



# Our Words

## The Work of Committees

The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

by Ayr Academy and Magic Torch Comics



The work of committees is extremely important to the Scottish Parliament.

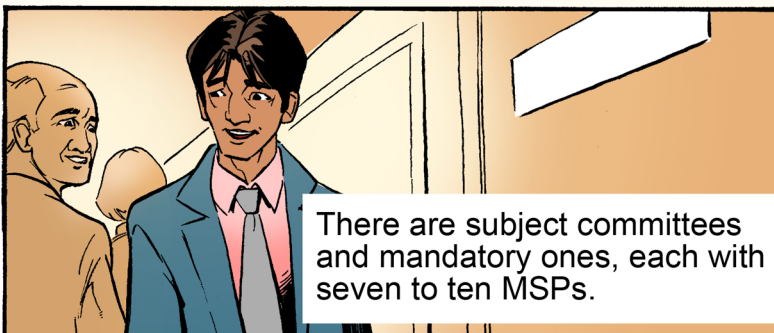
Committees scrutinise the work of the Scottish Government, including the scrutiny of budget proposals.



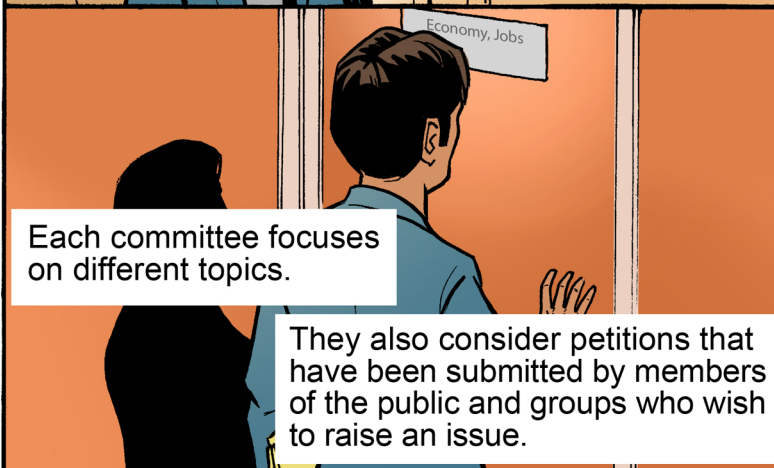
Committees hold inquiries, examine legislation and take evidence from witnesses to assist in their inquiries.



The meetings are usually held in the committee rooms in Scottish Parliament, but can take place all across Scotland.



There are subject committees and mandatory ones, each with seven to ten MSPs.



Each committee focuses on different topics.

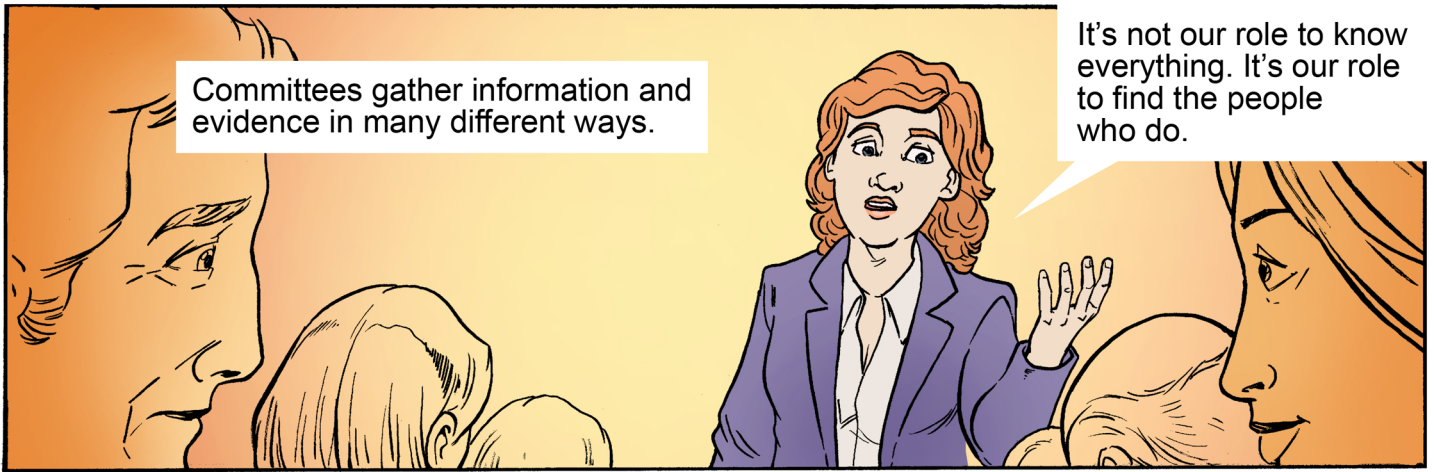
They also consider petitions that have been submitted by members of the public and groups who wish to raise an issue.



The proportion of MSPs matches the proportions of parties in parliament.

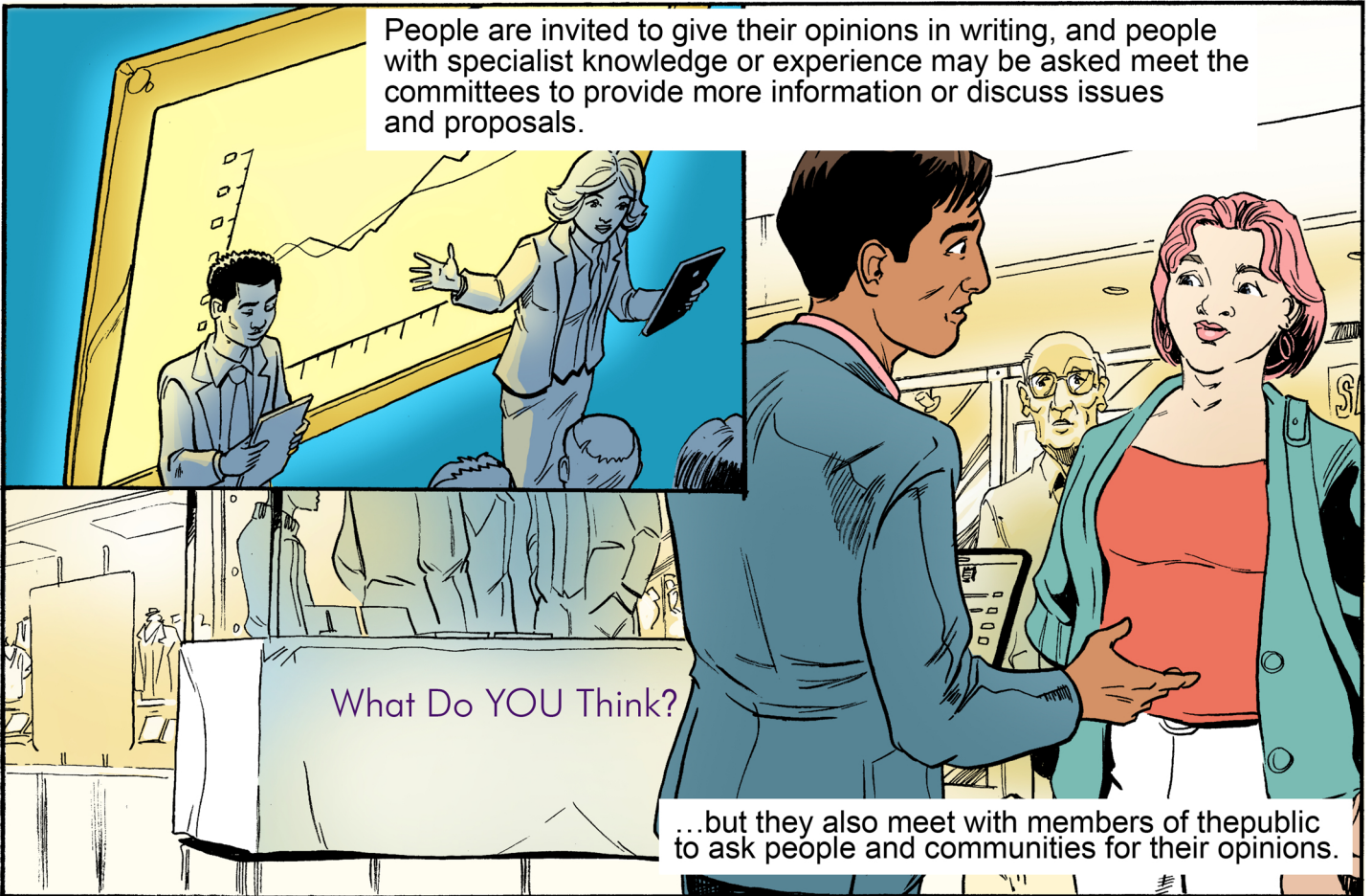
There is a balance to ensure that the work of committees does not become party political.





Committees gather information and evidence in many different ways.

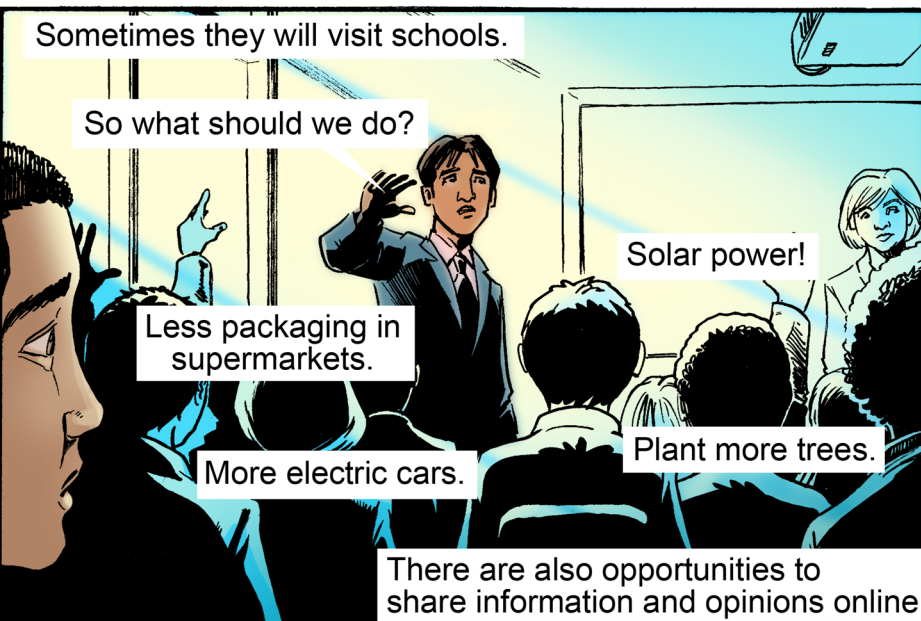
It's not our role to know everything. It's our role to find the people who do.



People are invited to give their opinions in writing, and people with specialist knowledge or experience may be asked meet the committees to provide more information or discuss issues and proposals.

What Do YOU Think?

...but they also meet with members of the public to ask people and communities for their opinions.



Sometimes they will visit schools.

So what should we do?

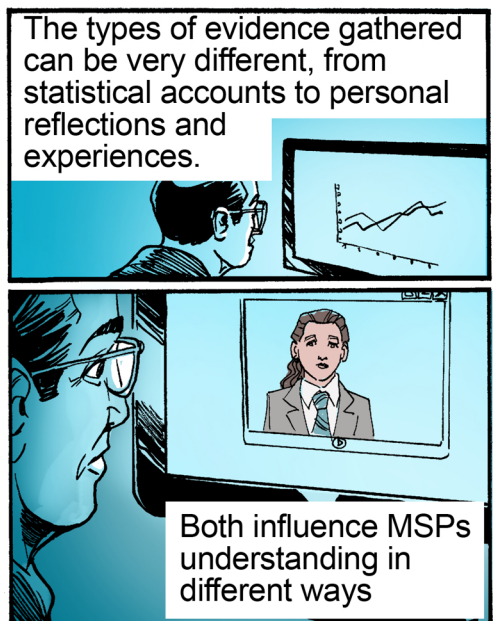
Less packaging in supermarkets.

More electric cars.

Solar power!

Plant more trees.

There are also opportunities to share information and opinions online.

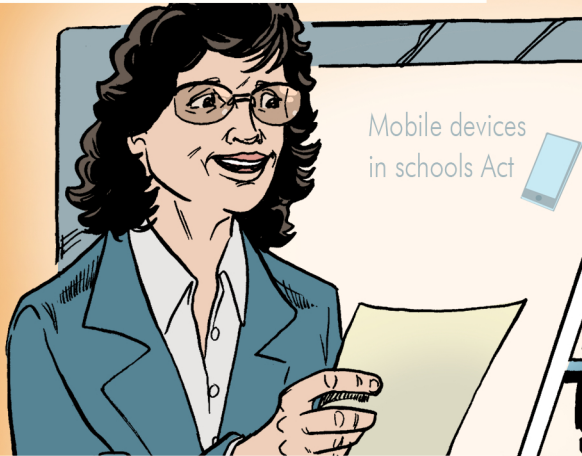


The types of evidence gathered can be very different, from statistical accounts to personal reflections and experiences.

Both influence MSPs understanding in different ways



MSPs who are not members of the government can also introduce bills.

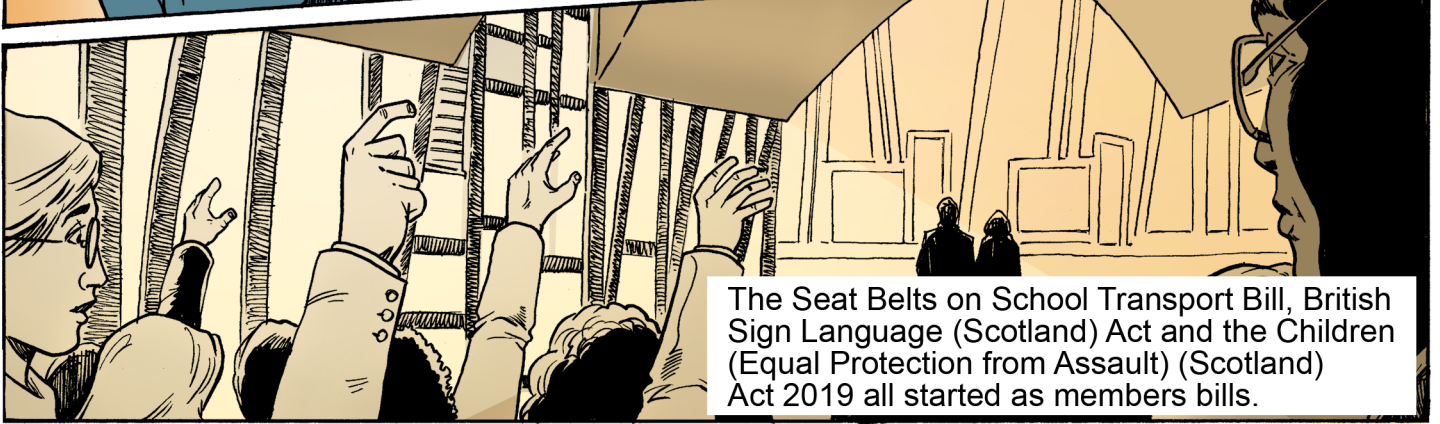


Most laws start as Government Bills.

MSPs who are not members of the government can also introduce bills.



Members' Bills can have a hard time getting enough support, but some important ideas were put forward by just one MSP and became laws.



The Seat Belts on School Transport Bill, British Sign Language (Scotland) Act and the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 all started as members bills.

Public petitions are a way for people to raise an issue with the Parliament to try and change the law. The Public Petitions committee consider the petition to see what action should be taken.

First Aid to be taught in every school?



The idea of banning smoking in public places started out as a petition from Firhill Academy!



In each case the committee uses all the information it has gathered along with briefings from SPICe to generate questions to government ministers...

...to challenge them and hold them accountable.

It is the same process for inquires, and though no law is made at the end, committees come up with recommendations to government about changes they think they should make.

Minimum Pricing for Alcohol – Health analysis"



Post legislative scrutiny works the same way. Information is gathered to find out how a law is working and the Government are questioned about any issues raised.



Clerks try to help MSPs write a report the whole committee can unanimously agree to...

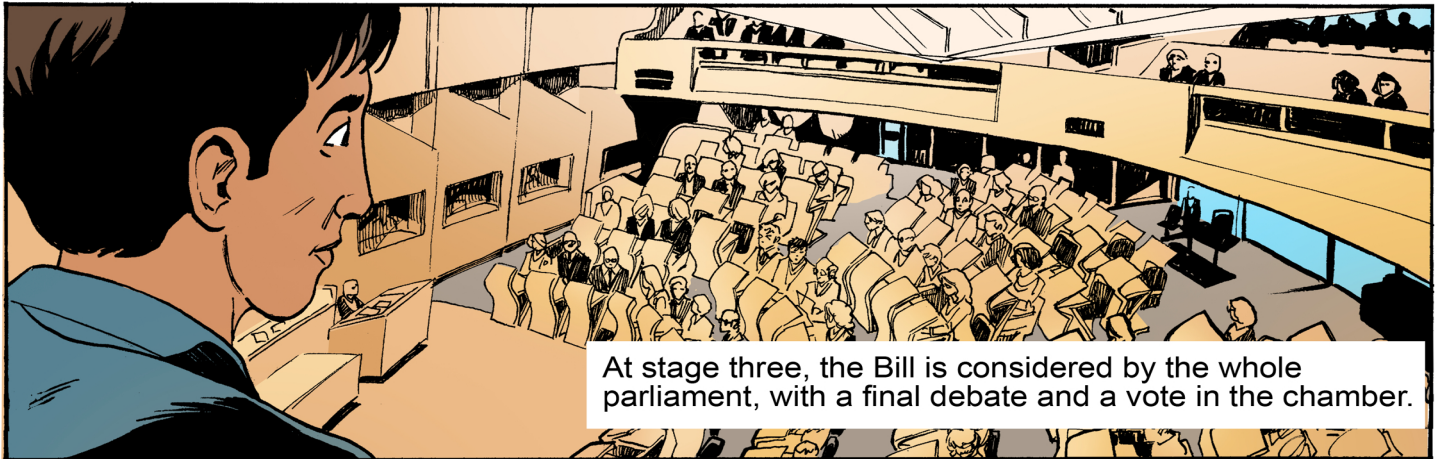


...but sometimes, MSPs cannot agree and the report notes it is supported by a majority of the committee, not all.

Once a Bill has been discussed and considered, the second stage allows for amendments to be made.



There may be changes arising from the evidence or changes suggested through lobbying from organisations.

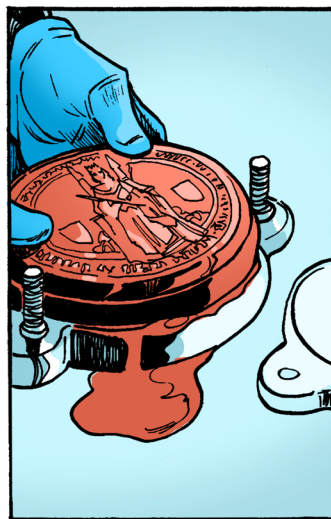
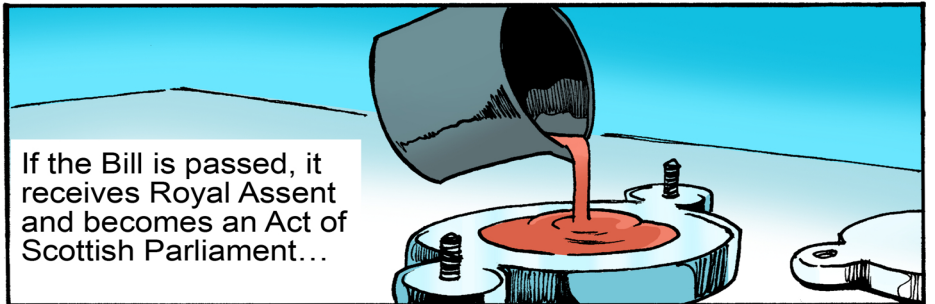


At stage three, the Bill is considered by the whole parliament, with a final debate and a vote in the chamber.

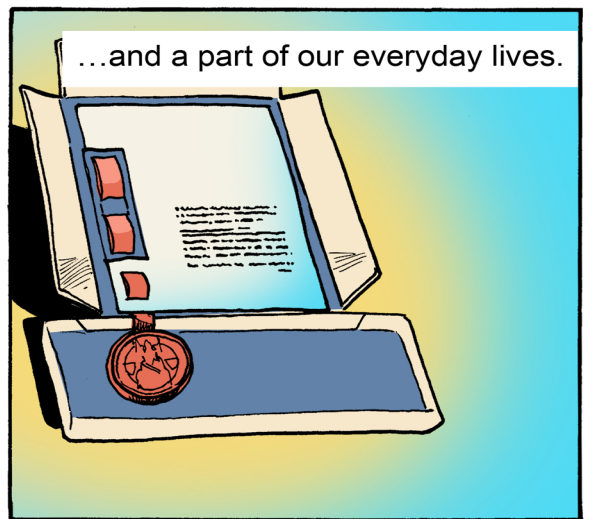
MSPs get to discuss the version of the Bill that the Committee amended and agreed to at stage two.



If the Bill is passed, it receives Royal Assent and becomes an Act of Scottish Parliament...



...and a part of our everyday lives.



To read more about the work of current committees at the Scottish Parliament, scan the QR code with a phone or tablet.

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