

## Annual General Meeting

Minutes - 10:00 am, Sunday June 2nd, 2024, via Zoom

An làthair: Ed MacDonell (Chair), Kieran Walker (Administrator), David Spencer (Treasurer), Victoria Rankin (Secretary), Màiri Britton, Monica Ragan, Peter Armstrong, Adam Young, Robert Pringle, Carol Anne MacKenzie, Vincent McDonald, Wendy Murray, Alexander MacDougall, and Heather MacLeod Leslie

Regrets: Joe Murphy, Hannah Krebs, Lili Watson, Aleen Stanton, Nathan MacDonald

1. **Fàilte agus Tòiseachadh** – Welcome and Call to Order:

**Meeting called to order at 10:02 am**

2. **Aontachadh air a' Chlàr** – Approval of the agenda for the day.

**David moves, Peter seconds** approved

3. **Aontachadh air a' Gheàrr-chunntas** – Approval of Minutes from previous AGM

**Màiri motions, Robert seconds** approved

4. **Iomraidhean** – Approval of Reports

**President's Report**

Comhairle na Gàidhlig has had a productive year. Some of these accomplishments include the dispersal of another round of Gàidheil air Adhart funding into the community of over \$15,000, Latha nan Gàidheal (Gaelic Day) at St. FX this past May for public school children, which for the first time included Gaelic students from Halifax and the Annapolis Valley; and continued advocacy for support for our Gaelic public school teachers within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

This past May, Comhairle na Gàidhlig engaged in our largest marketing campaign for Mìos nan Gàidheal to date, with the support of the Province of Nova Scotia and the Scottish Government Office in Canada. I would like to extend my thanks to the Mìos nan Gàidheal working group, which was primarily composed of community members; the Office of Gaelic Affairs, Iain and Lewis, in particular; the team at the Scottish Government Office in Canada in Ottawa; Ella Hanson, who came on with us for another year as our Mìos nan Gàidheal Coordinator, and, of course, Kieran, our Administrator, who

An issue for us over the past number of years has been a lack of funds to support the Council's operational expenses, which makes future planning difficult. Council members brought this concern to Minister MacMaster and his staff in 2022 and we were invited to submit a request for financial assistance. In late 2023, we received word that the Council would receive \$50,000 in core funding, multi-year project funding potential. This funding to support administration of ongoing projects, inclusive of Mìos nan Gàidheal and Gàidheal air Adhart dispersal.

Since summer 2022, we have engaged with Minister MacMaster and advocated that staffing shortages at the provincial Office of Gaelic Affairs be resolved. For most of 2023, the Office only had one Gaelic officer, in comparison to three in 2021 and five in 2015. In summer of 2023, two positions with the office were posted and these were filled in September. We are glad to see these roles filled where the interests and the community we represent can be advocated at the provincial level.

We also started the year with a relatively new board and I appreciate the contributions and efforts over the year, in particular Victoria Rankin who stepped up into the role of Secretary when one was needed. We have also seen the departure of two active members this year. Iain MacLeod accepted the role of Program Specialist & Manager with the Office of Gaelic Affairs last September. Iain came onto the board in 2021 and was an exemplary contributor and chair of several committees during his time with us. We were sad to see him leave us but happy to see him move into this position and have enjoyed working with him in his new capacity. We're also seeing Hannah Krebs depart the Council. Hannah joined the Council in 2019, in her five years, she chaired several of our committees and served on our Executive committee as Treasurer from 2021 to 2023. We're thankful for all of the work that she has done on behalf of the Council and no doubt we'll be seeing her around. I'd also like to thank David for his work as Treasurer this past year and all of the time he has put into his new role. Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank our Administrator, Kieran Walker, for his dedicated work over the past year and his smooth handling of programs inclusive of Mìos nan Gàidheal and Gàidheil air Adhart, as well as the general maintenance of Council affairs. Today, we're fortunate to have six

great candidates to add to the board and we look forward to working with them in the coming year.

### **Treasurer Report (David Spencer)**

Financial Statements presented

Totals Assets approximately \$76,759

Liabilities approximated \$61,079

Providing Approximately \$15,680 available in general reserve

### **Administrator's Report**

#### **Cainnt mo Mhàthar**

- Made updates to the website last year to ensure that it would continue to function; and,
- Some preparations were made to subtitle select videos, this is ongoing. I hope to have some live soon.

#### **General Admin**

- I have continued to aide in the general administration of the organization by completing payroll and other tasks; such as,
  - Serving in a managerial capacity for term employees;
  - Helping to organize committee meetings when requested; and,
  - Monitoring the organization's communications via email and social media.

### **Advocacy**

- The main project of the advocacy committee has been on hold as we work to collaborate with the Brigh is Barail project;
  - This is a survey of Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia with the goal of providing additional context about the state of Gaelic in Nova Scotia (additional as regards the census and community estimates);
- Fall meeting with the Halifax Stanfield International Airport re: their Tartan Team, advised on what might be good for representation of Gaelic culture in that context;
  - This included talks about tartanism and encouraging them to include Gaelic language when appropriate;
- We also met with the minister of Gaelic Affairs over the winter to discuss support for Gaelic in particular support that is being offered to Gaelic teachers in the province; and,
  - Specific topics were:
    - Follow up on the receipt of operational funding;
    - Additional support for Gaelic in the education system;

- Minister is aware and working on short and long term goals;
- Gaelic Language online class for credit;
- Recognition of Mìos nan Gàidheal; and,
- Also longer term goals of additional Gaelic language and cultural support staff at all levels.

#### Funding

- I assisted with all applications for funding and completed them for operational and project funding, summer student/intern, Mìos nan Gàidheal; and,
- We were able to secure funds from various sources this year.

#### Gàidheal air Adhart

- Yearly report for the 2022-2023 financial year's dispersal was delivered to the OGA;
- We had \$19,230.00 to disperse in 2023-2024, and we dispersed \$16,110.52;
  - This left \$3,119.48 in the Gàidheal air Adhart pot to be rolled over to next year;
  - Projects funded included, individual Gaelic language learning support for adults and youth, community programming (classes and events), music videos;
- Collection of final reports is on going for the immediate proceeding 2022-2023 year of funding;
  - Likewise publication of awardees is ongoing as that information comes in;
- A document detailing program best practices was also created to ensure fair treatment of applicants as the program moves forward;
  - This details what actions should be taken in various irregular cases of applications, late applications, overdue final reports and other scenarios; and,
- A final report to the OGA will be prepared and submitted prior to the deadline of August 31st

#### FIOS Newsletter & Social Media

- The Newsletter has continued to go out on a bi weekly basis; and,
  - There were communications about having the "Mìos nan Gàidheal" calendar becoming a permanent aspect of event awareness in the community.

#### Mìos nan Gàidheal

- A working group was created from interested community members when a call was put out in the fall and the committee began meeting in December;
- Funds were secured from the Office of Gaelic Affairs again this year to run a campaign and hire a marketing firm;
- Brainstorming sessions on assets and audience yielded excellent assets from our marketing firm;
- A \$50,000.00 budget was able to be had to pay for the creation of a poster, 6 unique social media assets, a video (chopped into a short 15 second version, a one minute and 15 second version with both having English and Gaelic versions), and three billboard sized advertisements. This also paid for the online and physical promotions in the form of online paid ads and billboard placement;
  - Additional TV ads were purchased on CTV (closed captioning sponsorship); and,
  - There was also media coverage with 4 pieces on CBC Radio, one on Global News (TV) and one on BBC Alba;
- Overall the month was successful with plenty of additional engagement on Comhairle na Gàidhlig's social media; and,
- Thanks to promotion and the work of our coordinator we had 108 total events submitted to the Calendar with 73 of those being in the May section of the calendar (this includes three days in April prior to the first of May and June first).

*Gaelic Education in Nova Scotia*

- The Teacher's advocacy committee is made up of primarily teachers in the public schools system;
- It met regularly throughout the year and mad suggestions and comments on what should be brought to meetings with the minister;
  - Other more general advocacy also came up;
- Primary event for the committee is Latha nan Gàidheal | Gaelic Day, which was started by the advocacy committee but responsibility was given to the teacher's advocacy committee;
  - Over 200 students were set to attend from three centre's of education. Unfortunately bus shortages led to one school being unable to attend which brought numbers below 200; and,
  - Event was a success, though some learnings happened around coordination of multiple centres of education.

*Fundraising (Ed MacDonell)*

- \$50,000.00 in operational funding from CCTH, \$50,000.00 in project funding for Mìos nan Gàidheal from CCTH, and \$3,500.00 for Latha nan Gàidheal from OGA
- We also received close to \$9,000.00 from the Scottish Office in Canada which supported the hiring of the Mìos nan Gàidheal coordinator
- Patronage and other memberships continue to bring in a reasonable amount of funds as well. Approximately \$1750.00.
- We also once again received funding for a summer student in the amount of \$4,859.00

**David motions to accept reports as presented, Adam seconds approved**

#### **5. Nomination of Board Members**

The Board of Directors presents the following individuals to be nominated as Directors:

- Aleen Stanton
- Carol Anne MacKenzie
- Lili Watson
- Nathan Bishop MacDonald
- Peter Armstrong
- Vincent McDonald

**Robert motions to accept nominees as presented, Màiri seconds approved**

No nominations from the floor.

#### **6. Election of the Executive**

- David and Victoria to reoffer
- Ed is finishing his two-year term
- Ed nominated for Chair by David, seconded by Màiri, approved
- Robert nominated for Vice-chair by Màiri, seconded by David, approved

#### **7. Election of a Financial Auditor**

Board of Directors will return to this subject later in the year

#### **8. Gnothaichean Sonraichte - Special Business**

Motion to forgo an external audit of 2023-2024 accounts made by Heather MacLeod Leslie, Peter Armstrong seconds, approved

#### **9. Sgaoileadh – Adjournment**

**Ed Adjourns Meetings at 10:57 am, approved by consensus.**



I the undersigned believe this to be an accurate reflection of the minutes. Errors and omissions

*V. Rankin*

---

Victoria Rankin

## APPENDIX 1: Comhairle na Gàidhlig Committees

	A d a m	A n n a g	B h i c t o r i a	M o n i c a	ì o m h a i r	R a i b e a r t	E ò s a	D a i b h i d h	M à i r i
<b>Executive</b>			X		X			X	
<b>Fundraising</b>	X				X			X	
<b>Gàidheil air Adhart</b>		X		X	X				
<b>Advising &amp; Advocacy</b>	X			X					
<b>Mios nan Gàidheal</b>								X	
<b>Nominating and Governance</b>					X			X	
<b>NS Teachers Advocacy</b>		X	X						

**Xs in bold denote Committee Chairs**

## APPENDIX 2: Priorities (as identified during GAELS Summit in May 2018)

**Increase Gaelic Media content** (*STATUS: Initiated and ongoing; more engagement needed. Film Industry and individuals are taking it on themselves – establishment of new non-profit org. Gaelic Nova Scotia Filmmakers Society*)

- a) Establish a Film and Media sub-committee of the Gaelic Council by Sep 2018 which will meet quarterly, to help plan and provide support to aspiring film-makers, audio-visual, storytelling media creation of NS Gaelic content.

**Improve Communications within the Community** (*STATUS: Newsletter well-established and successful. Sub-committee and Plan not established*)

- a) Establish a communications and media relations sub-committee of the Gaelic Council by Jun 30, 2018 with an objective of identifying resources that can strengthen communications both within the Gaelic community and outside the Gaelic community. The committee would convene to develop a communications and media relations plan plus action plan, budget, etc.
- b) Establish a digital newsletter through the Gaelic Council which will share news, events, links to podcasts & other content, happenings relevant to Gaelic Nova Scotia with all interested.

**Establish Endowment Fund** (*STATUS: Gaelic Community Development Fund has been established with the Community Foundation of NS, partnered with Council 2023*)

- a) By July 2019, we will identify an organization with charitable status in partnership with the Gaelic Council of NS to take on establishing an endowment fund that supports Gaelic language learning province wide.

**Gaelic Immersion Schooling** (*STATUS: Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide established – Council supported with in-kind administrative time*)

- a) Create Parents' group under the Gaelic Council to lead strong advocacy for pilot programs. Develop Plan for pathway to full Gaelic immersion schooling in the province
- b) By September 2023, get Gaelic in 5 more provincial schools by identifying schools where there is a potential demand by meeting and organizing with parents and having them lobby for Gaelic language in their respective schools. Check-ins annually, one per school year.
- c) By April 2019, create a new and unique, culturally oriented curriculum for preschoolers and families by collaborating with other cultural groups and Gaelic tradition bearers with 3-month check-ins
- d) Increase resources available for teachers

**Increase Community Awareness & Engagement** (*STATUS: Ongoing*)

- a) Increase awareness among elected officials
- b) Gaelic officers at all levels of government
- c) Establish list of talking points for Gaels

- d) Work for increased status for Gaelic
- e) Strengthen Gaelic identity in the wider community

**Increase intergenerational learning (STATUS: Ongoing, supporting Cròileagan as possible)**

- a) Establish a place where generations can meet, come together and learn from each other – language and traditions
- b) Integrate elders into existing Gaelic playgroups, integrate children into pre-existing seniors' groups (e.g. Mabou)
- c) Identify what supports are needed for seniors and playgroups

**Provide Traditional Courses, Storytelling, etc. (STATUS: some. Colaisde na Gàidhlig has organized several "instructor" retreats where a focus on Gaelic identity has been promoted)**

- a) Create a Storas-style initiative around music, dance and gaelic culture, language and customs and history. For non-speakers, especially musicians to improve their cultural competence and confidence. Establish a steering committee to organize this. With a goal of holding one in Summer 2019 and 4 per year in future. Find funding. Regular meetings monthly.

**Create long-term plan for Gaelic in NS (STATUS: No progress)**

- a) Establish baseline, where we want to be and how we are going to get there

**Establish Gaelic Festival (STATUS: No progress)**

- a) Create an annual, all-Gaelic festival in NS, celebrating that we are here and rotating it to a different community or region each year
- b) Create an annual Gaelic Media/Arts/Culture award system, celebrating creative leadership, literature, poetry in a gala event