



DEMOCRACY 21:

Let's Build a Democracy Fit for the 21st Century

DEM OCR ACY 21

Welcome

Thank you for attending Democracy 21 and taking an active interest in the future of Scottish democracy. This conference starts with the premise that people should have collective power to make good things happen for themselves and their communities and to stop bad things happening. This is a simple definition of power. Democracy is the most equal distribution of that power possible.

By bringing together community groups, democratic innovators, academics, legislators, local and national politicians, civil servants, civil society activists, community organisers, political activists, futurists, artists and creators we can collectively discuss the challenges for democracy today.

We hope this will be a space for generating innovative ideas about how we can make a better democracy. Today is also the launch of a declaration, developed by and for community activists, that will shape the Local Democracy Bill to advance an ambitious plan for local government reform.

Let's build a democracy fit for the 21st Century.

How did we get here?



Scotland is a great teacher about modern politics. The politics here is more open and inclusive than it is in Westminster and we think that is partly to do with better electoral systems. We also know that being better at democracy than Westminster is not getting over a particularly high bar. Scotland does not escape the inequality, confusion and precariousness that is fuelling volatility across the globe, which forms the backdrop to the discussions that we will have today. This makes it clear to us that democracy is not only about elections. Again in Scotland we see a relatively vibrant political and activist culture, often challenging and at times belligerent in the face of concentrations of power. Still, we think we can do better, much better.

Democracy is not only about elections, but it is mostly about power. Jane McAlevey, the American trade union organiser, defines power as being 'the ability to stop bad things happening to you and your community and the ability to make good things happen'. If democracy is about anything it should be about making sure that all communities in Scotland have that sort of power. This might seem obvious but it is not a conclusion we came to quickly.

In 2012 we began a process of trying to work out what would make Scotland's democracy better. We had a good starting point: Scotland's Claim of Rights which states not that our parliament, or any person or institution is

sovereign, but that all the Scottish people have the right to the type of government we agree upon. We wanted to discuss and then begin to describe how this beautiful idea could be made a reality. After 18 months of public meetings, roundtables and a citizen's assembly we concluded with a lengthy report and recommendations called Democracy Max.

The recurring theme was that democracy works best locally, in the places we live and work, send our kids to school, dance with our friends, use the transport systems and create homes. The fact that it doesn't is a demonstration that centralisation and 'top down' might work well for those on the top but it pulls power away from most people and largely detracts from their ability to make good things happen for them and/or stop bad things.

Since then we have worked hard to learn from many communities across Scotland and experimented with different ways of helping people find that power. This became a campaign to try and change the institutions and processes of government because the present set up does much to hinder and not enough to help. The campaign was named after what we saw the best of those local community activists doing 'Act as if you own the place'.

That democracy is suffering a range of morbid symptoms is beyond question Today we want to understand the causes and the cures. Democracy develops and is re-made in different places for different times. It feels like democracy has gone through a cold period, the depth of that winter is open to debate but there are things happening here and elsewhere that let us plan for better times.

The government is consulting on a bill for Scottish local governance and that is a source of optimism.

The #Metoo campaign is a dark recognition that men more powerful than woman often abuse that power. Its great optimism comes in an unstoppable challenge to that status quo and to domination and power abuse in the patriarchy and all other hierarchies.

Let's make the most of having hundreds of people in Glasgow today who can face up to these problems as we search for ways in which we can build a democracy fit for the 21st century.

Willie Sullivan, Electoral Reform Society

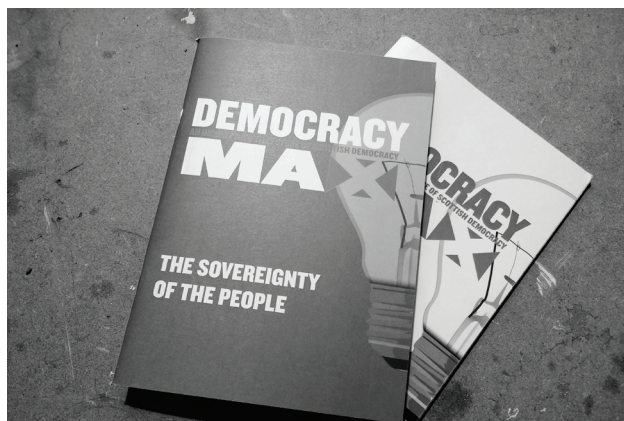
DEMOCRACY AN INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE OF SCOTTISH DEMOCRACY MAX

May 2012

Democracy Max Campaign Begins. An 18 month project that inquired into 'What makes a good Scottish democracy?'

July 2012

The People's Gathering. A Democracy Max deliberative event that brought together over 80 people to engage in radical thinking about Scotland's democracy. The people's gathering was followed by three further roundtable events.



September 2014

The Scottish Independence Referendum. A historic moment in contemporary Scottish politics.

November 2016

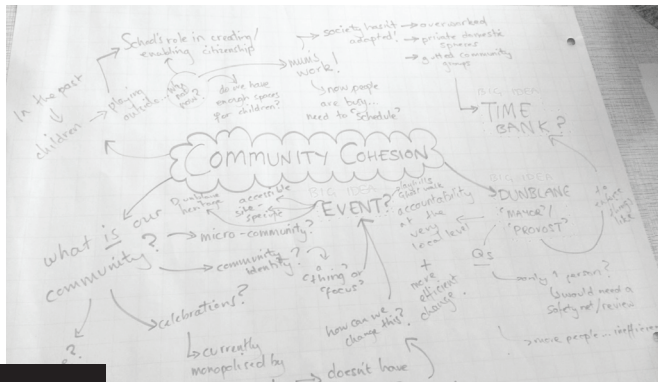
Our Democracy Coalition campaigned launched.





2017

Six Act As If Councils are held throughout Scotland. These deliberative min-publics events brought community members together into a democratic space to think politically about their futures.



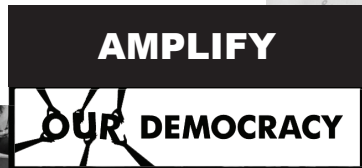
October 2017 - May 2018

Reclaiming Our Coalfield Communities.
A community development and democratic capacity building project ran in collaboration with Coalfield's Regeneration Trust.



April 2018

Impact Our Democracy event at Our of the Blue, Edinburgh. This event brought together activists, academics and campaigners to discuss local government reform. The outcome of the days workshop was the Declaration on Local Democracy, which is being launched today.



October 2017

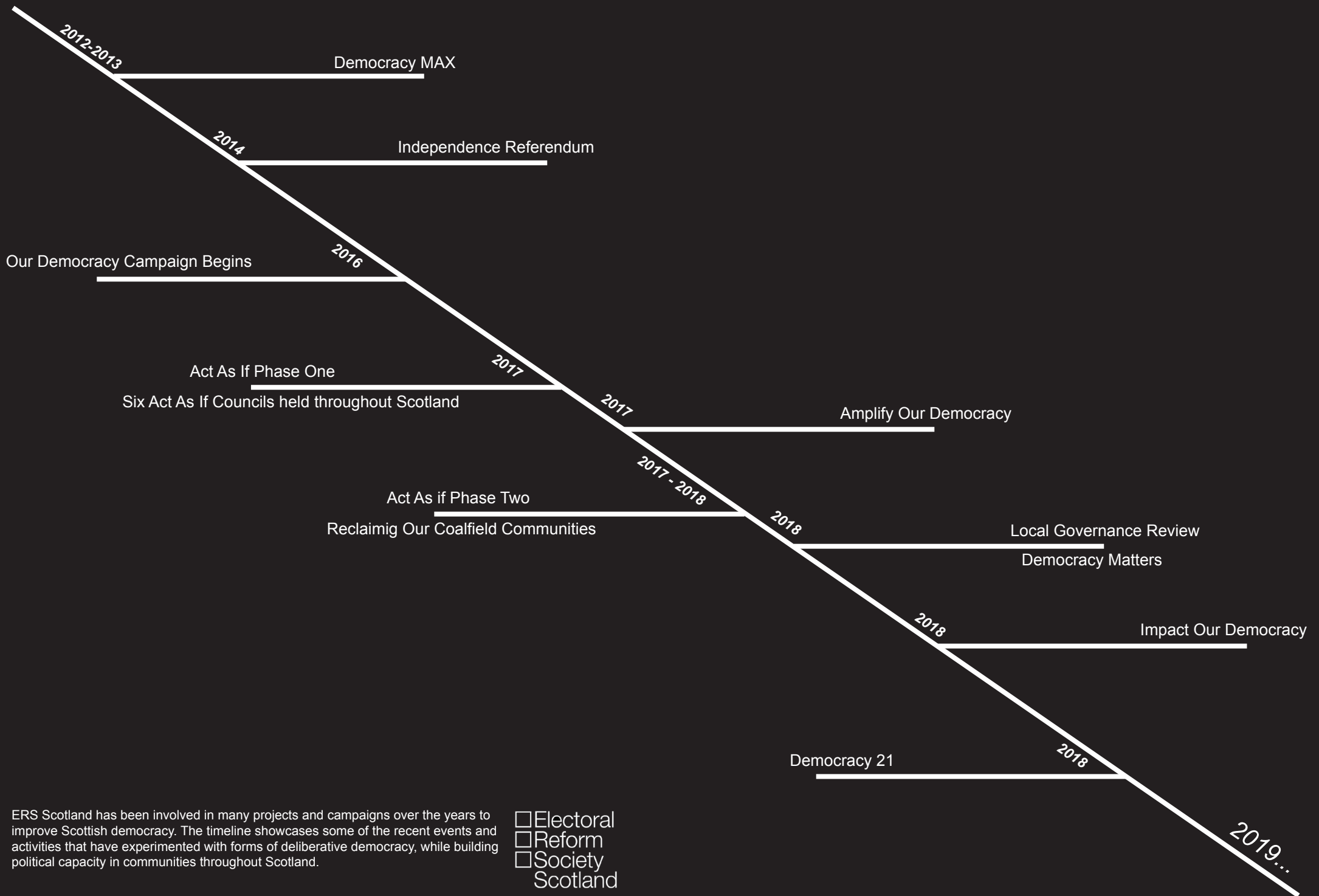
Amplify Our Democracy held in Dundee. A national showcase of some of the most inspiring examples of people who are taking back control of their communities.

Local Governance Review 2018

Throughout 2018 the Scottish Government are carrying out a review of local governance, called Democracy Matters. The outcomes of this review will inform new legislation in 2019.

Declaration on Local Democracy June 2018

Democracy 21 marks the launch of a new Declaration on Local Democracy, a manifesto to rally the people of Scotland, providing a focal point for discussion and activism. We hope that this declaration will encourage people to think about the importance of local democracy, particularly at a time when the Scottish Government are considering ways to reform local governance.



ERS Scotland has been involved in many projects and campaigns over the years to improve Scottish democracy. The timeline showcases some of the recent events and activities that have experimented with forms of deliberative democracy, while building political capacity in communities throughout Scotland.

- Electoral
- Reform
- Society Scotland

Democracy is the right for people to decide how the place where they live is run. For a hundred years this right has built our communities, our society and our sense of justice. But too few people now believe that this right is being honoured, too few believe that they decide and too many believe they are powerless and voiceless. So we call for a new democracy which is ready to help us build for a hundred years to come.

First, decisions must be made for each place, in that place by the people who live there. Our towns and villages must decide for themselves just as our nation must decide for itself. Power must exist at the scale of the community which is affected. We need our democracy much closer.

Second, the right to decide should not disappear each time the brief flicker of an election is over. Delegating our right to decide is not, in itself, enough. We must create a democracy that involves us all the time, where citizens do not just choose rulers but shape the rules.

Third, democracy must be powerful. The right to choose must be matched by the power to do – and the power to do must be matched with the resource to do it. Democracy is not gifted from above but from below, so power and resource must rest in the places where people live.

This is our simple vision for our future; a truly local democracy, a truly participatory democracy and a truly powerful democracy.

We have learned the lesson of our last hundred years; it is not enough that the future is built, it must be built for us. We must now learn a lesson for our next hundred years; it is not enough that the future is built for us, it must be built by us.

Speakers



Paul Mason

Journalist, author and political commentator



Willie Sullivan

Director, Electoral Reform Society Scotland



Katherine Trebeck

Research Director, Wellbeing Economy Alliance



Darren 'Loki' McGarvey

Rapper and author, Poverty Safari



Sofi Taylor

STUC Black Workers' Committee



Kyle Taylor

Director, Fair Vote



Amanda Burgauer

Chair, Scottish Rural Parliament



Gehan MacLeod

Co-founder, GalGael



Vince Mills

Red Paper Collective



Neil McInroy

Chief Executive, Centre for Local Economic Strategies



Pauline Grandison

Coalfields Regeneration Trust



Robin McAlpine

Director, Common Weal



Linda Somerville

Director, NUS Scotland



Doreen Grove

Head, Open Government Partnership



Layla-Roxanne Hill

Head of Engagement, The Ferret



Elena Tarifa Herrero

Representative from the International Commission of Barcelona en Comú and District Councillor at Barcelona's City Council



Sarah Collins

Senior Policy Officer, STUC



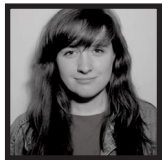
Adam Ramsay

Editor, Open Democracy



Peter McColl

Head of Policy for Scotland, Nesta



Kirsty Styles

The Reader



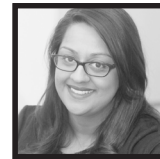
Lesley Riddoch

Broadcaster, author and veteran local democracy advocate



Nick Mahoney

Compass Associate



Talat Yaqoob

Women 50/50

WHAT

SHOULD

LOCAL

DEMOG

RACY

LOOK

LIKES?

Our Democracy

Our Democracy was formed in 2016, bringing together a collation of organisations, campaigners and politicians who are dedicated to improving our local democracy.

The campaign arose from a simple idea: that human beings flourish when they have control over their own lives.

We think that the vast majority of Scots realise that freedom and power is best exercised by communities. As lone individuals we can potentially do some good, but when we collaborate and work together we have so much more power; we create better ideas, build better places, and have more fun in the process. Working and organising in the interests of our friends and neighbours means they work in our interests too. By doing this we not only find out how capable we all are, we also build trust in ourselves and in each other.

At the moment most of us do not have the power to make important decisions at the community level; power is exercised over us by the government, by

the council, or by companies who don't work with our community interests at their core.

If democracy is about anything it is about citizens being able to run their own affairs. That is why we have been asking people to 'act as if you own the place'. We have encouraged communities all over Scotland to hold 'Act As If' Councils; these events bring local people together to talk about how they want to run their communities. The plan is that talk turns into action and people go beyond acting as if they own the place, to actually owning it. The success of these mini-publics (local deliberative events) shows that people are willing and able to work together to make decisions for themselves. Communities are ready ready to redesign their local democracy to work better for them, allowing them to flourish by taking control of their community's future.

Today marks another important step in the Our Democracy coalition's ambition to improve local democracy and we thank you for taking part.

Coalition Members

COMMON WEAL
△

 The
Democratic
Society

Nesta...

**Citizen
Participation
Network**

☐ Electoral
☐ Reform
☐ Society


GALGAEL

**scottish
community
alliance**
local people leading

**The People's
Council**
Act as if we own the place.

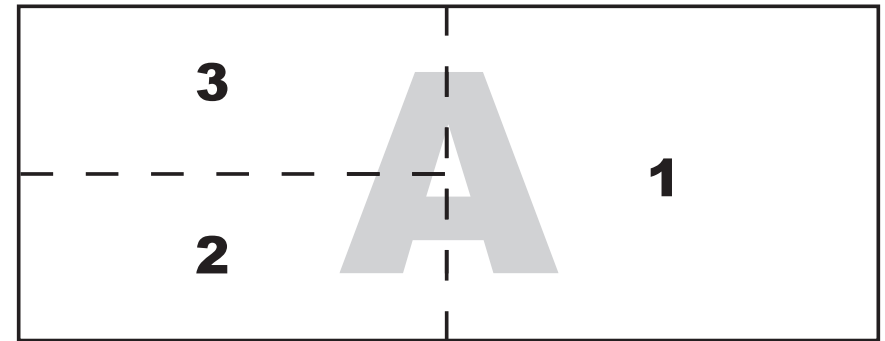
 **Scottish
Rural Parliament**

**the
stove
network**

sedc
**scottish
community
development
centre**


CSPP

Programme



4
The Hallmark Hotel

A 10:30 - 11:00
OPENING PLENARY
Democracy 21: The Race For The Future

Willie Sullivan Electoral Reform Society
Katherine Trebeck Wellbeing Economy Alliance

11:15 - 12:30
BREAKOUT FORUMS
In The Shell Of The Old: Envisioning Our New Democratic Life

Choose 1 of 4 forums

1 *The Crisis Of Representation: Roots And Discontents*

Darren McGarvey Author, Poverty Safari
Sofi Taylor STUC Black Workers' Committee

2 *Technology And Democracy: After Cambridge Analytica, how can we make it work?*

Adam Ramsay Editor, Open Democracy
Kirsty Styles The Reader
Kyle Taylor Director, Fair Vote

3 *Imagining Institutions: A Vision For New Democratic Infrastructure*

Amanda Burgaur Scottish Rural Action
Vince Mills Red Paper Collective

4 *The Power Of The Local: Turning Place Into Power*

Neil McInroy Centre for Local Economic Strategies
Pauline Grandison Coalfields Regeneration Trust
Gehan MacLeod GalGael

12:30 - 13:15
LUNCH

A 13:15 - 14:00
MIDDLE PLENARY
Barriers To Change: The Anatomy Of The Democratic Crisis

Paul Mason Journalist
Elena Tarifa Herrero International Commission of Barcelona en Comú

14:15 - 15:30
BREAKOUT FORUMS
Understanding The Problem: A Road Map

Choose 1 of 4 forums

1 *The Democratic Idea: What Makes Good Governance?*

Robin McAlpine Director, Common Weal
Doreen Grove Head, Open Government Partnership

2 *The Collapse In Trust: People, Politicians and Parliaments*

Nick Mahoney Compass
Linda Somerville Director, NUS Scotland

3 *Communication Breakdown: Politics in the era of Fake News*

Layla-Roxanne Hill Head of Engagement, The Ferret
Michael Gray Journalist

4 *What is Populism? Analysing New Shocks*

Sarah Collins STUC Policy Officer PC
Peter McColl Head of policy for Scotland, NESTA

A 15:45 - 16:30
CLOSING PLENARY
The Democratic Spring

Lesley Riddoch Broadcaster and veteran local democracy advocate
Talat Yaqoob Women 50/50

Reading of Jimmy Reid Alienation speech delivered by actor Iain Robertson

**a truly local democracy,
a truly participatory democracy
and a truly powerful democracy.**

☐ Electoral
☐ Reform
☐ Society
Scotland

