

Agenda Item	7
Report No	HC/14/25

The Highland Council

Committee: Gaelic

Date: 27 August 2025

Report Title: Post-event Survey: Gaelic Conference

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the post-event survey of the Gaelic conference, which was organised by The Highland Council. The event took place on 1 May 2025 in Eden Court, Inverness.
- 1.2 Following the successful delivery of the Gaelic conference, key actions have been identified to ensure the outcomes of the event lead to progress. Information from the survey will support and inform these actions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note the report;
 - ii. Consider and note the post-event survey; and
 - iii. Agree the next steps.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource
The delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan is funded by The Highland Council, Scottish Government grants and various Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnaG) funding streams.

The conference was funded with support from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The contract for delivering the Gaelic Conference was awarded to 21CC on 12 September 2024 through procurement. The final cost for the event was £29,900.
- 3.2 Legal
The Highland Council has a statutory duty to have a Gaelic Language Plan in terms of Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The duty includes an obligation to implement and accurately report commitments.

- 3.3 Risk
Risks identified include resourcing pressures impacting the ability of Highland Council to fulfil the conference recommendations.
- 3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)
No risk identified.
- 3.5 Gaelic
Positive impact on the delivery of Gaelic Language Plan outcomes relating to the Business and the Economy theme.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies, or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Survey Summary

- 5.1 **Appendix 1** provides an overview of the Highland Council's Gaelic Conference 2025, produced by 21CC Group. It summarises keynote speakers and data collected from a post event survey to assess whether the selected speakers added value to the conference. It also incorporates feedback from the speakers themselves.
- 5.2 The report analyses both qualitative and quantitative data from the post-event survey completed by attendees, to determine whether guests felt the conference was worthwhile, successful, and if they would support its return.
- 5.3 The report highlights the key successes achieved during the project and concludes with recommendations from 21CC Group on how to further develop the Gaelic Conference in alignment with The Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

6. Corporate Service Aims – Gaelic Language Plan (GLP)

- 6.1 The GLP Corporate Service aims are used with the intention of standardising key Gaelic services over time across The Highland Council. Each separate Corporate Service aim contains a desired outcome which Bòrd na Gàidhlig would like to see all local authorities achieve over time.

As the first local authority to have its Gaelic Language Plan approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig (in 2008), The Highland Council has long established commitments to the language across all its services and many of these desired outcomes are already being fulfilled.

In addition, the Council has developed guidelines on the use of Gaelic in the services it provides. These guidelines can be read in 'Guidelines on the use of Gaelic in Highland Council services' to identify where Gaelic can be used during meetings on a case-by-case basis, aiming to maximise language usage. Ahead of such meetings, the messaging that Gaelic is welcome will be advertised and promoted.

Simultaneous translation will be provided where possible.

- 6.2 The Gaelic Conference was planned with the aim of providing a total Gaelic experience. Simultaneous translation was provided to support the delivery of the event in Gaelic.

The speakers were carefully selected to ensure their insights and presentations aligned with the conference's aim of evidencing the cultural value and economic potential of Gaelic in business and employability across the Highlands.

Notably, 85% of the speakers at the conference were fluent Gaelic speakers.

7. Survey

- 7.1 The survey includes information on;

- Attendee feedback
- Noteworthy information
- Speakers feedback
- Key successes
- Recommendations for future planning of the GLP

- 7.2 This section summarises the survey report recommendations based on feedback received from attendees and speakers, as well as the suggestions below provided by 21CC Group, regarding how the Gaelic Language Plan can be further developed in future years.

For future Gaelic events;

- Inclusion of more female voices: It reflects the diversity of the Gaelic-speaking community and encourages greater participation and engagement from underrepresented groups, helping to foster equity and relevance in the conference content.
- Breakout rooms with speakers: Introducing breakout sessions allows for smaller, more focused discussions where attendees can engage directly with speakers. It also enhances networking and collaboration among participants.
- More leaflets and handouts with information and statistics: summaries of presentations can help attendees retain important information and better understand the impact of Gaelic initiatives. These resources also serve as useful tools for sharing knowledge beyond the event and encouraging continued interest and advocacy.
- Setting up a dedicated space for Gaelic-led businesses not only supports local enterprise but also demonstrates the practical and economic value of the language. It creates opportunities for attendees to connect with businesses.
- Bringing in lead members of the Highland Council earlier. It became clear that the lead members of the Highland Council had a strong vision and clear understanding of what they wanted from the conference.

- 7.3 Overall, the attendee feedback indicates that attendees found the speakers at the Gaelic conference to be of a high standard and that they met expectations in terms of quality. The data also shows that the conference was engaging and offered valuable insights into the benefits of the Gaelic language not only economically and in terms of employability, but also socially and among young people
- 7.4 The survey also indicates that most respondents expressed a strong willingness to attend the conference again should it be organised in the future. This demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with the overall event experience and suggests a continued interest in similar future gatherings.

8 Next Steps

- 8.1 The survey provides officers with information on what insights were gained by delegates attending the conference, the most helpful sessions, relevance of content, connections made and the likelihood of future collaboration following attendance. The survey also provides information on future requirements for improvements and any other comments about the event.
- 8.2 The Gaelic Team will include information from the survey in a Highland Council officer workshop to consider the key messages from the evidence presented at the Conference. The results will inform next steps and the delivery of business and economic outcomes for the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan going forward.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 08 July 2025

Author: Lena Walker, Education Support Officer

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Highland Council Gaelic Conference 2025 Post Event Report



Highland Council Gaelic Conference 2025

Post Event Report

Venue: Eden Court, Bishops Road, Inverness,
IV35SA

Event Date: 1st May 2025

Event Reference: EV-618316

21CC Group Ltd

6B Old Deans Road

West Lothian

Bathgate

EH48 1JU

0131 331 4509

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the Highland Council's Gaelic Conference 2025, produced by 21CC Group. It summarises the involvement of the keynote speakers, drawing on data collected from a post-event survey to assess whether the selected speakers added value to the conference. It also incorporates feedback from the speakers themselves.

Further, the report analyses both qualitative and quantitative data from the post-event survey completed by attendees, to determine whether guests felt the conference was worthwhile, successful, and if they would support its return. The report highlights the key successes achieved during the project and concludes with recommendations from 21CC Group on how to further develop the Gaelic Conference in alignment with The Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

Summary of Keynote Speakers

21CC Group was tasked with creating the programme for the Gaelic Conference under the guidance of The Highland Council. The speakers were carefully selected to ensure their talks aligned with the conference's aim of evidencing the cultural value and economic potential of Gaelic in business and employability across the Highlands. Notably, 85% of the speakers at the conference were fluent Gaelic speakers.

Below is the final list of confirmed speakers, with an indication of Gaelic language proficiency:

- Councillor Raymond Bremner – Leader of The Highland Council (Gaelic Speaker)
- Councillor Alex Graham – Member of The Highland Council (Gaelic Speaker)
- James Graham – The Royal National Mòd (Gaelic Speaker)
- Ian Smith – Tìree Distillery (Gaelic Speaker)
- Calum Maclean – Presenter (Gaelic Speaker)
- Calum Ferguson – ALBA FA (Gaelic Speaker)
- Joanna Peteranna – Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Gaelic Speaker)
- Cornelius Chikwama – Economist (Non-Gaelic Speaker)
- Inverness Castle Experience – (Non-Gaelic Speaker)
- John Morrison – MG ALBA (Gaelic Speaker)
- Derek Brown – CEO of The Highland Council (Gaelic Speaker)
- Charlotte MacNeish – Student (Gaelic Speaker)

- Daniel Cowe – Student (Gaelic Speaker)
- Kate Forbes – Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic (Gaelic Speaker)

Each speaker delivered a 20-minute presentation, followed by 9 minutes of Q&A and 1 minute allocated for transitions. This format was well-received, as it ensured engagement without overwhelming the audience and allowed ample time for interaction.

The conference ran according to schedule, with only a minor 10-minute delay caused by an overrun during MG ALBA's presentation, which slightly impacted the remainder of the programme.

Attendee Feedback

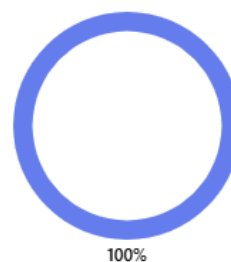
A post-event email was sent to all registered attendees of the conference, containing 19 questions focusing on various aspects of the speakers and the event. A full copy of the responses can be found in a separate spreadsheet titled **Co-labhairt Ghàidhlig Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd _ Highland Council Gaelic Conference**. There was a total of 16 responses.

On review of the data, out of the attendees who responded to the post event survey, we can see that 100% felt that they gained valuable insight from the Gaelic Conference.

2. An d' fhuair sibh lèirsinn luachmhor sam bith on Cho-labhairt Ghàidhlig? | Did you gain any valuable insight from the Gaelic Conference?

[More details](#)

- Fhuair | Yes 16
- Cha d' fhuair | No 0



The responses collected also indicate that the speaker's content was relevant to a large majority of the attendee's industry and interests. It's key to note that the attendees' invites were selected by the Highland Council and included multiple different industry sectors, suggesting that the range of speakers that were selected covered a wide range of industry across the Highlands.

7. An robh an t-susbaint buntainneach dhan ghnìomhachas is do na h-ùidhean agaibh? | Did you find the content relevant to your industry and interests?

[More details](#)



When producing a free conference, it can be challenging to find good quality speakers who are willing to speak at the conference. However, on this occasion its speakers who 21CC Group had reached out to under guidance of the Highland Council were to high standards., This claim is supported by the data below, which indicated the quality of speaker's presentation was scored 4.25 out of 5.

6. Ciamar a mheasadh sibh na taisbeanaidhean is an luchd-labhairt? (le 1 truagh agus 5 sàr-mhath) | How would you rate the quality of the presentations and speakers? (1 Being poor and 5 being excellent)

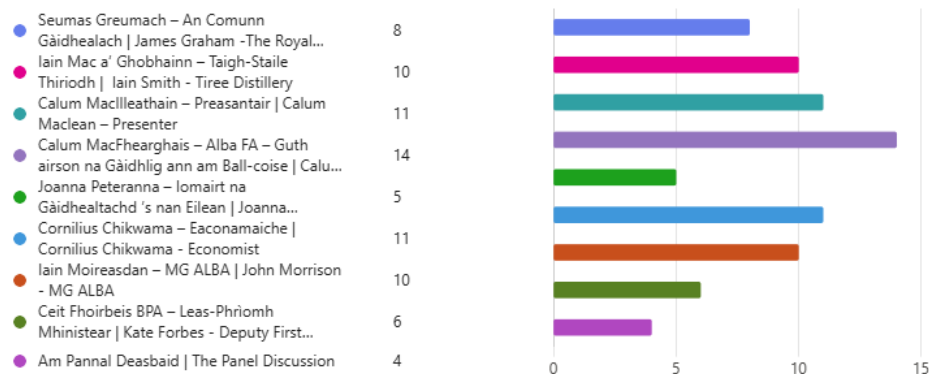
[More details](#)



The above data indicates that the attendees felt that the quality of the speakers and presentation was of very high standards and it is likely a large majority of the attendees who attended the conference left with some valuable insight of how the cultural value and impact of Gaelic economic potential in business and employment opportunity.

Although the main goal of the conference was focused on the Gaelic language's economic potential in business and employability across the Highlands, the range of speaker's backgrounds was spread across multiple industries, providing multiple options on views around this topic. The data below shows which speakers were ranked most valuable.

4. Dè na seiseanan no cò an luchd-labhairt a b' fheàrr a chòrd ribh? | Which sessions or speakers did you find most valuable?



Other noteworthy comments from the attendees about the speakers also include:

- 1) “Mar a tha FC ALBA air fàs, an dèidh dhaibh beachd fhaighinn & leantainn orra far a' bheil iarratas airson na tha iad a' toirt seachad. Gu bheil daoine mar Charlotte le ùidh anns a' chànan & airson a' cleachdadh.”
- 2) “Cornelius Chikwama's observations on the value of minority language were fascinating and very thought provoking. Additionally, I think there is much more that can be achieved in the Gaelic economy if we continue to raise the profile and value the interventions that we make”
- 3) “This was by far the most engaging conference I have ever attended! It is rare to be able to maintain complete focus for an entire day of presentations. The other speakers were of an extremely high standard.”

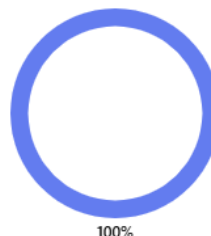
Overall, the attendee feedback indicates that attendees found the speakers at the Gaelic conference to be of a high standard and that they met expectations in terms of quality. The data also provides evidence that the conference was engaging and offered valuable insights into the benefits of the Gaelic language not only economically and in terms of employability, but also socially and among young people.

Noteworthy Information from The Post Event Survey

10. An robh e furasta rudan a lorg aig an tachartas agus an robh e air a dheagh chur air dòigh? | Was the event easy to navigate and well-organised?

[More details](#)

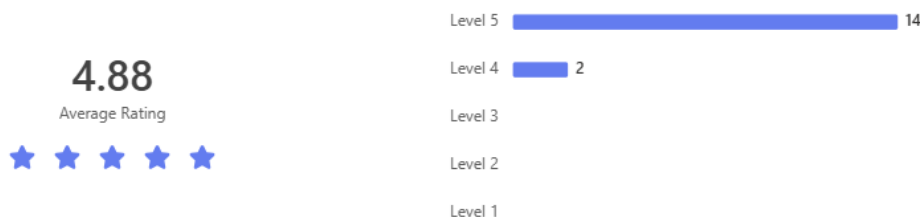
● Bha | Yes 16
● Cha robh | No 0



The statistic indicates that the layout design of the conference was not only easy to comprehend but also functioned effectively, contributing to a smooth event experience for the attendees

12. Air sgèile 1 gu 5, ciamar a chòrd Cùirt an Easbaig ribh mar aitreabh airson na Co-labhairt Gàidhlig? (le 1 truagh agus 5 sàr-mhat h) * | On a scale of 1 to 5, how did you like Eden Court as the venue for the Gaelic Conference? (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)

[More details](#)



The data indicates that Eden Court was a suitable venue for the Gaelic Conference, receiving high scores in our post-survey report. This suggests that the venue could be considered for future conferences.

13. Dè cho buailteach 's a tha sibh tighinn chun na co-labhairt seo a-rithist? (1 rionnag gun a bhith buailteach idir agus 5 rionnagan fìor bhuailteach) | How likely are you to attend this conference again in the future? (1 Star being unlikely and 5 stars being very likely)



The data indicates that most respondents expressed a strong willingness to attend the conference again should it be organised in the future. This demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with the overall event experience and suggests a continued interest in similar future gatherings.

16. An robh cothroman lìonrachaidh gu leòr ann le luchd-frithealaidh eile? | Were there enough opportunities for networking with other attendees?



The conference format included three designated networking sessions held during breakfast, lunch, and post-event drinks. Survey responses indicate that most participants considered the allocated time to be adequate for engaging in meaningful professional networking.

17. An robh cothrom gu leòr ann airson ceistean is freagairtean, no eadar-obrachadh sna seiseanan? | Was there enough opportunity for Q&A or interaction during sessions?



Multiple sessions were allocated for audience questions and interaction throughout the conference. According to survey results, most attendees perceived these opportunities as adequate for addressing their queries and engaging with the presenters.

Speakers Feedback

A distinct set of questions were posed to the speakers, separate from those directed to the attendees, as part of the post-event survey. Four responses were received, submitted by Calum Maclean (Presenter), Ian Smith (Tiree Gin & Whisky), James Graham (Royal National Mòd), and a representative from MG ALBA. The questions administered to the speakers are detailed below. This report will analyse the overall scores, and feedback obtained from the feedback, while the individual comments are provided in Appendix 1.

1. How would you rate the overall conference experience? (1 being poor, 5 being excellent).
2. How satisfied were you with the support provided before and during the event? (1 being Very unsatisfied, 5 being very Satisfied)
3. Was the communication from the organisers clear and timely? (Yes / No)
4. Did the AV and technical setup meet your needs? (Yes / No)
5. Was the audience engagement and participation what you expected? (Yes / No)
6. What could we improve for future speakers?

1. How would you rate the overall conference experience? (1 being poor, 5 being excellent).

The average score for this was 4.0, indicating that the speakers who responded generally had a highly positive experience at the Gaelic conference.

2. How satisfied were you with the support provided before and during the event? (1 being Very unsatisfied, 5 being very Satisfied).

The average satisfaction rating for the support provided before and during the event was 4.25 out of 5, indicating that respondents were generally very satisfied with the assistance they received throughout the conference.

3. Was the communication from the organisers clear and timely? (Yes / No)

All respondents (100%) indicated that the communication from the organisers was clear and timely

4. Did the AV and technical setup meet your needs? (Yes / No)

All respondents (100%) stated that the audiovisual and technical provisions satisfactorily met their needs

5. Was the audience engagement and participation what you expected? (Yes / No)

While all respondents (100%) agreed that audience engagement and participation met their expectations, one individual noted that the audience needed warming up before they began to engage more fully.

6. What could we improve for future speakers?

Reading through all of the responses, below I have listed the findings that we can use to help improve the Gaelic conference moving forward

Calum Maclean

‘There was a lack of female voices, and I feel this is an important point. The entire morning session was all men, and although of various ages and points of view, it was still all male’

‘I feel like there wasn't a clear "what comes next?" objective off the back of it.’

Ian Smith

‘I think a fee along with travel and accommodation costs should be offered to all speakers.’

James Graham

Perhaps a little more information given to visiting speakers re travel costs/accommodation and their requirements also

These insights offer valuable guidance for improving future Gaelic conferences. To ensure greater inclusivity and diversity, organisers can actively work to balance gender representation among speakers, creating a more varied and engaging programme. Clarifying the conference's goals and outlining clear next steps or actionable outcomes can help attendees and speakers leave with a stronger sense of purpose and direction. Additionally, establishing a fair compensation policy that includes fees alongside travel and accommodation costs will recognise speakers' contributions and encourage broader participation. Providing comprehensive information about travel and accommodation logistics in advance will also ease planning for visiting speakers, helping to create a smoother and more welcoming experience overall. Implementing these changes will contribute to a more inclusive, organised, and impactful conference in the future.

Key Successes

- The conference provided evidence of the cultural value of the Gaelic language, as well as its positive economic impact on business and employability in the Highlands achieving the original target of the conference.
- The conference successfully provided a dedicated platform to facilitate networking and collaboration among key stakeholders, fostering meaningful connections within the Gaelic community.
- Provided a platform for the Gaelic Language Plan to be promoted.
- Multiple speakers shared real-life examples that highlighted the tangible benefits of the Gaelic language, enriching the content and relevance of the sessions.
- The event exceeded its minimum attendance target of 50 participants, reflecting strong interest and engagement.
- Both attendee and speaker satisfaction ratings were notably high, indicating a positive overall experience.
- There was a clear and strong desire expressed by attendees to participate in future conferences, demonstrating ongoing commitment.
- The conference achieved technical success by live streaming one of the presenters' presentations seamlessly, with no reported technical issues.
- The programme was well-managed and ran strictly according to schedule, ensuring a smooth flow of events.
- Speakers represented a diverse range of backgrounds and interests, contributing to a rich and inclusive dialogue throughout the conference.
- There was strong representation from The Highland Council at the conference, highlighting local government support for Gaelic. Their involvement helps strengthen partnerships, ensures backing for Gaelic initiatives, and reinforces the commitment to preserving and promoting the language in the Highlands.

Recommendations for the future planning of the Gaelic Language Plan

This section of the report takes into consideration the feedback received from attendees and speakers, as well as the suggestions provided by 21CC Group, regarding how the Gaelic Language Plan can be further developed in future years. It aims to incorporate diverse perspectives to ensure the plan's continued growth, relevance, and effectiveness in promoting and supporting the Gaelic language. By reflecting on past experiences and expert recommendations.

- **Inclusion of more female voices:** Increasing female representation among speakers ensures a broader range of perspectives and experiences, contributing to a more balanced and inclusive dialogue. It reflects the diversity of the Gaelic-speaking community and encourages greater participation and engagement from underrepresented groups, helping to foster equity and relevance in the conference content.
- **Breakout rooms with speakers:** Introducing breakout sessions allows for smaller, more focused discussions where attendees can engage directly with speakers. This format encourages deeper conversation, more personalised interaction, and the opportunity to explore specific topics in greater detail. It also enhances networking and collaboration among participants.
- **More leaflets and handouts with information and statistics:** Providing printed materials that include key facts, statistics, and summaries of presentations can help attendees retain important information and better understand the impact of Gaelic initiatives. These resources also serve as useful tools for sharing knowledge beyond the event and encouraging continued interest and advocacy.
- **A stall area for Gaelic businesses to promote their practices and products:** Setting up a dedicated space for Gaelic-led businesses not only supports local enterprise but also demonstrates the practical and economic value of the language. It creates opportunities for attendees to connect with businesses, discover Gaelic-based products and services, and see firsthand the role of the language in contemporary commercial life.
- **Bringing in lead members of the Highland Council Earlier**
It became clear that the lead members of the Highland Council had a strong vision and clear understanding of what they wanted from the conference. However, their involvement came quite late in the process, which led to several last-minute changes. While we successfully implemented these changes, involving them earlier in the planning stages would provide a clearer picture of their expectations and ensure that all their priorities are incorporated from the outset.

21CC Group's Final Comments

The team at 21CC Group thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Highland Council's Gaelic Conference. It was a real privilege to contribute to an event that celebrates and supports Gaelic language, heritage, and culture, something we feel proud to have helped bring to life.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the entire team at the Highland Council for their professionalism, enthusiasm, and outstanding support throughout every stage of the planning and delivery process. From the early stages of concept development through to on-the-day execution, your team made collaboration seamless and enjoyable. Your clear communication, openness to ideas, and responsiveness to our suggestions allowed us to deliver a polished and impactful experience for everyone involved.

On behalf of everyone at 21CC Group, I'd like to express our heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity to work with you. We look forward to the possibility of working together again on future events. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can support you in any upcoming projects.

Tapadh Leat!

30/05/2025

X Callum Ridley

Callum Ridley
Event Coordinator
Signed by: Callum Ridley

Appendix 1

MG ALBA

Hi, thank you for your help in the run up to and on the day itself Callum.

1. How would you rate the overall conference experience? (1 being poor, 5 being excellent). **4**
2. How satisfied were you with the support provided before and during the event? (1 being Very unsatisfied, 5 being very Satisfied). **5**
3. Was the communication from the organisers clear and timely? **Yes**
4. Did the AV and technical setup meet your needs? **Yes**
5. Was the audience engagement and participation what you expected? **Yes**
6. What could we improve for future speakers?
7. Any additional comments or suggestions?

Calum Maclean

- How would you rate the overall conference experience? (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)
- **3. I'm not sure that I know what the conference aimed to achieve, and whether it did (I can't know, being unclear of the exact purpose!). I feel that it brought together many people who are of the same point of view or working at the same purpose, so it became somewhat of a talking shop. I like to hear new ideas and opportunities - which I attempted to present with my talk. I feel like there wasn't a clear "what comes next?" objective off the back of it.**
- How satisfied were you with the support provided before and during the event? (1 being Very unsatisfied, 5 being very Satisfied).
5 - All very straightforward from my point of view
- Was the communication from the organisers clear and timely? (Yes / No)
- **Yes**
- Did the AV and technical setup meet your needs? (Yes / No)
- **Yes, although I was not aware that playing video was an option, as I may have used that**
- Was the audience engagement and participation what you expected? (Yes / No)
- **Somewhat. I feel that it was a quiet audience, and needed waking up a little.**
- What could we improve for future speakers?
- **There was a lack of female voices, and I feel this is an important point. The entire morning session was all men, and although of various ages and points of view, it was still all male. I think a more interactive-based speaker would be good - someone using Menimeter or something similar - instead of just 'talking at' people. It's the kind of thing that may need to be suggested to speakers, or teased out of them.**
- Any additional comments or suggestions?

James Graham

1. How would you rate the overall conference experience? (1 being poor, 5 being excellent). **5**
2. How satisfied were you with the support provided before and during the event? (1 being Very unsatisfied, 5 being very Satisfied). **4**
3. Was the communication from the organisers clear and timely? (Yes / No)
4. Did the AV and technical setup meet your needs? (Yes / ~~No~~)
5. Was the audience engagement and participation what you expected? (Yes / ~~No~~)
- 6. What could we improve for future speakers? Nothing, the set up and organisation on the day was excellent.**
7. Any additional comments or suggestions? Perhaps a little more time granted to speakers to submit their slides and information, however, I understand that there was translation work to be carried out. Perhaps a little more information given to visiting speakers re travel costs/accommodation and their requirements also. The event was excellently put together, though, and ran extremely smoothly on the day, well done to all involved.

Ian Smith

1. 4
2. 3
3. Other than communication on fee, I think it was clear and timely.
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Again, I think a fee along with travel and accommodation costs should be offered to all speakers.
7. Thoroughly enjoyable day. Communication in the build up was clear. Great to catch up with colleagues in the Gaelic world and to meet others with the same interest. Slight misunderstanding regarding expected fee but this was rectified in a satisfactory manner, which was much appreciated.