

# culturecounts

The campaign to highlight the value of culture in Scotland

## Make culture count in the 2016 elections

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This toolkit gives information on how to make your voice heard in the 2016 Scottish Parliament election and make sure that culture is part of the campaign debate.

## What difference will it make?

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During election campaigns, candidates are receptive to ideas and questions, so now is the time to ask them to express their support for culture. Not only will this make the value of culture more visible, it will also ensure that the politicians entering the next Parliament know this is an issue you are passionate about.

Politicians' agendas are driven by the issues brought to them by you, the public. Even a relatively small number of people contacting them to say why culture is important, can make a difference to their thinking.

So a small action by you in this campaign can make a big difference to the next Parliament.

### If you only do one thing...

... sign up to the [Culture Counts Thunderclap](#) .

On 28<sup>th</sup> April, Culture Counts is coordinating a social media message show support for culture. The message is

**We value culture in Scotland. Culture is fundamental to our communities, wellbeing, economy & identity #vote4culture**

Sign your social media accounts up to post our message and add your voice. The more people who sign-up, the bigger impact it will have.

Sign up at <http://thndr.me/gzSz1l>

# Send a message to your candidates

## On Twitter

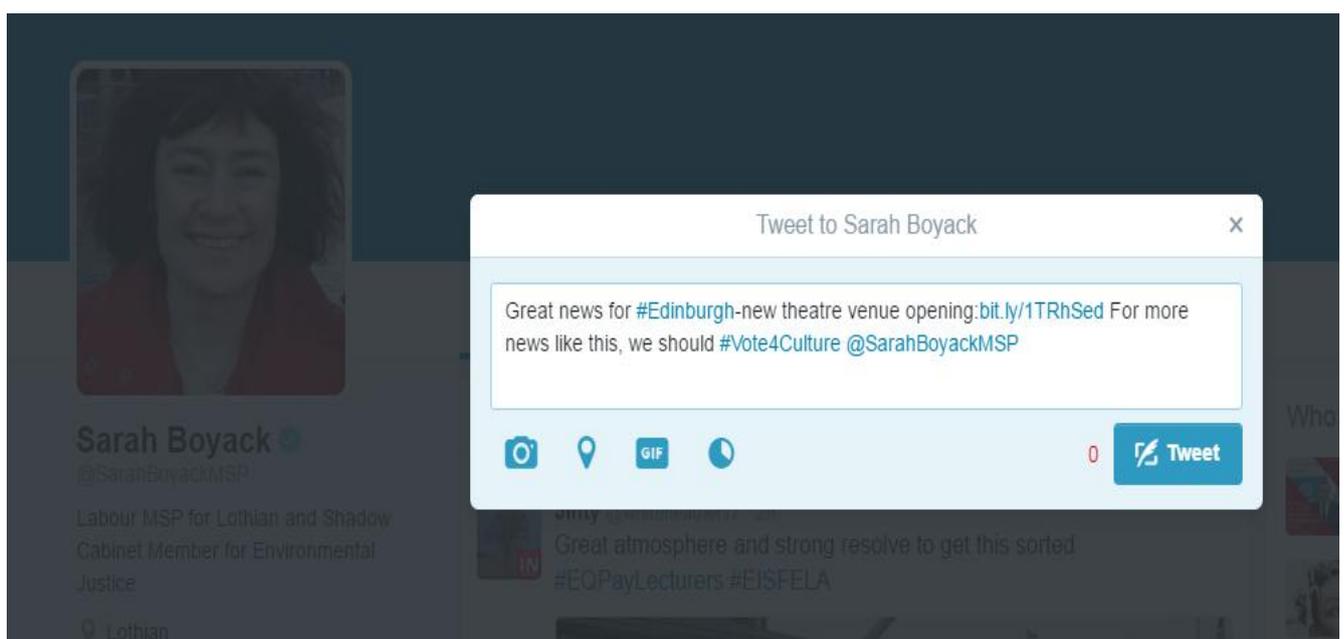
Ask a candidate a question by posting a tweet addressed to them. Remember to start your tweet with a full stop before the candidate's Twitter handle to make sure that all of their followers see it.

Example tweets to post are

[.@candidatename](#) I work in culture in Scotland, why should I vote for you / your party?  
[@culturecounts](#) #vote4culture

[.@candidatename](#) I value culture in Scotland, why should I vote for you / your party?  
[@culturecounts](#) #vote4culture

You could also tweet about a particular cultural event / place that you like and you believe should be praised, funded etc. See the examples below



## On Facebook

Use Facebook status updates to tag your candidate or their party in a Facebook post. You will have to make your message publicly visible if you want your candidate to react to it but it's a great opportunity to add photos of your favourite cultural places and events or your own artistic work and remember to tag people and places in your post so they will be aware of the message too.

If you use the hashtag: #vote4culture, we will be able to pick those messages up, in order to demonstrate how many people are expressing their support of culture before the elections.

You could make your Facebook message quite personal:



## By email

You can also email candidates directly. Example text is given below

**Dear [Candidate name]**

**I value culture in Scotland. Culture is fundamental to our quality of life, supporting learning, health and wellbeing, as well as being a powerful enabler of community engagement and the regeneration of places. Investment in culture contributes to economic growth, as well as social value in our communities, building the skills and confidence of a skilled and imaginative population.**

**Please could you tell me your policy on how you will protect and enhance culture in Scotland and let me know why I should vote for you and your party.**

You can also include your own experiences and say how culture is important to you personally.

# Finding your candidates

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The political parties list their candidates on their websites by the constituency or region they are standing in. If you are unsure of which constituency and region you are, visit the [BBC website](#) to find out.

- [Scottish Conservatives candidates](#)
- [Scottish Greens candidates](#)
- [Scottish Liberal Democrats candidates](#)
- [Scottish Labour candidates](#)
- [Scottish National Party candidates](#)
- [Rise candidates](#)
- [UKIP candidates](#)
- The Scottish Parliament has also published a list of previous MSPs, many of whom are standing for re-election. You can view this list [here](#).

These sites have information about how to contact candidates, but you can also do an internet search for their name and political party to find their contact details and social media sites.

# Have an impact on social media

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On the morning of 28 April, we're aiming to get #vote4culture trending in Scotland. Remember to use the hashtag to tweet your own messages that day and re-tweet others using the hashtag as well. Use the #vote4culture hashtag to promote your own activities and say why culture is important to you.

For the biggest impact, sign up with your social media accounts to our [Thunderclap](#) which will send a coordinated message out at 11.30am on 28th April. The more people who sign up, the bigger impact it will have.

Our Thunderclap message is

**We value culture in Scotland. Culture is fundamental to our communities, wellbeing, economy & identity #vote4culture**

Sign-up here <http://thndr.me/gzSz1>

# How do the elections work?

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The Scottish Parliament elections are on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Each voter has two votes:

- With one vote, voters choose between the candidates standing in their constituency to elect their Constituency MSP. The candidate who receives the largest number of votes in the constituency wins the seat. There are 73 constituencies for Scottish Parliament elections.
- The other vote is for a political party (or for a candidate standing as an individual) within a larger electoral area, known as a region. There are eight Scottish Parliament regions, each with seven seats in the Parliament so a total of 56 Regional MSPs are chosen to fill these seats. Regional MSPs, also known as list MSPs, are allocated seats using a formula that takes into account the number of constituency seats that a party has already won in that region, as well as the number of regional votes an individual or party receives.

For more information see the [Scottish Parliament](#) website or read the detailed guide [here](#).

You can also watch the [YouTube video](#).