

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Agenda Item | 5 |
| Report No | G/5/20 |

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 5 November 2020

Report Title: The Virtual Online National Mòd

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Elected Members on the following: -
- a) the Virtual online Mòd which An Comunn Gàidhealach (ACG) organised in place of the 'traditional' Mòd.
 - b) the projects and support which the Gaelic Team provided to ACG

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Discuss and comment on: -
 - a) the Virtual Mòd
 - b) the projects which the Gaelic Team developed and managed in conjunction with key stakeholders to support the Virtual Mòd.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource
The current Service Delivery Contract (SDC) between the Highland Council and An Comunn Gàidhealach (ACG) ends on December 31st 2020. On November 20th, 2019 Corporate Resources Committee agreed that
- a) the Royal National Mòd (RNM) would take place in the Highlands every 4 years (2024, 2028 and 2032).
 - b) as part of the revised governance and renewed SDC that £37.5k is awarded to ACG annually over 4 years to host the RNM in the Highlands
- 3.2 Legal
Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

- The policies are recognised
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever
The work undertaken to deliver the projects utilised various social media and ICT platforms
- 3.5 Risk
None
- 3.6 Gaelic
Extremely positive implications for Gaelic as the Mòd is one of the Highland Council's core commitments within GLP3.

4. Highlights of the Virtual Mòd

- 4.1 The RNM, due to be held in Inverness 9-17 October 2020, fell victim to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, ACG were able to design an online version of the event which allowed them to be innovative in their approach to engage with both the Mòd and Gaelic community, this was made possible due to maximising the use of current technologies.
- 4.2 ACG delivered 31 online events as part of the virtual RNM over the 8 days. These events included, 7 special compilation programmes which showcased participants' performances that received a commendation as well as other outstanding performances. Performance categories covered all art forms ranging from singing, literature, dancing, instrumentals music, drama and vlogs. In addition to showcasing the performances, a programme of exciting online events took place alongside the online celebration.
- 4.3 ACG received 550 video submissions from junior and senior participants. ACG highlighted that they were surprised at the number of junior performances submitted as the closing date for submissions was during school closures. ACG also highlighted how extremely encouraging it was to have received so many International video performances, the geodemographic of participants ranged from 7 different States in America, South America, Canada, The Netherlands, Wales and England.
- 4.4 Participants pre-recorded their performance entries on video and submitted to ACG for adjudication. The entries were judged by a panel and were placed into 3 categories, "Exceptional", "Highly Commended" and "Commended".

5. Virtual Mòd Week

- 5.1 Compilation programmes were showcased with many performances being broadcast during Mòd week. The compilation programmes were hosted by a presenter and each day's programme represented the traditional day of The Royal National Mòd, i.e. Piping was showcased on Saturday, Junior competitions were showcased on Monday and Tuesday with Senior events, Drama and Literature being showcased Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, respectively.

6. Feedback from Stakeholders on the Event

- 6.1 To date ACG have received verbal and written feedback from their key stakeholders which has been extremely positive. The feedback has been received from participants, audiences and sponsors in the form of online messages and e-mails. ACG will conduct an online survey in order to gather audience feedback to review and evaluate the event. This will be conducted in the coming weeks.

7. Highlights, Challenges and Opportunities

- 7.1 One of the main highlights of the event was the International interest and the number of people from around the world who made the effort to take part in the online Mòd. The online aspect did make it more accessible for people to participate, especially people who might ordinarily not have made it to Scotland for the Mòd due to logistical challenges with travel, distance and cost.
- 7.2 ACG are also aware of the opportunities which are now available in the future to retain an online element to the RNM in order to maintain the increased International interest in the event.
- 7.3 ACG also received a substantial number of submissions from “new” participants, i.e. people who had not participated in previous Mòds. One of the benefits of the online event included that it gave some participants more confidence to take part, without having to perform in person in front of a live audience.
- 7.4 The challenges were mainly from the technical side:
- creating new online entry systems to allow video performance submissions
 - amending performance syllabuses in accordance to current restrictions
 - broadcasting online programmes to showcase participants’ performances (editing and production of programmes).

8. Numbers of Participants in comparison to Previous Mòds

- 8.1 The Numbers participating in the Virtual Mòd compared to a ‘traditional’ Mòd are more challenging to quantify due the fact that ACG had to:
- amended syllabuses
 - non-attendance of junior and senior choirs and other groups, such as folk groups and instrumental groups.
- However, ACG received 550 individual video performance submissions which was encouraging.

9 Loss to the Community

- 9.1 ACG stated that it was a huge disappointment to them that the ‘traditional’ Mòd did not take place as planned in the City of Inverness and that this also was a loss to the Gaelic community. However, it provided an opportunity to be innovative in a way that will have a positive impact on the language and culture going forward.
- 9.2 As the ‘traditional’ Mòd did not take place in Inverness, this obviously will have had serious economic consequences on the various businesses and organisations whose support has been a crucial factor in hosting the Mòd. These businesses and organisations would have also benefited financially from the event taking place in the City.
- 9.3 It is also important to highlight as the ‘traditional’ Mòd did not take place, many artists who are self employed within the creative industries would not have acquired any bookings for events and gigs, but Cèilidh na Comhairle played a small part in supporting a number of Highland based artists.
- 9.4 One of ACG’s aims in delivering the online event was to capture some of the Mòd spirit that would have existed during normal circumstances, this was achieved to some extent by bringing some of the best of Gaelic music and culture directly into people’s homes

across the world with the online events. The broadcasting output by both BBC Alba and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal was crucial as it also supported and enhanced the Mòd Week festival feel.

10. Results

- 10.1 The link to the results is attached: <https://www.ancomunn.co.uk/air-loidhne>
Appendix 1 highlights competitors from the Highland Council area who received commendations for their submissions.

11. Highland Council and the Virtual Mòd

11.1 Virtual Mòd Homepage

The Gaelic and Digital Teams developed a Virtual Mòd homepage which was placed on the Council website and acted as a portal for all Mòd events.

11.2 Members' Videos

The Gaelic Team worked with Communications Team, the Chair of the Gaelic Committee, and the Chair of Education and the Leader of the Opposition to develop short videos which included key welcome to the Virtual Mòd messages, these were placed on the Virtual Mòd homepage throughout the week. The Chair of the Gaelic Committee Cllr. Munro's welcome message was broadcast on the Opening night, on 9th October, and it was also included in the Cèilidh na Comhairle event.

11.3 Cèilidh na Comhairle

The Gaelic Team worked with Fèis Rois to produce a pre-recorded Cèilidh na Comhairle which was the final event of the Virtual Mòd. The Cèilidh na Comhairle was broadcast in Gaelic and included musicians and Gaelic singers and professionals, who are resident/ come from each of the Highland Council areas. Cèilidh na Comhairle lasted 90 minutes and was broadcast on both facebook and you-tube at 9pm on October 16th. The renowned Gaelic singer and musician Julie Fowlis presented the event. The landscape images between each performance were supplied by VisitScotland. The event also acknowledged and welcomed the 'Traditional' Royal National Mòd to the Capital of the Highlands in October 2021. ACG and Fèis Rois received extremely positive feedback with 7.5k views on youtube. The event was funded by GLAIF (Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund).

11.4 Mise agus am Mòd

The Gaelic Team are currently running an online schools' competition inviting schools to share their favourite Mòd memories, including this year's virtual Mòd. The Mise agus am Mòd competition was inspired by Muireann Beck a young Gaelic Medium pupil who attends Mallaig Primary GME. The closing date for the event is November 6th.

11.5 Spòrs is Seinn

The Gaelic Team worked with C.A.L.A to develop a pre-recorded video aimed at babies and toddlers, its Sing-along was broadcast on facebook and youtube Tuesday 13th October at 12noon.

12. The 2021 Royal National Mòd (RNM)

- 12.1 ACG has agreed with Highland Council that the 2021 RNM will return to Inverness in October next year, although this is obviously dependant on the national situation regarding the pandemic. The Inverness RNM 2021 Local Organising Committee (LOC) is meeting virtually, and the Gaelic Team continue to support both the LOC and ACG.

Designation: Gaelic Development Officer

Date: 29/10/2020

Author: Morag Anna MacLeod Mitchell

Appendices: 1 Virtual Mòd commendations for Participants from Highland Council area

Appendix 1

Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail Air-loidhne / Royal National Mod Online Results for Highland entries, taken from Royal National Mod website

1. 'Sònraichte' 2. 'Air leth math' 3. 'Ri moladh'
1. 'Exceptional' 2. 'Highly Commended' 3. 'Commended'

Òigridh / Junior

Seinn Aon-neach – Fileanta – Nigheanan Fo aois 13 / Solo Singing Fluent – Girls U13

1. Sophie, Siorrachd Rois

Seinn san t-Seann Nòs fo aois 13 / Traditional Singing U13

2. Sophie, Siorrachd Rois
3. Lily Jane, An Gearastan

Seinn Aon-neach Fileanta – Nigheanan Fo aois 19 / Solo Singing Fluent – Girls U19

2. Emily, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach

Seinn Aon-neach Fileanta – Balaich Fo aois 19 / Solo Singing Fluent – Boys – U19

1. Ruairidh, Druim na Drochaid

Seinn Aon-neach. Balaich. Luchd-ionnsachaidh fo aois 19 / Solo Singing Boys Learners U19

1. Archie, A' Mhorbhairne

Seinn Aon-neach. Fosgailte / Solo Singing. Open – Caledonian MacBrayne Category)

2. Eoghan, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach
3. Eliza, Loch Abar

Innse-sgeulachdan. Fosgailte Fo aois 13 / Storytelling. Open U13

2. Jonathan, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach

Bàrdachd Fo aois 13 / Poetry U13

1. Niamh, Baile Dhubhthaich
3. Hannah, Baile Dhubhthaich

Bàrdachd Luchd-ionnsachaidh Fo aois 19 / Poetry Learners U19

1. Rachel, A' Mhorbhairne

Sgrìobhadh Fo Aois 13 / Writing U13

2. Hannah, Baile Dhubhthaich
3. Lucy, Inbhir Narann

Sgrìobhadh Fo Aois 19 / Writing U19

1. Elissa, Inbhir Nis

Òran Ùr / New Song

1. Niamh, Baile Dhubhthaich

Fìolm Goirid / Vloga – Fosgailte - Òigridh

1. Clas 7 Bun-sgoil Chille Mhoire
2. Fionnlagh, Inbhir Nis
3. Hannah, Baile Dhubhthaich

Bogsa CSR fo Aois 13 / Accordion MSR U13

2. Eilidh, Inbhir Nis

Fidheall fo aois 13 / Fiddle U13

3. Eliza, An Gearastan

Piàna fo aois 13 / Piano U13

1. Grace, Inbhir Nis

Feadan – neach-ionnsachaidh. Fosgailte / Chanter – novices. Open

2. Iain, Inbhir Nis
3. Ronnie, Inbhir Nis

Pìob – CSR fo aois 13 / Bagpipes MSR U13

3. Grace, Inbhir Nis

Pìob – fo aois 13 / Bagpipes U13

1. Grace, Inbhir Nis
2. Charlie, Inbhir Nis

Pìobaireachd fo aois 13 / Bagpipes U13

3. Charlie, Inbhir Nis

Fidheall fo aois 19 / Fiddle U19

1. Kathleen, Am Ploc
3. Rachel, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach

Pìob CSR fo aois 19 / Bagpipes MSR U19

1. Ruairidh, Druim na Drochaid
2. Hector, An Caol
3. Calum, Inbhir Nis

Pìob fo aois 19 / Bagpipes U19

1. Ruairidh, Druim na Drochaid
2. Laura, An Gearastan

Pìobaireachd fo aois 19 / Bagpipes U19

1. Hector, An Caol
2. Ruairidh, Druim na Drochaid
3. Calum, Inbhir Nis

Clàrsach. A' chiad ìre. An Roghainn Fhèin / Elementary. Own Choice

2. Bernadette, Inbhir Theòrsa

Clàrsach. Eadar-mheadhanach. An Roghainn Fhèin / Intermediate. Own Choice

3. Carly-Skye, Inbhir Nis

Clàrsach. Adhartach. An Roghainn Fhèin / Advanced. Own Choice

1. Isabella, Inbhir Nis

D1 Dannsa 7-10 Bliadhna / Dancing 7-10 Years

2. Katie Mairead & Niamh, Inbhir Nis

Inbhich / Senior

Seinn Aon-neach. Fileanta. An Roghainn Fhèin / Solo Singing Fluent. Own Choice

1. Saffron Hanvidge, Inbhir Nis
3. Lorna Nic an t-Sagairt, Port Rìgh

Seinn Aon-neach. Seann Nòs. Fosgailte / Solo Singing. Traditional. Open

2. Saffron Hanvidge, Inbhir Nis

Seinn Aon-neach. Puirt-à-beul. / Solo Singing. Puirt-à-beul.

2. Saffron Hanvidge, Inbhir Nis

Seinn Aon-neach. Roinn Caledonian Mac a' Bhruthainn. / Solo Singing. Caledonian MacBrayne Category.

1. Saffron Hanvidge, Inbhir Nis

Bàrdachd / Poetry

3. Tia Thomson, Inbhir Narann