

Gaelic and Highland Council

A digital workshop with Ruairidh (Roddy) Maclean

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Content:

- Why are the Highlands the ‘Gàidhealtachd’?
- Gaelic as a landscape language.
- Economic opportunities and Gaelic.
- Bilingualism and the modern Gaelic ‘Revival’.

SECTION 1: WHY ARE THE HIGHLANDS THE ‘GÀIDHEALTACHD’?

Early Celtic Scotland:

Before the arrival of the Norse, there were three main language groups in what is now Scotland. The Picts dominated the north and east, north of the Forth-Clyde line, the Britons were dominant in the south, and the Gaels occupied a swathe of territory known as [the kingdom of] Dál Riata (Dalriada), roughly coterminous with modern Argyll. All these peoples spoke Celtic languages. The Pictish language remains obscure but is likely to have been related to the Brythonic spoken by the Britons (an early form of what became Welsh in Wales).

Scotland’s Name:

Scotland is named for the Scots, a term which comes from *Scoti*, the Latin word for ‘Gaels’, referring originally to Gaelic-speaking inhabitants of Britain and Ireland. ‘Scot’ and ‘Gael’ were at one time virtually synonymous. Alban is likely to have been used to refer to the land of the Picts, and became the name of the combined kingdom of the Picts and Scots in the Celtic languages, including Gaelic. In more modern times, the terminal ‘n’ was dropped in Scottish Gaelic, so we refer to **Alba**. Nova Scotia in Canada is *Alba Nuadh* in Gaelic – which means, as in the Latin, ‘New Scotland’.

Dál Riata:

Dál Riata was an influential Gaelic-speaking maritime kingdom that also encompassed part of Ireland (modern Antrim and Derry). It was said to have been founded by Fearghas Mòr (Fergus Mòr) in the 5th century. Its capital was at Dunadd between Kilmartin and Lochgilphead, where a citadel was built on a rocky outcrop surrounded by bogland (still known as *A’ Mhòine Mhòr* ‘the great bogland’). Dál Riata was in conflict with Pictland and Northumbria, but it also had religious connections with those kingdoms, as it contained Iona from which much proselytizing took place.

Dál Riata became *Airer Goídel* ‘border region or coastland of Gaels’ – modern *Earra-Ghàidheal* (Argyll). This at one time extended to take in parts of modern Wester Ross and possibly Skye. The critical action in the formation of Alba/Scotland as a kingdom covering most of northern Scotland was the combining of the kingdoms of Dál Riata and Pictland under common leadership. Two kings

are thought to have been instrumental in this – *Óengus mac Fheargais* (Angus son of Fergus), king of Pictland, who is thought to have gained control of Dál Riata in the 730s, and *Cináed mac Ailpín* (Coinneach mac Ailpein, Kenneth MacAlpin) who ascended to the common throne in around 843.

The combining of the Picts with the Scots might have been promoted by a common enemy – the Norse – and by what appears to have been a gradual Gaelicisation of Pictish society at this time. By the early 11th century, Alba appears to have been largely Gaelic-speaking, but the country was confined to territory north of the Forth-Clyde line and did not include, at least in a practical sense, the Norse-dominated territories of the far north and west.

The Norse:

Orkney and Shetland are thought to have been part of Pictland until the arrival of Vikings at the end of the 8th century. Although influenced by Gaelic-speaking churchmen who were spreading the gospel, they are unlikely ever to have become Gaelicised at a community level. The kingdom of Norway annexed the islands in 875AD. The Norse also ruled in the Western Isles and greatly influenced other parts of northern and western Scotland, leaving behind place-names, personal names, other cultural influences, and a significant number of words adopted into Gaelic. In the modern Highland Council area, most of the descendants of the Norse – outside Orkney, Shetland and the north-eastern part of Caithness – eventually adopted the Gaelic language and became part of Gaelic Scotland.

Southern expansion:

During the 11th century, Alba annexed the old kingdom of Strathclyde in the south-west, absorbing a population that probably spoke a mixture of Brythonic (also known as Cumbric), Gaelic and Inglis, although Galloway (*Gall-Ghàidhealaibh*) – land of Gaelic speaking people of Norse ancestry – retained a degree of independence for some time.

Alba (Scotland) also absorbed the Inglis-speaking region to the south-east, as far as the Tweed. The Gaels never dominated the south-east, and the Gaelic place-names we see there probably result from the settlement of an elite. However, nationally – by the end of the 11th century – Gaelic reached perhaps its political zenith. It was the country's dominant language, spoken by a majority and providing the country with a national identity. Even people of non-Gaelic heritage were calling themselves 'Scots'.

From Kenneth MacAlpin, there was a lineage of 22 Gaelic-speaking kings. There was no national capital, although monarchs were generally crowned in a ceremony at *Sgàin*/Scone near Perth. The last of the Gaelic speaking kings was Malcolm III ('Canmore') who ruled from 1058 to 1093, although the court began to take on English and (Norman) French norms and customs during his reign. His brother *Dòmhnall Bàn* 'fair haired Donald' ascended the throne after him for a brief period (to 1097) but this was the last flourish of Gaeldom in the Scottish royal court. Gaelic speakers might have made up the majority of the country's population, but its leaders were to become estranged from the language.

Two pivotal dates:

Here are two important dates in Scottish history. Why are they significant linguistically and politically?

1066

1266

What happened in **1263** that led up to 1266?

Expansion of Gaelic into the ‘Norse’ lands:

Gaelic did not reach Orkney or Shetland because those island groups remained under the control of Norway after the signing of the Treaty of Perth. With the waning of Norse power, Gaelic reasserted itself in the north-west and western islands, with that part of the country eventually being seen as the Gaelic ‘heartland’ of Scotland (something that was not the case in the 13th century). The descendant language of Old Norse in the Northern Isles – Norn – came under pressure, not from Gaelic, but from Scots – giving rise to the island dialects today which boast many Norse loanwords.

Unlike the Northern Isles, Caithness returned to Scotland in 1266, and Gaelic came to dominate the landscape of the south-western half of the modern county, with Norse place-names and heritage dominant in the north-eastern half. This obviously reflects a pattern of language use within the population.

Highland and Lowland:

By the late 14th century, we see written accounts of Scotland as a nation divided into two along linguistic lines – the Gaelic Highlands and Scots-speaking Lowlands (the Norn-speaking Northern Isles were still under the control of Norway at this stage). No such division is apparent in the literature before this time.

In Barbour’s *Bruce*, written about 1375, the ‘Scottish tongue’ is first applied to the language of the Lowlands rather than Gaelic. We see a change in terminology taking place, with some writers applying ‘Irish’ to the Gaelic language, distancing it from the country (Scotland) which the Gaels had been instrumental in founding. An example is the historian and intellectual, John Major (or Mair), a native of East Lothian, who wrote in Latin. In *Historia Majoris Britanniae*, published in 1521, he wrote ‘*One half of Scotland speaks Irish, and all these as well as the Islanders ... belong to the Wild Scots. In dress, in the manner of their outward life, and in good morals ... these come behind the householding Scots.*’

Major tells us that shortly before his time, the majority of Scots spoke Gaelic, and he himself identifies as a Scot, although he foresees a future union with England and calls his own language ‘English’.

From a Gaelic perspective, the Highlands were known as *Na Garbh-chrìochan* ‘the rugged territories’ in the days when Gaelic was still widely spoken in the Lowlands. As Gaelic ‘retreated’ into the Highlands, the region became known to the Gaels themselves as *A’ Ghàidhealtachd* (the realm of the Gael), with the

Lowlands referred to as *A' Ghalltachd* (the realm of the non-Gael). The distinction is based on language, rather than topography (although one could argue that there is a relationship between the two). That terminology is still used today. Thus, Highland Council is *Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd* in Gaelic. Of course, this labelling carries a degree of inherent inaccuracy. Argyll and the Western Isles are most certainly part of the *Gàidhealtachd*, as are the 'Highland' parts of Moray, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Perthshire, Stirlingshire and North Ayrshire (Arran).

The Demise of Gaelic in the Lowlands:

The broad-brush picture of post-medieval Scotland consisting solely of the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Scots-speaking Lowlands is challenged by a couple of salient observations. A few communities in the Highland Council area became Scots-speaking (and eventually English-speaking), possibly as a result of immigration from Lowland areas. The main examples are Cromarty, Fortrose/Rosemarkie and Avoch. In the north-eastern part of Caithness, Scots eventually replaced Norn.

Many parts of Lowland Scotland retained the Gaelic language for centuries after the emergence of the Highland/Lowland divide. The most obvious example is Galloway and Carrick (southern Ayrshire) where Gaelic remained a vernacular into the 17th Century and survived patchily into the latter half of the 18th Century. Kinross and Clackmannan lost the language around 1350, but it lasted a little longer in Fife. In 1434, Gaelic was still in common use in parts of lowland Moray and Aberdeenshire and disappeared from coastal Aberdeenshire in the 16th century. Southern Perthshire was only partially Gaelic-speaking in the early 16th century, but this county and Aberdeenshire are particularly instructive. Despite the appearance of Inglis/Scots in each county at an early stage, the Gaelic language remained dominant for centuries in the Highland areas of each.

The Strength of Gaelic within Highland Council area:

Despite the weakening of Gaelic within Lowland parts of the country, it remained dominant across the Highlands. In 1806, Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk, published figures for the prevalence of Gaelic usage in church services as a marker of language strength. Here are his figures for parts of the modern Highland Council area:

County	Estimated % of the county population speaking Gaelic in 1806
Caithness	50.1
Inverness	100.0
Nairn	56.3
Ross & Cromarty	100.0
Sutherland	100.0

In his report, Douglas notes that the following parishes should 'be considered as entirely Highland' (i.e. Gaelic-speaking):

Caithness: Reay, Thurso, Halkirk, Latheron

Nairnshire: Nairn, Ardclach, Calder

The following figures show the percentage of Gaelic speakers within various communities in the 1891 Census. This followed a period of decline and was 19 years after the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act which effectively removed Gaelic from the Scottish education system. Rural communities in which more than 90% of the inhabitants spoke Gaelic were geographically widespread (the list runs approximately clockwise around the Highland Council area). These figures demonstrate how much the Gaelic heritage is a common factor across different parts of the area:

Moidart	91.9%
Eigg	92.3%
Glen Gloy	95.7%
Banavie	93.8%
Plockton	96.4%
Toscaig & Uags	99.1%
Alligin & Upper Diabaig	97.2%
Achiltibuie & Polglass	91.7%
Morefield & Rhue	94.4%
Marishader & Staffin	94.7%
Dunvegan & Claigan	91.4%
Raasay	90.0%
Inverasdale	95.9%
Lochinver & Drumbeg	91.8%
Melvich & Portskerra	90.1%
Embo	90.7%
Hilton of Cadboll	91.8%
Inverfarigaig	91.5%
Abriachan	93.5%
Coignafearn	97.5%
Glen Affric & Knockfin	100%

Gaelic-speakers in more urban or densely-populated areas were almost always diluted by those who did not speak the language, but nevertheless the census figures for 1891 show a considerable population of ‘urban’ Gaels (although many of these communities would still be termed ‘villages’ rather than ‘towns’). These are given in descending order:

Community	% Gaelic-speaking
Portree	76.2%
Newtonmore	73.4%
Aviemore	63.4%
Beaully	54.5%
Kingussie	53.9%
Golspie	50.2%
Dornoch	53.3%
Strathpeffer	52.9%
Dingwall (town)	41.3%
Tain	39.0%

Inverness	33.0%
Grantown-on-Spey	32.9%
Halkirk	21.5%
Nairn (Small Burgh)	15.1%
Thurso	7.6%
Wick	3.0%

Caithness:

In terms of place-names, the ‘dividing line’ between the ‘Gaelic zone’ and the ‘Norse zone’ runs approximately from Brims to Latheron. In terms of language usage, we might consider another approximate ‘dividing line’ running from Janetstown, west of Thurso, to East Clyth. Figures for Latheron parish (from the national census) demonstrate the strength of the language there in 1891. In the village of Latheron 65% of the population were Gaelic-speakers. It is sometimes assumed that the bulk of these Caithness Gaels were immigrants from other places but the following figures for the parish suggest otherwise (Source [Gaidhlig Local Studies Vol 22 Cataibh an Ear Ed II \(linguae-celticae.de\)](http://Gaidhlig Local Studies Vol 22 Cataibh an Ear Ed II (linguae-celticae.de))):

Birthplace by civil parish or county	Number of Gaelic-speakers
Latheron	1,813
Halkirk	54
Reay	8
Watten	9
Wick	26
Thurso	6
Caithness (other)	3
Sutherland	90
Ross & Cromarty	33
Inverness-shire	15
Argyll	4
Other	18

From 1500 to present – a national summary:

From *The Highest Apple* (ed. Wilson McLeod & Michael Newton) p.15:
‘Although perhaps almost half Scotland’s population spoke Gaelic in 1500, this had fallen to under 20% by 1800. The first reliable census of Gaelic speakers was conducted in 1891 and recorded 254,415 speakers in Scotland, 6.3% of the national population. Of these 43,738 could not speak English. The number of Gaelic speakers then fell sharply over the course of the twentieth century, and many formerly Gaelic-speaking areas in the Gàidhealtachd have become entirely English-speaking. The 2011 census showed 57,602 Gaelic speakers aged 3 and over in Scotland, a mere 1.1% of the national population, all of whom can also speak English. The rate of decline has now slowed considerably, however, and the proportion of Gaelic speakers in the younger sections of the Scottish population is increasing slightly.’

SECTION 2: GAELIC AS A LANDSCAPE LANGUAGE:



Three languages dominate the landscape toponymy of Scotland – Gaelic, Norse and Scots. There are also names derived from Pictish, Cumbric (Brythonic) and English. Much of the Gaelic and Scots landscape is fairly pure, although in some areas Gaelic place names, mostly in ‘Lowland’ Scotland, have been modified by Scots, following a historical linguistic change in the community. The Norse toponymy in the north and west of the country has been modified by Gaelic influences, with the exception of Orkney, Shetland and the north-eastern third of Caithness which are mostly pure Norse or Norse modified by Scots. Pictish elements, notably in the North-East, are often combined with Gaelic elements, and names of Cumbric origin often show the later influence of Gaelic or Scots.

Because of Gaelic’s historic presence in most of the country, there are Gaelic names for virtually all urban settlements. Some, like *Dùn Omhain* (Dunoon) and *Glaschu* (Glasgow) are fairly obvious, even to a non-Gaelic speaker; others like *A’ Bhruaich* (Fraserburgh) and *Inbhir Pheofharain* (Dingwall) are not.

Mountain names: Gaelic is a rich landscape language, and this is most clearly seen in the *Gàidhealtachd*. For example, there are well over a hundred generic terms for hill, mountain or elevated ground. Around twenty are parts of the body (human or animal), transferred onto the landscape. The classic example is *beinn* (anglicised ‘ben’) which originally meant ‘animal’s horn’. Other common examples are *aodann* ‘face, face of a mountain’, *cìoch* ‘breast, nipple, pointed hill’, *druim* ‘back, mountain ridge’, *gualann* ‘shoulder, mountain shoulder’, *sàil* ‘heel, steep end of a mountain’, and *sròn* ‘nose, end of a mountain or ridge’. In some parts of the Highlands, particularly on the mainland where the Norse influence was minimal, virtually the entire landscape is named in Gaelic. For example, the author has examined in detail the place-names of Inverness and its Environs, in which 93% of place-names originate in Gaelic (see [Celebrating the place-name heritage of Inverness | NatureScot](#)). Similar work in Glenmoriston, adjacent to Loch Ness, revealed a figure of 99%. It is a magnificent heritage that should be celebrated much more by our society, particularly in education.

Some key concepts concerning Gaelic & landscape

- Over 100 Gaelic terms for ‘hill’ or ‘mountain’.
- Nearly 50 Gaelic words for ‘bog’.
- Gaelic has given us a number of landscape terms used in English.
- Colour and pattern descriptors in Gaelic may tell us of rock-type, vegetational features or aspect.
- Gaelic has a unique literature connected to its landscape.
- Gaelic has a unique vocabulary naming and describing the plants and animals native to Scotland.
- Place names may give an indication of past ecologies and habitat change.
- Place names tell us of ways of life and connectivity with land (e.g. hunting, transhumance).

Gaelic names of some towns and villages in Highland Council area:

English name	Gaelic name	Meaning of Gaelic name
Portree	Port Rìgh	<i>king’s harbour*</i>
Newtonmore	Bail’ Ùr an t-Slèibh	<i>new town of the moor</i>
Aviemore	An Aghaidh Mhòr	<i>the big face*</i>
Beaully	A’ Mhanachainn	<i>the monastery</i>
Kingussie	Ceann a’ Ghiùthsaidh	<i>the end of the pine forest</i>
Golspie	Goillspidh	<i>gully village (Norse)</i>
Dornoch	Dòrnach	<i>pebble place</i>
Strathpeffer	Srath Pheofhair	<i>strath of the Peffery burn</i>
Dingwall (town)	Inbhir Pheofharain	<i>the mouth of the Peffery</i>
Tain	Baile Dhubhthaich	<i>St Duthac’s town</i>
Inverness	Inbhir Nis	<i>the mouth of the Ness R.</i>
Grantown-on-Spey	Baile nan Granddach	<i>the town of the Grants</i>
Halkirk	Hàcraig	<i>haugh church (Norse)</i>
Nairn	Inbhir Narann	<i>the mouth of the Nairn R.</i>
Thurso	Inbhir Theòrsa	<i>the mouth of the Thurso R.</i>
Wick	Inbhir Ùige	<i>the mouth of the Wick R.</i>

* slightly contentious explanation

Useful publications:

Drummond, Peter *Scottish Hill Names* Scottish Mountaineering Trust

Murray, John *Reading the Gaelic Landscape* Whittles Publishing

Ruairidh's list of generic Gaelic terms for hills and mountains is available at <https://acisd.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/ainmean-bheann.pdf>.

Ruairidh's paper on 'Ecosystem Services and Gaelic' is available at [NatureScot Research Report 1230 - Ecosystem Services and Gaelic: a Scoping Exercise | NatureScot](#)

SECTION 3: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES CONNECTED TO GAELIC

There are now many hundreds of jobs for which Gaelic is a required or desired skill – notably in education, the media, music and the arts, translation services, Gaelic literature and language development. Clearly, the language can be seen as providing an economic advantage to young people who are accessing the employment market, within certain parts of the economy. Part of the national strategy for the language is to increase its use in the workplace. Ruairidh will give some examples of people using their Gaelic skills in the workplace and of recent job adverts which make mention of the language.

Ar Stòras Gàidhlig

A study by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2014 called *Ar Stòras Gàidhlig* declared a potential economic value of Gaelic as an asset to the Scottish economy of between £82 million and £149 million. The same study also found the language to be an important social asset.

Gaelic and Tourism:

A survey of visitors in 2015 by VisitScotland showed that “A third of visitors stated an interest in or enjoyment of finding out about Gaelic, particularly international visitors”. It was recognised that such a demand was far from being satisfied by Scottish tourism providers.

The Gaelic Tourism Strategy for Scotland 2018-23 says:

‘Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, identity and culture. In an increasingly competitive global market, it is vital that Scotland offers a memorable, authentic and unique visitor experience. Our Gaelic language and its associated culture has significant potential to contribute to this as an important but – so far – under-used ingredient in the Scottish cultural offer... Gaelic can be accessed by the entire tourism industry – speakers and non-speakers. From businesses offering Gaelic immersion experiences, to those providing information on the language, its culture and heritage, to those including some Gaelic in their brand as a USP.’

SECTION 4: BILINGUALISM AND THE MODERN GAELIC ‘REVIVAL’

Gaelic and Education:

In 1616, the Privy Council in Edinburgh passed an act to set up an Anglophone school in every parish in the country. The text of the Act makes its purpose clear: ‘...that the vulgar Inglishe tounge be universallie plantit, and the Irische language, whilk is one of the chief and principall causis of the continewance of barbaritie and incivilitie amongis the inhabitantis of the Ilis and Heylandis, may be abolisheit and removeit...’

The SSPCK

The Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), established in 1709, was the main purveyor of education in the Highlands and Islands. It was strongly anti-Catholic and anti-Gaelic (the Highlands at this stage were less strongly reformed in religion than the Lowlands), and it initially insisted on an English-only education, even in communities where few understood or used the language. This changed in 1766 when instruction in both Gaelic reading and English reading was introduced, and it underwent a sea change in 1825 when children were taught to read Gaelic initially before learning how to read English.

Through the 19th century, following the publication of the Gaelic Bible in 1801, the change in heart by the SSPCK and the provision of basic Gaelic education by churches and philanthropic citizens, literacy rose greatly in the Gaelic community, which now included a sizeable diaspora. Publishing of Gaelic periodicals took place in Canada and Australia, as well as in Britain.

Education (Scotland) Act 1872

This was an act of the Westminster Parliament of the time, whose members were rich men returned by other men of wealth. No woman had a vote. The Education Act removed Gaelic from the curriculum. Gaelic Scotland today arguably suffers under the dark shadow of the 1872 Education Act even more than under the legacy of the Clearances. Even today, only a small percentage of Scottish schoolchildren receive any meaningful education in, or about, Gaelic.

The Gaelic Renaissance

The decades of the 20th century until the 1970s were dark times for the Gaels. The language was hidden away and often treated with contempt or derision by those in power or who didn’t speak it. Many people who are still alive can tell stories of being strapped by a teacher for speaking Gaelic in the classroom. The Scots language also suffered from similar derisory attitudes. Numbers of Gaelic speakers fell from nearly a quarter of a million to a hundred thousand by 1970. In the 1910s and 1920s, the loss was severe, due to the Great War, a global influenza pandemic and emigration. In mainland counties like Sutherland and parts of Ross-shire and Inverness-shire, the language all but disappeared within two generations.

Attitudes began to change in the 1970s and, with the UK’s accession to the European Union, a greater appreciation of multilingualism arose. Scotland often looked to Wales for inspiration, as the Welsh upheld their linguistic rights in a

more vocal manner. It was seen that education had to be at the heart of a linguistic renaissance, and in 1985 Gaelic Medium Education (GME) commenced at two small units in primary schools in Inverness and Glasgow.

The sector has expanded enormously and is now available in 14 council areas, and attended (2019-20) by 3,700 pupils in 61 primary schools and 1,500 pupils in 34 secondary schools. Including the 0-3 age range, there are 6,800 pupils in GME nationwide, with around 450 staff (not including 0-3). GME is extremely successful, producing pupils who are bilingual and above average in their English language skills. Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) is available in 53 primary schools and 32 secondary schools, and there are 3,600 pupils doing GLE at secondary level.

For some time, the Western Isles and Highland were by some distance the council areas most heavily involved in Gaelic education, and they are still very important. In Highland, GME is available in 20 primary settings, 20 secondary settings and 18 nursery settings.

Glasgow and Edinburgh have demonstrated considerable growth in recent times, and the percentage of children in GME in those two cities is now higher than the national average of Gaelic speakers as a percentage of the population. If this trend continues, these cities will show a growth in their Gaelic speaking populations. However, set against that, numbers are low in Aberdeen, and Dundee City Council is yet to commence offering GME (the nearest school is at Forfar in Angus).

There is an arguable case that home and community have not been prioritised enough in Gaelic development, and there has been a tragic loss of young speakers and of confidence in the strongest Gaelic communities in the islands. This was highlighted in 2020 with the publication of *The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community* – a comprehensive sociolinguistic survey of the language in its ‘heartland’. The loss of these communities will not mean an end to the language but will threaten its integrity and status in the years ahead – and more effort is required to ensure intergenerational domestic transmission in the islands.

Census 2011

Which age group showed growth in numbers between 2001 and 2011?

Bilingualism and the modern Gaelic ‘Revival’:

What was the purpose of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005?

Can Minority Languages be Revitalised?

Yes! The Manx Gaelic community has shown a considerable increase in speaker numbers from a much lower base than Scottish Gaelic, as has Hawaiian. While Gaelic is a minority language with demonstrable weaknesses, we should also note that more than half of the world’s languages have less speakers than Gaelic.

Embracing Bilingualism

It is likely that a majority of the world’s population speaks more than one language in their everyday lives. A useful website is **bilingualism-matters.org** which says

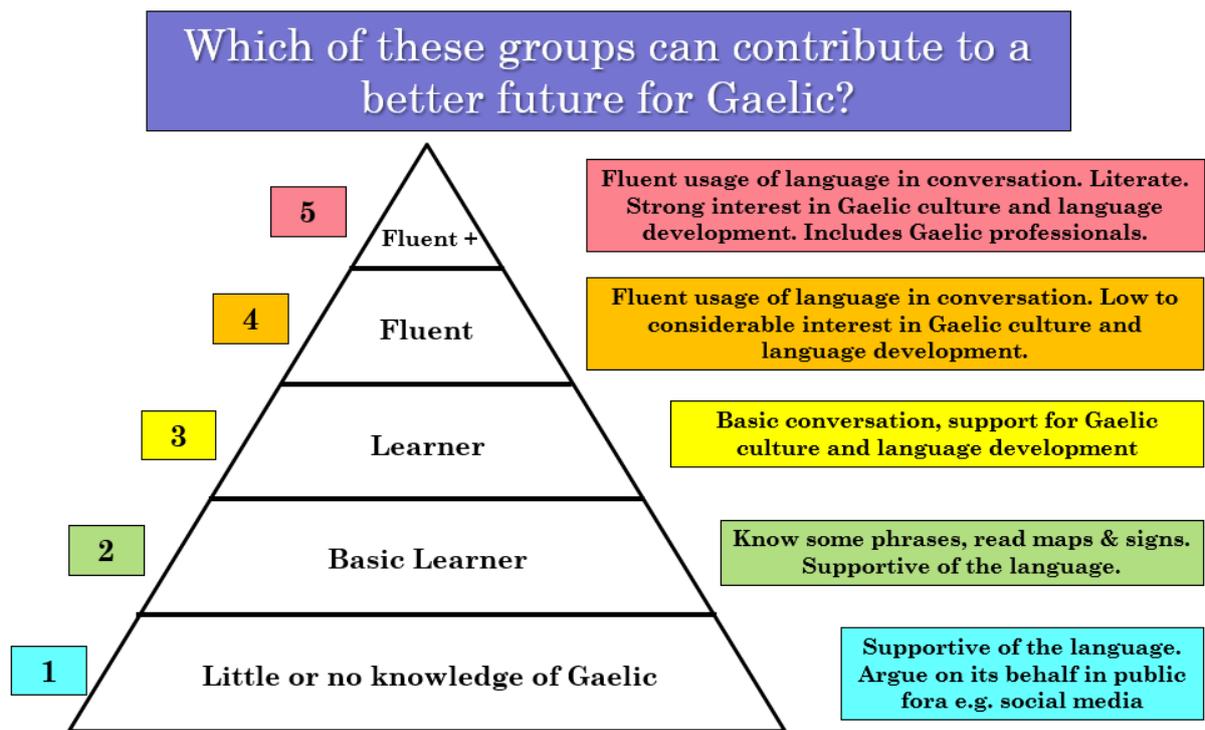
that 'Research has shown that bilingualism is beneficial for children's development and their future. Children exposed to different languages become more aware of different cultures, other people and other points of view. But they also tend to be better than monolinguals at 'multitasking' and focusing attention, they often are more precocious readers, and generally find it easier to learn other languages. Bilingualism gives children much more than two languages!' There is also evidence that bilingualism can help to offset dementia in old age which has major implications for societal wellbeing and costs of care in an ageing society.

Duolingo: That Gaelic has the ability to engender interest worldwide is clear from the massive response to the language being available on the Duolingo platform.

Health and wellbeing:

We should be proud to live in a place with such a rich heritage (we haven't even looked at literature, song, instrumental music, storytelling, games, dance ...) Pride in place, community and identity in Highland Scotland can work positively in favour of good mental and physical health for individuals and society.

A spectrum of Gaelic in the community:



The Gaelic Ability/Support Pyramid

The answer, of course, is 'all of them'!