

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Committee** held **Remotely** on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at 10.30 am.

### **Present:**

Mr G Adam  
Mrs I Campbell  
Miss J Campbell  
Mr J Gordon  
Mr A Henderson

Mr A MacInnes  
Mr G MacKenzie  
Mr C Munro  
Mrs M Paterson  
Mr D Rixson

### **Non-Member also present:**

Mr J Finlayson

### **In attendance:**

Ms K Lackie, Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance  
Ms L Walker, Gaelic Development Manager  
Ms J MacDonald, Senior Gaelic Translation Officer  
Mr I Jackson, Education Officer  
Mr R Mackay, Development Officer  
Ms M A MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator

### **Also in attendance:-**

Mr J Graham, Chief Executive Officer, An Comunn Gàidhealach  
Mr A Campbell, President, An Comunn Gàidhealach

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.**

### **Mr C Munro in the Chair**

### **Preliminaries**

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair conveyed the following items of good news:-

- Emma Roddick, a member of the Gaelic Committee, had been elected to the Scottish Parliament on 6 May 2021. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, extended his best wishes to her;
- an online information session on Gaelic Medium Education for parents had been held in March. This had provided an opportunity to hear from Antonella Sorace, Professor of Developmental Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. A recording had been made and was available for schools to share with their parent communities. The session had concluded with a family ceilidh and sing-along;
- Fèis Rois was part of the Highland Culture Collective, a national pilot programme to establish creative networks. Highland Council had a long-standing partnership relationship with Fèis Rois and was pleased to see the creation of an artist-in-residence who would focus on young Gaelic learners whose access to Gaelic

beyond the classroom had been impacted when schools were closed during the pandemic;

- Dunvegan Primary School was enjoying their new Gaelic Sgoil-àraich.
- brothers Alasdair and Ruairidh Macleod, pupils at Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, were recently mascots for Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club and had read out the team sheet in Gaelic;
- the following Highland winners of the 2021 FilmG awards were congratulated:-
  - Staffin Primary Pupils Jonathan MacDonald and Lachlann MacLeod won the People's Choice and the FilmG Gaelic awards for their film 'Thairis na Maidne', a take on the morning news programme on Radio Nan Gaidheal (Aithris Na Maidne). Jonathan also won the award for Best Performance;
  - Craighill Primary School, Tain, won two awards including Best Youth Group Film and Best Film for their 'Na Cèicean Blasta, a take on Little Red Riding Hood;
  - Best Documentary, 'Bhon Làimh Chun a' Bheòil', was won by Eoin Cuimeanach, a sixth-year pupil at Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd in Plockton;
  - Ullapool High School pupils Finlay MacDonald and Silas Brown from Achiltibuie were awarded the Best Production category for 'Claidheamh Cutach'. Also a pupil at Ullapool High School, Nuala MacDonald won the International Representative category for her film 'Aonaichte' which looked at loneliness and the power of friendship;
  - in the Open Category the Best Mobile Short award was awarded to 'Contraigh' by Tanca Aonghais;
  - Best Film 'Am Bruadar' was won by Calum Maclean; and
  - Best Script 'Aiseirigh' was won by Fiona J NicCoinnich, archivist and manager of Canna House for the National Trust for Scotland.

## **Business**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr R Bremner, Mr D Mackay, Ms E Roddick and Mr A Sinclair.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **3. Royal National Mòd 2021**

There had been circulated Report No. G/4/21 dated 26 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance. Mr James Graham, Chief Executive Officer and Mr Allan Campbell, President of An Comunn Gàidhealach were also in attendance at the meeting to answer Members' questions regarding the Royal National Mod which had been due to be held in Inverness in October 2020 and was hoped to be held in Inverness in October 2021.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- holding the Royal National Mod in Inverness in October 2021 was warmly welcomed, especially after a difficult year as a result of Covid 19. Many people

would be looking forward to it and it was important, not just in term of the economy, to people's mental wellbeing;

- the investment of £80k would generate a greater considerable amount to the local economy, not just in Inverness but beyond;
- the flexible approach adopted by An Comunn Gàidhealach in 2020 to move the Mod online was welcomed. Looking ahead, this might need to be developed further in the future;
- if Covid continued to be an issue and resulted in the 2021 Mod having to move entirely online, it would be difficult to postpone Inverness again as a venue;
- moving to an online platform had generated a number of benefits. Audiences and entrants had come from many countries and it was hoped that this could be retained in the future. In addition, where venues were full to capacity, events and competitions could be streamed online;
- it was hoped competitors and audiences would have confidence coming back together;
- whilst moving to a hybrid format involving online participation, it was suggested this also offered an opportunity to increase income through merchandising;
- moving to a virtual platform had incurred additional costs;
- some Members felt that further detail was required as to specifically what the additional funding was to be used for;
- it was asked whether the additional funding would detrimentally affect grants for other Gaelic organisations. In response, the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance confirmed that it would not, and she went on to explain the funding model for the Mod and how it was spread over a number of annual instalments to accumulate in time for the Mod to be delivered in the local area.
- much of what the Royal National Mod delivered was as a result of voluntary efforts and delivering similar festivals elsewhere would cost considerably more;
- the Mod in October would extend the tourism season, a move which was warmly welcomed. Cultural tourism was also playing an increasing greater role;
- the benefits the Royal National Mod had for young people, such as increasing confidence, could not be underestimated;
- in response to a question, it was confirmed the syllabus for the Mod would be published at the end of May; and
- the choral community had been particularly badly affected. Choirs normally practised all year round but had been unable to do so during the pandemic. However, as the vaccination programme continued, it was hoped some would come together for a flagship event.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the initial outline of events for the Royal National Mòd 2021; and
- ii. **AGREED** to support a request to the Corporate Resources Committee on 26 May 2021, to agree to a mid-year budget feed of up to £80,000 to retain the Mòd in the Highlands for another year.

#### 4. Progress against Gaelic Language Plan 3

There had been circulated Report No. G/5/21 dated 26 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the increase in the number of actions now RAG'd as green was to be welcomed as was the information provided on those marked as amber;
- progress was well on track, particularly considering the nature of Highland and the impact of Covid 19;
- one theme was to contribute to and support Community Partnership Development Plans but Community Planning Partnerships and Locality Planning Groups were at various stages of activity. Nevertheless, it was hoped such groups could be engaged to boost the Council's plans for locality development, Caol being cited as a specific example;
- Highland had an important part to play in the National Gaelic Arts Strategy and a more proactive approach was suggested;
- there was an action to develop links between Gaelic medium primary and Gaelic medium secondary schools and an audit of secondary resourcing to expand access within Highland was underway. Information as to its progress and anticipated completion date was sought, and provided;
- the Council was working collaboratively with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and e-Sgoil to expand access to secondary Gaelic subject delivery but the Highland now had its own Virtual Academy which had had its teaching compliment extended. It was important Gaelic was part of this as it would encourage better access to areas of the curriculum and it was confirmed that there was a dedicated officer assigned to this; and
- additional place-based examples of Gaelic in the Workplace were sought, particularly in Highland Council.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the progress made in both monitoring and implementing GLP3 on a quarterly basis utilising the Performance & Risk Management System (PRMS) which was the Council's corporate performance management system in order to support delivery of GLP3; and
- ii. the progress and challenges regarding the implementation of some enabling actions in the Plan. Challenges were largely due to the pandemic, which had impacted some projected project implementation and completion dates.

## 5. Gaelic Translation

There is circulated Report No. G/6/21 dated 27 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the Gaelic translation service provided was to be commended;
- ideally Gaelic should have a more prominent position on the Council's website;
- proofreading of sign templates was important and would avoid unnecessary errors arising at the final stage of the process;
- Gaelic place names of road signs were often more informative as to the history and nature of the area;
- there were constraints in driving the service forward in terms of resourcing; and
- there were nuances between Skye and Lewis Gaelic and languages generally often caused debate as to which terms to use.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report and the work that had been undertaken in relation to Gaelic translation; and
- ii. the areas of current and future development.

## **6. Scottish Government Gaelic Specific Grant Report**

There had been circulated Report No. G/7/21 dated 27 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the grant increase was to be welcomed and reflected the Council's alignment with the Scottish Government's Gaelic aims and policies;
- Project 3 (Gaelic in Early Learning and Childcare, Primary and Secondary Education Description) was to be commended. However, there was a narrowing of the curriculum and the Gaelic Medium options, post S3, were being explored to increase subject choice and pathways. There were critical points in secondary education where subject choices were made and these were often based on discussions with parents and teachers and, to a significant degree, with peers. To encourage more to choose Gaelic Medium it was suggested that it could be in a course column by itself;
- an audit of secondary resources to expand access, as referred to in Item 4, was welcomed; and
- Community Planning Partnerships had been given more responsibility and the value of Gaelic should be highlighted to them.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the 3 projects outlined in the Gaelic Specific Grant;
- ii. the application and the commitment to delivering the conditions of the Grant; and
- iii. the commitment of the Gaelic Team to delivering the outcomes and promotion of the outcomes in the grant application.

## **7. Statutory Consultation Gaelic Medium Catchment Proposals**

### **(a) Acharacle Primary School**

There had been circulated Report No. G/8/21 dated 23 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the geography of the area meant that the Ardgour and Lochaline catchments were not included, as the distances and time of travel involved from these locations were beyond what might be considered reasonable. However, there was potential for confusion in terms of Associated School Groups and an indication was sought if there was a

desire in the Ardgour and Lochaline areas to be included in the catchment area;

- in terms of time, it was quicker for pupils in Ardgour to reach Acharacle than it would be for pupils from Kilchoan; and
- the area had a history of Gaelic and feisean and this had to be supported.

The Committee **AGREED** to support the proposal and **NOTED** that the Education Committee would be advised of Gaelic Committee Members' views, prior to taking its decision.

#### **(b) Newtonmore Primary School**

There had been circulated Report No. G/9/21 dated 27 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning.

The Committee **AGREED** to support the proposal and **NOTED** that the Education Committee would be advised of Gaelic Committee Members' views, prior to taking its decision.

### **8. Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnaG) Gaelic Language Act Implementation Funding (GLAIF) - Draft Programme of Projects**

There had been circulated Report No. G/10/21 dated 27 April 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

Members warmly welcomed the introduction of the Gaelic Youth Champion, giving young people a Gaelic voice to represent them. They would be involved with the Council's Gaelic Language Plan, would draw attention to what the key pressures were and how Gaelic was used in their communities. It was hoped they would also be able to attend the Gaelic Committee and help develop policy.

In recognising GLAIF as one of the Council's Gaelic key funding streams, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** and acknowledged the GLAIF applications that the Highland Council Gaelic Team were managing, leading, and participating in which were submitted to BnaG by the closing date of 22 April 2021.

### **9. Gaelic Vision and Strategy for Highland Council**

There had been circulated Report No. G/11/21 dated 6 May 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the Executive Chief Office Infrastructure and Environment had responsibility for cultural strategy and it was important to link up with this;
- the provision of dedicated locations for touring motor homes offered an excellent opportunity to promote the contribution that Gaelic made to the Highlands in terms of culture, tourism and the economy, especially in relation to the translation of what was meant as a "shieling", the history of the origins of this word being explained. An information board of place names at such

locations could encourage tourists to get “off the beaten track”. This could be promoted with little additional expenditure; and

- if a Gaelic vision and strategy was to be promoted then it was important it was endorsed at a full Council meeting, perhaps even as part of the annual Gaelic Implementation Report.

The Committee **AGREED** the approach to developing the Council's Vision and Strategy for Gaelic.

The meeting concluded at 1.40 pm