

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
Gaelic Committee – 7 August 2008

Agenda Item	4.
Report No	G/16/08

AINMEAN-ÀITE NA H-ALBA – GAELIC PLACE-NAMES OF SCOTLAND COMMITTEE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION CULTURE AND SPORT

Summary

This report informs Members of the developments to date in relation to Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba – AÀA - the Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland Committee

1.0 Background

- 1.1 AÀA developed from the Gaelic Names Liaison Committee (GNLC) established in 2000 when Ordnance Survey asked a range of organisations for advice on Gaelic place-names.
- 1.2 When the government initiated a policy of bi-lingual road signage in the Highlands in 2003, GNLC was asked to research Gaelic names for the signs.
- 1.3 As the use of Gaelic signage has grown, so has AÀA's role and in 2006 the group expanded to form the Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba Partnership. Increasingly AÀA is being asked for help with bilingual street and building signs as Councils bring their Gaelic Language Plans into operation.

2.0 Partnership

- 2.1 AÀA, is a partnership of public and voluntary bodies comprising:

Local government

Argyll & Bute Council; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; and The Highland Council

Gaelic groups

Clì Gàidhlig – associate, Comunn na Gàidhlig

Government Organisations

Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Ordnance Survey

Central Government

The Scottish Government – associate
The Scottish Parliament – associate

Academic Institutions

UHI Millennium Institute, including Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Place-names societies

Scottish Place-Names Society

3.0 Purpose

3.1 AÀA's purpose is to research Gaelic place-names to establish correct and consistent forms for maps, signage and general use. AÀA uses local knowledge, historical sources and established principles to agree orthographically and historically accurate forms of place-names. The partnership has produced guidance on the use and spelling of Gaelic place-names and on common elements in street names. These are available on the AÀA website www.gaelicplacenames.org.

3.2 AÀA is run by a committee comprising representatives of all the partners and chaired by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The partnership currently employs a part-time project coordinator, based at Fàs - the Centre for Creative Industries at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

Occasionally when funds are available for particular projects, AÀA has employed part-time researchers.

4.0 Current Activities

4.1 Since 2000, AÀA has seen a growing demand for reliable information on Gaelic place-names, both from the general public, for heritage reasons and outdoor interests, and from public bodies. To meet this demand they are setting up a national database with funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This will provide a single source of authoritative information on Gaelic place-names, with supporting evidence.

5.0 Progress since April 2007

5.1 Since the appointment of a project coordinator in April 2007 AÀA has

- established the project in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
- considered and rejected a move to charitable status
- drafted a new business plan
- obtained funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to create a national database for recording names and contracted Cànan to create the database structure
- established relations with other place-names projects and secured permission to add their research to the national database
- carried out a scoping study of names awaiting research

6.0 Names researched

6.1 Projects completed:

- A82, Tyndrum - Inverness: 109 names, completed July 2007.
- Skye and Wester Ross names for Highland Council: 172 names, completed April 2008.
- 100 buildings names for the Highland Council toolkit, completed July 2008.

7.0 Projects in progress:

- 7.1
- 69 settlement names in Lochaber and Sutherland for Highland Council -
 - 82 building names for Argyll and Bute Council.

7.2 Altogether 75 enquiries and requests were received during mid April 2007 to mid July 2008. In addition to the lists mentioned above, 42 requests were received from Highland Council, 3 from Ordnance Survey, 1 from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 1 from STV and 23 from members of the public or other organisations.

In total 965 names were researched, comprising:

- 496 place-names
- 252 street names
- 209 building names
- 8 phrases

8 Funding

8.1 AÀA is funded by contributions from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the three local authorities. Current funding runs out in October 2008.

8.2 An application has been submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig to continue funding for the national database.

8.3 The running costs of AÀA are £35k/annum, this includes the salary of a part-time officer, place-names research costs, the setting up, hosting and maintenance of a Place-Names Data Base for 3 years, office expenses and the development of a scoping exercise.

8.4 The Council awarded £6 000, to AÀA, (£3 000 for research in financial year 06/07, and £3 000 for the development of a business plan in 07/08); Comhairle nan Eilear Siar has awarded £3 000 for running costs; Argyll and Bute Council has awarded £3 000 for running costs and a further £12 000 for the setting up of a Gaelic Place-Names Archive.

8.5 AÀA aims to apply to the Highland 2007 Legacy Fund for financial support towards this Gaelic Place-Names Archive project and may seek match funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the 3 Local Authorities who are currently partners of AÀA.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 Members are invited to note the contents of the report and the accompanying presentation.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: 23 July 2008

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