit; Professor Nicola McEwen, University of Edinburgh; and Dr Kirsty Hughes, Director of the Scottish Centre on European Relations, to debate the best and worst-case outcomes.

##### **In Conversation with Lord Michael Heseltine**

18:00 -19:30, £8.00/£6.00

**Lord Michael Heseltine** is often accorded the title, Conservative grandee, reflecting a distinguished career at the heart of politics and a party he served for 35 years as MP, including ministerial office in the governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, not least as Deputy Prime Minister. Join Lord Heseltine in conversation with the **Presiding Officer** as they discuss a life at Westminster as President of the Board of Trade, Defence Minister; champion of urban renewal and as arch critic of Brexit, having described the 2016 Referendum result as – "the greatest constitutional crisis of modern times." A must for any fan of politics.

#### **Thursday 11 October**

##### **The NHS at 70 – Unsustainable?**

17.00 – 18.30, £6.00/£4.00

The NHS is 70 years old. Join our panellists Gavin Francis, GP and author; Sue Cameron, broadcaster; Theresa Fyffe, Director, Royal College of Nursing Scotland; and Helen Puttick, The Times, to discuss whether Bevan and Beveridge's vision of the NHS has stood the test of time or is this jewel of the welfare state en route to becoming an unsustainable behemoth. Is it possible to take the politics out of universal access to healthcare and put patient care and outcomes at the top of the health agenda? In partnership with The Open University in Scotland

##### **In Conversation with Ben Okri**

20:00 – 21:30, £8.00/£6.00

The Booker Prize winning novelist of *The Famished Road* and poet **Ben Okri's** latest publication *Rise Like Lions: Poetry for the Many*, could not be more timely. Having penned his own devastating eulogy, *Grenfell Tower June 2017* for the victims of the tragedy, Okri has selected 100 poems from around the world – from Bob Marley to Marvin Gaye and Shakespeare – celebrating the many voices of politics, from polemics and rallying cries to lyrics and meditations. Join the **Presiding Officer** and Ben Okri to discuss the need for political poems and their impact on ideas, vision, protest, change and truth.

#### **BBC Question Time**

The BBC's flagship political debate programme, Question Time, will be held in the Debating Chamber of the Scottish Parliament. This is the first time the programme has come from the main chamber of a UK parliament. Chaired by David Dimbleby, a panel of politicians, commentators and other guests will debate the issues of the week with an audience drawn from the local area.

If you would like to be in the audience or if you have any questions about the timing for appearing in the audience please direct all enquiries to BBC Question Time. You can apply via the Question Time website <https://bbc.in/2y5ldBx> or contact them by phone on 0330 123 9988.

#### **Friday 12 October**

##### **In Conversation with Dame Margaret Hodge MP**

15:00 – 16:30, £8.00/£6.00

Despite boasting a 40-year political career in local and national government, it could be argued that **Dame Margaret Hodge** really came to public prominence in 2010 as the fearsome Chair of the Public Accounts Committee overseeing £750 billion of public expenditure annually. Join the **Presiding Officer** and Dame Margaret Hodge to discuss her book, *Called to Account: How Corporate Bad Behaviour and Government Waste Combine to Cost Us Millions*, and her Committee's dogged pursuit of transparency and accountability in grilling everyone from corporate giants Amazon, Starbucks and Google to civil servants and HMRC. Dame Hodge will also discuss her life in politics and her experience of anti-Semitism both in and outside of the Labour Party.

##### **A Forgotten History: The Scottish Clearances**

17:30 – 19:00, £8.00/£6.00

Historian **Sir Tom Devine's** ground-breaking new book *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed (1600-1900)* is a unique and challenging reinterpretation of one of the most controversial subjects in Scottish history – The Clearances. Join Chair **Presiding Officer** and **Professor Emeritus Sir Tom Devine OBE** as they discuss fresh perspectives on the many men, women and children affected by The Clearances. Sir Tom claims this is his most ambitious and challenging project in Scottish history to date. Come and learn why the book threatens to undermine some of the nation's most cherished orthodoxies about its past.

##### **In Conversation with Darren McGarvey aka Loki**

20:00 – 21:30, £8.00/£6.00

**Darren McGarvey**, aka **LOKI**, is a writer, performer, community activist and columnist. His book *Poverty Safari*, which recently won the prestigious Orwell Prize, is described by Irvine Welsh as, "an intellectual and spiritual rehab manual for the progressive left," and McGarvey's views are being sought on everything from BBC *Question Time* to *The Guardian* and rapper-in-residence at Police Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit. Join Darren and the **Presiding Officer** to discuss the "industry of deprivation"; how to achieve political representation for the unrepresented and working-class masculinity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as explored in McGarvey's new album *Trigger Warning*. This will be an energising mental-flossing from one of Scotland's most inspiring commentators. In partnership with The Open University in Scotland

#### **Saturday 13 October**

##### **In Conversation with Professor Mary Beard**

13:30 – 15:00, £8.00/£6.00

She is the doyenne of classical scholars; fond of Anglo-Saxon expletives and a feminist to her bones. **Professor Mary Beard** is the academic who wrote and presented on the BBC *Civilisations* series; authored the globally best-selling book *Women and Power* and is the poster woman for every opinionated, outspoken and fan who recognises misogyny did not cease post the ancient world. Join the **Presiding Officer** and Professor Mary Beard to discuss her trajectory from scholar to public combatant in febrile debates on everything from #MeToo; to no-platforming and Pompeii; in this unmissable exhilarating event.

##### **Future of Public Broadcasting Service**

13.30 – 15.00, £6.00/£4.00

Does the rise of streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon mark the end of TV as we know it, or is public service broadcasting needed now more than ever? Join chair Torin Douglas, former BBC media correspondent and panellists including Andrew Billen, The Times; and Professor James Bennett, Royal Holloway University of London, to discuss if and how public service broadcasting can adapt to meet the needs of an increasingly digital world. In partnership with BBC Scotland

##### **Programme availability and tickets**

- Tickets are now on sale online via [www.parliament.scot/festival](http://www.parliament.scot/festival)
- A limited number of tickets are available via the Scottish Parliament in person and via telephone on 0131 348 5200.
- Full details of the festival programme are available from [www.parliament.scot/festival](http://www.parliament.scot/festival)
- Hard copies of the programme are available from most Waterstones and Blackwells bookstores.







Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh Photo – Andrew Cowan/Scottish  
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