

Festival of Politics begins later today

The Festival of Politics opens at Holyrood promising a few days of films, talks and some music.

With more events taking place than ever before, this year's Festival will include talks from Professor Mary Beard, Lord Michael Heseltine and Dame Margaret Hodge MP as well as Sir Tom Devine OBE, Orwell prize winning author Darren McGarvey and poet and author Ben Okri.

Running from today until Saturday 13 October 2018, the Festival programme explores politics, history and current affairs and takes a look at the issues that face society today. Events that will explore the politics around foodbanks, disability and housing will take place alongside those exploring political anniversaries and movements such as the end of the First World War, suffragettes and the #Metoo campaign.

The Parliament will also become the first UK legislature to host the BBC's flagship political debate programme, Question Time, when it broadcasts from the unique setting of the Debating Chamber tomorrow night.



Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh is pictured with an oversized copy of the 2018 Festival of politics Photo- Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

The Presiding Officer Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP said: “This year sees the most packed Festival of Programme yet. Not only will the Festival welcome BBC Question Time, but we also have a huge programme of events and there really is something for everyone.

“The Festival of Politics is where we open the doors of the Parliament to allow everyone to get involved and have their say in the heart of Scottish politics. But it is about more than just politics. There is history, culture and poetry as well as art, music and dance in the Festival Café Bar.

“I am looking forward to welcoming more people than ever before as they come to see events in their Parliament.”

Once again, the Festival Café Bar will see a fantastic programme of music, dance and comedy taking place. From Festival favourites, Folksville bringing their own brand of acoustic beats to Dundee’s Dee Ukes who will delight the audience with their ukulele sounds.

The Festival takes place from Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 October.

Entry to the Festival Café Bar is FREE.

Full programme details can be found at www.parliament.scot/festival

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**, journalist and 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** and **Professor Stana Nenadic**, University of Edinburgh 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,” he was rapper-in-residence at Police Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit and McGarvey's views are being sought on everything from BBC *Question Time* to *The Guardian*. 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 21st century, as explored in McGarvey's new album *Trigger Warning*. Join us for 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