



Radical
Federalism

We, the People

Our Right | The People's Convention

The second report



We, the People

Ein Hawl - Our Right

Confensiwn y bobl - The People's Convention

Radical constitutional reform is no longer an option, it is an unavoidable necessity. The internal conflicts within the structure of the UK must be resolved.

This paper is our second contribution to that growing debate. It sets out some fundamental principles which we believe should underpin the review and redesign of constitutional and governance arrangements in the UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We believe that the people of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England should be offered the opportunity to play an active role in envisioning, and contributing to the creation of a **modern, collaborative, distributed and open democracy** – the **UK transformed**, and our democracy renewed.

We believe that this can be achieved by:

- Asserting the right of the People to determine the form and scope of the governance established in their name: **Ein Hawl - Our Right**
- Creating open and inclusive processes which facilitate the widest possible engagement of people and communities in the design of new constitutional and governance arrangements: **Confensiwn y bobl - The People's Convention**

February, 2021

We, the People: The Case for Radical Federalism

Since the publication of our first paper, ‘We, the People: The Case for Radical Federalism’, the public debate about the positions of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland within the UK has been growing. The debate extends across all the options available for constitutional change, from national independence to adherence to the status quo, and it is evident that there is a growing interest in the potential benefits that a federal structure of governance would offer the UK and its constituent nations and regions.

In addition, there is discussion about how such a change to the UK’s constitutional and governance structure could best be reviewed, designed, and agreed. Some are arguing that a UK wide Commission should be established, which would bring together experts from a range of institutions to assemble and weigh the evidence, before setting out new proposals for public consideration.

Our first paper, ‘We, the People’, set out the case that a radical, federalist solution could transform the UK, and empower the constituent nations, cities, regions and communities through the decentralisation of power and decision-making. The paper also made clear that we believe that people, and their communities, should be as fully, and as closely engaged in the redesign and selection of the ultimate choice of governance structure as possible.

This paper, therefore, sets out our recommendations for how that process should be taken forward. Our recommendations are based on two fundamental principles:

- the full engagement of people and their communities is of paramount importance in this process
- the people who live and work in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have an unassailable right to determine the forms of Government that best suit their needs.

On that basis, the terms of this paper are applicable throughout the UK, and we would urge that all people “at hame wi’ Freedom” who want to live within a modern, democratic and empowered system of governance adopt, and campaign for the principles and actions set out in ‘We, the People – the Case for Radical Federalism.’

This paper takes as its primary focus the direction and actions required to begin the journey of democratic renewal in Wales.

Ein Hawl - Our Right

We believe that the right of people in Wales to determine the form of Government best suited to their needs requires to be asserted.

Ein Hawl - Our Right

We acknowledge the right of people in Wales to determine the form of Government best suited to their needs. We declare and pledge that in all our actions and deliberations, their interests shall be paramount.

We further declare and pledge that our actions and deliberations shall be directed to the following ends:

- **To agree a scheme for the full devolution of powers to the Welsh Senedd, and Welsh local government, consistent with the principles of subsidiarity;**
- **To mobilise opinion in Wales and ensure the approval of the Welsh people for that scheme; and**
- **To assert the right of the people in Wales to secure implementation of that scheme.**

We believe that this Right can only be asserted by the express will of the people in Wales. That means that the views and lived experience of people in Wales need to be at the very centre of the process of discussion and debate which will create an empowered governance for Wales, within a transformed UK.

We reject absolutely the idea that the design of the future governance and constitutional arrangements for the UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should be left exclusively in the hands of an appointed Commission – particularly one designed, and populated according to the perspectives of the Westminster Government. Any such approach would be remote, and too far distant from the heart-beat and voices of our towns, villages and communities.

We are proposing that a Convention of the People in Wales should be created. We believe that the Convention should be supported in its work by locally based public forums and gatherings in all parts of Wales. The Convention and the public forums would be closely integrated into the fabric of life in Wales, and would draw on the rich knowledge, experience and hopes that exist in our towns, cities, communities and institutions. (Further details about how the local forums might operate, and examples of good practice collected from other countries, will be presented in a forthcoming Radical Federalism paper.)

The Convention will give citizens, community leaders, and politicians the chance to express, and to hear, how people from all parts of Wales would make the changes in governance needed to deliver greater food security, resilience against flood and environmental hazards, better work and housing, the repair of eco-systems, and improved prospects for the generations that follow.

The broadly-based Convention would be tasked to collect and condense the views and ideas generated by the public forums and gatherings into options, and a coherent, visionary and deliverable plan for an improved, empowered governance for Wales, and its towns, villages and communities: a plan which is fit for purpose, and fit for the future.

Confensiwn y bobl - The People's Convention

The People's Convention in Wales will be inclusive, accessible, responsive and engaging. It will seek the most authoritative expert opinion available, and it will listen to, and take account of, the knowledge and lived experience of the people who live and work in Wales.

Its purpose will be to condense, analyse and review the views and opinions it draws in, and prepare consultative proposals for new and improved governance for consideration by local public forums and gatherings, the institutions and organisations that make up civic Wales, and the population in general.

The scope and specification for The People's Convention is set out as follows:

1. Scope

The terms of reference for The People's Convention will be based upon four key principles:

1. **Fair shares:** to design the structures and processes which will ensure that resources, opportunities and power are redistributed fairly across Wales. In addition, the People's Convention will propose a new, fair, needs-based formula for allocating UK resources.
2. **Equality, justice and fairness:** to hear, and to transform the aspirations of the people of Wales into systems of governance and empowerment in Wales which will guarantee equality, fairness and justice in housing, work, health and education.
3. **Climate stability:** to hear, and to transform the aspirations of the people of Wales into systems of governance and empowerment which will deliver security and stability on issues of climate change, food, and community safety.
4. **Culture and identity:** to hear, and to transform the aspirations of the people of Wales into systems of governance and empowerment which will allow the cultures of Wales to flourish, and the sense of identity in individuals, communities and places to be supported and nurtured.

2. Membership

The People's Convention will seek broad representation from the organisations and institutions that uphold civic society throughout Wales and, significantly, from people from all parts of this nation, who want to be part of building a new future for Wales.

3. Process

The People's Convention will invite the submission of views, opinions, research, aspirations and inspirations on the main tenets of its terms of reference from the people, communities and institutions of Wales.

The People's Convention will promote the establishment of public forums and gatherings in all parts of Wales. We believe that these forums and gatherings can be creative hubs where innovation, inspiration, and the lived experience of people in Wales together forge ideas and proposals for new ways to create an exciting, democratic, dynamic and empowered Wales.

By means of the views and opinions submitted to it, its own research, and the proposals generated from the debate and discussion in local forums, the People's Convention will be able to design the options for the structures and processes needed to deliver the vision of a modern, democratic, just and empowered Wales.

4.Objectives

The objectives of The People’s Convention will be to:

1. Be inclusive, transparent, accessible and accountable in how it conducts its business;
2. Promote, and secure the support of the organisations and institutions of Civic Wales to the statement of Ein Hawl - Our Right
3. Promote the establishment of public forums in all parts of Wales;
4. Advise and support local people and communities in initiating, conducting and recording the discussion and debate which takes place in local public forums and gatherings;
5. Use the material submitted to it, and the proposals generated by the public forums to:
 - a. create a prospectus of the full range of options open to the people of Wales for the future governance of their country, and its relationship with the other nations, regions and communities of the UK
 - b. draw up a costed and deliverable plan for the full devolution of powers to the Welsh Senedd, and Welsh local government, consistent with being a member of the UK partnership of nations, regions and cities, and the principles of fairness, social justice, and subsidiarity;
6. Issue its prospectus to the people of Wales, as Our Right, in respect of the powers and democratic governance affecting life, work and the environment in Wales, for the people of Wales.

Ein Hawl - Our Right

Confensiwn y bobl - The People’s Convention

This paper is a call to action. We urge and invite all people “at hame wi’ Freedom”, inclusivity, fairness and social justice to join with us on the journey to renew our democracy in Wales, and to realign our relationship as part of the UK family of nations, regions, and communities.

There are many voices in the communities of Wales. Together, our voices can help build a renewed Wales, distinguished by inclusion, partnership and empowered democracy: a democratic Wales which is fit for purpose, and fit for the future.

Join with us at www.radicalfederalism.com

About this paper

This paper is intended to stimulate discussion, promote the idea of radical federalism, and encourage an open, crowdsourced and inclusive approach to shaping that vision.

The paper has been written by:

Mick Antoniw MS

Mick Antoniw practised as a solicitor for over 30 years. He has represented the Constituency of Pontypridd in the Welsh Parliament since 2011. He has served in Welsh Government as Counsel General and is currently Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee. He is a visiting fellow of the University of South Wales.

Alun Burge

Alun Burge worked for many years in Welsh central and local government, and for 15 years in international NGOs. He has also served as the Chair of a constituency Labour Party and member of its Welsh Executive.

Sue Essex

Sue Essex is a former Minister in the National Assembly for Wales, and former Leader of Cardiff City Council.

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Owen Gareth Hughes is a journalist and political commentator

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David Hume is a consultant specialising in governance and public policy. He was previously the Chief Executive of a local authority.

Alan Simpson

Alan Simpson was a Labour MP for 18 years, and from 2017-2020 was the Shadow Chancellor's Advisor on Sustainable Economics.

We are a group of people drawn mainly from Wales, but with representation from Scotland and England also.

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Aneurin Bevan said that the purpose of getting power is to be able to give it away. This principle underpins our views.