

Subject: Request for information about the Scottish Parliament mace and “Scotland’s values”.

FOI reference: FOI/202000019534

Date received: 6 March 2020

Date responded: 21 April 2020

Information requested:

“Information about the Scottish Parliament mace and “Scotland’s values”, and specifically:

- Briefing/scoping for paper(s) for the mace of the Scottish Parliament.
- Proposals which were submitted and, in particular, the values noted on proposed designs (if indeed values were noted at all at this point).
- Minutes of meetings of the group who decided on the scope and final design of the mace.
- Any correspondence relating to the mace between the group and the proposal submitters.”

NRS Response:

National Records of Scotland (NRS) holds the archived records of the Scottish Parliament, the pre-Devolution Scottish Office departments, and the current Scottish Government. These records can usually be consulted in our [public search room](#).

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide access to these records right now as, in line with advice from the UK and the Scottish Government and to delay the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), we have taken the decision to restrict non-critical services.

Our [online catalogue](#) allows key-word searching to identify records held at NRS which may be relevant. Records which are available in our search room are considered to be ‘Information otherwise accessible’ under [FOISA Section 25\(2\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#). This means that NRS isn’t required to produce this information in response to a FOISA request as it is available in our search room for viewing.

Some records at NRS are not available (i.e. ‘closed’) to researchers because they contain information which is exempt from release under FOISA – for example, sensitive personal information about living people which can’t be made public. Our catalogue shows when records are closed because of FOISA exemptions, and it also shows the dates when exemptions expire and records will become available. Access to specific closed records can be requested under FOISA - these requests are dealt with under [FOISA Section 22](#), which requires the transferring authority (rather than NRS) to make the decision on access.

We carried out a search of the NRS catalogue was carried out under the keyword ‘mace’. Unfortunately, no records which specifically fall under the terms of the

request were identified. However, three records were identified (SCP2/3/1/1/3, SCP3/1/1/1 and DD41/26) relating to the Parliament Mace more generally, of which further details are provided below.

Open records

Two of these records (SCP2/3/1/1/3 and SCP3/1/1/1) are from the Scottish Parliament itself. These records are usually open to public access in our search room, and are therefore considered to be 'Information otherwise accessible' under [FOISA Section 25\(2\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#).

NRS Ref No	Title	Description	Date
SCP2/3/1/1/3	Business Bulletin: Nos 29/1999-37/1999	Including the procedure to be carried out by the Parliament using The Mace which had been presented by the Queen at the opening ceremony. This item is also available on the Scottish Parliament website here.	Jul 1999
SCP3/1/1/1	Hand bound book to commemorate the opening of the Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood, 9th October 2004.	Inscribed on the front "Widsom Gliocas Justice Ceartas Compassion lochd Integrity Ionracas". The inscription is from the mace presented by HM the Queen at the opening of the Parliament. Further information about this book is found on the Scottish Parliament website here : please see Press Release 063/2004 of 7 Oct 2004. Information about this book can also be found in the National Archives of Scotland's Annual Report 2004-2005, which is available here – scroll to page 31. (National Archives of Scotland is a former name for NRS.)	9 October 2004

Please note that the Scottish Parliament records are not yet included on our online catalogue as they are part of a collection of records which are still in the process of being catalogued. In addition, the hand bound book has been temporarily returned to the Scottish Parliament. Neither item appears to include any information relating to the request, and one is available online, but if there is interest in viewing these records once the current restrictions are over, please get in contact with us.

Closed record

The third record (DD41/26) identified is a file from the pre-Devolution Scottish Office which is currently closed to public access as exemption applies under section 41(a)

(communications with Her Majesty, with other members of the Royal Family or with the Royal Household;) of FOISA:

NRS Ref No	Title	Description	Date	Access Conditions
DD41/26	Scottish Parliament Building	Papers and correspondence relating to the construction of the Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood and the exhibition of the Parliament mace and Scottish art in the building.	25 Oct 1999	Information in this item is exempt under Section 41(a) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002: communications with the Royal Family. As such it will not be available for public consultation until five years after the death of the royal or 20 years after its creation, whichever is longer.

For access to this closed file a request under FOISA needs to be submitted to foi@nrscotland.gov.uk. We would then have to ask the Scottish Government to carry out a sensitivity review to determine whether the information can be made available. However, we will not be able to progress this request and ask the Scottish Government to carry the review until staff have access to records following the lifting of the current coronavirus restrictions. We may not be able to respond to the request within the statutory timescales.

If a FOI request is submitted we will notify when normal service resumes and provide an update then on when a response can be expected. In the meantime we will be publishing regular updates on our websites about the availability of our services.

Please note, to identify other records relating to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament a keyword search of our online catalogue can be performed. It is possible that some of these records may contain information about the mace which is not noted on our catalogue. When our search room reopens the records will be made available for checking. FOISA requests can also be submitted for access to closed government records identified on our catalogue.