

## Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Brath Naidheachd

*Press Release*



**\*Please scroll down for English Version\***

**23/03/2017**

**Freagairt don Artaigil sa Phress & Journal “Gaelic Gestapo forcing Moray to spend £40k”**

Dear Sir,

I refer to the article prepared by Ben Hendry, *“Gaelic Gestapo forcing Moray to spend £40k”* (22/03/2017) and would like to clarify some of the misconceptions in the article.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig works with public authorities across Scotland to support them to develop and implement Gaelic language plans which are appropriate to their functions. These plans support opportunities for communities to learn about their heritage, to foster interest in learning one of Scotland’s languages and to allow families to participate in bilingual education.

It is clear from place names in Moray – such as Knockando, Elgin, and Kinloss – that the area has a significant Gaelic heritage and Moray Council’s Gaelic plan offers an opportunity to increase people’s awareness of that heritage. The often repeated complaints about costs and road signs have been proven time and again to be false. In fact, your caption for the photograph sums up the situation well – *“Road signs will now be written in Gaelic and English, similar to what you find in other parts of the country”*.

Gaelic language plans can also provide support for people who want to learn about their heritage, learn and use one of Scotland’s languages, and support for families who want to choose a bilingual education for their children. There is no evidence at all for Councillor Alexander’s statement that people will be forced to learn it; but there is increasing evidence which demonstrates the benefits of bilingualism, both in terms of attainment in education and for health benefits.

We fully recognise the challenges facing public authorities from public spending cutbacks, however, the sum estimated by the Council of up to an average of £8,000 each year for a 5-year period seems a small cost for residents of Moray to be able to play their part in the plans to create a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland. It is, in fact, 0.02% of the Council's overall budget.

In light of all this, it is extremely disappointing to see the way in which some councillors chose to articulate their concerns, and that you chose to use an offensive quote as your front page headline in reporting the debate. It is also surprising that you describe Gaelic as 'a former national tongue' when many of your readers, growing numbers of schoolchildren, and others across the country use the language every day and when it can be seen in place names and signs across Scotland.

I trust that this will redress some of the inaccuracies presented in the article and that we can all work together in supporting the Gaelic language and culture.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd

**Shona MacLennan**  
**Ceannard (CEO)**  
**Bòrd na Gàidhlig**

**[DEIREADH]**

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**Shona MacLennan**  
**Ceannard (CEO)**  
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**[END]**