

SPICe Fact Sheet

Duilleagan Fiosrachaidh SPICe

Dates of recess, dissolution, parliamentary years and recalls of Parliament

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This Fact Sheet provides a list of the parliamentary years since 1999 as well as the dates when the Scottish Parliament has been in recess, dissolution or has been recalled.

A parliamentary year is a period, normally of 12 months, beginning on the date of the first meeting of the Scottish Parliament following a general election, and on each subsequent anniversary of that date within that session.

Recess is a period when the Parliament is not dissolved but is not meeting for a particular length of time. The dates of recesses are decided by the Parliament on a motion from the Parliamentary Bureau that has regard to Scottish school holidays (Standing Orders Rule 2.3).

Dissolution is the official term for the end of a session. The Presiding Officer determines the date when the Parliament is expected to be dissolved and members



are notified of the date by the Clerk. Under the Scotland Act 1998 ordinary general elections are held on the first Thursday in May, every four years.

A recall occurs in the event of the Scottish Parliament reconvening when the Parliament is not sitting; this can be during term-time, dissolution or recess. Under Standing Orders Rule 2.2.10, the Presiding Officer ‘may convene the Parliament on other dates or at other times in an emergency.’

Parliamentary years

Session One	Start date	End date
Parliamentary Year 1	12 May 1999	11 May 2000
Parliamentary Year 2	12 May 2000	11 May 2001
Parliamentary Year 3	12 May 2001	11 May 2002
Parliamentary Year 4	12 May 2002	31 March 2003

Session Two	Start date	End date
Parliamentary Year 1	7 May 2003	6 May 2004
Parliamentary Year 2	7 May 2004	6 May 2005
Parliamentary Year 3	7 May 2005	6 May 2006
Parliamentary Year 4	7 May 2006	2 April 2007

Session Three	Start date	End date
Parliamentary Year 1	9 May 2007	8 May 2008
Parliamentary Year 2	9 May 2008	8 May 2009
Parliamentary Year 3	9 May 2009	8 May 2010
Parliamentary Year 4	9 May 2010	22 March 2011

Session Four	Start date	End date
Parliamentary Year 1	11 May 2011	10 May 2012
Parliamentary Year 2	11 May 2012	10 May 2013
Parliamentary Year 3	11 May 2013	10 May 2014
Parliamentary Year 4	11 May 2014	10 May 2015
Parliamentary Year 5	11 May 2015	23 March 2016

Session Five	Start date	End date
Parliamentary Year 1	12 May 2016	11 May 2017
Parliamentary Year 2	12 May 2017	11 May 2018
Parliamentary Year 3	12 May 2018	11 May 2019
Parliamentary Year 4	12 May 2019	11 May 2020
Parliamentary Year 5	12 May 2020	4 May 2021

Session Six	Start date	End date
Parliamentary Year 1	13 May 2021	12 May 2022
Parliamentary Year 2	13 May 2022	12 May 2023
Parliamentary Year 3	13 May 2023	12 May 2024
Parliamentary Year 4	13 May 2024	12 May 2025

Parliamentary Year 5	13 May 2025	8 April 2026
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Recess and Dissolution Dates

Session One: 12 May 1999 – 31 March 2003

Year	Recess	Start date	End date
1999	Summer	5 July 1999	30 August 1999
1999	Autumn	11 October 1999	22 October 1999
1999	Christmas	20 December 1999	7 January 2000
2000	Easter	10 April 2000	24 April 2000
2000	Summer	10 July 2000	03 September 2000
2000	Autumn	9 October 2000	22 October 2000
2000	Christmas	21 December 2000	7 January 2001
2001	February	19 February 2001	23 February 2001
2001	Easter	9 April 2001	20 April 2001
2001	Summer	2 July 2001	31 August 2001
2001	Autumn	8 October 2001	19 October 2001
2001	Christmas	24 December 2001	04 January 2002
2002	February	18 February 2002	22 February 2002
2002	Easter	29 March 2002	12 April 2002
2002	Summer	11 July 2002	30 August 2002
2002	Autumn	14 October 2002	25 October 2002
2002	Christmas	23 December 2002	3 January 2003
2003	Dissolution	1 April 2003 (Dissolution began at midnight on 31 March 2003)	1 May 2003

Session Two: 7 May 2003 – 2 April 2007

Year	Recess	Start date	End date
2003	Summer	28 June 2003	31 August 2003
2003	Autumn	11 October 2003	26 October 2003
2003	Christmas	20 December 2003	4 January 2004
2004	February	14 February 2004	22 February 2004
2004	Easter	3 April 2004	18 April 2004
2004	Summer	26 June 2004	29 August 2004
2004	Autumn	11 October 2004	22 October 2004
2004	Christmas	27 December 2004	7 January 2005
2005	February	12 February 2005	20 February 2005
2005	Easter	25 March 2005	10 April 2005
2005	Summer	2 July 2005	4 September 2005
2005	Autumn	8 October 2005	23 October 2005
2005	Christmas	24 December 2005	8 January 2006
2006	February	11 February 2006	19 February 2006
2006	Easter	1 April 2006	17 April 2006
2006	Summer	1 July 2006	3 September 2006
2006	Autumn	7 October 2006	22 October 2006
2006	Christmas	23 December 2006	7 January 2007

2007	Dissolution	3 April 2007 (Dissolution began at midnight on 2 April 2007)	3 May 2007
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Session Three: 9 May 2007 – 22 March 2011

Year	Recess	Start date	End date
2007	Summer	30 June 2007	2 September 2007
2007	Autumn	6 October 2007	21 October 2007
2007	Christmas	22 December 2007	4 January 2008
2008	February	9 February 2008	17 February 2008
2008	Easter	29 March 2008	13 April 2008
2008	Summer	28 June 2008	31 August 2008
2008	Autumn	11 October 2008	26 October 2008
2008	Christmas	20 December 2008	4 January 2009
2009	February	14 February 2009	22 February 2009
2009	Easter	4 April 2009	19 April 2009
2009	Summer	27 June 2009	30 August 2009
2009	Autumn	10 October 2009	25 October 2009
2009	Christmas	21 December 2009	4 January 2010
2010	February	13 February 2010	21 February 2010
2010	Easter	27 March 2010	11 April 2010
2010	Summer	5 July 2010	5 September 2010
2010	Autumn	9 October 2010	24 October 2010
2010	Christmas	23 December 2010	9 January 2011
2011	February	14 February 2011	20 February 2011
2011	Dissolution	23 March 2011 (Dissolution began at midnight on 22 March 2011)	5 May 2011

Session Four: 11 May 2011 – 23 March 2016

Year	Recess	Start date	End date
2011	Summer	2 July 2011	4 September 2011
2011	Autumn	8 October 2011	23 October 2011
2011	Christmas	23 December 2011	8 January 2012
2012	February	13 February 2012	19 February 2012
2012	Easter	31 March 2012	15 April 2012
2012	Summer	30 June 2012	2 September 2012
2012	Autumn	6 October 2012	21 October 2012
2012	Christmas	22 December 2012	6 January 2013
2013	February	9 February 2013	17 February 2013
2013	Easter	30 March 2013	14 April 2013
2013	Summer	29 June 2013	1 September 2013
2013	Autumn	12 October 2013	27 October 2013
2013	Christmas	21 December 2013	5 January 2014
2014	February	8 February 2014	16 February 2014
2014	Easter	5 April 2014	20 April 2014
2014	Summer	28 June 2014	3 August 2014
2014	Summer	23 August 2014	21 September 2014

2014	Autumn	11 October 2014	26 October 2014
2014	Christmas	20 December 2014	4 January 2015
2015	February	7 February 2015	15 February 2015
2015	Easter	4 April 2015	19 April 2015
2015	Summer	27 June 2015	30 August 2015
2015	Autumn	10 October 2015	25 October 2015
2015	Christmas	19 December 2015	4 January 2016
2016	February	13 February 2016	21 February 2016
2016	Dissolution	24 March 2016 (Dissolution began at midnight on 23 March 2016)	5 May 2016

Session Five: 12 May 2016 – 4 May 2021

Year	Recess	Start date	End date
2016	Summer	2 July 2016	4 September 2016
2016	Autumn	8 October 2016	23 October 2016
2016	Christmas	24 December 2016	8 January 2017
2017	February	11 February 2017	19 February 2017
2017	Easter	1 April 2017	16 April 2017
2017	Summer	1 July 2017	3 September 2017
2017	Autumn	7 October 2017	22 October 2017
2017	Christmas	23 December 2017	7 January 2018
2018	February	10 February 2018	18 February 2018
2018	Easter	31 March 2018	15 April 2018
2018	Summer	30 June 2018	2 September 2018
2018	Autumn	6 October 2018	21 October 2018
2018	Christmas	22 December 2018	6 January 2019
2019	February	9 February 2019	17 February 2019
2019	Easter	06 April 2019	21 April 2019
2019	Summer	30 June 2019	1 September 2019
2019	Autumn	12 October 2019	27 October 2019
2019	Christmas	21 December 2019	5 January 2020
2020	February	8 February 2020	16 February 2020
2020	Easter	04 April 2020	19 April 2020
2020	Summer	27 June 2020	9 August 2020 (With the exception of 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 July 2020 and 6 August 2020 on which dates business may be programmed by the Parliamentary Bureau.)
2020	Autumn	10 October 2020	25 October 2020 (With the exception of 15 October 2020 on which date business may be programmed by the Parliamentary Bureau.)
2020	Christmas	24 December 2020	8 January 2021

2021	Campaign recess	25 March 2021 (Instead of dissolution, from 25 March the Parliament was in recess until the day before the election. This recess was called a “campaign recess”. Dissolution happened on 5 May, the day before the election.)	4 May 2021
2021	Dissolution	5 May 2021	5 May 2021

Session Six: 13 May 2021 – 8 April 2026

Year	Recess	Start date	End date
2021	Summer	26 June 2021	29 August 2021
2021	Autumn	9 October 2021	24 October 2021
2021	Christmas	24 December 2021	9 January 2022
2022	February	12 February 2022	20 February 2022
2022	Easter	2 April 2022	17 April 2022
2022	Summer	2 July 2022	4 September 2022
2022	Autumn	8 October 2022	23 October 2022
2022	Christmas	24 December 2022	8 January 2023
2023	February	11 February 2023	19 February 2023
2023	Easter	1 April 2023	16 April 2023
2023	Summer	1 July 2023	3 September 2023
2023	Autumn	7 October 2023	22 October 2023
2023	Christmas	23 December 2023	7 January 2024
2024	February	10 February 2024	18 February 2024
2024	Easter	30 March 2024	14 April 2024
2024	Summer	29 June 2024	01 September 2024
2024	Autumn	12 October 2024	27 October 2024
2024	Christmas	21 December 2024	5 January 2025
2025	February	8 February 2025	16 February 2025
2025	Easter	5 April 2025	20 April 2025
2025	Summer	28 June 2025	31 August 2025
2025	Autumn	11 October 2025	26 October 2025
2025	Christmas	20 December 2025	4 January 2026
2026	Pre-election recess period (The Parliament was in a pre-election recess period from 26 March to 8 April 2026, followed by a dissolution period from 9 April to 6 May 2026. Taken together, the pre-election recess period and the	26 March 2026	8 April 2026

	dissolution period are referred to as the “Campaign period”.)		
2026	Dissolution	9 April 2026	6 May 2026

Recalls of Parliament

Session One: 12 May 1999 – 31 March 2003

Date	Reason
13 October 2000	Following the death of Donald Dewar
3 April 2002	Following the death of the Queen Mother

Session Three: 9 May 2007 – 22 March 2011

Date	Reason
24 August 2009	Following the release of Mr Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al Megrahi.

Session Five: 12 May 2016 – 4 May 2021

Date	Reason
30 December 2020	Following the UK Withdrawal Agreement reached with the European Union.
4 January 2021	To consider the Covid emergency.
12 April 2021	Following the death of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.
12 September 2022	Following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

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