CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The registration of civil partnerships

Question 1 (Paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13)

Do you agree that legislation should be changed so that civil partnerships could be registered through religious ceremonies?

Yes / ☐ /  
No ☐  
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer.

Comments
The British Druid Order has been conducting handfastings (the usual term to designate a Druid wedding) for many years, although it has always been necessary for couples to enter into a separate legal marriage contract. We have never differentiated between same-sex and different-sex handfastings and have never seen any good reason why the state should make any such differentiation. Love and commitment are not, never have been and never will be gender-dependent. Same-sex partnerships are a perfectly natural aspect of human life and to effectively legislate against them is morally, ethically and logically wrong.

Question 2 (Paragraphs 2.14 to 2.19)

Do you think that the proposals in England and Wales on registration of civil partnerships in religious premises would be appropriate for Scotland?

Yes / ☐ / 
No ☐  
Don’t know ☐

If you have answered no, please explain what elements of the proposals in England and Wales you consider inappropriate for Scotland.

Comments
Our ‘religious premises’ tend to be places like mountainsides, woodland glades or ancestral sacred places such as Avebury, but I see no sensible argument against other religious premises of other faiths being used for the recognition of same-sex partnerships. The only arguments I have heard stem from bigotry, ignorance, superstition and fear.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>(Paragraphs 2.20 to 2.24)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you agree with allowing religious celebrants to register civil partnerships in religious premises?</td>
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<td>Please give reasons for your answer</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
<td>I might, if pushed, even argue that individuals should not be allowed to be religious celebrants if they are so narrow-minded and prejudiced as to be opposed to the celebration of same-sex partnerships.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>(Paragraphs 2.20 to 2.24)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you agree with allowing religious celebrants to register civil partnerships in other places agreed between the celebrant and the couple?</td>
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<td>Please give reasons for your answer</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
<td>As suggested above, the rites of handfasting (marriage) conducted by the British Druid Order tend to take place far more frequently in natural settings than they do in buildings. We see no reason why other faiths should be limited to specific buildings.</td>
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<th>Question 5</th>
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<td>Do you agree that religious bodies should not be required to register civil partnerships?</td>
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<td>Please give reasons for your answer</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
<td>From a libertarian standpoint, we tend to oppose legal requirements being imposed on anyone beyond what is absolutely necessary.</td>
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### Question 6 (Paragraphs 2.26 and 2.27)

Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to register civil partnerships if their religious body has decided against registering civil partnerships?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer

**Comments**

I think that if religious celebrants are brave enough to stand out against the prejudice of their governing bodies they should be encouraged to do so in every possible way. That way, the governing bodies themselves may, eventually, come to reconsider their bigotry.

### Question 7 (Paragraphs 2.28 to 2.30)

Do you agree that individual religious celebrants should not be required to register civil partnerships?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

Please give reasons for your answer

**Comments**

See the response to Question 5 above.

### Question 8 (Paragraphs 2.31 to 2.35)

Which of the options do you favour to ensure that religious bodies and celebrants do not have to register civil partnerships against their will?

Do you favour:

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Neither

If you have another option, please describe it.
Comments
Same-sex partnerships should be treated in every way as no different to different-sex partnerships. Frankly, it is staggering that this is even still a question 11 years into the 21st century.

Question 9  (Paragraphs 2.36 to 2.40)

Religious bodies may not wish their premises to be used to register civil partnerships. Do you agree that no legislative provision is required to ensure religious premises cannot be used against the wishes of the relevant religious body?

Yes  /☐/  
No   ☐  
Don't know  ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
I do not think it appropriate that the law should be used to prop up bigotry, whether it be religiously inspired or not.
**Same sex marriage**

**Question 10** (Paragraphs 3.11 and 3.12)

Do you agree that the law in Scotland should be changed to allow same sex marriage?

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Please give reasons for your answer

**Comments**

Same-sex partnerships should be treated exactly the same under law as different-sex partnerships.

**Question 11** (Paragraph 3.13)

Do you agree that religious bodies and celebrants should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?

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Please give reasons for your answer

**Comments**

As a broadly libertarian organisation, the British Druid Order feels that no one should be required to do anything beyond what is absolutely necessary to maintain a civil and civilised society. On the other hand, we strongly feel that the law should not to be used to support intolerance and bigotry and making the solemnisation of same-sex partnerships a legal requirement would have the effect of removing intolerant bigots from religious roles they should not be holding in the first place in a truly civilised society.

**Question 12** (Paragraphs 3.14 to 3.18)

Do you agree with the introduction of same-sex **civil** marriage only?

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Please give reasons for your answer

**Comments**
To do so continues existing discrimination against same-sex partners.

Question 13  (Paragraph 3.19)
Do you agree with the introduction of same-sex marriage, both religious and civil?
Yes
No
Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
To do so would finally, albeit belatedly, bring about equality under law for same-sex couples.

Question 14  (Paragraphs 3.23 and 3.24)
Do you agree that religious bodies should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?
Yes
No
Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
See response to Question 11 above.

Question 15  (Paragraphs 3.25 and 3.26)
Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to solemnise same sex marriages if their religious body has decided against solemnising same sex marriage?
Yes
No
Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
If religious celebrants are allowed to solemnise same sex marriages in spite of their governing body’s opposition, this may have the effect of ultimately causing the body involved to rethink its opposition. Allowing religious bodies
to prevent individual celebrants from solemnising same sex marriages amounts to using the law to encourage bigotry to continue.

Question 16 (Paragraphs 3.27 and 3.28)
Do you agree that individual religious celebrants should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?
Yes ☐
No ☐
Don’t know ☐
Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
See response to Question 11 above.

Question 17 (Paragraphs 3.29 to 3.33)
Which of the options do you favour to ensure that religious bodies and celebrants do not have to solemnise same sex marriage against their will?
Do you favour:
Option 1 ☐
Option 2 ☐
Neither ☐
Don’t know ☐
Please give reasons for your answer and if you have another option, please describe it.

Comments
See response to Question 11 above. Why not amend existing legislation to allow for same sex marriage and leave it at that? Why pander to the bigotry of some religious leaders? Religiously-inspired bigotry is still bigotry.

Question 18 (Paragraphs 3.34 to 3.39)
Religious bodies may not wish their premises to be used to solemnise same sex marriage. Do you agree that no legislative provision is required to ensure religious premises cannot be used against the wishes of the relevant religious body?
Yes ☐
No ☐
Don’t know ☐
Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
See all my other responses above.

Question 19 (Paragraph 3.41)

If Scotland should introduce same-sex marriage, do you consider that civil partnerships should remain available?

Yes /□/
No □
Don’t know □

Please give reasons for your answer

Comments
If some people prefer them, why not?

Question 20 (Paragraph 4.19)

Do you have any other comments?

Yes /□/
No □

We are particularly interested in your views on:

• potential implications of the proposals for transgender people (paragraph 3.42)
• possible transitional arrangements (paragraphs 3.43 and 3.44);
• recognition of Scottish same sex marriages elsewhere (paragraphs 3.45 to 3.49);
• any comments on forced marriage (paragraphs 3.51 and 3.52)
• any comments on sham marriage (paragraph 3.53)
• potential financial implications (paragraphs 4.01 to 4.08);
• potential equality implications (paragraphs 4.09 to 4.14).

Comments
It would be nice if we could all just grow up.