

Parliament Handbook

Clan MacLeod Parliament 2023

Parliament week in Dunvegan 22-29 July 2023



Welcome!

Along with other MacLeods, you are about to begin a fascinating adventure in Scotland. You will have an opportunity to explore your heritage, visit places of renowned natural beauty, and greet both old and new friends.

Parliament is an event run by volunteers - by MacLeods for MacLeods. There is a great deal of preparation and many daily chores required to make it run smoothly. We are constantly learning how to do new things, and how to do old things better. Parliament also involves many local businesses and members of the island and rural communities. We are therefore very grateful if you are able to offer assistance in any way - when asked or not! - and we hope you will be understanding and patient when necessary.

What's in this booklet?

This booklet includes general information that will help you get ready for your trip to Scotland, and can be downloaded from the Associated Clan MacLeod Societies' website for Parliament: <https://clanmacleod.org/parliament/parliament-2023/parliament-handbook/> You will also have been emailed this Handbook as part of your Parliament registration process. We are trying to limit the use of world's natural resources by not printing a copy of the handbook for everyone, but we will have a few spare hard copies available at Parliament. We hope that the information you find here will demystify the various activities at Parliament and help make them more enjoyable.

If you have any questions, please email Parliament Organiser Rory McLeod at rmcleod83@gmail.com / parliament@clanmacleod.org

1. WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO AT PARLIAMENT

1.1 Why is there a Parliament?

Once upon a time, Dame Flora - our great Chief of the MacLeods - invited Clansfolk from all over the world to gather at Dunvegan for a “Parliament”, to talk about the Clan. At that first Parliament in 1956, the gathering was small and included only a speaker and a few country delegates. The early Parliaments were held once every three years. Later, attendance at Parliament grew to include hundreds of people, and Clan Societies were established representing several more countries. Parliament is now held every four years in Dunvegan, with interim gatherings in North America and the Pacific.

Parliament is a very busy time for many of us. There are formal activities to engage the larger number of people attending, as well as many ad hoc get-togethers and mini-reunions.

The purpose of this section of the booklet is to tap the knowledge of the Wise Ones and share the origins of some of the events on this year’s Parliament programme. It is not a substitute for the many fine books and pamphlets that chronicle the history of the Clan Societies, MacLeod lore, or Parliament itself. And you should never hesitate to ask questions of your fellow Clansfolk!

Remember that once upon a time, we all came to Parliament for the first time. We have all quietly worried how well we would dance at the ceilidh, forgot how to spell Borreraig, got lost on the way to Orbst, or suddenly found ourselves standing shock-still on the main street of Dunvegan, staring in awe at the MacLeod Tables. So, if you feel a little overwhelmed, you have joined a fine tradition!

1.2 Who chooses the activities?

While business activities at Parliament are centred on issues brought forward by our National and Regional Councils, much of the “work” at Parliament is dedicated to having fun and meeting fellow MacLeods from all over the world. Activities can be recommended or requested by anyone, but it is up to the Parliament Coordinator – with the support of the ACMS Council and many volunteers – to figure out how to fit it all in. In general, the activities at Parliament in Dunvegan are chosen because they take us to sites of historic significance to the Clan MacLeod, they allow us to enjoy places of natural beauty, or they have been popular events at previous Parliaments. Some Parliaments include an additional excursion to other MacLeod lands, as did our pre-Parliament visits to Lewis and Harris in 2006 and 2018, and Assynt in 2010. This year there will have been a new venue for a Pre-Parliament trip - Mull and Iona - led by Kevin Tolmie.

1.3 What's On and Where to Go!

1.3.1 THE PROGRAMME

The Parliament Programme for 2023 is attached separately to this document but a few of the daily highlights include

Saturday - Cheese and Wine Reception Hosted by the CMS England

Sunday - Welcome Lunch and "Official" opening of Parliament#

Monday - The Hebridean Baker (with a little help from the Isle of Harris Distillery) and the Clan Ceilidh

Tuesday - DNA Workshop and a presentation by the Isle of Harris Distillery. Silent Auction

Wednesday - Raasay Day and Quiz Night

Thursday - Local Craft Fair and Bratwurst and Bier on Pier

Friday - MacLeod's Tables expedition and Clan Ball

All events are held at the Village Hall in Dunvegan unless otherwise noted and the Village Hall is the centre of operations for Parliament. We will post a more detailed daily programme on the Notice Boards in the Hall, but if you aren't sure what is happening, please do ask. There will be plenty of folk who will have a good idea what is happening and you can even try emailing parliament@clanmacleod.org

One thing that we are restricted on this time around is coach tours to various places of interest on the island. The only large-scale bus operator in the area has now picked up lucrative contracts to assist cruise companies with land-based transfers, which has meant that the availability of coaches is severely compromised in comparison with previous years. However, we do have one minibus that could be used, on request, to facilitate visits to various locations. Please do contact Rory McLeod on parliament@clanmacleod.org if this might be of interest.

The Village Hall will be open each evening for socialising and the bar will be open each night until 11pm. Please note that sadly Dunvegan does not have a Public House at the moment, though most restaurants do have alcohol licences for drinking with meals.

1.3.2 CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

There will be events for children based at the hall, together with excursions to local places of interest. The Children's Programme will be weather dependant to some extent, but we would hope to include visits to the Coral Beaches, Neist Point and Bharcasaig amongst others. We should also be able to accommodate any "special requests" for visits to particular places, so please do get your thinking caps on. We will meet together in the Village Hall on the Monday morning and decide between us what activities we would like to do.

1.3.3 PLACES OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CLAN MACLEOD

1.3.4 *Borreraig*

The MacCrimmons are the hereditary pipers to the Chiefs of the Clan MacLeod. Many years ago, there was a college of piping at Borreraig, where the MacCrimmons and others were trained. It took many years of study and practice to master the pipes. (It still does!) Some stones from the old buildings can still be found, marking the ruin of the original school. In the 1930s, a large stone cairn was erected to commemorate the cultural contributions of the MacCrimmons.

If you choose to visit the cairn at Borreraig, you should acknowledge the long relationship between the MacLeods and the MacCrimmons. A trip to Borreraig gives you a wonderful opportunity to enjoy both the spectacular views across Loch Dunvegan. Please do be careful when visiting the Borreraig Cairn - the path is uneven and there are fences to cross. It is a journey not for the faint-hearted but a very rewarding one.

To access the cairn at Borreraig you need to follow the B884 from Dunvegan towards Glendale. You'll drive through a number of small townships on the way but once you have passed through Colbost there will be a turning to your right signposted Husabost, Borreraig and Galtrigill. Once on this very narrow single-track road you will travel approximately 2½ miles or 4 km to arrive at Borreraig. If you are in a car you will need to park at the side of the road and walk the remaining 200 metres to the Cairn, crossing fences and some boggy terrain. Please note that the walk to the Cairn can be difficult for those with mobility issues.

1.3.5 *Harris and Lewis*

The Outer Hebrides were a stronghold for much of the Clan MacLeod for centuries. Our pre-Parliament trip in 2018 visited places of historical significance to the Clan and its chiefs, as well as the amazing modern business and arts communities of today.

1.3.6 *Isle of Raasay*

The Macleods of Raasay have their own Chief, John Macleod who resides in

Tasmania. Raasay has a fascinating history of its own, in some ways typical of a smaller Scottish island, but has been home to a number of unique industries and individuals. Our day-long Raasay visit is traditionally one of Parliament's most popular activities. A separate handbook for activities on Raasay is going to be produced so that you know what is happening.

1.3.7 The Norman Magnus Hall and Dame Flora Lounge

When Norman Magnus was Chief, he had the original Village Hall erected in 1904 and gave it to the community. It was subsequently expanded in 1985 by Dunvegan residents to include the Sports Hall, parking, public toilets, and other facilities.

Within the present Village Hall, there is a room dedicated to the memory of Dame Flora. After she passed away in 1976, the ACMS paid to have this room built, furnished, and decorated. Make sure you visit this lovely memorial.

1.3.8 Orbost

Orbost is traditionally "MacLeod territory," and is a great example of contemporary, mixed-use businesses in rural Scotland. Part of the area includes the Orbost Estate, land owned by the local government and leased to private citizens. There are several MacLeod-themed projects to see here, including the "Emigration Wall" using stones brought back to Skye by the descendants of Scottish emigrants scattered overseas. Orbost is some 3 miles or 5km south of Dunvegan on the minor road which can be reached from the B884 to Glendale. It is the first turning on the right if you take the B884 from Dunvegan. Orbost also offers a great starting point for the walk to Bharcasaig Beach and the MacLeod's Maidens beyond.

1.3.9 St. Kilda

St. Kilda is a haunting and remote island archipelago nearly 40 miles northwest of other islands in the Outer Hebrides. It has been inhabited by human beings for over 2,000 years but is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site for both its cultural and natural qualities. Today it is owned by Scottish Natural Heritage, but for many years it belonged to the Chief of the MacLeods. St. Kilda has a strong presence in MacLeod history and lore.

1.3.10 Climbing MacLeod's Tables

"Just do it" -- experience the distinctive Skye terrain and memorable views. Not necessarily for the faint hearted, and doing both Tables in one can be a serious undertaking in poor weather.

1.3.11 Waternish, Trotternish, Duirinish, Uiginish, Minginish...

In Norse, "nish" or "ness" means headland. The "nishes" of Skye form the spreading wings of the island. Each has a slightly different character. We would strongly recommend that you consider a self-guided tour of one or more of these peninsulas. There

are MacLeod connections in most corners of North Skye but particular highlights include:

1.3.12 Coral Beaches

The Coral Beaches are famous for their special "sand", which is not really sand at all. Rather, it is made of tiny bits of crushed coral, thousands of miles away from tropical waters. Legend says that if you can count 12 little pink cowrie shells on the beaches, it means you will return to Skye within a year. (But please leave them on the beach for the next shell seeker!) The Coral Beaches are situated north of Dunvegan at Claigan. Continue along the A850 past Dunvegan Castle for approximately 3½ miles (6km) until you reach the obvious car park. Please do note that the walk from the car park to the Beaches is approximately 1 mile (2km) on a rough track, requiring sensible footwear. Please also note that the Coral Beaches can be extremely popular and the car park can be very busy. Please do park with consideration for others and local residents - please don't block any road or park in passing places.

1.3.13 Dinosaur Fossils at Staffin

A definite must - if you have the time - is a trip to see the fossilised dinosaur footprints and other remains around Staffin. All you need to know can be found at the Staffin Dinosaur Museum - staffindinosaurmuseum.com. We would recommend booking in advance if you wanted to go to the museum.

1.3.14 MacLeod's Maidens

A fairly strenuous and challenging walk from Bharcasaig on the Orbst Estate, but very rewarding, particularly in good weather, with great views around Skye and to the Outer Hebrides. You basically follow the path that heads South from Bharcasaig Bay. Altogether the walk is approximately 9 miles or 14 kilometres, so you should allow plenty of time. We would also recommend a map, a compass, wet weather clothing and midge repellent!

1.3.15 Trumpan Church

The approximate site of the Battle of the Spoiled Dyke in 1578, Trumpan, on the Waternish Peninsula is a very significant landmark in the history of the Clan. The church here is now ruined, but also well preserved, and well worth a visit. There are other landmarks worth visiting on the Peninsula, notably the village of Stein, with its famous (and very busy) Inn and Skyeskyns, where you can learn about the process of making sheepskin rugs.

1.3.16 Fairy Bridge

Another very significant landmark for MacLeods, the Fairy Bridge is situated some 5 miles from Dunvegan where the B886 Waternish road meets the A850 - the main road between Dunvegan and Portree. Definitely worth a visit to sit where the Faeries sat.

1.3.17 *Dunvegan Castle*

It goes without saying that you should include a visit to Dunvegan Castle during Parliament. You will be allowed free entry on production of your name badge, so please do have it with you. There will also be a limited number of personalised MacLeod Tours that you can sign up to - sadly the Castle does not have the capacity to allow everyone onto “MacLeod only” tours, but please do feel free to join in a general tour one afternoon perhaps.

1.3.18 POPULAR CELEBRATIONS AT PARLIAMENT

Because of the increasing number of people at Parliament, organised activities are included each evening, but they should not get in the way of spending time with friends.

1.3.19 *Silent Auction*

The Silent Auction – to which anyone is most welcome to make a donation – is our major fundraiser at Parliament. The money raised is used to get the next Parliament (2026!) off the ground. The articles available are typically Clan-themed goods, and can range from homemade crafts to a great find at a local salvage store. **Please remember to bring your donations with you!**

1.3.20 *Evening ceilidhs*

“Ceilidh” (pronounced “KAY-lee”) is a Gaelic word that means “visit” or house party. Ceilidhs are informal musical events popular throughout Scotland - and the rest of the world. At Parliament, Clan members are warmly invited to share their talents and perform traditional and reinterpreted works. Often, we have a new song or story composed just for MacLeods. The evening will also be filled with live music and dancing and if you would like to wear any tartan you own this is an ideal opportunity.

1.3.21 *North Room Group or “NRG”*

A Young People's Clan Parliament was introduced at the fourth Clan MacLeod Parliament in 1965. Eighteen young MacLeods representing six countries met in the North Room of the Castle, and subsequently became called the “North Room Group” - or “NRG”, and now sometimes “Energy”. Since the 1970s, NRG have gathered during the week before Parliament to undertake a project for the Castle estate, community organisations, or for Parliament itself. This year, logistics of accommodation and projects have meant that a pre-Parliament week for NRG has not been possible. We are looking for volunteers to take this forward and get an NRG project back onto the agenda for 2026

1.3.22 *Bratwurst and Bier on the Pier*

What has now become one of the most popular events at Parliament is the

barbecue hosted by CMS Germany at the old pier outside the Laundry Cottage directly below Dunvegan Castle. There will obviously be a German flavour to this event - Bratwurst rather than burgers and Bier rather than Beer. And of course, the most important thing - Great Company!

2. TRAVEL TIPS

2.1.1 ACCOMMODATION

It is your responsibility to make your own accommodation arrangements at the establishment of your choice in the Dunvegan area. Please note that spots in and near the village fill up quickly in a Parliament year. If you need help, we recommend that you use Visit Scotland online at www.visitscotland.com. VisitScotland also operates information centres (“iCentres”) throughout the country, where you can get assistance accessing tourist attractions, travel connections, and accommodation. The Skye iCentre can be found in [Portree](#).

2.1.2 DRIVING IN SCOTLAND, AND AROUND SKYE

Many of the roads on Skye are “single track” roads, which are only wide enough for a single vehicle to travel. On these single-track roads there are frequent “passing places”, extra sections of wider road that allow one vehicle to pause while the other vehicle goes by. The person who first encounters the passing place closest to the point where the cars would otherwise meet is generally the one to wait. If the passing place is not on your side of the road, stop opposite it (don’t cross the road to the passing place). A nod of the head and a wave between the drivers of the passing vehicles is customary. It is also customary for a driver facing downhill to wait for a driver coming uphill. Also remember that you should only pass bicycles at passing places if it is safe to do so.

Outside of the villages, the roads are not well lit at night. It is important to take extra care when driving after dark. In general, it’s a good idea to remind yourself to watch for unexpected behaviour by others – especially fellow tourists – either on foot or in cars. And remember to drive on the left.

We encourage all Parliamentarians to utilize coach travel options provided by Clan MacLeod where possible or car share with others.

Dunvegan Area

Points of Interest



North Skye

Points of Interest



25-6-2023

2.2 Ferry use during Parliament

The cost of scheduled ferry tickets for the trip to Raasay is included in your Dunvegan registration. You will receive the tickets when you get your badge in Dunvegan. We advise that everyone visiting should travel as foot passengers to avoid congestion on the Island.

If you are driving yourself to Skye, note that the big bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh is now toll free. However, as a scenic alternative you can take the ferry from Glenelg to Skye. The Glenelg ferry is an old-fashioned, hand turned ferry owned by the community, and it was recently featured in the major motion picture “Made of Honor.” More information is available at skyeferry.co.uk.

3. ETIQUETTE AND CULTURAL GUIDE

3.1 All about you

3.1.1 Name tags

Remember to wear your name badge at all times. Although you may be well-known at home or within your national Clan Society, there are many people around the world who have not had the pleasure of meeting you yet.

3.1.2 Parliament “dress code”

Most Parliament activities require functional and not glamorous clothing. The village setting is informal, and the outdoor activities are best enjoyed with casual clothing. Ladies may wear skirts or slacks / trousers as they prefer. Kilts and tartan are encouraged at any time, dressed up or dressed down. Dressing up a bit for the ceilidhs is also encouraged, but what you wear doesn’t matter very much as long as you are willing to get up and dance! The main thing is that everyone feels comfortable. Please see below a very useful tip!

Kilt Packing Tip

For those packing a kilt, an easy way to pack it so it does not take up so much room is to roll it. A kilt roll carrier is a good investment, and these can easily be purchased from the likes of Amazon. You may even be able to take this as carry on, on the plane.



3.2 Getting around

3.2.1 *Transportation to and from events - please share transport where you can*

Minibuses can be provided for transportation to and from major Parliament events, though most are located at Dunvegan Village Hall. Skye's narrow roads cannot accommodate many private automobiles that may be carrying only one or two people; we would like to reduce pollution and consumption of fuel resources; parking is always limited; and an excess of private cars can impair the movement of fire and medical emergency vehicles. So please, plan to share transport whenever possible and try to be considerate.

3.3 Softening our footprint on local businesses

While you will find that local establishments welcome our business, it is helpful to remember that this is already a hectic time of year for our hosts, and Parliament sometimes introduces additional complications. We can distinguish ourselves by being just a little bit more aware and considerate of the effort that the local Scottish communities make to accommodate the invasion of MacLeods!

Please note that there are a number of local businesses that have contributed to our events. Please patronise these businesses whenever possible – either in 2023, or perhaps on a future visit of your own to Scotland - details will be provided in your welcome packs.

3.3.1 *Dinner for two... or twelve?*

Dinner reservations are strongly recommended during Parliament week. Please be prompt so your restaurant can be of service to as many of your fellow Clansfolk as possible.

Also, please keep the size of your party down to the number of folks for whom you made the reservation and with whom you originally arrived. You may be tempted to ask other friends to join you as they later enter the restaurant, but this can create a service nightmare for establishments with limited seating and smaller kitchens. In a less busy time, this might be less of a problem, but during Parliament week it can create a real burden for kitchen and wait staff. We want to remain on good terms with our local friends.

3.4 Weather

Usually, dress for “cool summer” weather is appropriate in Scotland at this time of year. Waterproof (or easily dried) comfortable shoes and outerwear that will also stand up to the wind are good to have. The predicted temperature during Parliament is about 55-60°F or 12-16°C, but we have had genuine heat waves during Parliament 2006 and 2014!

Be happily prepared for long summer evenings and fantastic sunsets.

3.5 Local flora and fauna

3.5.1 Plants

In general, there are no dangerous plants to avoid on Skye, although anyone who has been roughed up by a bunch of prickly thistles might disagree. Do not consume wild berries or other plants unless you are knowledgeable about their genus and any possible treatment with pesticides.

3.5.2 On four legs

Sheep rule. Skye is a rural community with a strong agricultural component. There are many areas where the sheep roam without benefit of fences. This means that our woolly friends may be travelling on, crossing, or even napping on the pavement. You may encounter sheep day or night, so be mindful of their presence. They generally will scatter to get out of your way. Pheasants, while delicious, can also behave erratically or without regard to their own safety when approached on the road. Anything can happen.

However, there is an especially colourful group of cattle whom you may encounter wandering the Duirinish peninsula, the “Glendale Coo”. They barely acknowledge the presence of the road surface or the small cars of Britain, over which a few of them tower. Proceed very slowly and steadily when you encounter these gentle domestic beasts, and they will eventually – albeit begrudgingly – get out of the way.

Also, there is an abundant deer population throughout Scotland, especially in areas where road warnings are posted. These animals have become bolder during the course of recent harsh winters, and have moved closer to the human population. Beware of deer crossing the roads, especially at twilight as that is the time when they move to new feeding areas.

Any incident involving injury to an animal should be reported to the local police.

3.5.3 Midges (*the only truly dangerous animal on Skye*)

Welcome to the real top of the food chain!

Midges are tiny, aggressive biting insects that seem to be unbothered by most forms of bug repellent. If you are prone to allergic reactions to insect bites, then bring along your antihistamine medication. Over-the-counter products that seem to work as repellents include:

- Avon’s “Skin So Soft” and its retail clones (from the USA and Canada),
- Rid (from Australia), and
- “Bite Free” (and its companion after-bite medication, “Bite Soother”), natural and effective Scottish-made products for dealing with the midges.

4. “HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS”, CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

As anyone would observe from watching our events at Parliament, nearly one in three people who attend have volunteered their time in some capacity, to make it all run smoothly. The smallest efforts, such as staffing the information point for an hour, or giving someone a ride back to their B&B, can make a big difference in a fellow MacLeod’s day. Contact the Parliament Coordinator, Rory McLeod if you would like a special assignment.

In 2023, there are activities that can help generate excitement before your trip, and add to the fun, just have a look at the programme. You can also:

- locate memorable items for the silent auction,
- let your National Society know that you are coming, and volunteer to help with your National Morning Tea, staffing the bar in the evening or other activities that may have been planned,
- rehearse your “ceilidh idol” performance, or
- simply share Parliament information and your enthusiasm with family and Clansfolk.





Clan MacLeod Parliament 2023 Programme

	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00			Ceilidh dance workshop CMS USA AGM 9-11 Followed by Dunvegan Foundation AGM	Ceilidh dance workshop	Raasay Day - separate programme	Ceilidh dance workshop CMS CANADA AGM 9-11	Ceilidh dance workshop
10:00		Morning worship at Duirinish Church	Morning tea, hosted by Canada	Morning tea, hosted by USA		Morning tea, hosted by the Pacific	Morning tea, hosted by "Europe"
11:00			Parliament open meeting	Parliament open meeting 10 til noon		Parliament open meeting	Parliament open meeting 10 til noon
12:00	Registration opens	Welcome lunch	Lunch available, hosted by community groups	Lunch available, hosted by community groups		Lunch available, hosted by community groups	Lunch available, hosted by community groups
13:00							
14:00		Opening of Parliament	Coinneach MacLeod - The Hebridean Baker - Cookery Demonstration - assisted by the Isle of Harris Distillery	DNA Workshop with Mark MacLeod - followed by the Isle of Harris Distillery		Local Craft Fair at Dunvegan Village Hall	Climb MacLeod's Tables
15:00							
16:00		Georgia McClure Dunvegan Castle Update					
17:00			Piping and singing groups	Piping and singing groups		Piping and singing groups	Piping and singing groups
18:00			Evening snacks available Dinner for 40 at MacLeod Tables Cafe	Evening snacks available Dinner for 40 at MacLeod Tables Café	Evening snacks available	Evening snacks available	Evening snacks available
19:00	Wine and cheese reception, hosted by CMS England						
20:00		Evening reception with guests from local community, hosted by Clan MacLeod Scotland	Clan Ceilidh	Silent auction, whisky tasting,	Quiz Night	Bratwurst and beer on the pier, group photo, fireworks	Clan ball
21:00							
22:00							
23:00							

FLOOR PLAN OF DUNVEGAN VILLAGE HALL - NOT TO SCALE

