

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT – CROSS PARTY GROUP ON GAELIC

Draft Minute of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Gaelic, held in Committee Room 5, The Scottish Parliament, Holyrood on Wednesday 30th November, 2016 at 1.00pm.

Present: Kate Forbes MSP (Convener); Angus MacDonald MSP; Rhoda Grant MSP; Calum Iain Macleod, Comunn na Gàidhlig (Asst. Secretary); Shona Nic'Ilinnein (Bòrd na Gàidhlig); Allan Macdonald (Bòrd na Gàidhlig); Mona Wilson (Bòrd na Gàidhlig); Steven Maciver (Bòrd na Gàidhlig); Mata MacIver; Dòmhnall Caimbeul (MG ALBA); Iain MacLeòid (An Comunn Gàidhealach); Iain Moireasdan (An Comunn Gaidhealach); Sheila Carvel (GME); Ceitidh Mhoireach (Cearcall Comhraidh Dhun Eideann); Wilson MacLeoid (Oilthigh Dhùn Èidinn); Coinneach MacÌomhair (Comunn na Gàidhlig); Joan Esson (Education Scotland HMI); Dòmhnall MacGhillemhoire (Stòrlann); Carole Henderson (Parent); Ruairidh MacIntyre (Scottish Government); Magaidh Wentworth (Comann nam Parant); Doileag NicLeoid – simultaneous interpretation. For items 7, 8 and 9 only, Donald MacNeill (Comunn na Gàidhlig); Donald Morris (Comunn na Gàidhlig) and Iain Macaulay (Comunn na Gàidhlig).

1 Welcome & Apologies

Kate Forbes MSP, CPG Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from: Calum Alex Macmillan (Feisean nan Gaidheal); Maeve Mackinnon (Foghlam Alba); Derek Mackenzie (Skills Development Scotland); Ann Dessey; Calum Duncan (Comunn na Gàidhlig);

Mata Maciver commented that although very few Members of Parliament were present at the meeting, he had evidence that information on dates of the CPG meetings was being received by Members, and he thanked the Secretary for this.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved, proposed by Mata MacIver and seconded by the Convener.

3 Update from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

3.1 Draft National Plan on Gaelic, Allan Macdonald, Chair, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Allan Macdonald Chair of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, updated the Group on progress on the draft National Gaelic Plan 2018 - 2013.

He explained that the next Plan was very important and that it was important to get it right. A seminar, for the Gaelic organisations, had been held earlier in the year which had been attended by 165. Research had also been carried out by Edinburgh University on the impact and effectiveness of the delivery on the current National Plan. A draft Plan had then been presented to the Bòrd na Gàidhlig Board meeting in October and following further work on the Plan, the final draft will be presented to the next Board meeting on 6 & 7 December. The draft Plan would then go out to public consultation for a period of 3 months and, following consideration of the feedback from the consultation would be approved in the early summer. Bord representatives had met with John Swinney MSP, Minister for Education, last night where he expressed his wish to be kept up to date on progress, and to be involved in the process.

3.2 Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Medium Education, Mona Wilson, Education Director, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Mona Wilson, Stiùiriche Foghlaim (Education Director) at Bòrd na Gàidhlig informed the Group that, following public consultation on the draft Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Medium Education, they had received a great deal of feedback, most of which was very positive. The National Group had met in November to consider the feedback and other responses and had completed the work on the draft Guidance. The final draft Guidance would be considered by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig Board on 6 & 7 December, when it was hoped, it would be approved. It would then be presented to the Minister for formal approval.

3.3 Early Years Strategy, Mona Wilson, Education Director, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Mona Wilson informed the meeting that the Bòrd was currently working on developing a new strategy for Early Learning and childcare in preparation for the extended entitlement of 1140 hours which will be available to parents by 2020. She also told the meeting that there would be a strong focus on Early Years, families and communities in the upcoming National Plan.

3.4 Bòrd Membership, Allan Macdonald, Chair, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Allan Macdonald, Chair of the Bòrd, informed the Group that the Bòrd were currently seeking nominations for Bòrd Members. They will have 3 vacancies, 2 current Members having served their term, and 1 member having to step down because of other commitments. They were seeking nominations from anybody with an interest in the future of the language, but, would particularly welcome nominations with skills in Marketing, Finance and Research/Development of a minority language. Applications would have to be received by mid-December, with the successful candidates taking up their posts in February 2017. The Bòrd were looking for a commitment of 36 days a year from the successful candidates.

4 BBC Royal Charter renewal - the case for a greater contribution to Gaelic. Donald Campbell, MG ALBA.

Donald Campbell thanked the Group, and individual Group members, for their letters of support. For the first time, in the history of the Charter, the new Charter Framework Agreement included a clause requiring the BBC to support Gaelic television services and the work of MG ALBA. MG ALBA was asking the BBC to move towards parity with the Welsh TV Service S4C as regards their programming contribution to BBC ALBA (10 hours per week of new programmes) and were currently establishing with the BBC the shape and make up of an investment plan for BBC ALBA, for consideration by BBC Director of Nations and Regions, Ken MacQuarrie.

Donald Campbell thanked the Group for its ongoing support and asked if it could further support the demand for equality by writing to the BBC seeking weekend news programmes as well as Current Affairs, News, Learning and Children's programmes.

It was agreed that the CPG would write to the BBC supporting this call for further programming commitment.

Following a question from the CPG Convener, Margaret Mary Murray, BBC ALBA, agreed that the CPG consider the matters raised by MG ALBA regarding the future funding of BBC ALBA.

She informed the meeting that much work had been undertaken on Charter Renewal and was hopeful that this work would prove fruitful. In other areas of BBC ALBA work, she informed the meeting that Tony Hall, Director General of the BBC had visited Stornoway, had been impressed with the facilities and the work of the broadcast teams based there. He

met many partner agencies and stakeholders and learnt a great deal about the Gaelic broadcasting services. She also informed the meeting that the Autumn schedule, with new programming was now on-air, and that a new series of Bannan was being produced for next Spring. Long term volume production contracts would be considered and agreed over the next 3 months. Margaret Mary agreed that she would make a presentation at the next CPG meeting.

5 UNESCO Status for Gaelic in the Western Isles. John Macleod, An Comunn Gàidhealach

John Macleod made a presentation to the CPG on how international protection could be provided for, “An Sean Nòs” in the Western Isles, by applying to have it recognized in the “Intangible Cultural Heritage” category by UNESCO. “Intangible Cultural Heritage” included traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. This could include various forms of music, dancing and singing such as Psalm singing and traditional Gaelic singing. UNESCO already recognize the Gaelic language as an indigenous language. Mr Macleod suggested to the CPG that it would be prudent to explore any possible benefits such protection might bring and also to explore what mechanism would be required to make the case to UNESCO, e.g. would the case have to be made by Holyrood or Westminster, and what part the Gaelic community had in any application. There was broad support from the CPG that the matter should be explored and that a letter be sent to UNESCO. It was further agreed that the matter be pursued through the raising of a petition, at Holyrood.

6 Gaelic4Parents, Donald W Morrison, Stòrlann Naiseanta na Gàidhlig

Donald Morrison from Stòrlann Naiseanta na Gàidhlig, gave a presentation on Gaelic4Parents, which was celebrating its 10th Anniversary. He thanked Angus Macdonald MSP for raising this in Parliament also thanked the CPG for their continuing support. He informed the meeting that new resources were being added continually and that they were working on social media platforms in order to get to young people. He also told the meeting that 8 new titles had been prepared for children with additional support needs, and would be available in audio files in due course. He circulated a leaflet giving a timeline of Gaelic4Parents progress and also containing useful website addresses.

7 Spòrs Gàidhlig, Donald Morris, Comunn na Gàidhlig

Donald Morris informed the CPG that he, along with CnaG colleagues, had just come out of a meeting with John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, where they had been giving Mr Swinney information on the Spòrs Gàidhlig project following a request to the Government for funding. The meeting had gone well.

Donald proceeded to give information to the CPG on Spòrs Gàidhlig. He explained to the meeting that, due to the expansion of GME, there was a huge demand for outdoor sports facilities, which were delivered in Gaelic. Pupils going through GME from schools throughout Scotland regularly attended week-long outdoor sports camps but at these camps, all the activities are delivered through English, because Gaelic-speaking staff, trained in delivering such activities do not exist. Spòrs Gàidhlig is being developed to overcome this. Spòrs Gàidhlig will train up to 4 leaders who will be trained and qualified to deliver outdoor sports and activities, through the medium of Gaelic. The training would be carried out in partnership with Glenmore Lodge, Scotland’s National Outdoor Training Centre. Research conducted, whilst developing the business plan for Spòrs Gàidhlig has highlighted demand from Schools for Gaelic-speaking leaders delivering the activities/sports.

To date, funding has been confirmed from Highlands & Islands Enterprise, AMW Charitable Trust and CnaG is investing £65,000 of its own funds in the project. CnaG is currently awaiting a decision on an application to Leader application (decision due, March 2017) and discussions are to be held with Bòrd na Gàidhlig on possible funding.

Following a question as to where Spòrs Gàidhlig would be based, Donald confirmed that it would be based in the Highlands, but that the aim was to provide a national service. Joan Esson, Education Scotland HMI, pledged her support for Spòrs Gàidhlig. She went on to say that it was vital that extra-curricular activities, delivered through Gaelic were available to all young people going through GME. In her view, Spòrs Gàidhlig would make a huge difference. Donald Morrison, Stòrlann, added his support for the project. He added, that Stòrlann had already created sports terminology, and that he would be happy to work with Spòrs Gàidhlig to create any new terminology required and also to ensure consistency in terminology. Donald Campbell, MG ALBA, also welcomed the development of Spòrs Gàidhlig. He stated that it was important that “fun things” like sports were available in Gaelic. It was also a big part in current efforts of normalizing the language. Shona MacIannan, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, welcomed the update on the project and confirmed that discussions would be held with CnaG on possible funding. Donald Morris thanked the CPG members for their support, and in particular, Kate Forbes MSP, Convener, for arranging the meeting with John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. He also thanked Bòrd na Gàidhlig, who had earlier provided funding for a feasibility report, for their support.

8 Questions relating to Gaelic Education delivery, Carole Henderson

Carole Henderson tabled a number of questions relating to the delivery of GME. These ranged from teacher shortage, teacher remuneration, limited range of subjects taught in Secondary schools because of subject-specific teacher shortage, guarantee of probationary placements for all GME trainees, GME representation on Parent Councils and alleged lack of understanding of GME within some local authorities. Mona Wilson, Education Officer addressed some of the concerns but added that many of the issues raised were currently being addressed, others would be addressed by the National Guidance on Gaelic education and others were the responsibility of local authorities and some specific to one school/local authority. Mona agreed to meet with Carole to discuss her concerns and it was further agreed that the Convener, in conjunction with Mona, would write to North Lanarkshire Council regarding some of the issues raised by Carole Henderson. The Convener told the meeting that she would welcome feedback from CPG members on the various issues raised by Carole Henderson.

9. Proposed date of next meeting

No date was set for the next meeting. Dates would be circulated on Members early in the New Year.