

COMUNN NA GÀIDHLIG



Annual Report 2005/2006

Creating opportunities for Gaelic



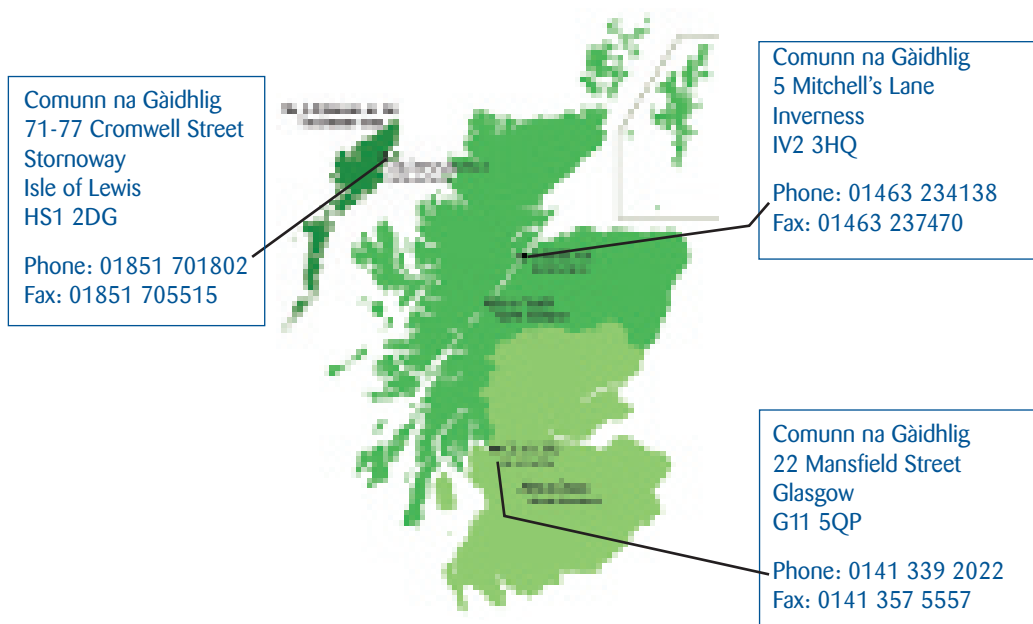
Area Teams

Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) was established in 1984 as a co-ordinating Gaelic Development Agency. Operating at local, regional and national levels, CnaG has a Board of Directors which includes representatives from other organisations.

CnaG is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

Day to day responsibility and execution of policy rests with the Chief Executive, who is also the Secretary of the Company. The current Chief Executive is Donald Martin who is based in Stornoway.

CnaG has three operational areas – Western Isles, Scotland North and Scotland South.



What we do

- CnaG's operations fall under two headings:
- Services
- Development

CnaG Services

Advice

CnaG attends career fairs all over Scotland to give advice on Gaelic careers.

Information

CnaG is involved in publishing diaries for schools, Gaelic calendars, newsletters and information leaflets.

Campaigns

CnaG makes representations to government and Europe.

Representation

CnaG is represented on bodies such as Stòrlann, Ionad Chaluum Chille Ìle, the Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Gaelic and the Gaelic Place-Name Partnership.



Chair's Message 2005/2006

As the old proverb says... *"a land without a language, a land without a soul"*

I find these words very apt as I approach my final Message as Chair for our 2005/06 Annual Report. Indeed they have been recurring in my mind on many occasions over the past few decades.

Looking back over the last eight years since I became involved with CnaG, there can be no denying that a great deal of progress has been made with the development of Gaelic Medium Education, the expansion of Gaelic radio and television broadcasting, the Gaelic Arts and more recently the introduction of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 in February 2006.

Recognition of our minority language at European level, with the ratification of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, is further evidence of the support given to Gaelic by the UK Government. Numerous Language Plans have been, or are currently, in the process of being prepared, and very soon public bodies will be asked by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare their Language Plans under the Act. All this should help in promoting Gaelic.

However, we cannot overlook the simple fact that despite all these developments the health of our language, numerically, is in decline. This trend has been confirmed by previous Census figures and even without this statistical evidence those of us living in the so called "Gaelic heartlands" know from our daily work and contacts that Gaelic is not spoken so much nowadays in the shops, the offices, the garages, the homes and at community activities such as fanks, ceilidhs and church services.

We need to tackle this huge challenge if we are to dramatically reverse the state of our language as a community language. Some people argue that it is already too late to do anything about it and that we should resign ourselves to the fact that Gaelic will very soon not be a community language. I firmly believe that if that day ever comes, it will be the final nail in the coffin for the Gaelic language I and thousands of others were brought up to learn and use. If our community loses its own language, which has for centuries marked us out as Gaels, with our own unique cultural and distinctive song, music and literacy traditions, we will have surrendered an irreplaceable part of our make up and way of life. We will become undistinguishable from the ever growing universal globalisation which is fast gaining ground in all corners of the world.

Legislation, Plans, Policies, Education and Broadcasting will not, unfortunately, halt this decline. It is very much up to us, the individual Gaelic speakers of today, young and old, fluent speaker or learner, islanders, highlanders or lowlanders, who have total responsibility for ensuring that *OUR* language is maintained and passed on to future generations. Bodies such as CnaG can only help by creating opportunities for giving people access to Gaelic, by for example, creating employment opportunities for young people during the summer months or through our Graduate Placement Schemes. We need to build on these and our other successful initiatives to provide the stimulus and to engender the confidence needed by young Gaelic speakers to speak their language with pride and pass it on to their own off-spring.

Having had another extremely busy and successful year, in meeting our aims in accordance with our contracts with our two main funding agencies, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, I would like to thank them for their continuing support and assistance with our work. I have no doubt that the cordial relationships which we have built up with HIE and BnG augers well for our respective organisations for the future. Our congratulations to Matta MacIver on his appointment as Chair of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the new members on the Bòrd. We wish them every success in their work.

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to my fellow Directors on the Board for their interest and input to the work of the Board. We have now had the experience of working within our new streamlined Board for eighteen months and I am very happy at the progress we have made.

Our staff continue to work extremely hard, very often under difficult circumstances and with restricted resources. Credit for achieving our success goes to the Chief Executive and his staff, who are always cheerful, courteous and dedicated in carrying out their duties in the cause of the Gaelic language and culture.

Finally, I would like to thank all former Board Members and staff for the support and help given to me since my appointment to CnaG in 1998 as Board member, Vice-Chair and latterly as Chair. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with CnaG, learnt a lot, done a lot and had the privilege of meeting many interesting people, many of whom I now regard as good friends. I wish you all every success in all you do in the future. Many, many thanks to you all. And my final message to you all from the song *Aithne Do'n Òige*, a well known Lewis song-

"Please do not forsake your language, I plead with each Gael today, It will never let you down, but will always be your stay".

Mairi Bremner
Chair

The Year's Review 2005/2006

A year of changes both within and outwith CnaG saw a number of targets achieved which will have a long-term impact on Gaelic developments. I am pleased to report that our overall performance in terms of our aims and targets has been extremely satisfactory with 5 targets exceeded, 26 fulfilled and 2 partially completed. We made substantial progress in implementing our revised structure both at Board and Officer level. All new Board appointments were finalised and the new smaller Board has worked well over the past twelve months.

At Officer level, the first phase of the recommendations of the Management Review, undertaken by Reference Economic Consultants, was implemented from 1 January 2006. Area Teams were established in Inverness, Stornoway and Glasgow. Donald Morris moved from Oban to Inverness to take up the post of Area Development Manager for the Highlands, Argyll and Grampian. Sine Maclean in Glasgow was appointed Area Manager for South Scotland. The duties of Area Manager for the Western Isles continues to be undertaken by the Chief Executive.

The UK Government's Second Progress Report on the implementation of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* was published in July 2005. Following an invitation from the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts to meet the Committee on their visit to Edinburgh in January 2006 to discuss the UK Government's Report, we attended a meeting and gave evidence in support of our earlier written submission. While we received a very favourable hearing from the Committee, it is disappointing to record that despite the opportunity given by the Committee to Gaelic bodies to give evidence to them in Gaelic, only CnaG, CnP, An Comunn Gaidhealach, and Gàidheil Òga took advantage of this opportunity. It will be interesting to see what view the Committee of Experts takes on this and other issues when the Report is published towards the end of 2006.

As a result of additional funding from Highlands & Islands Enterprise to support our Youth Activities, we were able to appoint a Graduate Placement with the specific task of managing the Graduate Placement Scheme, the Summer Student Placement Scheme and the newly established Student Assistance Scheme. We received over 33 applications for the Student Assistance Scheme, which was funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Each application was individually assessed and an award for assistance, with course fees or course expenses, made to 28 applicants.

Both the Summer Placement Scheme and the Graduate Placement Scheme will be expanded next year to involve the placements in community development work along the lines of the successful Community Pilot Scheme which was undertaken in Barra, in the Summer of 2005. Under the pilot Scheme a summer Gaelic Playscheme was organised in Castlebay during the summer months which resulted in the local Sradagan Group being revived during the following winter.

A successful *Eurosgoil* Event organised by the Youth Development Manager, took place in Fort William in July, and was attended by 30 participants from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Friesland. 18 Gaelic speaking youngsters and 4 leaders from CnaG's Youth Activities Section travelled to represent Scotland at a *Eurosnow* event in the Laddins area of South Tyrol in Slovenia in March 2006. This international event was attended by 11 other minority language communities throughout Europe.

The Annual Summer Camp for Sradagan took place in Stirling in July and was attended by 35 Gaelic speaking youngsters throughout Scotland. The Annual Teenager's Camp took place, again, this year in Tiree with 11 teenagers present.

A Conference for young people between the ages of 16 and 30 was held in Aviemore in September 2005. Over 30 young people attended the two day event which was addressed by a representative from *Urdd, the National Welsh Youth organisation*. A comprehensive Report detailing over fifty recommendations from the Conference was launched at the Royal National Mod in Stornoway in October. One of the main recommendations from the Conference was the need to establish an independent group which would represent the views of young people on Gaelic issues. A Steering Group was set up to move this proposal forward. A presentation was given by the President of *Gàidheil Òga* to the Cross-Party Group on Gaelic in December and evidence was given by two representatives of the *Gàidheil Òga* Steering Group to the Committee of Experts on the European Charter. CnaG welcomes this important initiative and we will be happy to provide any assistance, advice and support which the Group may need in its formative years.

The cultural tourism project *Gàidhlig air a' Bhàta*, which was introduced as a pilot scheme on three CalMac ferries during the summer months proved to be very successful. Students and graduates were employed on the *Isle of Lewis*, the *Hebrides* and the *Lord of the Isles* to provide information sessions to passengers on a range of topics involving the Gaelic language and culture. Passengers were given the opportunity to learn some Gaelic using a list of phrases specifically prepared for visitors to the islands and each session ended with a musical and or singing contribution. We hope to repeat this project for Summer 2006.

The Annual Reception hosted by the Cross Party Group on Gaelic, organised by Comunn na Gàidhlig, was held in the Parliament Building on Wednesday 23 November 2005, following the BT Gaelic Schools Final Debate. Over 80 guests attended the function and an entertaining programme was provided by Am Bothan, the Gaelic promotion group based in Edinburgh.

Following the success of last year's Gaelic calendar, we produced another version for 2006 with pictorial scenes and accompanying narrative of a range of photographs throughout the Western Isles and Skye.

The 2005/2006 Graduate Placement Scheme has been successful with 6 placements having obtained employment – 5 in the Western Isles and 1 in Skye. As part of their placement programme, they attended a week's Outward Bound self-development course at the Loch lall Centre in Fort William, followed by a two week placement with Gaelige bodies in Belfast for three of the graduates, and a week's placement in the Isle of Man for one of the other graduates.

Our Summer Placement Scheme for Students goes from strength to strength with 27 students gaining placements with 20 employers throughout Scotland this year.

We have been heavily involved in supporting parents in making representations to 3 Local Authorities for Gaelic Medium Education provision at both pre-school and primary levels. Parents at Sleat and Morar made representations to the Highland Council to designate Morar and Sleat schools as Gaelic schools; parents in North Uist made representations to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to provide an adequate level of provision for nursery education at Cròileagan Eubhal and Glasgow City Council produced 2 Consultation papers, one on the provision of a Gaelic School at Woodside, establishing an all Gaelic pre-school to secondary school, and one on the proposal to close Oatlands Nursery without replacing this Gaelic pre-school provision within the area. We were more than happy to support the parents and Comann nam Pàrant in making representations to the authorities concerned.

Having made several attempts over the past few years to establish a branch of Comunn nam Pàrant in Lewis, the outcome of a meeting in Stornoway towards the end of 2005 resulted in a Parents' Group being formed. The Group have already made representations to the Rector of The Nicolson Institute and the Director of Education on the lack of current Gaelic Medium subjects on offer at the school.

A schools' educational visit to Edinburgh, in conjunction with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Historic Scotland, Dynamic Earth and the Scottish Parliament was organised in April 2005. These are important and informative visits for the children and are held through the medium of Gaelic.

The final of the BT Gaelic Schools Debate took place in the Holyrood Parliament Building, Edinburgh on Wednesday 23 November 2005. An excellent final was held between James Gillespie's of Edinburgh and Millburn Academy, Inverness with the team from James Gillespie's taking the honours this year. This was an extremely successful and enjoyable competition and we are much indebted to BT Scotland for their generous contribution of £15,000.00 towards this year's Debate.

A group of 10 schoolchildren from Scotland joined 20 Gaeilge speakers from Northern Ireland and Eire in October 2005 in Armagh as part of the annual *Ri Cheile* event which gives young Gaelic/Gaeilge speakers the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of the respective languages and cultures through a debating competition.

A total of 20 grant applications amounting to £19,530 have been approved during the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006. These do not include on-going claims processed under the Gaelic in the Community Scheme.

The Inverness and Nairn Gaelic Language and Culture Plan Steering Group agreed to extend the remit of the Plan Co-ordinator to include activities in the Badenoch and Strathspey area. This area was transferred from Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Local Enterprise Company to Inverness and Nairn Local Enterprise Company and it was a natural step to incorporate the new area within the current work being undertaken under the Inverness and Nairn Gaelic Language Plan. The Co-ordinator's post with CnaG became full time, with the additional funding being provided by the Gaelic in the Community Scheme (Badenoch & Strathspey Area).

Our participation in the Western Isles Language Plan, which was officially launched in April, continues through the Plan's Steering Group which is chaired by the Chief Executive. Funding applications to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Western Isles Enterprise have been made and decisions are awaited which will enable the project to move to its next implementation phase.

We have continued to make representations to the Scottish Executive on Gaelic Broadcasting, on the Crofting Reform Bill and on Scottish/Irish cultural links and to the UK Government on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and Gaelic Broadcasting.

Information Packs with up to 17 bilingual signs, which can readily be used in the workplace, have been produced and distributed in four specific locations as a means of enhancing the use of Gaelic in businesses such as offices, shops, hotels and restaurants.

In the course of the year we welcomed two new members of staff – Marion Beaton from Skye was appointed Youth Development Officer in the Inverness office, while Steven Graham was appointed on a twelve month Graduate Placement in the Stornoway office dealing with our various Students' Schemes. Brian Ó hEadhra Development Officer in the Inverness office left us in March 2006, to pursue his musical and other cultural interests and we wish him well for the future. Our two summer student placements for 2005 were Claire Scoular who was based in the Glasgow office and Ishi Maclean who was involved in the Summer Playscheme Project in Barra.

Finally, my grateful thanks to the staff who have again produced excellent results in promoting and developing our wide range of projects. The results shown elsewhere in this Report speak for themselves. Well done and thank you.

Dòmhnall Màrtainn
Ceannard

Our activities

Strategy and Promotion

“Working together to promote and develop the Gaelic language and culture”.

- Made written submission to the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts in response to UK Government's 2nd Progress Report on the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and gave oral evidence in Gaelic to the Committee at its meeting in Edinburgh in January 2006.
- Serviced 8 meetings of the *Cross-Party Group on Gaelic* and organised one Annual Event for MSP's in conjunction with the final round of the BT Gaelic Schools Debate in the Holyrood Parliament with 80 guests in attendance.
- Serviced 6 meetings of the *Gaelic Names Liaison Committee*.
- Made representations to Executive Ministers, Government Departments and Parliamentary Committees on Gaelic Broadcasting, Crofting Reform and Scottish/Irish links.
- Made representations to the Outdoor Capital of the UK resulting in increased use of Gaelic at major international events.
- Made representations to UK Ministers on Gaelic Broadcasting and provided briefings for MP and MEP on Gaelic issues.
- Advice given on bilingual policies to Western Isles Health Board, University of the Highlands and Islands and National Trust for Scotland.
- Work commenced on re-designing CnaG website by ReefNet.
- 2,500 copies of Gaelic Primary and Secondary School Diaries 2005/06 distributed in August.
- Co-ordinated 2 full page features in local press on Gaelic issues.
- Provided funding for publication of four children's books, book of six Gaelic Plays and Gaelic Placenames of Lismore.
- Attendance at *Best Practice in Bilingualism* Conference in Dublin.
- Represented CnaG on the Board of Directors of *Pròiseact nan Ealan, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Ionad Ìle, An Lòchran, An Gaidheal Ùr, Studio Alba, Western Isles Gaelic Forum, and the Àrd Chomhairle of An Comunn Gaidhealach.*

Education and Skills

“Promoting Gaelic Education and skills at all levels”.

- Attended Benbecula and Barra Careers Events and Open Days in Ayrshire, North Lanark, Edinburgh.
- 33 applications processed and 28 students assisted with fees and/or course expenses under the new Students Assistance Scheme.
- Attendance of 6 graduate placements at Outward Bound Course at Loch lall on a week's self-development programme.
- Representations to Highland Council on Gaelic Schools at Morar, Nairn, Sleat and to CNES on Cròileagan Eubhal, Uist and Lewis Gaelic Schools and Glasgow City Council in support of retention of Oatlands Nursery and on Glasgow Gaelic School consultations.
- Organised CnP(N) AGM and attendance at CnP and parental meetings in North Uist, Edinburgh, Ullapool, Inverness, Gairloch, Sleat, Bonar Bridge, Glasgow, Oban and Stornoway.
- Publication of 2 promotional leaflets – *Gaelic Medium Education* and *Gaelic in the Home*.
- Submissions to Parliament's Public Petitions Committee in support of Islay CnP for a GM teacher for Islay.
- Participation in *Home Visiting* and other information and promotional schemes.
- Participation in Highland Council's Seminar on *20 years of GME* and participated as member of Working Group established to progress the Seminar recommendations.
- Attendance at 2 Careers Conventions held in the Autumn and Annual SECC Careers Fair in Glasgow in February 2006.
- Information visits to 4 Universities and 2 Colleges.
- Assisted with the *2005 BT Gaelic Schools Debate* with 16 teams participating. Final held in the Scottish Parliament and won by James Gillespie's School, Edinburgh.

- Attended *Ri Cheile* event in Armagh in October 2005 with 30 Gàidhlig/Gaeilge speaking youngsters.
- Organised 1 educational event in Edinburgh in April 2005 involving 260 Gaelic Medium pupils from 14 schools in Western Isles, Highland, Argyll and Central Scotland.
- Promotion of Gaelic Classes in Argyll and Lochaber.
- Assistance with Lochaber tutor training event.

Youth

“Creating opportunities for young people to use and enjoy Gaelic”.

- Organised National Youth Conference (*Gàidheil Òga*) in Aviemore in September 2005 and participated in meeting of Gaelic Forum.
- 4 Outward Bound courses held at Loch Eil for Graduate Placements, Greenfaulds Secondary; Lochaber Primary Schools, Teachers/Pupils *“Geography on-line”* Course.
- 1 Teenagers Camp held in April in Tiree for 11 teenagers.
- 2 Offsite mountain biking events run in partnership with The Highland Council.
- Participate in Gaeilge TV programme in Belfast in March 2005 with 10 Gaelic speaking children.
- *Euroscoil* Event held in July 2005 in Fort William for 30 representatives from Scotland, Friesland and Northern Ireland.
- *Eurosnow* 2006 attended with 18 children and 4 leaders in South Tyrol in March 2006.
- 1 Sradagan Camp held in Stirling in July 2005 for 35 youngsters.
- 6 Drama and games sessions held for Sradagan Groups and Leaders.
- 4 Sradagan newsletters produced.
- CnaG 2005 Christmas Card selected from Sradagan Competition entries.
- Processing applications and assessing approvals for Disclosure Scotland applicants for Sradagan Group leaders.

Community Development

“Helping communities to develop and strengthen the use of Gaelic”.

- Cultural Tourism Information Project *Gàidhlig air a’ Bhàta* undertaken on 3 CalMac ferries during July and August 2005.
- 5 funding applications for cultural tourism events approved.
- 6 applications approved for Bilingual Signage Scheme.
- Promotion of Bilingual Signs Scheme in new areas.
- 20 applications approved for Grants to Community Bodies totalling £19,530.
- 6 meetings of the Western Isles Gaelic Language and Culture Plan Steering Group, 1 Seminar and 3 Consultation Meetings held in preparation for launch of plan in April 2006.
- Inverness and Nairn Language Plan extended to include Badenoch and Strathspey.
- 27 Summer placements secured with 20 employers under the Summer Placement Scheme 2005.
- Funding secured for 6 places on the Graduate Placement Scheme for 2005/06 with 5 placements in the Western Isles and 1 in Skye.
- Letters sent to OFCOM and DCMS on the Gaelic digital television channel in response to OFCOM Report.
- Submission made in response to Green Paper and subsequent White Paper on BBC Charter Review.

Financial Summary 2005/06

Receipts	£'000
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	352
Bòrd na Gàidhlig	332
Local Authorities	26
LEC's	26
Other Income and Receipts	8
TOTAL RECEIPTS	744

Payments	£'000
Strategy and Promotion	74
Education, Skills and Youth	277
Community and Culture	149
Project Support Costs	60
Other Costs	184
TOTAL PAYMENTS	744

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO COMMUNITY PROJECTS 2005/06

Area	Gaelic in the Community	Other
The Western Isles	£42,157	£11,452
Caithness & Sutherland	£9,227	-
Argyll & Bute	£23,455	£328
Ross & Cromarty	£19,617	£500
Skye	£14,146	£2750
Inverness	£18,257	-
Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey	£6,107	-
Lochabar	£13,501	-
Edinburgh	-	£3700
Glasgow	-	£500
Aberdeen	-	£300
TOTAL	£146,467	£19,530

CnaG Board of Directors 2005/06

Mrs Mairi Bremner, South Uist	Chair, Community Interests
Mr Donald Macdonald, Skye	Vice-Chair, Business Interests
Mr Iain Campbell, Inverness	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Mr John Macleod, Edinburgh	An Comunn Gaidhealach
Cllr Hamish Fraser, Skye	The Highland Council
Cllr Alex A Macdonald, Lewis	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Iseabail Maclean, Barra	Youth Interests
Mr Derek Murray, Glasgow	Arts Interests

Senior Staff

Mr Donald Martin, Lewis	Company Secretary and Chief Executive
Mr Donald Morris, Inverness	Area Manager, Inverness
Mrs Sine Maclean, Glasgow	Area Manager, Glasgow
Mrs Fay McDiarmid, Skye	Youth Projects Manager
Mrs Maggie Wentworth, Gairloch	Parental Officer