

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
GAELIC COMMITTEE - 7 AUGUST 2008

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	G/20/08

Gaelic Development Manager's Update

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Summary

This report provides an update to Members on various issues of potential interest to the Gaelic Committee.

1.0 Background

1.1 A Gaelic Development Officer's report has been submitted to previous Gaelic Committee meetings to update Members on potential matters of interest. It is felt appropriate to do so again for this Committee

2.0 Recruitment

2.1 Members will be aware of the ongoing challenges involved in securing Gaelic staff – for teaching and non-teaching posts.

2.2 There are currently three vacant posts for Gaelic Medium primary teachers in Thurso (Pennyland); Gairloch and Ullapool – advertisements have been placed in the press during the school holiday period. Discussions have also taken place with Bòrd na Gàidhlig regarding the promotion, recruitment and deployment of Gaelic Medium teaching posts.

2.3 Three adverts are also to be issued shortly for GM school support staff for Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhirnis, and Broadford primary.

2.4 Recruitment is also required for the core Gaelic Development Team; a Gaelic Education Development Officer and a Childcare and Family Resource Officer. An advert for the Gaelic Education Development Officer post has been prepared and will be published following the summer school recess. The second post will be considered at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

2.5 A further post of Gaelic Resources and Administration Assistant has been advertised and the selection process is underway.

2.6 In order to boost the numbers of potential applicants – in particular to the teaching posts, both those highlighted above and those elsewhere - discussions have been held to identify ways in which potential Gaelic teaching recruits can be encouraged to enter the profession. In addition attention is being given to ways in which qualified teachers can be encouraged to enter GME or to remain within the Gaelic Medium system. This includes consideration of enhanced training opportunities, or ways in which training achievements are recorded on the Chartered Teacher Programme.

3.0 Highland Council Staff Skills Survey

- 3.1 One of the requirements under the Gaelic Language Plan was for Highland Council to carry out an All-staff Gaelic Skills Ability and Use Audit. This contract was tendered by The Council and won by Craigforth HACS Ltd.
- 3.2 A survey letter has now been issued to some 12,500 Council staff. These have been posted to their home addresses and will have arrived from Monday 4th August.
- 3.2 The Survey questionnaire itself is on two sides of an A4 sheet, and limited to 7 questions in order to minimise the time taken to complete, and to encourage responses. Staff have until Friday 29th August to submit the survey to Craigforth Ltd.
- 3.3 A verbal update on basic survey data, such as response rates and emerging patterns will be given to the Gaelic Committee on 18th September. A written report, including a potential presentation by the consultants will be made to the November Committee

4.0 Leabhar na Gaidheal Òga (The Book of the Young Gael)

- 4.1 This new book, developed a a partnership project between the Gaelic Books Council, the Gaelic Development Officer and the Skye and Lochalsh Cultural Co-ordinator was launched in Inverness in early June.
- 4.2 This is the first book to be published in Gaelic by young people in the Highlands and contains stories and artwork from GME pupils from primary and secondary schools throughout the area.
- 4.3 The project fitted well with efforts to boost Gaelic literature and literacy within the GM curriculum. According to a survey carried out as part of the project 50% of schools surveyed said they would like to have a Gaelic author visit once per term.

5.0 FilmG – A Gaelic short film competition

- 5.1 A new short film competition has been launched by Media Gàidhlig Alba (MGA Alba) – the new ‘brand name’ for the Gaelic Media Service, responsible for preparations towards the new Gaelic Digital TV Channel.
- 5.2 The competition will have professional, amateur and children’s categories and it may be that some of the recently completed work, or future projects with GM secondary schools in the Highland area will be eligible.
- 5.3 The closing date for the competition is December 1st 2008.

6.0 Nova Scotia MoU & Cape Breton craft exchange

- 6.1 Over the last few months, as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between Nova Scotia and the Highlands, a craft-worker exchange has taken place.
- 6.2 Beth Legg, a jewellery designer from Scotland, worked with the pupils of Dalbrae Academy in Cape Breton and more recently, Kelly Krawchuck a weaving/textiles craftworker and Gaelic language student from Cape Breton spent time in Ardnamurchan. During this period she undertook workshops with school pupils and members of the community. A joint exhibition of the work produced in both communities during the project will take place later this year.
- 6.3 A teacher from Acharacle Primary school, Margaret Ford, has attended the Cruinneachadh nan Gàidheal (Gathering of the Gaels) conference held at St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The trip has been undertaken as part of the Highland Council/Nova Scotia MoU. Ms. Ford presented a conference paper on Gaelic Medium Education as well as workshops on GME teaching modules.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 Members are invited to note the contents of the report.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: 23 July 2008

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