

Towards a National Assembly of Cornwall



**A consultation document from:
Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall**

Foreword

Mebyon Kernow is campaigning for a National Assembly of Cornwall and this document sets out what it would mean for Cornish communities.

This is a consultation document for MK members and the wider population of Cornwall. We recognise that individuals and groups committed to greater powers for Cornwall may have different views about the detail of the democratic settlement that we should be seeking for the future.

The consultation period is open until 30th June 2014 and we would like to hear from you.



Cllr Dick Cole
Party Leader

Raglavar

Yma Mebyon Kernow ow kul kaskyrgh rag Senedh Gwlasek rag Kernow ha'n derivas ma a dheriv pyth a via an stiryow rag kemmyniethow Kernow.

Hemm yw paper kesusulyans rag eseleth MK ha'n poblans pella a Gernow. Ni a wel bos hwansow bagasow ha tus neb a vynn nerthow kreffa rag Kernow martesen dyffrans adro an taklow munys a vynnyn gweles yn termyn a dheu.

An termyn kesusulya yw ygor bys dhe 30ves a Vis Metheven 2014 ha ni a garsa klewes orthowgh.



Cllr Dick Cole
Hembrynkyas

Towards a National Assembly of Cornwall

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Introduction

1. On 12th December 2001, 50,546 individually signed and verified declarations calling for a Cornish Assembly were presented to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. They had been collected within a period of less than 18 months and the majority of people approached by campaigners had supported the campaign. The declarations were signed by more than 10% of the Cornish electorate.¹

2. The declaration stated the following:

Cornwall is a nation with its own identity, culture, traditions and history – it also suffers severe and unique economic problems.

Important decisions about our future are increasingly taken outside of Cornwall and such decisions are often inappropriate or even contrary to the needs of our local communities.

Scotland now has its own Parliament and Wales its own Assembly – but Cornwall has been ignored. We had the artificial ‘south west’ region foisted upon us.

We, the People of Cornwall, must have a greater say in how we are governed. We need a Cornish Assembly that can set the right democratic priorities for Cornwall and provide a stronger voice for our communities in Britain, in Europe and throughout the wider World.

I support the Campaign for a Cornish Assembly.

3. It is the view of MK that the declarations demonstrate significant support for greater powers to Cornwall, and that a detailed proposal for a National Assembly should be placed before the people of Cornwall in a binding referendum.

¹ The Labour Government – which supported devolution to other parts of the UK – dismissed the 50,546 declarations. It refused to consider the demands for devolution to Cornwall and continued to centralise power to unelected regional government bodies for the “south west region.” It then undermined the existing democratic set-up in Cornwall, when it abolished Cornwall’s six district councils and centralised local government to a single unitary authority.

The evolving politics of the United Kingdom

4. Devolution has led to the establishment of a Scottish Parliament, Assemblies for Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as an Assembly for London.
5. The devolved administrations have certainly grown in stature and authority in recent years, and constitutional change continues to rise up the political agenda across the whole of the United Kingdom.
6. The National Assembly of Wales gained law-making powers in 2011 following a second referendum and, in 2013, the Westminster Government announced that the Welsh Government would be given borrowing powers, control of landfill tax and stamp duty. The Westminster Government further confirmed that there would be a bill in the House of Commons that would give permission to hold a referendum on the devolution of income tax.
7. On 18th September 2014, the people of Scotland will go to the polls to vote on whether their country becomes an independent state. The Scottish Government has published a White Paper, *Scotland's Future*, setting out its plans for full self-government, while opponents of Scottish independence are already promising more powers to the Scottish Parliament if people vote no.
8. Mebyon Kernow believes that there needs to be a mature, respectful and wide-ranging debate about the future of the whole of the United Kingdom and how it is governed.
9. There is certainly a desperate need to address the unequal constitutional relationships between the various nations and regions of the UK, as well as the centralising influence of London and the South East of England.
10. The future constitutional status of Cornwall should be at the very heart of this debate.

A new democratic settlement for Cornwall

11. Cornwall is a historic Celtic nation, just like Scotland and Wales, with its own identity, culture, language, traditions and history. It has a distinct constitutional position that reinforces Cornish nationhood through the Duchy of Cornwall and Stannary Law. Cornwall also has a distinct economic profile, with the lowest output in the whole of the UK.
12. However, at the present time, Cornwall is alone amongst the Celtic nations of the United Kingdom in having no form of effective self-government. It simply lacks the tools to make important political, economic, environmental and social decisions for itself.
13. Government bodies, quangos and agencies which develop key strategies and policies are located outside of Cornwall. They inevitably fail to recognise the strengths of Cornwall or understand the special needs of its communities. It means that approaches specifically relevant to Cornwall are rarely pursued by central government.
14. Mebyon Kernow is campaigning for the recognition of Cornwall as a distinct national community for all forms of governance and administration.
15. MK is committed to building a new democratic settlement, with the meaningful devolution of significant powers to a National Assembly of Cornwall.
16. It is the view of MK that Cornwall merits stand-alone legislation, like the other Celtic parts of the UK. It should not be dealt with as a so-called "English region" or, as is often the case, a mere portion of such an "English region."
17. The Party for Cornwall also believes that sovereignty lies with the people and the powers of the National Assembly should be increased when that is shown to be the democratic will of the people of Cornwall.

A National Assembly of Cornwall

18. Mebyon Kernow has a manifesto commitment to the creation of a legislative National Assembly of Cornwall, with powers broadly equivalent to the present Scottish Parliament, through a “Government of Cornwall Act.”
19. It would have the capability to create primary legislation within its various areas of competence, without reference to Westminster, as well as democratic control over most areas of domestic politics in Cornwall, and associated public expenditure, as listed below:

Agriculture, fisheries and food, including food standards and food security.

Arts and culture, including broadcasting, libraries, museums, and support for the Cornish language.

Economic development, including regeneration, promotion of trade and inward investment, and promotion of tourism.

Education and training, including school education, further and higher education, training policy and lifelong learning.

Energy policy, including renewable energy and energy efficiency measures.

Environment and heritage including all forms of environmental protection, flood defence and the protection of the historic environment.

Health, including full responsibility for the National Health Service in Cornwall.

Home affairs, including the emergency services, prisons and emergency planning.

Housing, including investment in affordable housing.

Local government, including local government finance and taxation.

Planning, including a National Planning Policy Framework for Cornwall.

Social services, including child protection and support for the voluntary sector.

Sport, including a Cornish Sports Council.

Transport, including responsibility for all forms of road, air and sea transport, as well as support for the public transport infrastructure.

20. The National Assembly would also have the ability to vary income tax powers.

The number of Assembly Members and electoral arrangements

21. It is the view of Mebyon Kernow that the National Assembly of Cornwall should comprise approximately forty Assembly Members (AMs).
22. There would be a four year fixed term for each Assembly and AMs would be elected via multi-member constituencies, each returning 3-4 AMs, using the Single Transferable Vote system of preferential voting.
23. The full details of the constituency arrangements, based on geographic and community identity and the wishes of the people of Cornwall, would be agreed by a locally-based Commission following widespread local consultation.

The Cornish Government

24. It is considered vital that the administrative apparatus of the National Assembly is structured for the best advantage of Cornwall, with robust constitutional procedures in place to ensure thorough and detailed scrutiny of the Cornish Government.

25. Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall envisages that the Cornish Government would comprise a First Minister and an Executive of between four and six ministers. A small number of junior ministers would also be appointed to assist the Executive with their work.
26. The Cornish Government would be accountable to the National Assembly in the same way that the UK Government is accountable to the UK Parliament.
27. The First Minister and Cornish Government would set budgets for the public sector in Cornwall and devise the legislative programme for each parliamentary session. These would be scrutinised, challenged and modified by the remaining AMs through a series of strategic committees and select committees, before being democratically agreed by all AMs in the National Assembly itself.
28. The creation of a National Assembly of Cornwall would also lead to a locally-based civil service to support the new democracy in Cornwall, with an integrated structure covering the Assembly, local government and other public bodies.

Relationship with the Westminster Government

29. The Westminster Parliament would retain authority over a range of powers. Matters reserved to central government would include benefits and social security, immigration, defence, foreign policy, and employment, trade and industry.
30. The relationship between the National Assembly and the Westminster Parliament would be extremely significant and mechanisms would need to be put in place to ensure that Cornwall is able to work constructively in partnership with Westminster on matters of joint interest.

31. This would include a Secretary of State for Cornwall, who would work with the National Assembly and ensure that Cornish interests are effectively represented within the UK Government.

Relationship with the public sector in Cornwall

32. The National Assembly of Cornwall would set the funding and policy framework for the majority of the public sector within Cornwall, which would include local government, educational institutions, health bodies and other public bodies.
33. At the present time, much of the public sector is dominated by unelected bodies, but it is anticipated that the responsibilities of most of these bodies would be incorporated into departments of the new National Assembly.
34. However, there will be a small number of other public bodies created on a Cornwall-wide basis. These would include Cornish Heritage (taking over the responsibilities of English Heritage in Cornwall), Natural Cornwall (in place of Natural England) and a Cornish Sports Council.
35. The National Assembly of Cornwall would ensure open and accountable appointments to such public bodies and it would hold them to account for their actions and retain the power to legislate in respect of their activities.

Relationship with local government

36. Mebyon Kernow is committed to the creation of at least four principal councils to deliver local government services, within the framework of legislation set by the National Assembly.
37. These councils would replace the unitary authority, though the principal councils would be empowered to work in partnership to provide some Cornwall-wide services where appropriate.

38. MK takes the view that each of the principal authorities should have 35-45 members, with the precise boundaries and the electoral arrangements to be agreed by a locally-based Commission, based on geographic and community identity and the wishes of the people of Cornwall following widespread local consultation. Councillors would be elected via multi-member constituencies using the STV system of preferential voting.
39. MK is committed to a grassroots “bottom-up” form of democracy and to the principle of subsidiarity with political decisions made at as local a level as possible, with support for the devolution of significant decision-making and resources to local town and parish councils.

Relationship with Europe and the wider World

40. Mebyon Kernow believes that the National Assembly of Cornwall would work with regions and nations throughout the British Isles, Europe and the wider World.
41. The political recognition of Cornwall as a unit for greater self-government within the United Kingdom would also lead to greater opportunities to promote Cornwall on the global stage. This would include:
 - Representation on trans-national bodies such as the British-Irish Council.
 - Greater representation within the structures of the European Union, with Cornwall having its own Member of the European Parliament.
42. Cornwall would also be able to have representative offices in Brussels and other key locations, in order to promote Cornwall, its businesses and encourage trade and commerce.

Financial basis of the devolution settlement

43. The devolved administrations within the UK are funded by a block grant from the UK Treasury. The block grants for the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly of Wales, respectively, are approximately £30 billion and £15 billion.
44. A National Assembly of Cornwall would be funded in a similar manner, with a needs-based settlement. This would be allocated to the devolved body so that it would be able to make the key spending decisions for Cornwall in accordance with the needs and priorities of the area.
45. Cornwall Council has estimated that, in 2008-2009, the total extent of governmental expenditure associated with Cornwall was about £3.8 billion – though this has dropped markedly because of deep cuts from the present Coalition Government.
46. However, this figure needs to be taken with significant caution, because government data often does not reflect Cornwall as a distinct economic unit. The total includes:
 - Some estimates of Cornwall's share of expenditure across central government's "south west region," rebased by population;
 - The funding of certain services based in Devon (eg. NHS hospitals in West Devon);
 - Cornwall's share of non-identifiable UK-wide expenditure (such as the state and government bureaucracy), the cost of which is deemed notionally shared across the whole of the United Kingdom, though the actual economic benefits are rarely felt within Cornwall.
47. The development of a block grant for Cornwall would allow the historic under-funding of Cornwall and its public services to be addressed. This has been recognised as a key issue by all political parties in Cornwall, and by the unitary authority, and it is necessary to conduct a thorough review of the funding Cornwall should receive from central government.

Economic basis of the devolution settlement

48. The United Kingdom – even taking into account the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – is an over-centralised state, dominated by London and the South East of England. As a consequence, central government policies favour the South East. Other areas lose out and this is reflected in the economic performance of areas such as Cornwall.
49. Cornwall's Gross Value Added (per capita) in 2012 was only 61.2% of the UK average – down from 62.5% in the previous year. It is the worst performing region in the whole of the United Kingdom and, between 2015-2020, will receive the top level of European structural funding to tackle Cornwall's low economic performance.
50. Central government has failed Cornwall, and Mebyon Kernow believes that the best way to improve the Cornish economy would be for strategies and policies to be devised by those people who live in Cornwall and have a tangible stake in the success of their policies.
51. Mebyon Kernow maintains that a National Assembly of Cornwall would be in a strong position to build a more prosperous economy. It would, for example, be able to support Cornwall's traditional and emerging industries, build on Cornwall's sense of place, its unique brand, and maritime potential. It would also be able to prioritise infrastructure improvements that would benefit the Cornish economy.
52. The National Assembly of Cornwall would have full responsibility for structural funding received from the European Union, which is of extreme importance for the economic regeneration of the area.

Democratic basis of the devolution settlement

53. Democratically elected and locally accountable politicians in Cornwall presently have limited control over public expenditure.
54. The Westminster Parliament retains control over most political decisions of real significance. Local government makes up only a portion of the public sector, and central government continues to remove power and financial resource from local councils, transferring influence to unelected bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Health & Well-Being Board.
55. A National Assembly of Cornwall would be ceded powers from central government and it would also reclaim powers exercised by a wide range of other unelected bodies. As noted previously, the responsibilities of most of these bodies would be incorporated into the departments of the new National Assembly, though a small number of other Cornwall-based public bodies would be created.
56. Likewise, civil servants based in places such as Bristol and London would no longer be dealing with issues in Cornwall. Professionals dealing with, for example, Cornwall's environment, emergency services and principal highway network, would be based in Cornwall – creating many new jobs and boosting the local economy.
57. Mebyon Kernow would also work to ensure that the powers of local government are not negated, but enhanced where possible.
58. The decentralisation of political and economic power around the United Kingdom would help build a more federal form of governance, which would mean that it would not be appropriate for Cornish MPs to vote on matters which did not materially affect Cornwall.
59. With Westminster responsible for less areas of competence, it would also lead to a reduction in the number of MPs.

Tackling Cornwall's democratic deficit

60. Cornwall is suffering from a massive democratic deficit, and has less democratically accountable politicians than most other parts of the United Kingdom.
61. Cornwall (population 534,000) is disadvantaged by not having a National Assembly that can legislate for the best interests of Cornwall and its people. In terms of local government, Cornwall only has 123 councillors on its single principal authority – each responsible for about 4,340 people. Prior to the centralisation of local government in 2009, Cornwall had 331 councillors on principal local authorities.
62. In contrast, Scotland (population 5.29 million) has 129 MSPs and 1,222 principal authority councillors, while Wales (population 3.06 million) has 60 AMs and 1,254 councillors.
63. The contrast with the local government arrangements in the neighbouring English counties of Devon and Somerset is also very stark. Devon (population 1,412,000) has 492 councillors, while Somerset (population 912,900) has 425 councillors.
64. The creation of about 40 Assembly Members and increasing the number of principal authority councillors to around 150 would help to democratise civic life in Cornwall.

Greater recognition for Cornwall

65. Winning greater powers for Cornwall goes hand in hand with the recognition of Cornwall as a national entity, which would benefit its distinct cultural traditions and the rights of its people.
66. Potential further gains could include:
 - A full Inquiry into the Duchy of Cornwall and Cornwall's ambiguous constitutional relationship with the Crown, and the contradictions between this constitutional status and administrative arrangements.
 - The protection of Cornish people through the Framework Convention on National Minorities, as already afforded to Scottish and Welsh people.
 - The enhanced protection of the Cornish Language through the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.
 - The entry of representative teams into sporting occasions such as the Commonwealth Games, alongside teams from, for example, Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man.

Benefits from devolution

67. When he launched his Government's plans for a Scottish Parliament in 1997, the late Donald Dewar stated that the aim was for a "fair and just settlement for Scotland within the framework of the United Kingdom." He added that it would be "good for both Scotland and the UK," that it would "strengthen democratic control and make government more accountable," and "reflect the needs and circumstances of Scotland regardless of race, gender or disability."
68. Mebyon Kernow wants the same "fair and just settlement" for Cornwall, which we believe would also be good for both Cornwall and the UK.
69. Devolution to Scotland and Wales has made a real difference to both countries – politically, economically, socially and culturally.
70. In September 2012, in a speech marking the 15th anniversary of the positive referendum vote for a Scottish Parliament, Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon eloquently summed up the significance of the democratic rebirth of her country.

"Fifteen years ago, the people of Scotland made the historic decision to reconvene the Scottish Parliament, meaning that some key decisions affecting our daily lives would be made in Scotland for the first time in three hundred years ... Scotland has achieved so much that we can all be proud of - right across the parliament and across the country.

"Scotland has led the way in the UK by introducing the smoking ban, we passed world-leading climate change legislation, we reintroduced free higher education in Scotland and have a record number of Scottish students at Scottish universities ... we have delivered 1,000 additional police officers and our National Health Service is being protected and promoted."

71. Specific examples of legislation, strategies and measures agreed by the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly of Wales include the following:

- Scottish Parliament agreed a ban on smoking in bars, restaurants and all public places. (2005)
- National Assembly of Wales and Scottish Parliament both scrapped prescription charges. (2007/2011)
- National Assembly of Wales and Scottish Parliament both abolished car parking charges at NHS hospitals. (2008)
- Scottish Parliament has put 1,000 more policemen on Scotland's streets since 2007. By comparison, funding cuts to "Devon and Cornwall" police mean there will be 700 fewer police officers by 2015.
- Scottish Parliament passed a radical climate change bill, which set a target for 2050, an interim target for 2030, as well as annual targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. (2009)
- National Assembly of Wales and Scottish Parliament have protected Welsh and Scottish communities from the top-down reorganisation, and creeping privatisation of the National Health Service being experienced in Cornwall and England. (2010-ongoing)

- National Assembly of Wales became the only part of the UK to set statutory waste and recycling targets, in line with its long-term waste strategy *Toward Zero Waste*. (2010)
- Scottish Parliament reintroduced free university education for Scottish students studying in Scotland, whereas the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition at Westminster has imposed tuition fees of up to £9,000 a year. (2011)
- Scottish Parliament introduced “zero waste” regulation to make Scotland was of the most resource efficient nations in Europe. (2012)
- Scottish Parliament imposed levy on large supermarkets, in order to support town centres and small shops. (2012)
- National Assembly of Wales passed a law to allow the suspension of the “right to buy” of council houses and housing association homes in areas of significant housing pressure. (2012)
- Scottish Parliament agreed to allocate additional funding to off-set the damaging “bedroom tax” imposed by the Westminster Parliament. (2014)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Isn't Cornwall just too small for its own Assembly?

A1. There are many independent countries, with populations smaller than that of Cornwall. These include Iceland (320,000), Luxembourg (525,000) and Malta (453,000). There are also countless examples of smaller regions that have devolved governments. This was acknowledged in central government's 2002 White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice*, which recorded regions such as Vorarlberg, Austria (350,000), Corsica, France (300,000), Valle d'Aosta, Italy (115,000), Flevoland, Netherlands (330,000) and Navarra, Spain (540,000).

Q2. We already have a unitary authority. Shouldn't we just ask for more powers for Cornwall Council?

A2. There is a widespread misconception that Cornwall Council could somehow evolve into a Cornish Assembly, without any wider political reforms. A law-making Cornish Assembly would represent national government – controlling the majority of the public sector in Cornwall including the National Health Service, all aspects of education, a wide range of public bodies, and local government. In terms of local government, MK's model mirrors that of Scotland, which has 32 principal local authorities below the Parliament, and Wales, which is served by 22 principal local authorities beneath the National Assembly.

Q3. Wouldn't a National Assembly of Cornwall simply be another layer of expensive politicians?

A3. A National Assembly of Cornwall would be responsible for making strategic decisions about Cornwall's future. It would bring greater decision-making back to Cornwall, and it would do away with the need for so many unelected bodies. It would also lead to a significant reduction in the number of unelected individuals on such bodies with little or no democratic control.

Q4. Wouldn't a National Assembly cost us all a lot more?

A4. Mebyon Kernow is confident that a new democratic settlement for Cornwall would actually save money and boost the Cornish economy. The increased democratisation of the UK would lead to the abolition of a large number of unelected bodies, and a National Assembly of Cornwall would also ensure that much of the business of government and administration, presently carried out in places such as Bristol or London, would be happening in Cornwall – creating a significant number of well-paid new jobs. A National Assembly would also be best placed to manage the expenditure of the majority of the public sector in Cornwall and to create the conditions to develop a more successful and sustainable Cornish economy.

Q5. Wouldn't it be better for Cornwall to be part of a greater SW region or to join forces with Devon?

A5. Since the 1960s, central government, big business and unelected and unaccountable quangos have been vigorously pursuing a south west or devonwall policy solution for Cornwall. It has been variously argued that Cornwall's interests were best served by merging Cornwall institutionally with Devon or regionalism on the "big south west" model even though Cornwall and its representatives would inevitably be in a minority. We have been told that the wider south west option would enhance the political and economic "clout" of Cornwall. In practice, evidence of this regionalism over the past four decades shows that the reverse has happened and is continuing to happen. Our economic performance is significantly behind the rest of the UK, our wages have fallen steadily further behind the UK average and Cornish jobs have been exported eastwards. We lost the Cornish Police Force to merger in the 1960s and, since then, the centralisation of a range of public bodies and organisations has undermined the Cornish economy and cost thousands of Cornish jobs.

Q6. What would be the point of MPs after a National Assembly came into being?

A6. The National Assembly of Cornwall would not be independent of the UK – it would be an integral and empowered part of the governance of the United Kingdom. Local MPs would still need to play a full and constructive role at Westminster, representing Cornish perspectives on a wide range of issues that the National Assembly would not be responsible for, such as foreign policy and defence.

Q7. Could you give an example of how it would work?

A7. Over the last few years, the unitary authority has been debating what Cornwall's housing target should be for the next twenty years. Central government claims that local councils can make the decision, but it has put in place an inspection regime that forces them to adopt higher targets than the majority of residents would prefer. As a result of this, the debate has been less about what is right for Cornwall, but more about what target councillors could get past central government. If there was a National Assembly of Cornwall, the housing target would be agreed locally. All related planning policies would also be devised in Cornwall, with the National Assembly producing a Planning Policy Framework to replace the NPPF produced by central government.

Q8. Would the new Assembly need a new purpose-built building?

A8. Mebyon Kernow considers that the National Assembly of Cornwall would not need such a new building. It is the view of the Party for Cornwall that existing buildings already in the public sector, such as New County Hall, could accommodate the new democratic settlement for Cornwall.

Chronology of devolution movements in Cornwall, Scotland and Wales

- 1536 Act of Union between Wales and England.
- 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England/Wales. Scottish Parliament dissolved, but legal powers devolved to Scotland.
- 1752 Last meeting of the Cornish Stannary Parliament.
- 1885 Office of Secretary of State for Scotland re-established for the first time since 1745.
- 1886 Home Rule Association established in Scotland, along with Cymru Fydd in Wales.
- 1901 Celtic-Cornish Society (Cowethas Celto-Kernuack) established.
- 1904 Cornwall recognised as a Celtic nation by the Pan-Celtic Congress.
- 1912 *Cornish Guardian* called for domestic self-government for Cornwall.
- 1925 Plaid Cymru formed in Pwllheli.
- 1926 Scottish Office established.
- 1932 Cornish cultural pressure group Tyr ha Tavas founded.
- 1934 Scottish National Party established.
- 1943 A number of university students formed Young Cornwall Movement.
- 1945 Robert McIntyre won the Westminster seat of Motherwell for SNP in a by-election.
- 1949 Scottish Covenant launched. It demanded a Scottish Parliament and was signed by two million people.
- 1951 Mebyon Kernow founded in Redruth to campaign for "self-government in domestic affairs in a federated United Kingdom."

- 1964 Labour government established Welsh Office with a seat in the Cabinet.
- 1965 MK secured first seats on local councils.
- 1966 Gwynfor Evans won Westminster seat of Carmarthen for Plaid Cymru in a by-election.
- 1967 Winnie Ewing won Westminster seat of Hamilton for SNP in a by-election.
- 1969 Royal Commission on Constitution (Kilbrandon) formed to investigate UK's constitutional structures.
- 1973 Kilbrandon Commission recommended devolved assemblies for Scotland and Wales, but proposals rejected as unworkable.
- 1974 11 SNP MPs and 3 Plaid Cymru MPs elected to Westminster.
Stannary Parliament revived by campaigners.
- 1978 Scotland Act and Wales Act agreed at Westminster.
- 1979 Scottish electorate backs a Scottish Assembly, but vote falls short of the condition requiring 40 per cent of the electorate to vote Yes.
Welsh voters reject devolution settlement.
- 1988 *A Claim of Right* published by Campaign for a Scottish Assembly.
- 1989 The cross-party and cross-sector Scottish Constitutional Convention launched.
- 1995 Scottish Constitutional Convention published final report *Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right*.
- 1997 Referendum provides overwhelming support for a Scottish Parliament, with tax raising powers.
Welsh voters back the creation of a Welsh Assembly by a slight margin.

- 1998 Scotland Act 1998 and the Government of Wales Bill introduced.
- 1999 Scottish Parliament reconvened in Edinburgh and National Assembly of Wales launched in Cardiff.
Cornish National Minority Report, seeking protected status for the Cornish, published.
- 2000 Cross-party Cornish Constitutional Convention is launched in Truro.
- 2001 50,546 declarations calling for a Cornish Assembly presented to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street, but ignored by central government.
- 2002 Labour Government launches *Your Region, Your Choice* White Paper on regional government for England. Cornish responses to White Paper out-number those from England.
- 2004 MORI poll shows 55% in favour of a Cornish Assembly, with 70% supportive of a referendum.
- 2006 The Government of Wales Act hands the National Assembly new powers, creating an executive body separate from the legislature.
- 2007 National Conversation on Scotland's Constitutional Future launched by Scottish Government.
- 2008 Formation of Calman Commission on Scottish devolution to review experience of devolution since 1998.
- 2009 Centralisation of local government imposed on Cornwall by Liberal Democrats at County Hall and Labour Government.
- 2011 National Assembly of Wales achieved legislative powers through a referendum.
SNP won a majority of seats at election to form Holyrood's first majority government.

- 2011 *Second Cornish National Minority Report* published with the support of political groups at Cornwall Council.
Nearly 84,000 people self-identify as Cornish in the 2011 census.
- 2013 Welsh Government secures borrowing powers, as well as control of landfill tax and stamp duty.
Scottish Government launches White Paper *Scotland's Future* on independence.

The consultation period is open until 30th June 2014 and we would like to hear from you.

Please send any comments on this document to:

Mebyon Kernow - the Party for Cornwall, Meridian House,
Heron Way, Truro, Kernow/Cornwall, TR1 2XN.

Or by email to:

info@mebyonkernow.org.

A revised version of this document will be published later in 2014.



Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall,
Meridian House, Heron Way, Truro,
Cornwall/Kernow TR1 2XN

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