

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 10.30am.

Present:

Mr I Brown	Mr P Logue
Mrs I Campbell (Remote)	Mr A MacKintosh
Ms S Fanet	Mr J McGillivray (Remote)
Mr J Grafton	Mr D Millar (Remote)
Dr M Gregson	Mr C Munro
Mr S Kennedy (Substitute)	Mr R Stewart

Non-Members also present:

Dr C Birt	Mr W MacKay
Mr J Finlayson	

In attendance:

Ms K Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive - People
Ms A Jansson, Area Education and Learning Manager
Ms L Walker, Gaelic Development Manager
Ms M A MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer
Ms E Rodgers, Gaelic Policy Officer
Ms J MacDonald, Senior Gaelic Translation Officer
Mr I Jackson, Education Officer
Mrs S MacAskill, Head Teacher, Dingwall Primary School
Ms J MacLennan, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Ms G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr S Thoumire, Creative Director of Hands Up for Trad
Mr S Walsh, Chief Executive, High Life Highland

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

Business

1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Mr R Bremner and Mrs M Paterson.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statement:-

Item 3 – Mr C Munro

3. Good News

Transparency Statement: Mr C Munro made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item as a close family member participated in Portree High School's cultural trip to Northern Ireland and he himself was an accompanying responsible adult. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

The Committee **NOTED** the good news as presented.

4. Gaelic Education Update

There had been circulated Report No. G/14/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People accompanying a presentation by Mrs Sara Macaskill, Head Teacher, Dingwall Primary School. Mrs MacAskill described Dingwall Primary's journey in Gaelic Medium Education and the reason as to why she was passionate about driving Gaelic forward and providing a Gaelic positive ethos and culture. Pupils too joined Mrs MacAskill to explain to Members what Gaelic meant to them.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Dingwall Primary School had brought the community, staff and pupils on board with fostering a whole school approach to Gaelic. This should not be unique and set a benchmark for others to follow;
- Mrs MacAskill was to be congratulated and her presentation demonstrated what she had achieved at Dingwall Primary. It showed what determination could bring about;
- the Cafaidh Gaidhlig initiative, where people could meet, play board games and listen to musicians, was applauded;
- the Rights-based approach was to be encouraged; and
- the introduction of Gaelic into primary schools also had education and cognitive advantages.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the content of the report; and
- ii. the ongoing development work towards providing access to Gaelic education in secondary schools by digital learning.

5. Na Trads and MG Alba – Presentation

Members were presented with an overview of the upcoming Na Trads Music Awards, due to be held on Saturday 30 November at Inverness Leisure.

Mr Thumire thanked the Gaelic Committee officers and Members for their involvement, acknowledging the strong collaborative partnership established between Highland Council, High Life Highland and Hands Up for Trad. He also welcomed the support from the Inverness Common Good Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and High Life Highland.

Trad Awards reached an international audience and the second half of the ceremony was due to be broadcast live on MG Alba.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Inverness and Fort William were cultural hubs and Members looked forward to the awards in Inverness this year;
- given that local venues had been vulnerable and under threat in many places, including Inverness, it was felt that the sector was performing well;
- it was asked if Hands Up for Trad had contact with any of the local musicians that performed at Eden Court Under Canvas, and it was confirmed this was the case;
- information was sought, and provided, regarding the benefits to the wider communities, particularly economic benefits and legacy. It was asked if information, such as lessons learned, was shared with other agencies, to maximise the benefit to the wider communities, and it was confirmed that Hands Up for Trad shared learning with the Royal National Mod; and
- in terms of engagement and the popularity of the event, thousands of votes for nominees had been received from across the world. This was on par with last year and the event showcased people, music, culture, nominees and language.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

6. Progress Against Gaelic Language Plan 4

There had been circulated Report No. G/15/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

In relation to the Scottish Languages Bill, it was asked if it might be appropriate for Inverness to be considered as one of the areas of priority, as well as those areas more traditionally perceived, to receive development officer and central support. Thereafter, it was suggested officers explored a response to the Deputy First Minister as the Scottish Government prepared amendments to the Bill and it was confirmed that a response had already been provided by Highland Council. The response included that a lack of clarity around designating these areas of linguistic significance was felt. It was also thought that Members would each have areas that they felt were a priority.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report; and
- ii. the progress made in relation to GLP corporate service aims, as outlined in section 6.

7. Gaelic Conference

There had been circulated Report No. G/16/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- it was hoped simultaneous translation would be provided;
- it was also hoped that local business could be encouraged to get involved; and
- the conference offered an excellent opportunity to explore the potential for economic and work-related opportunities.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the Gaelic Conference overview, and
- ii. how the research reports might impact the scope of the Gaelic Conference and the links to the Highland Council's GLP Theme of Business and the Economy.

8. Gaelic Plan Fund – Bòrd na Gàidhlig

There had been circulated Report No. G/17/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Gaelic in Lochaline was flourishing and had brought opportunities to the community. However, if this were to continue, other services were needed, housing in Morvern being cited as an example;
- a Gaelic Toddler support worker was to be employed in Lochaber, and it was hoped this could be built upon and involve more people; and
- in relation to the English group in Roybridge confirmation was sought, and provided, that this was a parent and toddler group.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report, and
- ii. the Gaelic Early Years (0-3) support for Highland.

The meeting ended at 12.10pm.