

The Pagan Federation (Scotland)



What is it?

The PF (Scotland) or 'Scottish PF' is a national body within the Pagan Federation, Europe's largest and most active Pagan organisation. Paganism is a spiritual way of life which has its roots in the ancient nature religions of the world. It is principally rooted in the old religions of Europe, though some adherents also find great worth in the indigenous beliefs of other continents.

What does it do?

Scottish PF provides accurate, factual information on modern Paganism to government, NGOs, civic society, the media and the general public. It works to defend Paganism from defamation, strives to protect Pagans from religious discrimination, and campaigns for equality of respect alongside the other religions of this country. In all its endeavours, Scottish PF promotes factual accuracy about Paganism, and works towards the goals of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding.

Over the past few years Scottish PF:

- * has defended Pagans against attacks from sections of the media and sought to improve the balance and accuracy of their coverage of matters relating to Paganism.
- * following the refusal of the government to carry out a detailed analysis of the religious responses in the 2001 Census, lobbied ministers, petitioned parliament, and finally raised £2000 to have the information on the numbers of Pagans and other minority religious groups extracted and freely circulated.
- * has been working with the civic inter faith movement since 1994 to win respect and recognition for Pagans within our multi-faith society, and to improve relations between Pagans and other religious groups.
- * provides Hospital Visitors on request and provides information on dealing with Pagan patients and clients to the Health and Social Care services.

* provides expert guidance in legal cases where attempts are made to present an accused person's Pagan religion in a sinister light.

Scottish PF also provides a range of other services. It maintains a register to assist those seeking reputable Pagan Celebrants to officiate at namings, handfastings, funerals and other rites of passage. Most of these celebrants are also able to perform legal religious marriage ceremonies. Scottish PF also organises a very popular annual national Conference to bring Pagans of all paths together to celebrate the diversity and vitality of our community. Scottish PF publishes a newsletter – **SPIN** – for members in Scotland and helps to publicise the growing number of moots and other Pagan events in this country. It helps members to meet like-minded people through a system of local contact lists, and provides basic information on Paganism and suggestions for further study to inquirers.

How can I join?

Scottish PF welcomes applications for membership because the more members we have, the better it we are able to serve Paganism and the Scottish Pagan community. Membership is open to Pagans of all paths resident in Scotland who are aged 18 or more and who affirm its three Principles (see overleaf). There are two ways in which you can join Scottish PF:

- 1) Membership with **SPIN** subscription only. This costs £6 per year, or £8 for joint membership by two people sharing the same address. It includes subscription to **SPIN** (4 issues per year), access to local PF members contact lists if desired, and membership discounts on tickets for events organised by Scottish PF - notably the annual Scottish PF conference.
- 2) Membership with **Pagan Dawn** and **SPIN** subscriptions. This costs £18 per year, or £22 for joint membership by two people sharing the same address. It includes subscription to **Pagan Dawn**, the PF's 'flagship' quarterly magazine, as well as **SPIN**, access to local PF members contact lists if desired, and membership discounts on tickets for all events organised by the Pagan Federation in any country.

To apply for either category of membership, simply fill in the appropriate parts of the form and send it off with your subscription to the address on the form.



The Three Principles of the Pagan Federation (Scotland)

The three principles of the Pagan Federation (Scotland) are not intended to provide a doctrinally definitive Pagan creed. They **do** provide a general outline of some key, mainstream, Pagan attitudes and beliefs concerned with how we relate to the Earth, how we relate to other living beings, and how we relate to the divine (our Goddesses or Gods or a more abstract spirit of life). Each is open to a range of honourable and reasonable interpretations.

i. “Love for and Kinship with Nature. Reverence for the life force and its ever-renewing cycles of life and death.”

*The first principle of the Pagan Federation emphasises the importance of love and respect for nature in Paganism. It recognises that human beings are part of **nature** and that our lives are intimately interwoven with the web of life and death.*

ii. “A positive morality, in which the individual is responsible for the discovery and development of their true nature in harmony with the outer world and community. This is often expressed as ‘Do what you will, as long as it harms none’.”

*The second principle of the Pagan Federation puts forward a broadly humanistic approach to ethics which seeks to maximise both **individual freedom** and **personal responsibility**. It recognises our place as human beings within the web of life wherein everything we do, or refrain from doing, has consequences for ourselves and for*

others. It encourages working towards peaceful outcomes while acknowledging the legitimacy of both self-defence and justice. This is compatible with all Pagan paths, and essential for a tolerant, diverse and humane society. The Wiccan Rede is given as an illustrative, but not definitive, example of this general approach to ethics - this does not insist that we harm none under any or all circumstances. It does encourage us to be aware of the context in which our actions operate, to consider the probable consequences of the choices we make, to choose those which are reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances and thus minimise such harm as cannot be prevented, and take responsibility for our contribution, by either action or inaction, to the outcome. Hard ethical decisions are not about whether harm will happen, but about where it will fall.

iii. “Recognition of the Divine, which transcends gender, acknowledging both the female and male aspect of Deity.”

*This principle encompasses a range of Pagan understandings of **divinity** including, but not restricted to, pantheism, all forms of polytheism including duotheism, Goddess-recognisant monotheism, and animism. It requires us to acknowledge that where the divine is understood as deity or deities having gender, it must include a Goddess or Goddesses as well as a God or Gods. It also recognises that there are Pagan understandings of divinity which cannot be thus categorised. Modern Paganism tends to approach theology through a synergy of multiple understandings of the divine or Divinity in the abstract, and modern Pagans tend to regard the **honouring** of the Gods, of the divine as it is manifest within this living world, as of greater importance than theological speculation as to its or their precise nature.*

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