

Good evening everyone I hope you're all well, as many of you are aware my name is Sandy Bond and I'm a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament for Moray as well as a co-opted member of Lennox Community Council. I'm here to talk to you a bit about the Scottish Youth Parliament, Moray youth matters and the ways in which I hope to get young people involved with the decision-making in the area and most especially of course with the community councils.

The Scottish Youth Parliament of which I am the member for Moray has two members for all Scottish constituency areas. It is usually the case that we meet three times a year at sittings, the location of these sittings varies each time, although during every term the membership will visit the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood. Unfortunately since last March when we were meant to visit Orkney, all sittings have been online. This has meant missing soon to be 4 sittings in person which although detracting from our experience as msyp's by no means detracts from the work that syp as a whole is doing.

Much in the same way as parliament and government makes resolutions, bills, acts and laws; so the Scottish youth parliament puts forward motions. These can be of two types either an action motion or an opinion motion the former of which as you may have guessed will have stated the actions that it proposes to take if the motion is passed; an opinion motion is simply a way in which the Scottish youth parliament can make a stance on an issue and voice any concerns that it has in an official manner. As well as this the committees in the Scottish Youth Parliament can make their own motions, this allows them to take action pertaining to the topics covered in the committee's remit. All of these motion types only become policy if they are passed by the membership; this also means that there needs to be a majority of constituents in favour of the motion. As well as this, every 5 years we release a Manifesto, this will be made up of things that young people want to see achieved or changed by the government following extensive consultation. The manifesto is released around election time so that the incoming government will be able to see what young people want and act on it from day 1. This allows us to work both as a pressure group and an advisory body to both the Scottish and Westminster Parliament. The work of the Scottish Youth Parliament has helped to bring about significant change: in the past it has pushed the Scottish parliament to give 16 year olds the vote; more recently we've pushed for the incorporation of the UNCRC in Scots law as well as having a significant part in the Free Period Products for all bill which became law earlier this year.

The Scottish Youth Parliament is a Scotland wide organisation however, so at a more local level in Moray we have the Moray Youth Matters group. The Group acts as a youth council and focuses on issues it notes as being ones of importance in the area. Having only officially started in January of last year it hasn't been able to do a great deal of work and unfortunately has lost some members, on the other hand it is now left with members that are devoted to working hard in the group. In the coming year the group hopes to be able to expand its membership and achieve progress for young people in areas including mental health and travel. Travel being their current focus they are presently working with Transport Scotland and YoungScot to see about discounted rates for YoungScot card holders on buses in the area. This they hope will mean young people can travel with greater ease in the area when the restrictions allow. This group also gives me another point of consultation in order to give me a fuller view of the opinions young people throughout moray hold on an issue.

I feel however that there are a great number of people who have issues with the way things are in the area's they live and in those two organisations there are very limited spaces. I also believe that many people are unaware of the other ways in which they can have an impact on their local area - most particularly Community Councils. Already I'm pleased to say I've managed to tell another young person of the Community Councils and they have already joined Speyside. I'm hoping that should there be any lack of numbers in the Community Councils in the coming months, I'll be able to get more young people involved. I believe last month that Dyke Community Council was low in members so I may well be in contact with you shortly if this is still the case. Otherwise though, with it coming up to election time then I'll be trying to promote the Community Councils through the Schools in the hope of getting some more young people involved. I am pleased to say that the young person that has joined Speyside CC has said of their experience so far, "It has opened their eyes on what happens in the community and how everyone all works together to make things happen" and having spoken to some of the other members I believe the different perspective she holds on local issues has been appreciated.