



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE01541](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Chris Cromar

**Subject:** 'Flower of Scotland' to be officially recognised as Scotland's national anthem

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to officially recognise 'Flower of Scotland' as Scotland's national anthem.

### Background

The song 'Flower of Scotland' was written by Roy Williamson of the Corries in 1968 and performed for the first time on television in the same year. It was based on the battle of Bannockburn.

In 1974, the song was adopted, with altered words, as the tour song by the British and Irish Lions rugby team for their tour of South Africa. On their return the players sang the song on television giving the tune wider coverage.

The song was adopted as the Scotland team's pre-game anthem during the 1990 Five Nations championship.

Since then it has been played at more sporting events. The Scottish Football Association adopted it as the pre-game anthem in 1997, although it was first used by them in 1993. Usually, only the first and third verses are sung. The song was used as the victory anthem of Team Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in India in 2010, replacing Scotland the Brave.

The BBC World Service produced a programme in its Witness series on [Flower of Scotland](#), which included an interview with the surviving member of the Corries, Ronnie Browne.

### Scottish Government Action

During the referendum campaign the Scottish Government published a consultation on a draft Independence Bill, to be introduced in the event of a yes vote. It contained section 8 which stated that:

The Scottish Parliament may choose, as it sees fit, a national anthem for Scotland.

In Session 2 of the Parliament, in answer to parliamentary question S2W-04453, lodged by David Mundell, the Scottish Conservative MSP, on 26 November 2003, which asked the Scottish Executive:

“...what role it has in determining whether the National Anthem or any other national song is formally played at public events”.

Cathy Jamieson, the then Minister for Justice, responded that:

“The Scottish Executive has no role in these matters. Arrangements for the selection and playing of tunes at public events are a matter for the organisers of the event”.

### **Scottish Parliament Action**

In Session 2 of the Parliament, the SNP MSP Michael Matheson, lodged motion S2M-02023 on 17 November 2004:

“That the Parliament considers that there is a need for it to take the lead on the issue of a national anthem for Scotland, as the anthem is within its remit; recognises the importance of this issue to the Scottish public and will consult the people of Scotland while examining the issue of the national anthem; considers it necessary to have a Scottish national anthem that is endorsed by the majority of Scotland and that embodies the rich cultural heritage and strong character of Scotland, and pledges to consider this issue in the future to ensure that the Scottish people have an anthem of which to be proud”.

In the same session, the Scottish Green Party MSP, Chris Balance had already lodged Motion S2M-01816 (1 October 2004):

That the Parliament believes that Scotland should adopt Robert Burns’, “A Man’s a Man for a’ That”, as its national anthem.

Neither motion was debated.

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