Highland Youth Voice

Evaluation of HYV Elections 2004

http://www.highlandyouthvoice.org

International Teledemocracy Centre
Napier University
10 Colinton Road
Edinburgh EH10 5DT

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Prepared For: Highland Youth Voice

HYV Elections September 2004: Evaluation

1. Introduction

1.1 Summary of findings

There was an overall drop in turnout, following a drop in turnout in the previous election. There was also a large drop in the number of candidates standing, leading to a drop in the number of schools holding elections.

Feedback received from teaching staff attributes the lack of candidates (and lower turnout) to students' lack of interest in the Youth Parliament. However, it should be noted that only 18 out of 30 schools' staff provided feedback in any form, which may indicate a lack of interest at a staff level.

Feedback from young people attending the Highland Youth Voice (HYV) Parliament meeting at Carbisdale Castle, in December 2004, attributes students' lack of interest to a lack of information and knowledge about what Highland Youth Voice is and what HYV members do, with most claiming they knew very little about these until after the first workshops at the Carbisdale meeting.

1.2 Structure of report

This report summarises the findings from the evaluation of the Highland Youth Voice (HYV) elections, held in September 2004.

It begins with a summary of the turnout figures, compared to those in 2000 and 2002.

An overview of the organisation and running of the 2004 elections is then given. This includes information about changes made to the elections due to findings from the evaluation of the 2002 HYV elections.

The evaluation methods used are then listed in chronological order. The results of the evaluation have been clustered into topics, across evaluation methods. The suggested actions follow the topics as clustered in the results section.

The appendices contain materials used in the evaluation.

1.3 Note on Youth Forums and HYV

While electoral activity centred on schools, for the purposes of this document, the terms HYV members and HYV representatives are used to refer to both *young people representing their schools* (as a constituency) and *young people representing their local area through a Youth Forum* (as a constituency).

1.4 Website Redesign

Since this report was written the website has been redesigned. URLs in this report have been changed to the relevant archived version. The current website is available at http://www.highlandyouthvoice.org/home.asp

2. Overview of 2004 Election

2.1 Key facts

- Elections were held over the period 17th September to 1st October 2004. Voting was scheduled to end at 4pm on 31st September (Thursday) but extended a day: partly in response to a request from Dingwall Academy and partly due to technical problems (see below).

- 6 schools voted online (compared to 10 schools in 2002 and 9 schools on 2000). 6 schools voted through a paper ballot (compared to 9 schools in 2002 and 11 in 2000)[1]. 1 school elected members through a school council meeting (as in 2002 and 2000). In 17 schools the election was uncontested (compared to 10 in 2002 and 9 in 2000).[2]
    o Of these (schools in which the election was uncontested) 5 had intended to vote online.

- Turnout, in schools which held an election, dropped from an average of 61% in 2002 (72% in 2000) to 58% in 2004.
- Turnout, in schools voting online, dropped by 4%: from an average of 52% in 2002 (73% in 2000) to 48% in 2004.
- Turnout, in schools voting by paper ballot, dropped by 4%: from an average of 71% in 2002 (68% in 2000) to 67% in 2004.

2.2 Organisation

The 2004 elections were primarily organised by Highland Council and the International Teledemocracy Centre (ITC), with the help of teaching staff and youth workers in schools involved.

2.3 Changes arising from evaluation of the 2002 elections

The organisation of the elections was based on that of 2002, with changes made based on feedback from teaching staff and HYV members and information and opinions garnered by Clearplan in their external evaluation of HYV (completed in Spring 2004).

Evaluation methods used in 2002
1. An evaluation with HYV members took place in the evaluation workshop at the Drumnadrochit Parliament meeting in November 2002.
2. Some feedback was received via email from teaching staff.
3. An external evaluation of HYV was conducted by Clearplan (completed in Spring 2004). This included some evaluation of HYV's electoral methods.

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[1] Note that our records may not be complete e.g. feedback from Kingussie mentions "a very successful election campaign", yet we have no record of any candidates there.

[2] Note that there were 29 schools involved in 2000 and 30 in 2002 and 2004, due to the opening of Ardnamurchan High in 2002.

Table of changes made

Change made	Reason for change	2002 evaluation source
Changes made to HYV website, including e-voting system		
Navigation links (including the link to candidates' statements) were made available at the beginning of the login process.	Some schools had set their computers to begin at the Login form – bypassing the rest of the website	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit)
A note on password usage was added below the login form.	To clarify that there was no space between the name and number. This had previously been a problem in one school.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit)
Diaries were set up at Parliament meetings. These were linked to from the *information page* and from 2 pre-voting pages – *Who can stand for election?* and *Who can vote in the election?* under the heading 'What do Youth Voice members do?'[3]. See also 'Publicity' below.	To make attendees' accounts of HYV meetings available to potential candidates and voters.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit)
A *Member Job Description[4]* page added (written by HYV members at the Drumnadrochit Parliament).	To give more information about what HYV members do.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit) and external evaluation.
Extra links back to the home page added (after the last elections)	To improve navigation.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit)
The discussion forum had been simplified and colour coded.	To improve ease of use.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit)

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[3] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/ElectionPages/whocanstand.asp
http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/ElectionPages/whocanvote.asp
http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/HYVnewsSection/HYVNewsPages/photos.asp

[4] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/ElectionPages/membersrole.asp

Passwords and logins		
These were needed to use the e-voting system and to make comments in the discussions in the Your Voice section[5].		
Students were not issued with PINs. These were used in the system, but not visible.	To simplify the login process	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit) and feedback from teaching staff
Encouragement to distribute login details in registration classes, as close to the elections as possible.	In order to minimise students losing them between receiving and using them.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit) and feedback from teaching staff
New ways of creating passwords had been developed in August 2003. However, there may still be legacy passwords held by older students.[6]	To ensure that new passwords were clean and unlikely to be construed as insulting.	Members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit) and feedback from teaching staff
Every effort was made to deal with discrepancies in the school rolls that could lead to password problems.	To maximise the accuracy of the e-voting database.	Feedback from teaching staff (during the elections)
Changes to methods for recruiting candidates		
Manifesto and nomination forms combined as a leaflet, which also outlined the duties and advantages of being an HYV member and clarified who was eligible to stand. It also included a list of local people (staff and youth workers) who could help young people fill in the form and support them through their campaign (not exclusively)[7]. The leaflets/forms were available from staff or could be downloaded directly by	To empower students to stand without having to consult teaching staff or be approved by them. To weaken HYV's reputation as a 'school thing'. Also to prevent teaching staff limiting who could stand (e.g. restricting to specific years) It was hoped that this would lead to a more representative sample of young people serving on HYV. Younger HYV members	External evaluation and members' feedback (from Drumnadrochit)

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[5] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/YourVoice/
[6] Note that no complaints about the unsuitability of passwords were received this year.
[7] We only have feedback of this happening in Ardnamurchan High. The Youth worker felt that her help was valuable in this, but that she had not been provided with any resources specifically to help with this task.

young people from the website. Completed forms could then be returned to HYV by teaching staff, by youth workers or directly by young people.	would be more likely to serve their full term as HYV members.	
Changes to elections timetable		
Nominations and voting periods extended.	To give more flexibility to schools	In 2002, one school had asked to vote early and a couple of schools had needed to vote later

2.4   Publicity

Publicising the elections to students

It was acknowledged that this was important in order to gain candidates, encourage students to vote and promote understanding of what HYV is and does.

Posters with basic information about the election, including the website URL, were designed by HYV staff and included in the material sent to schools. The material sent to schools is available as Appendix 4.

In 2002, 2 young people had visited all schools in a 'Roadshow' to publicise HYV and the elections and encourage people to stand as candidates. It was decided that this would not be practical this time. This decision was partly based on some negative feedback about the Roadshow, which implied the confidence of the 2 young people presenting it had been intimidating to some students.

Publicising the elections to teaching staff

This was primarily designed to publicise the elections as a practical way for students to experience democracy as part of the Citizenship Education curriculum. In practice, this became part of an email sent to all head teachers.

A 'mock' online election[8] was created so that staff (and students) could try the e-voting system to see how simple it was to use. This was not ready as early as had been hoped (i.e. before the summer holidays) but was available before the nomination process began. There is no technical evidence, however, that it was used by staff prior to the election.

Publicity planned but not accomplished

Lack of knowledge about what HYV actually does was known to be a problem. A summary report of HYV's achievements over the 2 years since the last election was to be produced to ameliorate this. The report would be included in the information sent

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[8] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/Mock_elections/ElectionPages/mock_info.asp

to schools and also be added to the *Achievements*[9] page of the website, as this page had hardly been updated since November 2002. This report has not been created at time of writing and apart from some News items[10] and minutes[11] from Executive Committee meetings (to January 2004 only) there is no record of HYV's activities between Parliament meetings.

At the suggestion of the HYV Executive Committee, case studies written by Youth Voice members were to be presented in the form of a yearbook. This would be published on the website and made available to schools. However, no case studies were written.

A workshop was planned for the Sabhal Mor Ostaig Parliament meeting in June 2004 on the theme of publicity and PR. This would influence the posters and leaflets produced. However, this workshop was shelved.

There were also plans to give a presentation at HSHA (Highland Secondary Heads Association) meeting. However, no time could be allotted in the HSHA schedule.

2.5   Information for teaching staff

In order to reduce teaching staff's workload, it was decided to distribute less information[12] to teachers and distribute it nearer to the time of the election. All publicity and information, provided offline or by email, should direct people to the elections section of the website[13] or the HYV office for more information.

As this was the 3rd HYV election, it was presumed that schools would have a reasonable understanding of the elections process. However, some Youth Voice coordinators had not been involved in previous elections. For Ardnamurchan High, this was their first full election, as they have only been open 2 years.

Information sent to schools

This information is included as Appendix 4. It was sent out on August 20th 2004.
- A covering email for head teachers and youth voice coordinators
- An overview of the HYV 2004 elections: *Overview - teachers.doc*
- A 'task list' for schools: *Task list - schools.doc*
- Procedures for online and ballot box elections: *Procedures - Ballot Box.doc* and *Procedures - Online.doc*
- The nomination/manifesto/information leaflet[14]: *Leaflet - nominations manifesto contacts.doc*
- Publicity posters: *Posters.ppt*
- Ballot paper for schools holding a ballot box election: *Ballot Paper - school.doc*
- Member Job Description (as written at Drumnadrochit in 2002): *Member Job Description.doc*

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[9] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/HYVnewsSection/HYVNewsPages/achievements.asp
[10] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/HYVnews/
[11] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/HYVnewsSection/HYVnewsPages/minutes.asp
[12] In 2002, the 'teachers' pack' had been sent out in Spring 2002 and contained a range of useful documents including, for example, safe use of the Internet for young people.
[13] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/Elections/
[14] Also available here: http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/nomination_form.doc

- Parental consent forms for those who become HYV members: *Parental Consent Form inc additional essential info - new 140704.doc*
- Change of details form, for changes to HYV membership between elections: *Change of Details Form.doc*

2.6   Youth Forums

The number of Youth Forum representatives standing on HYV had been increased from 2 to 4 per area. It was hoped that Youth Forums would get more involved in the election process, especially holding their own elections and having some sort of electoral presence on the website (e.g. having their candidates' manifestos published, perhaps publishing the dates of their meetings). Emails were sent to youth workers to encourage this. However, no information was received from youth forums about their elections and how their representatives were chosen remains unknown.

3. Evaluation Methods

The results of these evaluation methods follow in sections 4 and 5. Section 4 contains the results of the analysis of turnout figures. Section 5 contains the results of the qualitative evaluation methods. Analysis of these results involved clustering into thematic topics.

3.1   Monitoring of website

The website was monitored throughout the election period. ITC were informed of problems experienced by teachers, either directly or via HYV.

3.2   Observation

The ITC observed a day's voting (online) at Dingwall Academy, which included a discussion with Dingwall's Youth Voice coordinator. This discussion and the observation have been included with the telephone interviews.

3.3   Turnout

Turnout figures were calculated for online elections and gathered for ballot box elections. Turnout data was analysed by comparing figures from the 2004 elections with those from the elections in 2000 and 2002.

3.4   Feedback forms from teaching staff

An evaluation form was designed as part of the results form. This was sent to Youth Voice coordinators, in all schools, as an email attachment. Staff at schools where the election was uncontested were encouraged to complete the form, as well as those in which an election was held, and the form included questions specifically aimed at these schools. The form was completed by staff in 8 schools. HYV staff made several attempts to gather feedback from schools which did not complete the form. This led to 'casual' feedback, by email, from another 3 schools.

The form is attached as Appendix 1

3.5   Telephone interviews with teaching staff

Telephone interviews were held with staff (who consented to be interviewed) in schools that held an election. 8 telephone interviews were held and one interview was completed as part of the observation exercise (above). The interviews were based on a series of outline questions, which are attached as Appendix 2.

3.6   Feedback from HYV members

This was undertaken in a workshop format with attendees (about 90 Youth Voice members) at the HYV Parliament meeting at Carbisdale Castle in December 2004.

The workshop was designed around 3 main aspects of the election process, with a view to finding out 'what worked', 'what didn't work' and what the young people thought would have worked or would work in future. These aspects were:
1. Explaining what HYV does
2. Getting candidates
3. Getting people to vote

The workshop plan is attached as Appendix 3.

4. Results: Turnout

Full turnout figures, including figures ordered by area and size of school) are available in the report "HYV elections 04: Statistics" (HYV elections 04_final turnout.doc).

4.1 Definitions

Turnout

Turnout refers to the number of students whose votes were recorded as a percentage of students registered in that school's roll. It does include recorded abstentions[15].

It is calculated using this formula:

$$\text{Turnout} = \frac{\text{Number of students whose votes were recorded}}{\text{Number of students registered in school}} * 100$$

Percentage of Votes Cast

In this case 'Percentage of Votes Cast' refers to the percentage of potential votes that were cast for candidates. It does not include recorded abstentions.

It is calculated using this formula:

$$\text{Percentage of Votes Cast} = \frac{\text{Recorded votes (excluding abstentions)}}{\text{(Number of students * number of representatives)}} * 100$$

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[15] Students using the e-voting system can record a valid vote for 0 candidates

4.2   Comparison of figures with elections held in 2000 and 2002

Turnout

	Average	
	e-voting	**Ballot box**
2004	**48.41%**	**67.1%***
2002	52.14 %	70.58 % #
2000	73%	68%

* Based on results from 5 schools, one of which is an approximate figure
# Based on results from 3 schools only

Percentage of votes cast

	Average	
	e-voting	**Ballot box**
2004	**43.8%**	**57.11%***
2002	48.47 %	66.09 % #
2000	67.33%	60.72%

4.3 Figures for September 2004

Schools using the e-voting system

School	Reg'd Voters	No. of rep's	No. of candidates	Potential Votes	Recorded Votes	% of votes cast	No. that voted	Turnout %
Ardnamurchan High	99	2	3	198	105	53.03 %	61	61 %
Dingwall Academy	1107	3	6	3321	1247	41.29 %	497	45 %
Dornoch Academy	243	2	3	486	57	11.73 %	33	13.5 %
Farr High	93	2	4	186	175	94.09 %	91	98 %
Plockton High	352	2	5	704	84	11.93 %	45	13%
Ullapool High	260	2	4	520	283	54.42 %	157	60 %

Schools using a paper ballot system

School	Reg'd Voters	No. of rep's	No. of candidates	Potential Votes	Recorded Votes	% of votes cast	No. that voted	Turnout %
Alness Academy	408	2	5	816	478	58.5%	249	51.8%
Gairloch High	204	2	3	408	297	61.8%	<192[16]	<80%
Grantown Grammar	344	2	4	688	608	88.4%	313[17]	91%
Mallaig High	162	2	3	324	130	40.1%	160[18]	80.2[19]%
Millburn Academy	1119	3	6	3357	954	28.4%	364	32.5%
Nairn Academy	817	3	5	2451	1605	65.48%	#	#

\# No figures available

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[16] The information we received from Gairloch was "Turn out was nearly 80%"

[17] Figure calculated from the percentage provided

[18] It seems that each student at Mallaig was only given one vote

[19] See above (footnote 19)

Schools where the election was uncontested

School	Reg'd Voters	No. of rep's	No. of candi dates	Potential Votes	Recorded Votes	% of votes cast	No. that voted	Turnout %
Charleston Academy	837	3	0	2511	Elected representatives through house council and whole school council election scheme – where every student in the school has a vote			
Culloden Academy	1048	3	0	3144	N/A			
Drummond	69	2	0	138	N/A			
Fortrose Academy	675	2	1	1350	N/A			
Glenurquhart High	219	2	0	438	N/A			
Golspie High	381	2	0	762	N/A			
Invergordon Academy	444	2	0	888	N/A			
Inverness High	465	2	0	930	N/A			
Inverness Royal Ac.	874	3	0	2622	N/A			
Kilchuimen Academy	70	2	2	140	N/A			
Kingussie High	397	2	0	794	N/A			
Kinlochbervie High	81	2	2	168	N/A			
Kinlochleven High	123	2	2	246	N/A			
Lochaber High	1017	3	0	3051	N/A			
Portree High	682	2	0	1364	N/A			
Tain Royal Ac.	644	2	0	1288	N/A			
Thurso High	957	3	2	2871	N/A			
Wick High	908	3	3	2724	N/A			

Comparison of methods for each school

School	2000		2002		2004	
	Method	Turnout	Method	Turnout	Method	Turnout
Alness Academy	Paper	34%	Online	11.25%	**Paper**	**51.8%**
Ardnamurchan High	N/A	N/A	Uncontested	N/A	**Online**	**61%**
Charleston Academy	Meeting	N/A	Meeting	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Culloden Academy	Uncontested	N/A	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Dingwall Academy	Online	46%	Online	49%	**Online**	**45%**
Dornoch Academy	Online	45%	Online	46%	**Online**	**13.5%**
Drummond	Paper	80%	Online	71.21%	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Farr High	Online	89%	Uncontested	N/A	**Online**	**98%**
Fortrose Academy	Uncontested	N/A	Online	37%	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Gairloch High	Paper	95%	Paper	79.23%	**Paper**	**<80%[20]**
Glenurquhart High	Online	81%	Paper	63%	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Golspie High	Uncontested	N/A	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Grantown Grammar	Paper	91%	Online	75.97%	**Paper**	**91%**
Invergordon Academy	Online	79%	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Inverness High	Uncontested	N/A	Paper	Unknown % cast= 51	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
	Method	Turnout	Method	Turnout	Method	Turnout
	2000		2002		2004	

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[20] The information we received from Gairloch was "Turn out was nearly 80%"

School	2000		2002		2004	
	Method	**Turnout**	**Method**	**Turnout**	**Method**	**Turnout**
Inverness Royal Academy	Paper	83%	Paper	Unknown % cast = 59	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Kilchuimen Academy	Uncontested	N/A	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Kingussie High	Paper	85%	Paper	Unknown (% cast = 81)	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Kinlochbervie High	Online	86%	Online	82%	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Kinlochleven High	Paper	71%	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Lochaber High	Paper	33%	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Mallaig High	Online	92%	Online	41%	**Paper**	**80.2%**[21]
Millburn Academy	Paper	48%	Paper	48%	**Paper**	**32.5%**
Nairn Academy	Uncontested	N/A	Uncontested	N/A	**Paper**	**Unknown % cast = 65**
Plockton High	Online	87%	Uncontested	N/A	**Online**	**13%**
Portree High	Uncontested	N/A	Online	62%	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Tain Royal Academy	Paper	51%	Paper	84.5%	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Thurso High	Online	48%	Paper	Unknown (% cast = 70)	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
Ullapool High	Uncontested	N/A	Online	46%	**Online**	**60%**
Wick High	Paper	79%	Uncontested	N/A	**Uncontested**	**N/A**
	Method	**Turnout**	**Method**	**Turnout**	**Method**	**Turnout**
	2000		**2002**		**2004**	

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[21] It seems that each student at Mallaig was only given one vote

5. Results of qualitative evaluation techniques

In this section, various comments gathered during the evaluation are quoted. In order to clarify their source and context, while retaining anonymity, the following attributions have been used:

- *Feedback form* – denotes a comment written by a teacher from feedback and results forms
- *Telephone interview* – a comment made by a teacher or youth worker in a telephone interview. These comments may not be verbatim.
- *Post-it note* – denotes a comment written on a post-it note by HYV members at Carbisdale.
- *Feedback during plenary session* – denotes a comment from the plenary session at the Carbisdale workshop. Groups were asked to summarise the outcomes of their post-it writing and discussion.

5.1   Volume of feedback received from teaching staff

The evaluation form was completed by staff in 8 schools. 8 telephone interviews were held and one interview was completed as part of the observation exercise (above). Given that 2 schools completed both the evaluation form and interview, staff of 15 schools took part in this evaluation. A further 3 schools' Youth Voice coordinators replied to emails seeking feedback with an overview of their experiences.

No feedback or evaluation was received from the staff of 12 schools.

5.2   Publicity and information

Lack of publicity/information reaching young people

In the results and feedback form, teachers were asked about the adequacy of information received from HYV. The responses received indicate complete satisfaction with this, except for one school whose teacher suggested that more Citizenship Education resources be available on the website. However, the overwhelming response from young people at Carbisdale was a severe lack of information about what HYV is and does. This was mentioned in terms of both a lack of knowledge (among students and staff) and a lack of publicity. These problems were at the root of answers to all the questions the members were asked.

"Nobody knew anything about HYV or the election" – Post-it note[22]
"Didn't work well because not everyone knew what it was about" – Post-it note
"People didn't know what they were voting for" – Post-it note
"What is it?" – Post-it note
"Wasn't publicised well in [my school], no one knew anything about HYV, elections or what they do" – Post-it note
"Nothing worked as no one knew what HYV was at [my school]." – Post-it note

Almost half the post-its contained references to the lack of accurate information about HYV and lack of publicity about both HYV and the elections.

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[22] Young people were asked to answer questions about aspects of the election on Post-it notes. See Appendix 3

This is also acknowledged by one of the telephone interviewees:
"This was one of the problems – young people didn't have enough info about HYV to vote. Because voting was in the community area, probably not enough time to look at much of website – maybe queues (although could've looked at it in their own time)... Also, confusion about relationship between HYV and youth forums."
-Telephone interview

Young people were also concerned about the accuracy of the information they received from teaching staff. They felt that, where teachers explained more about HYV and becoming a member, they overemphasised the work aspects and implied that only the more intelligent students would be suitable or interested:
"Wasn't publicised – no information. Made to sound boring and really formal – only for intelligent people." – Post-it note
"People didn't know what they were being nominated for! People don't know both sides of Youth Voice –negative teachers." – Post-it note

However, it should be noted that young people's criticism of an unbalanced view, given of HYV, included recognition of the serious side:
"Explain it is fun, but also serious." – Post-it note

It should also be recognised that some teaching staff were informed and enthusiastic and went out of their way to communicate this to students:
"What worked – School's head teacher constantly publicising the elections and HYV" – Post-it note

Suggestions from teaching staff
Some suggestions about information and publicity were received from teaching staff:
- 2 asked for information to be distributed earlier (one suggested beginning of August, one June)

- Some suggested extra resources:
  "Possibly a short video that could be shown prior to nominations to give a bit more of an insight into youth voice and what being a rep means." – Feedback form
  "Badges and placards for candidates." – Feedback form
  "Would welcome much more support in setting up election, e.g. someone to contact council over getting voting booths, ballot boxes etc. Also, better publicity. We are really busy and the YV election adds considerably to our workload Could there be a more regular YV newsletter for students to update them on developments, or more encouragement for them to access the website?" – Telephone interview

- One school mentioned the positive involvement of youth work teachers:
  "This was the first year that the youth work team were involved in running the election... We felt that the process involved was a valuable learning experience for the young people, that all involved felt there was a 'buzz' about proceedings and it was an enjoyable, good experience. We also felt that this time we 'broke the mould' with regard to the perceptions of some young people of youth voice being elitist, or only for the confident few." – Telephone interview

Another spoke of how a youth worker had helped young people fill their nomination forms in, but had not been given any advice on how to do this. – Telephone interview

Publicity suggestions from young people

1. Visits
HYV staff, local youth workers, youth forum members and previous HYV members were all mentioned in the context of visits to schools to explain what HYV is and publicise the elections:
"Nobody from HYV came to our schools/forums to tell us about HYV" – Post-it note
"A youth worker could have come to school forum to tell us about HYV." – Post-it note
"Get more teenagers to go round school and tell their experiences" – Post-it note
"Some coming round schools to give presentations" – Post-it note

Where this had happened, it was appreciated:
"Scott and Pablo came in to talk about youth Voice – from HYV – not school! After agreed to participate" – Post-it note

2. Roadshow and involvement of previous HYV members
In 2002 the chair of the HYV Executive Committee and another young person were working for HYV over the summer. They created a PowerPoint presentation and did a 'Roadshow', visiting all the schools to talk about HYV and its importance to the students, in order to publicise the elections and encourage people to stand as candidates.

It was decided that a Roadshow was not a practical option in 2004. However, some of the young people remembered it and thought it should be repeated:
(In answer to the question "What would've worked to explain what HYV is/does?")
"Presentation from previous members" – Post-it note
"Road show" – Post-it note

(In answer to the question "What would've worked to get people to vote?")
"Ex-members telling people what it's like (Roadshow)." – Post-it note

3. Media
Both teachers and young people suggested videos, CDs and DVDs as suitable ways to disseminate information about HYV:
"Possibly a short video that could be shown prior to nominations to give a bit more of an insight into youth voice and what being a rep means" – Feedback form
"Make diff videos of past fun experiences to show around diff schools etc" – Post-it note
"Leaflets/newsletter- explaining. Video/DVD/ Visit/speeches at school" – Post-it note

A few of the young people had been shown the 'Big Brother Diary' video, made from clips filmed at Carbisdale in November 2003. This was mentioned positively and it was suggested that similar videos be shown to all students.

Both teachers and young people also suggested regular newsletters about HYV activities:

"Could there be a more regular YV newsletter for students to update them on developments, or more encouragement for them to access the website?" – Telephone interview

5.3   Lack of interest

Teaching staff identified one of the major problems of the election as a lack of interest in HYV among the students:

"Youth parliament is not really a hot topic among students in the school. They see little evidence of the work that the Parliament does and only seem to get feedback about 'fun' weekends which have little to do with progressing any issues important locally. One past member decided not to stand in this election. When asked why he said 'they spend a lot of money but do not seem to do anything that makes a real difference.'" – Feedback form

"Students' lack of interest in HYV" – 2 separate feedback forms

It is possible that this lack of interest cited by teachers and the lack of information cited by young people are causally related. It may also be that some negative images of HYV are held because of a lack of information and publicity of what HYV actually does- especially between Parliament meetings.

"The only thing I would say is that although I think HYV itself seems to be very enjoyable for those who are elected, the other students in the school don't seem to see any tangible benefits and, as such, were not terribly enthusiastic about the elections." – Feedback form

5.4   Website

Website availability from monitoring and observation

On one occasion during the voting the website became unavailable for most of a day. This was due to a problem with the 'pipe' that connects Edinburgh University and Napier University to the Internet. The website is hosted on a server attached to Napier's network. The problem was outside the control of the International Teledemocracy Centre and Napier University as a whole. Added to this, there was no warning of the outage, nor any information about when access would be restored. It should be noted that the voting took place at the beginning of the University term. This is often a difficult time for the Universities' technical support teams. (By Universities, I refer to both Edinburgh and Napier as they share a connection to the Joint Academic Network[23]).

On 2 other occasions the website domain name (www.highlandyouthvoice.org) became unavailable. This was due to problems experienced by the domain name hosting company, UK Domains. The actual website was unaffected, but users would need an alternative URL[24] to access the site.

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[23] A T1 connection to the Internet, known by the acronym JANET

[24] Universal Resource Locator or web address

Internet Access

It was clear that in many schools access to the Internet was problematic for both students and staff:

"Not sure how flexible access was to website for young people in school, access was available if needed from HYV co-ordinator. Candidates did take advantage of this access to check site out" –Telephone interview

"Were unable to hold an electronic election due to IT equipment problems" – Telephone interview

And, in response to the question "Did you use the Highland Youth Voice website as a source of information?" *"To a limited extent because our access to intranet [sic] is problematic."* – Feedback form

"Were unable to hold an electronic election due to IT equipment problems. In future would like to hold election electronically, 'though suspect response would be better the way we did it (paper)" – Telephone interview

Website navigation and appearance

The website was not mentioned in the questions devised for the evaluation workshop at Carbisdale. It was hoped that young people would naturally mention it (and evaluate its use within the context of the elections).

Feedback about the website which arose in the Elections Evaluation workshop, was generally negative. Both the appearance and navigational structure of the website were criticised, as well as a lack of publicity about it. However, the ways in which the topic came up indicate the young people's understanding of the website's importance in terms of communication and provision of information.

The young people's criticisms of the website's appearance centred on it being 'dull', with a lack of bright colours and photos/images. While this is not obvious from the Post-its, it came through in the plenary session and is being discussed in the Members' Discussion forum[25]. It is interesting to note that, in the evaluation of the 2002 elections, the website's bright colours were perceived to be one of the best things about it. The colour scheme has not been changed in the intervening years.

"Net doesn't work as the site is poor" – Post-it note

(In response to "What would've worked to explain what HYV is/does?")
"Better website. More pictures easier." – Post-it note
"Website – no one knows about it" – Post-it note

Some comments were positive: (In response to the question "What did work to explain what HYV is/does?")
"Going on the Youth Voice website at our PSE lessons" – Post-it note

It's also interesting to note that this group of Youth Voice members seems to have made more use of the website than any before:
- No Internet access was provided at the Carbisdale meeting and members were invited to complete the online diary in their own time. 30 entries were made.

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[25] In the restricted access Members' Admin section of the website

- The Members' Discussion forum has been busy since the Carbisdale meeting, with a mixture of HYV-related and social threads being formed and used.

Use of website by teaching staff

Teaching staff were specifically asked about website usage, within both the feedback form and the telephone interview.

Teaching staff who had used the website, gave a generally positive evaluation of the both the website's usefulness to them (for the election) and its ease of use:

"We found the website very informative." – Feedback form

"Yes, Useful to see format ⇨ easily accessible/user-friendly" – Feedback form

Two of the most popular aspects were the facility to monitor turnout in schools voting online[26] and the speed with which results were posted.[27]

"Seemed fine, easy to navigate. Good to see how other schools got on." –Telephone interview

"[Youth Voice coordinator] accessed the website to get the results which were easy to find." –Telephone interview

5.5   E-voting system

Usability and convenience

No usability problems were observed or reported with the e-voting system, apart from delays (noted below) and system downtime (noted above). Feedback from teaching staff indicates that they felt the e-voting system was straightforward for students and convenient for them.

"Tried paper but like electronic better- quick, easy, ok." – Telephone interview

"Pleased they used the e-voting system. Seemed a sensible way to do it." – Telephone interview

There were some positive reactions, from HYV members, to the e-voting system, as a good way to elect representatives. (In response to the question "What worked to get people to vote?")

"What worked well: website elections." – Post-it note

"The Internet voting and how the election was run! Manifestos. Going round classes telling them what we were doing." – Post-it note

"The Internet" – Post-it note

Lower turnout figures for e-voting

Teaching staff seemed to recognise the advantages of the e-voting system, but also that it was harder to encourage people to use it than a paper ballot system and consequently that it could lead to a significantly lower turnout.

"E-election harder to make compulsory, but not compulsory leads to more genuine vote." – Telephone interview

Young people also pointed out that, in most schools, the impetus to go to the website and vote lay with the students and they were not inspired to do this.

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[26] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/ElectionPages/progress.asp
[27] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/ElectionPages/results.asp

(In response to the question "What didn't work to get people to vote?")
"Only the option of voting via the website wasn't successful - people didn't bother."
– Post-it note
"Online doesn't work. Neither does lunchtime voting." – Post-it note
"Internet voting ☹"– Post-it note

It should be noted that Farr High, who all used the e-voting system on one day, had the highest turnout with 98%. However, Farr High is a relatively small school with just over 100 students on the rolls. This would probably not be practical in larger schools.

Delays in page loading

Observations at Dingwall showed the site slowing down, probably due to pressure on Dingwall's server or Internet connection. This may have been exacerbated by students playing online games at the same time.

Candidates missing

Feedback from young people implied that the list of candidates for one of the schools, as displayed within the e-voting system, was not complete. We presume that some nomination forms were not received by HYV.
"Some people unhappy with online voting (candidates not there)" – Feedback during plenary session

Problems with school rolls

While observing the voting at Dingwall, ITC were asked to provide passwords for some students who had not been registered at Dingwall when the school rolls were received. Some had been registered at another school. Others were new to the Highland Council school system. It is likely that this occurred at other schools too.

Who has voted page

The 'who has voted page list the names of students in a certain school who have voted (using the e-voting system) accompanied by the time they voted. These exist to help resolve any confusion about whether a vote has been successfully cast or not. They do not give any indication of how the vote was used.

The pages are not linked to from any website – HYV coordinators are given their address. On the other hand, by an oversight, they were not password protected. This was pointed out to ITC at the time and the pages were immediately removed.

5.6   Timetable and organisation

Timetable set by HYV

Both the nominations and the voting period were slightly longer this time, to give schools more flexibility. This was also in response to requests in 2002 for earlier and later voting. The whole process was also moved forward in the year in order to publish the results before an earlier mid-term break. The only negative responses to this, from staff, were that the elections seemed a bit more sudden. This was probably also due to lack of publicity before the end of the summer term. Otherwise, the extended periods, where mentioned, seemed to have been helpful:

"More time was allowed in the schedule for nominations, etc., and this was welcomed." – Feedback form
"This year the process seemed to have a short time horizon and seemed to happen quite suddenly." – Telephone interview

Some young people felt that the voting period was too long for online elections, but we do not explicitly know why they felt this.
"Too long period voting online" – Post-it note
"One day online voting" (Post-it note) was suggested as an alternative.

Where and when voting took place in schools

Different schools organised the voting (whether ballot box or online) in different ways. In some schools specific time periods were allocated to voting: e.g. PSE lessons. In others, students were encouraged to vote at lunch or break time. The former type of organisation led to higher turnouts, regardless of the method used.
"What worked – putting aside class time for students to vote" – Post-it note

However, in some schools, this organised voting time seems to have been interpreted as compulsory voting. This is an impression gathered by students: all staff (who responded) said that voting was not compulsory in their schools.
"Not compulsory - students were encouraged by coordinator and staff to vote" – Telephone interview
 "No – had tried to make it compulsory before, but found that those coerced voted stupidly." – Telephone interview
"All students given the opportunity to vote and nobody opted to not vote" – Telephone interview
"Directed to website, but no compulsion." – Telephone interview

Some students felt strongly that they had been coerced to vote:
"Our teachers forced us to vote" – Post-it note
"Being forced to vote in PSE" – Post-it note
"Paper election compulsory" – Post-it note

When asked, "What would've worked to get people to vote?" HYV members suggested compulsory voting. This could be taken in response to the question, though, rather than as a general preference.
"Compulsory ☺ vote ☹" – Post-it note
About half the groups suggested this as a way to encourage people to vote, or improve the election, in their plenary feedback.

For schools using the e-voting system, the siting of technology was a crucial aspect of the voting. If voting was organised in class time, access to technology could also be arranged, whether in a classroom, library or coordinator's office. Schools that left students more to their own devices to vote, relied on students using technology in communal areas. In some schools, this was encouraged with links to the website made prominent in these places:
"Link to voting set up on Plasma screen in community area. All students have their own laptops. Voted over 2 days at break and lunchtime." – Telephone interview

In some schools this varied between school years. In one school S1 to S4 voted in guidance lessons while S5 and S6 were encouraged to vote at lunch and break times. A break down of figures, by year group, for this school, illustrates that voting lesson times produces higher levels of turnout.

For schools using e-voting, it was also possible for students with Internet access to vote at home.

Privacy

Privacy may have been a problem for schools where voting took place in classrooms or communal areas. If computers were situated close together or ballot papers were filled in at communal tables, students could observe each other's votes. There were no explicit complaints about voters' privacy this year.

Schools opting out of either voting system

At least one school chose not to have an election and (as for the past 2 elections) chose HYV members through the School Council (which is elected by the whole school). It is not clear whether the members were chosen by the Council from the Council or from the whole school (S4 up). This may be what is referred to by this cryptic comment:
"People from whole school should vote." – Post-it note

5.7   Involvement of staff in choosing candidates

One of the aims of amending the nomination process was to give more power to students to decide whether they would stand as a candidate, without teachers' involvement. It was possible for young people to download the nomination form from the website, complete it and send it back to HYV (by email or post) without using teaching staff as intermediaries. This was done to give opportunities to students whose relevant talents may not have been recognised by staff. Specifically, this was done to enable S3, S4 and S5 students to stand[28]. In some schools, this was very actively discouraged, presumably due to exam pressures during those years. Other schools were proud of the achievements of their younger candidates.
"Candidates (who were mostly from S3/S4) got votes from across all years." – Telephone interview

Young people's perceptions of staff involvement

Some young people implied that only certain years had been allowed to stand as candidates:
"Some schools said candidates had to be in a particular year group" – Feedback from plenary.
(In answer to the question "What didn't work to get candidates?")
"(Only S6)" – Post-it note

In at least one school, it seems that voting rights were removed from S1 to S3 students. (In answer to the question "What would've worked to get people to vote?")
"(open to ages from S4)" – Post-it note

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[28] Candidates do have to be over a 14, so only S3 to S6 are eligible

Some young people had been personally encouraged by teaching staff to stand. Others felt this encouragement as coercion:
(In answer to the question, "What would've worked as another way to choose representatives?")
"Volunteers rather than pressure to join HYV" – Post-it note

(In answer to the question, "What didn't work to get candidates?")
"Teachers not giving you the choice." – Post-it note
"Teachers choosing who they want" – Post-it note
It could be that some of these students were strongly encouraged to become HYV members because there were no candidates in their schools.

However, when asked for ways to get candidates or other ways to choose representatives, some young people seemed in favour of increasing the part teaching staff could play. (In answer to the question "What would've worked to get candidates?")
"Teachers nominating. More detailed manifestos." – Post-it note

(In answer to the question "What would've worked as another way to choose representatives?")
"Teacher ballot & student ballot" – Post-it note
"A candidate profile, teachers can target candidates and try to persuade them to stand. Candidate advertisement in the style of MPs" – Post-it note

Similar roles were suggested for youth workers:
"Putting your name forward and youth officer selecting the best candidate" – Post-it note

5.8   Positive experiences

With the majority of schools not holding an election and problems with the provision of information and lack of publicity in many more, it is easy to overlook the schools in which the elections were a success. Some elected HYV members were proud that they were elected fairly by their whole school. Feedback from staff implies that, in some schools, the election was an enjoyable affair.
"The young people involved enjoyed the complete experience of the campaign and elections." – Feedback form
"Candidates campaigned vigorously throughout the school, discussing election issues with other students." – Telephone interview
"Still immensely enjoyable and fun and we have resisted pressure to hold an electronic vote, as the young people and all participating very much enjoy the process involved." – Telephone interview

5.9   Are elections the best way to choose representatives?

Some of the young people were concerned that elections would inevitably become popularity contests[29]. This term appeared on several post-its and in the feedback from

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[29] The term was used in a discussion about the elections held in the Your Voice section of the website during the election period: http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/YourVoiceSection/YourVoicePages/ArchiveIntro.asp?debate=14

a few groups in the plenary session. One solution suggested was that voters should place more emphasis on candidates' manifestos.

"Manifestos worked. Gave people a rough idea for your aim." – Post-it note
"Base elections more on the manifests of candidates" – Post-it note

Youth Voice members were also specifically asked to suggest another way to choose representatives without an election. As well as volunteering, a couple of people suggested random methods:

"Secret ballot to get good rep OR fair way to pick out of a hat." – Post-it note

5.10 Election resources for schools

Some schools put extra resources into the elections – creating their own posters, enabling candidates to make badges, making ballot boxes etc. Some staff suggested that some of these resources could have been provided by HYV or material costs reimbursed.

6. Suggested actions

These actions have been clustered to reflect the results topics.

6.1   Publicity and information

By far the largest problem seems to have been the lack of quality information about HYV and the purpose of the elections reaching the young people – i.e. both potential candidates and voters.

HYV needs to review its communication methods, including making sure that members are involved in all stages of this process.

HYV's primary communication media is the website. This needs to be kept up to date, by Youth Voice members and staff, with HYV's activities. This needs to be done in such a way that both full and summary accounts of activities are available. Suggested methods would include:

- Adding all HYV and Youth Forum activities as news items.
- Keeping summaries or minutes of all HYV (and perhaps Youth Forum) meetings (i.e. Parliament and Executive) and posting them on the website.
- Summarising these activities on a regular basis and adding them to the achievements page.
- Publicising the website, especially within schools[30].

If these actions are taken, it would also be a simple matter to gather this information together regularly in the form of a newsletter.

In addition to the website:

- Publicity should also involve visits and presentations within schools and youth forums from HYV members and ex-members and youth workers involved with HYV. A meeting involving YV coordinators, some YV members and staff would clarify everyone's role and improve communication.
- Increase use of multimedia (e.g. CDs, videos) to record HYV events and distribute this to schools.
- Begin elections publicity, to both teaching staff and students, before summer break – i.e. spring 2006.

6.2   Lack of interest

Feedback gathered from HYV members indicates that most students' lack of interest in HYV is a result of lack of information about what HYV does and how it concerns them. Lack of interest beyond this is concerning, but outside the scope of this report.

6.3   Website

Website availability

Problems due to Napier's connection to the Internet are beyond our control while the website is hosted on the ITC server. It should be noted that the beginning of the University term should be avoided, if possible.

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[30] The presence of the website URL on High Life ~ Young Scot cards may help

Problems with the domain name hosting company are ongoing and we are looking at either using a different forwarding method (in consultation with UK Domains) or using a different hosting company.

Website navigation and appearance

The website was designed with a group of young people elected in 2000. It needs to undergo some level of redesign to make it more attractive and easier to navigate for the young people currently using it. This to is scheduled to begin in Spring 2005, with a team of HYV members[31].

6.4   E-voting system

Lower turnout figures for e-voting

It is hoped that improved publicity might provide more incentives for students to access the website and use their vote.

Other suggestions are outlined below in 'Ways of organising the voting'.

Candidates missing

Schools using the e-voting system should be asked to check the list of candidates for their school the day before the election. A note could also be added to the *Candidates page* inviting students to contact us if they feel the information is incorrect[32].

Problems with school rolls

The school rolls are used to update the database of users. Problems have been limited by receiving the rolls a little later, while still leaving time to go through the processes that update the data. Perhaps a note could be sent, with the passwords, to the schools, asking schools to contact HYV immediately if any students' passwords are not received. Most schools seem to do this already.

Who has voted page

Concerns, about the existence of this page, centred on privacy, in terms of the students' full names appearing with reference to their school. For a small school, this could provide the location of a child. However, there were also concerns about whether staff (or others) had a right to know who had or had not voted. The pages had been designed to clarify this, in case students or staff were in doubt about whether a vote had been recorded. This solution was suggested to avoid problems experienced in 2000. A compromise would be to limit access to the pages to ITC or HYV staff and invite teaching staff to contact us if there was any doubt over whether a vote had been cast.

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[31] The redesign is now complete and available at http://www.highlandyouthvoice.org/home.asp
- September 2005
[32] http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/ElectionPages/Candidates.asp

6.5   Timetable and organisation

Timetable set by HYV

More information is needed about why some students felt that the length of the e-voting period was too long. It would be possible to negotiate with schools so that each school was allocated a voting period to suit its timetable without the process 'dragging on'.

Ways of organising the voting

While schools are free to organise this as they choose, it is clear that more organisation works better than less. The following may increase the number of candidates coming forward and votes cast. Ideally, they should be applied to all students from S1 to S6.

- Appropriate lesson or communal time (e.g. assembly) devoted to presentation or discussion of HYV and its relevance to young people. HYV should assist in this by providing resources. These resources could include HYV members and ex-members with appropriate support, a PowerPoint or PowerPoint template or multimedia as outlined above. HYV could consider producing resources which make explicit the citizenship learning outcomes of involvement with the youth parliament and the elections.
- Ensure that all students are aware of their opportunity to vote.
- Ensure that all eligible students are aware of how to stand as a candidate.[33]
- Allocating lesson time for voting, where possible.
- In order to avoid the above leading to an almost compulsory voting situation, both the ballot papers and the e-voting system should contain a 'none of the above' option for those wishing to abstain.[34]
- HYV should arrange for appropriate resources (e.g. ballot boxes) to be made available.
- Perhaps the voting timetable should be specific to each school, so that no one misses out, but results can be made available at appropriate times.

6.6   Involvement of staff in choosing candidates

- Whilst teaching staff should not be discouraged from encouraging students to stand, they should not be able to prevent other students from standing.
- Hopefully, improved communication processes will clarify the eligibility of potential candidates (especially in terms of year group). Retiring HYV members should be involved in these processes.
- The facility to download nomination forms from the website and send them directly to HYV should be emphasised in publicity both on and off line.

6.7   Election resources for schools

The options of adding or linking to Citizenship Education resources on the website will be reviewed.

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[33] Candidates must be aged 14 or over, but less than 18 on the last day of the election
[34] It is possible, using the current e-voting system, to cast a vote for 0 candidates.

7. Conclusions

The 2 major problems experienced in the 2004 election were a lack of candidates, leading to most schools not being able to hold an election, and low turnout in most schools that held an election, whether online or offline. The major cause of these problems seems to be students' lack of interest in Highland Youth Voice. Our evaluation, particularly the feedback received from YV members, traces this lack of interest to a severe lack of knowledge and understanding about what HYV is and does and its relevance to young people in Highland.

Changing this situation is imperative if Youth Voice is to survive as an organisation meaningful to the young people it exists to serve.

The website is HYV's central information and communication resource. Working with a team of Youth Voice members, changes should be made to its structure and navigation, in order to maximise access to the most important pages. The design should be updated in line with young people's preferences.

Youth Voice should endeavour to begin recording its meetings and actions as they happen. The website is the logical place to do this. With this information kept up to date and held in one place, Youth Voice can then look at other ways of disseminating it. These should make use of HYV's most important resource: its members. Members and ex-members should be encouraged and supported as intermediaries:

- Members should take an active role in publicising the work of HYV within their schools, perhaps through assemblies, notice boards, school websites or the School Council.
- Members should continue to bring the concerns of their fellow students to Youth Voice and be able to feedback on any action taken or policies formed.

In addition, HYV should produce a regular newsletter, based on the information recorded on the website, and distribute it to all schools, Youth Forums, HYV members and ex-members and all youth workers and youth organisations in Highland. The newsletter should be distributed on paper and by email, as appropriate.

HYV should also endeavour to create a record of its work between the 2002 and 2004 elections: from minutes and outcomes of meetings, combined with the HYV Executive's Reports to HYV Parliament meetings and news items available on the website. This summary of work should be posted on the website and mailed to members and ex-members.

It should be noted that the HYV office was short-staffed for much of the 6 months prior to the election. This was also the first election that the Principal Youth Development Officer had been involved in organising.

8. Acknowledgements

This election and evaluation could not have taken place without the work of the Highland Youth Voice staff, Pablo Mascarenhas and James Sutherland and the HYV Office administrators: Cath MacKinnon and Sally Connor and the Education Help Desk, especially Sheila Ross.

Teachers and youth workers are to be thanked for fitting organising and helping with the elections into their already busy timetables. This extended into some staff's own time.

Thanks also to previous HYV members who helped with the elections.

Appendix 1: Results and Feedback form

HYV Elections 2004: Results and Feedback form

Please return completed forms to Highland Youth Voice, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX
Fax: 01463 711177
Email: HYV@Highland.gov.uk
(Telephone: 01463 702026)

School:	

Results

For schools which held a ballot box election only:

Candidate's name	Number of votes

Turnout: (total number of students that voted)	

Feedback (all schools)

Please could you help us by filling in this feedback form? It is important to Highland Youth Voice to find out your experience of taking part in this electoral process.

1. Have you been involved in previous HYV elections? (Please tick)

September 2000   October 2002

_____

2. Were you provided with enough information about this year's election? (please tick)

No   Don't know   Yes

_____

3. Would you have liked the information earlier?
   If so, please write the month you'd have liked to receive it:

_____

4. Did you use the Highland Youth Voice website as a source of information? If so, how helpful to you was it and how could it have been more helpful?

5. What other resources would you have liked HYV to provide?

6. What actions were taken to recruit candidates in your school? (Please tick all that apply)
   - Posters provided by HYV displayed
   - Announcement in class or assembly
   - Other (please specify below)

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the HYV elections?

8. Would you (or another member of staff) be willing to be interviewed about your experience of the HYV elections?

Feedback (schools in which the election was uncontested only):

9. What do you feel was the reason for the lack of candidates in your school this year? (please tick all that apply)
   - Lack of publicity
   - Publicity materials arrived too late
   - Students' lack of information about HYV
   - Students' lack of interest in HYV
   - Unsuitable timing (within school year)
   - Other (please specify)

10. If your school had less candidates than its allocated number of HYV representatives, how will HYV representatives be chosen?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your answers should help to improve future HYV elections.

Appendix 2: Outline questions for HYV election evaluation interviews

These questions are meant as a guide, but it would be helpful to get answers to most of them. If however, something else interesting comes up, please follow it and write it down.

1. How was the voting organised?
    a. Where did students vote?
    b. When did they vote? E.g. did they all vote on the same day? Was it done in lesson time?
    c. Was there any difference between the ways different years (S1 to S6) voted?

2. Was anything done to enable students to mark their ballot paper/use the e-voting system in private?

3. How compulsory was it for students to vote?
(Note – HYV have never suggested voting should be compulsory)
    a. Did students have to take or hand in their ballot paper?

4. Please could you tell us about how the candidates campaigned?
    a. Did candidates make posters?
    b. Were there 'hustings' (speeches or similar)

5. How were voters/ students given information about HYV itself?
    a. Encouraged to look at the website?
    b. From previous HYV members?
    c. From teaching staff?

6. For ballot paper elections: how many people were involved in counting the votes?
    a. How long did it take
    b. Was it done within school time (or e.g. did staff give up their own time)

7. Was the HYV website (www.highlandyouthvoice.org) used by staff/students as part of the election process?
    a. If so, which bits of it were useful?
    b. Any comments, ways it could've been more useful or interesting?

8. Any other issues you would like to raise?

Appendix 3: Elections evaluation workshop, Carbisdale, 2004

Time

Saturday 4th December
11:30 till lunch (or thereabouts)

Attendees

All young people attending the parliament meeting, plus enough facilitators for 5 or 6 break out groups.

Aims

Evaluate the HYV elections process (online and offline) with a view to improving them.

- Find out about their experiences of the elections
- Find out how they became members where elections were not held
- How can we encourage people to stand as candidates?
- How can we encourage people to vote?

Background

Elections for HYV members were held in September 2004. Each school has 2 or 3 representatives (depending on size). Each Youth Forum (by Council area) has 4 representatives. All secondary school students can vote.

Due to a lack of candidates coming forward, only a third of the schools held an election. Schools which held an election could vote using a paper ballot system or the online voting system on the HYV website. The choice was made by the school and included the whole school – i.e. it is not possible the mix types of election within one school.

See attached list of how schools voted (or not)

For more information about the elections see
http://www.highlandyouthvoice.org/Elections/
or ask Pablo to send you the printed bumf if you don't have access to the Internet.

Previous elections

HYV elections are held every 2 years, so previous elections were held in 2000 and 2002. It is likely that most attendees took part on or were aware of the 2002 election. (Although this was uncontested in about a third of schools).

Plan

1. Introduction

Everyone in one place for an introduction to the workshop.
Materials: PowerPoint including workshop plan and slide of grid.

Ella and Pablo will introduce the aims of the workshop and outline the plan, including showing a picture of the 'grid' (see below).
Everyone will be told what groups they are in and where each group is meeting.

2. Into groups

About 5 groups of about 12 people.
Materials: post-it notes for small groups, pre-drawn grid on A0 sheet of paper.

The next part of the plan (i.e. to be completed in smaller groups of about 3) will be gone over again by the group's facilitator. Break into small groups of 3: each group provided with post-it notes and pen.

3. In small groups

Groups of about 3.

Each person in the group will tell the other 2, how they came to be an HYV member: e.g. elected through a school election, volunteered at a youth forum meeting. The discussion should include as much of the election process as possible:
e.g.:

- If they became a candidate- how they heard about the election and what made them stand, what they thought of the election process
- If the election in their school was uncontested, why they think few or no candidates came forward
- If there were no candidates, how they were 'chosen' or what made them volunteer.

Their discussion needs to cover enough ground to answer (briefly) most of the following questions:

- What worked as a way to explain what HYV does (and explain why the election was being held)?
- What didn't work as a way to explain what HYV does?
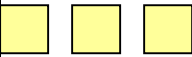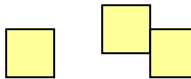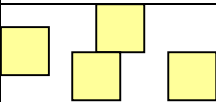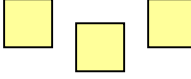- What would've worked as a way to explain what HYV does?
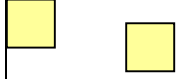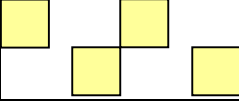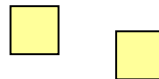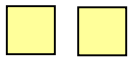
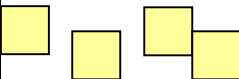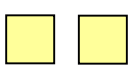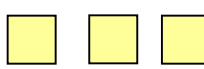- o   What worked as a way to get candidates (and make you want to be a member)?
- o   What didn't work as a way to get candidates?
- o   What would've worked as a way to get candidates?

- What worked as a way to get people to vote (if an election was held)?
- What didn't work as a way to get people to vote?
- What would've worked as a way to get people to vote?

- o What worked as another way to choose members (if there was no election)?
- o What didn't work as another way to choose members (if there was no election)?
- o What would've worked as another way to choose members (if there was no election or instead of an election)?

The answers should be written on post-its and placed on the larger group's grid (see below). In theory, each group of 3 should write one post-it for each of the questions. In practice, if the 3 people's experiences are very different, they may write more than one post-it for a question or none if that question's irrelevant to all of them.

The grid for a group of about 12 people:

	What worked?	**What didn't work?**	**What would've worked?**
To explain what HYV is/does:			
To get candidates:			
To get people to vote:			
Another way to choose representatives:			

☐ - a post-it from a group of 3 with the answer written on.

4. Back into groups

When the 3s have written their post-its the larger groups should get back together. Each 3 should put their post-its on the group's grid while explaining to the larger group, why they've written what they have - i.e. how it came out of their experience of the elections.

The larger group then needs to decide a '*What would work best*' point of action for each of the questions down the left-hand side of the grid:

1. What would work best as a way to explain (to potential candidates and voters) what HYV does?
2. What would work best as a way to encourage people to stand as candidates?
3. What would work best as a way to encourage people to vote?
4. What would work best as a way to elect/choose HYV representatives?

The group should also decide on a speaker (or group of speakers) who will be happy to present these action points to everyone.

5. Everyone in one place

Everyone back into one place.
Each group of 12(ish) takes their turn to present their action points, which are written up on sheets of paper (ideally one for each question).

If there is any time, there could be a bit of discussion.

6. Note

Please try to leave the grids intact with their post-its so that they can be transcribed by Ella as part of the evaluation of the elections.

Election methods for schools, 2004

Ballot box election

1. Alness Academy   5 candidates – ELECTION
2. Gairloch High   4 candidates – ELECTION
3. Grantown Grammar   4 candidates - ELECTION
4. Mallaig High   3 candidates – ELECTION
5. Millburn Academy   6 candidates - ELECTION
6. Nairn Academy   5 candidates – ELECTION

Intending to have a ballot box election, but not enough candidates

1. Thurso High   2 candidates -uncontested
2. Wick High   3 candidates – uncontested
3. Golspie High   (no candidates, no election)
4. Inverness High   (no candidates, no election)
5. Inverness Royal Academy (no candidates, no election)
6. Portree High   (no candidates, no election)
7. Tain Royal Academy   (no candidates, no election)

Online election

1. Ullapool High   4 candidates - ELECTION
2. Plockton High   5 candidates - ELECTION
3. Ardnamurchan High   3 candidates - ELECTION
4. Farr High   4 candidates – ELECTION
5. Dingwall Academy   6 candidates - ELECTION
6. Dornoch Academy   3 candidates – ELECTION

Intending to have an online election, but not enough candidates

1. Fortrose Academy   1 candidate -uncontested
2. Kinlochbervie High   2 candidates –uncontested
3. Kinlochleven High   2 candidates -uncontested
4. Invergordon Academy   (no candidates, no election)
5. Culloden Academy   (no candidates, no election)

Did not decide on an electoral method, or have enough candidates for an election

1. Kilchuimen Academy   2 candidates -uncontested
2. Glenurquhart High   (no candidates, no election)
3. Kingussie High   (no candidates, no election)
4. Drummond   (no candidates, no election)
5. Charleston Academy   (no candidates, no election)
6. Lochaber High   (no candidates, no election)

Youth forums – elect reps at meetings

Badenoch and Strathspey YF
Caithness Youth Forum
Inverness Youth Forum
Nairn Youth Forum
Lochaber Youth Forum
Ross-Shire Youth Forum
Sutherland Youth Forum
Skye and Lochalsh Youth Forum

Appendix 4 - material sent to schools

All materials are also available from Highland Youth Voice:
Highland Youth Voice, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX
Telephone: 01463 702026
Fax: 01463 711177
Email: HYV@Highland.gov.uk

- A covering email for head teachers and youth voice coordinators (not available)
- An overview of the HYV 2004 elections: *Overview - teachers.doc*
- A 'task list' for schools: *Task list - schools.doc*
- Procedures for online and ballot box elections: *Procedures - Ballot Box.doc* and *Procedures - Online.doc*
  These are not attached, as they are large files, but are available from:
  http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/Youth_Voice_Election_Procedures_Online_2004.doc
  or
  http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/Youth_Voice_Election_Procedures_Online_2004.pdf
  and
  http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/Youth_Voice_Election_Procedures_Ballot_Box_2004.doc
  or
- http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/Youth_Voice_Election_Procedures_Ballot_Box_2004.pdfChange of Details Form for Youth Voice coordinators: *Change of Details Form.doc* (not attached as not directly relevant)
- The nomination/manifesto/information leaflet: *Leaflet - nominations manifesto contacts.doc*
  This is not attached but available from:
  http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/Nomination_form.doc
- Ballot paper for schools holding a ballot box election: *Ballot Paper - school.doc*
- Member Job Description (as written at Drumnadrochit in 2002): *Member Job Description.doc*
- Parental consent forms for those who become HYV members: *Parental Consent Form inc additional essential info - new 140704.doc* (not attached as not directly relevant)
- Publicity posters: *Posters.ppt*
  These are not attached but available from:
  http://itc2.napier.ac.uk/hyv_02-05/ElectionSection/posters2004.ppt

Overview of the HYV 2004 elections for teachers

Elections 2004: Overview

It's 2 years since the last Highland Youth Voice elections and time to elect new representatives.

The Youth Voice Elections can be a powerful part of the citizenship curriculum – learning through participation. It is a great opportunity to put learning into practice, to encourage the young people to take responsibility for their lives and futures and to increase understanding of the political system.

How to vote: BALLOT BOX or ONLINE?

- Ballot boxes are the conventional method for voting – they can be set up anywhere there is privacy to vote but votes will then need to be counted by hand.

- Online voting is a fun way to vote, and encourages students to use the Internet to make informed votes – about HYV and the candidates for their school. Extra access to computers may need to be organised, but staff will not need to count the votes.

More information is available on the website – visit:
www.highlandyouthvoice.org/elections/
Pablo can also be contacted for more information or an informal chat on 01463 702026.

The Youth Voice office will need to know as soon as possible which method of voting you are going to use. Please contact the office on 01463 702026 or email hyv@highland.gov.uk

Important Dates

Beginning of Nomination Period	**Wednesday 25th August**
Close of Nominations	**Tuesday 7th September**
List of Nominations Published	**Wednesday 8th September**
Withdrawal of Nominations	**Friday 10th September**
Voting Begins	**Friday 17th September**
Voting Ends	**Thursday 30th September**
(4pm)	
Votes Counted	**Friday 1st October**
Results Announced	**Friday 1st October**
First Meeting	**3rd – 5th December**

A step by step guide will be available soon on the website:
www.highlandyouthvoice.org/elections/

Task list for schools

Highland Youth Voice Elections 2004

Task list for schools

Elections Pack

HYV will send an Elections Pack containing:
1. Overview of information and dates
2. Procedures about ballot box and online elections, as on website
3. Task list for schools
4. Posters
5. Nomination/manifesto leaflet
6. Ballot paper
7. Member job description

The pack will include Parental Consent Form – to be used when results are in and Change of Details Form.

At the beginning of term

1. Review information about elections and contact HYV with any queries[35]
2. Decide whether to hold an online election or a paper ballot and inform HYV
3. Nominate member[s] of staff (as well as Youth Voice Co-ordinator) to support prospective candidates. These people will also distribute and collect completed Nomination leaflets. Forward their names to HYV.
4. Display posters advertising for candidates in each registration classroom from S4 up and classrooms with computers in.
5. Display posters promoting voting in each registration classroom and classrooms with computers in.

Nominations and candidates

The nominations period runs from 25th August to 7th September. Nominations will be published on 8th and may be withdrawn until 10th.
1. Forward completed nomination leaflets to HYV (students may post or email their forms directly to HYV)
2. Display the list of candidates in prominent places (when you receive it from HYV)
3. Let HYV know of any nomination withdrawals and update lists accordingly
4. [Optionally organise or help with hustings.]

Voting

The voting period runs from Friday 17th September to Thursday 30th September (16:00).
1. Distribute login information when you receive it or immediately prior to the elections, explaining that it is needed for the HYV website and elections and should be held privately and securely. (This information is used for the online

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[35] Highland Youth Voice, Education, Culture & Sport, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX T: 01463 702026, F: 01463 711177, hyv@highland.gov.uk

discussion forum on the HYV website, as well as online voting, so login information needs to be distributed in all schools.)

2. Schools holding a paper ballot will need to organise an electoral roll (based on the school roll) and ballot papers.
3. Schools voting online may want to arrange extra or organised access to computers for all students during the voting period.
4. Optionally set the HYV website home page or Elections page as the home page on school computers: HYV website: http://www.highlandyouthvoice.org HYV Elections: http://www.highlandyouthvoice.org/elections/
5. Schools holding a paper ballot will need to count the votes on Friday 1st October and inform HYV of the results, including the number of votes each candidate received.
6. The results of all school elections will be published on the HYV website but should also be displayed in a prominent place in schools.

Example ballot paper

BALLOT PAPER

SCHOOL

VOTE FOR TWO/THREE* CANDIDATES ONLY
(* AMEND AS NECESSARY)

Member Job Description (as written at Drumnadrochit in 2002)

MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Youth Voice Member

Contract: 2 Years Fixed Term

Salary: N/A - Expenses Paid

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **To represent young people of the Highlands**
- **Positive and enthusiastic**
- **Willing to listen to others**
- **Reliable**
- **Approachable and friendly**
- **Have fun**
- **Time commitment**
- **Speak out**
- **Confident**
- **Works well with others**
- **Open minded**
- **Make a difference**
- **Traveller/stamina**
- **Innovative and creative**