

‘Our Land, our People, our Story’ ‘Ar Dùthaich, ar Daoine, ar n-Eachdraidh’

A Proposed Strategy for Gaelic in the new Gairloch Heritage Museum

Roddy Maclean

The Project

Gairloch Heritage Museum (GHM), which has been in existence and on the same site in Achtercairn since 1977, is planning to move to the former Anti Aircraft Operations Room (AAOR) in Spring 2019. This will provide a major opportunity to expand and develop the museum’s exhibition and activities. In the light of these changes, GHM appointed a consultant to develop a strategy for Gaelic. The museum exists within a locality that boasts a strong Gaelic heritage and it already has a significant archive of Gaelic resources, much of it collected by a former curator, the late Dr Roy Wentworth, who was an expert on the local dialect and heritage. The Articles of Association of the Gairloch and District Heritage Society, which runs the museum, include the aim ‘to promote understanding in and knowledge of the Gaelic language and literature’. The Curator, Dr Karen Thompson, is currently learning Gaelic.

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SECTION 1

GAELIC AND GAIRLOCH – THE BACKGROUND

1.1 Gaelic: the Major Heritage Language

Gairloch Parish is widely recognised as one of the heartland areas of Gaelic heritage in Scotland, particularly in the context of the Highland mainland which saw a large fall in usage of the language during the 19th and 20th centuries. In the case of Gairloch, the decline took place largely in the 20th century, with strong usage being retained throughout the 19th century. This long and rich history of language usage, in addition to the heritage it has bequeathed to the area of place-names, literature, music, oral tradition, understanding of environment, way of life and local identity, affords a great opportunity to GHM to give Gaelic and its wider legacy a prominent place within its unrivalled situation as a showcase of the locality and its community. Although local usage has fallen to a historical low point, Gaelic is the major heritage language of the Gairloch area (its only rivals being, historically, Old Norse and, in recent times, English). Gaelic should thus be viewed as fundamental to the work of a heritage body such as the GHM. Moreover, it should be reckoned an asset; it affords great opportunities to portray this part of the Highlands, both to local people and to the wider world, as a place with a strong, fascinating and even inspirational cultural heritage.

1.2 Gaelic in Scotland

In the early part of the first millennium AD, the predominant languages in the British Isles were Celtic. Britain was dominated by P-Celtic, whose modern descendants are Welsh, Cornish and Breton, whereas the population of Ireland predominantly spoke Q-Celtic or Goidelic, from which Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic are derived. By around 500 AD the maritime Gaelic-speaking kingdom of Dál Riata took in parts of Ulster and western Scotland, and it was to stretch as far north as Loch Broom. As the Gaelic language spread, it displaced the Pictish tongue which is considered by most authorities to have been P-Celtic. With the exception of a couple of stone carvings, and possible cultural echoes within Gaelic traditions, little remains today of Gairloch's Pictish heritage.

One of the mechanisms by which Gaelic spread was the influence of Christianity. Local tradition maintains that the old ruined chapel at Laide was built by St Columba or one of his immediate followers ¹, although there is no historical evidence to support the physical presence of the great saint in the area. St Maolrubha of Applecross, an extremely influential 7th century churchman, has stronger connections to Gairloch. The first church built in the area was dedicated to him, and Eilean Ma-ruibhe (Isle Maree) on Loch Ma-ruibhe (Loch Maree) carries Maolrubha's name in the genitive form. It is said that he had a chapel

built there, possibly on a site which was already sacred to pagans. It is likely, therefore, that Gaelic had a presence in the area from the late 7th century AD, if not well before that.

Gaelic made massive advances in Scotland following the union of the Picts and Scots (forming the kingdom of Alba) in the 9th century. It is one of the founding languages of Alba (Scotland) – the only one still spoken today. Gaelic became dominant both politically and numerically, spreading eastwards and southwards, and displacing Pictish and the P-Celtic Cumbric language of southern Scotland. However, at the same time, Scandinavians were appearing in the maritime north and west, raiding and then settling, and weakening Gaelic's hold in places like Gairloch. This settlement gave the area a significant strand of Norse place-names which it retains to this day. Norse overlordship in the north-west was only finally broken following the Treaty of Perth in 1266, after which Gaelic reasserted itself as the politically dominant language. Even before that, many people of Norse or partially Norse ancestry appear to have adopted the Gaelic language. Thus, the numerical status of Gaelic vis-à-vis Norse during the 9th to 13th centuries in Wester Ross is unclear.

A combination of the regaelicisation of the northern and western Highlands and anglicisation of the Lowlands led to a geographical split within Scotland, the Highland part being overwhelmingly Gaelic-speaking and taking on the mantle of the *Gàidhealtachd* ('Gaelic land'), and the Inglis or Scots-speaking Lowlands becoming the *Galltachd* ('non-Gaelic land'). The long decline of Gaelic as a national language had begun; it is reckoned to have lost its national majority during the 15th century.²

This weakening would hardly have been noticed, however, in the western Highlands where there was a distinct flowering of Gaelic culture under the Lordship of the Isles and the ubiquitous clan system. Traditional art forms such as music, song and poetry, for example, would have flourished with support from the chiefs of the clans that were dominant in the area – Macraes, MacBeaths, MacLeods, MacDonalds and, most significantly, many generations of Mackenzies. This continuity and stability of Gaelic culture, along with benign landlordship and a low level of forced clearance of the native population during the 19th century compared to many other parts of the Highlands, is probably a contributing factor to the rich vein of talented Gaelic poets which is so characteristic of the Gairloch area in more recent centuries.

1.3 The Diaspora

As with many parts of the Highlands, Gairloch has strong links to parts of the historical British Empire, most notably Canada, Australia and New Zealand. There is a body of water in Nova Scotia called 'Gairloch Lake' (it was originally 'Gair Loch'), a 'Gairloch Mountain' on Cape Breton Island, a 'Gairloch' on Prince Edward Island and a 'New Gairloch' in Pictou County on mainland Nova Scotia. Pictou town was the landing place of the pioneer settlers from Loch Broom on

board the ‘Hector’ in 1773; another notable vessel was the John Kerr which sailed for Cape Breton and Quebec in July 1842, with most of the passengers being voluntary emigrants from Gairloch and Torridon. In the second half of the 19th century, emigration to the Canadian Maritimes declined in favour of Australia as a destination. ³

1.4 Gaelic: snapshots from the national portrait (2011 census) ⁴

In 2011, 87,100 people aged 3 and over in Scotland (1.7% of the population) had some Gaelic language skills. Of these 87,100 people:

- 32,400 (37%) had full skills in Gaelic, that is could understand, speak, read and write Gaelic;
- 57,600 (66%) could speak Gaelic;
- 6,100 (7%) were able to read and/or write but not speak Gaelic; and
- 23,400 (27%) were able to understand Gaelic but could not speak, read or write it.

In addition, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has estimated that there are around 3,500 active adult learners of Gaelic in Scotland.

Between 2001 and 2011 there were decreases in the proportion of people who could speak Gaelic in all age groups for people aged 18 and over. For example, for people aged 65 and over the proportion fell from 1.8% in 2001 to 1.5% in 2011. In contrast, the proportion of people who could speak Gaelic increased slightly in younger age groups: from 0.53% to 0.70% for 3-4 year olds; from 0.91% to 1.13% for 5-11 year olds; and from 1.04% to 1.10% for 12-17 year olds. There was an 8.6% increase in the number of Gaelic speakers aged under 25.

Set against a decrease of 5.8% in those with some Gaelic language skills between 2001 and 2011, the number of those who had all the skills in the language (ie could understand, speak, read and write it) actually rose – by 2.8%.

Amongst all those who reported themselves to be Gaelic speakers in the 2011 Census, 95.6% were born in the UK, 1.1% in EU Accession countries (those countries that joined the EU between April 2001 and March 2011), 0.9% in the Middle East or Asia, 0.7% in the Republic of Ireland and 0.4% in Africa. The rise in EU Accession countries was significant – up from just 0.03% in 2001.

There is an evolving change in the ethnic makeup of Gaelic society in Scotland. Amongst the 3 to 17 age range, 96.1% of Gaelic-speakers were in a ‘white’ ethnic group and 3.9% were from ‘other’ ethnic groups. Among the 18 and over age group, the corresponding figures were 98.5% and 1.5%. However, ‘other’ ethnic groups are still under-represented in Gaelic society compared to the national average (eg 5.2% nationally in the 3-17 age range, compared to 3.9% among Gaelic-speakers).

In most council areas the incidence of people with any Gaelic skills was slightly higher among males than females but in the ‘heartland’ areas of Highland, the Western Isles and Argyll and Bute, females outnumbered males. The difference in Highland, however, was only 1.1 percentage points.

Nationally, there was a tendency for people with higher levels of educational qualifications to have a higher incidence of Gaelic skills. This was true in relation to people with any Gaelic skills, all skills, speaking ability and literacy skills only. The proportion of people with any skills in Gaelic among those with a Level 4 qualification (university degree level) was 2.4% compared with 1.3% among people with no qualifications. Compared with people who do not speak Gaelic, the Gaelic-speaking population had a higher proportion of people with Level 4 qualifications (35.9% compared with 27.0%), and a lower proportion of people with no or just Level 1 qualifications (37.0% compared with 47.3%). However, there is another national trend – Gaelic-speaking is spread more evenly across a range of educational qualification levels in the more strongly Gaelic-speaking civil parishes, but is more strongly associated with degree-level qualifications in less strongly Gaelic-speaking areas. Gairloch parish is classified as category C (the third strongest, with 10 to 25% of the population speaking the language).

The Highland Council area remains extremely significant for the language nationally, accounting for 19.1% of the Scottish population which boasts any Gaelic language skills. This gives it top billing, with na h-Eileanan Siar coming in second place with 18.9%. Reflecting the national situation, the proportion of Gaelic speakers with a Level 4 qualification in Highland is higher than the corresponding proportion for non-Gaelic speakers. Between 2001 and 2011 in Highland, there was a 24.6% increase in the number of people with Level 4 qualifications.

1.5 Gaelic in Gairloch

Until the 19th century few people in Gairloch parish would have spoken English; the schools run by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), which promoted English fluency, were slow to be established in the area because of a lack of finance.⁵ In the Old Statistical Account of 1792, Gaelic was described as ‘the prevailing language’ of the parish.⁶ Unlike many areas more peripheral to the Gàidhealtachd (ie closer to the border with the Galltachd), the situation changed little during the following four decades, the New Statistical Account of 1836 claiming that ‘the language generally spoken is the Gaelic. I am not aware that it has lost ground within the last forty years ... [it] is still spoken in as great purity by the inhabitants in general, as it was forty years ago.’⁷

Writing in the 1880s, John H Dixon in his authoritative book about the region considered Gaelic to be ‘*universal among the people of Gairloch, and they cling to*

it with the utmost affection..... The Gaelic language is as prevalent in Gairloch today as it was ... nearly fifty years ago, notwithstanding the near approach of the railway and the greatly increased communication by steamer. The religious services of the people are conducted in Gaelic (though short English services are often added); there are scarcely any houses where English is spoken round the table or by the fire-side; though comparatively few are able to read Gaelic. At the same time the knowledge of the English language is undoubtedly on the increase, and the schools are taught in that language. Nevertheless even children fresh from school seldom speak English when playing together”⁸

The 1891 national census backs up Dixon’s observations. Gaelic speakers ranged from a low of 84.9% of the community in Poolewe and Boor to 98.9% in Sand and Second Coast, while the highest figure was in Diabaig North and Craig where all 91 residents were recorded as speaking the language. While only 8.9% of the Gaelic-speakers in Poolewe and Boor were monoglots, the figure rose to 81.7% in Sand and Second Coast. However, the latter statistic was to fall to only 18.8% by 1901, presumably as a result of education and social change.⁹

While the universal education provided by the government following the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 was generally welcomed, its promotion of English-only instruction at the expense of the bilingualism that had latterly been a characteristic of the SSPCK system struck a heavy blow to the language, traditions and identity of the Gàidhealtachd. The negative outlook of the authorities is summed up by the Inspector of Schools for Ross, Caithness and Sutherland, Mr D Sime, who wrote in 1878: ‘I should regard the teaching of Gaelic in schools in any shape or form as a most serious misfortune’¹⁰. The attitude of government, at all levels, towards Gaelic was characterised by neglect and prejudice for many decades; this had an effect on the confidence of the Gaelic-speaking population, causing many of them to harbour negative sentiments towards their own language. This unfortunate legacy has not been entirely erased, although attitudes are more positive today.

Taking Lochbroom and Gairloch parishes together, even in 1931, Gaelic was still spoken by 79.1% of the population, and 150 inhabitants were recorded as speaking no English. However, a decline was underway. By 1961, it had fallen to under fifty percent, and by 1991 only 16.7% of people still spoke the language. English had become the dominant language within most households, although the 1971 census tells us that one-fifth of young people (aged 5-24) in Gairloch parish were still Gaelic-speakers.

The modern picture is a mixed one. The use of Gaelic within the various Presbyterian churches that have long been dominant in the area maintained a degree of literacy within the population, despite the negative attitudes of the educational authorities. In 1971 59.6% of Gaelic-speakers in Gairloch could read Gaelic, a high figure in a national context. By 2001, probably because of increased provision in education, and despite a decrease in usage in a religious context, the figure had risen to 61.5%. These literacy statistics, while

unacceptably low in comparison to English in Scotland, nevertheless give the lie to the common myth that Gaelic is only an oral language, particularly in the West Highlands. The rich vein of literature produced in Gairloch also demonstrates the falsehood of that myth.

The 2011 census gave us the following figures for the Gairloch enumeration area¹¹:

- 18.4% of the population had Gaelic language skills (considerably higher than the average for Highland Council area, where the figure is 7.4%).
- 13.1% of the population were Gaelic-speakers.
- 50.7% of those with Gaelic skills could read the language (this figure is not directly comparable to literacy figures in earlier censuses because of a change in the questions posed to respondents).
- 25.5% of those with Gaelic skills were able only to understand the spoken language (without claiming to speak or read it).
- 39.3% of Gaelic-speakers used the language in the home. (figures supplied by Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

In 2011 Gaelic was recorded as being in use within 117 homes in the Gairloch area, and it is clear that the presence of Gaelic medium education in Gairloch Primary School and Gairloch High School is an important factor in maintaining the language's presence in the community and in promising the possibility of future growth. In Wester Ross, Gaelic medium education is also available in Lochcarron (primary only) and Ullapool (primary and secondary). The author visited a Gaelic class in Gairloch High School where only a minority of students were able to use the language conversationally in the home, but he was impressed by their fluency, interest and motivation. The language is unlikely to return to the numerical and social dominance it previously enjoyed in Gairloch but, while Gaelic medium education persists, it will remain a permanent part of the fabric of the community. Gaelic as a modern language, and the success of Gaelic medium education, should form part of GHM's interpretation of the area's Gaelic heritage.

SECTION 2

SUPPORT FOR GAELIC IN MODERN SCOTLAND

Scotland has progressed considerably in its social attitudes, acceptance of plurality and appreciation of multilingualism since 1872 when the Education Act wilfully ignored the Gaelic language. There is now widespread support for Gaelic across Scottish society, and considerable interest internationally. What follows is a summary of the contemporary support demonstrated for the language by important public organizations and in surveys conducted with clients involved in business and tourism.

2.1 Bòrd na Gàidhlig

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, passed by the Scottish Parliament with cross-party support, seeks to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to English. Only British Sign Language (BSL) has a similar legal status in Scotland. The Act built on existing measures such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992); the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992); Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities (1995); and clauses relating to Gaelic in education, media, civil courts and crofting legislation of the UK and Scottish Parliaments. The Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig (with national headquarters in Inverness) to support and co-ordinate language development efforts and to submit a National Gaelic Language Plan to the Scottish Government.

The current National Gaelic Language Plan runs until 2017. It sets out a strategy for increasing usage of the language, including restoring the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland by 2021 to the levels recorded in the 2001 census. The Plan notes the following ¹²:

- *Gaelic is important for reasons of heritage and identity. It provides continuity with a language community that has deep historical roots in Scotland.*
- *Gaelic is also important for reasons of cultural enrichment and strengthening diversity. It provides Scotland and the rest of the world with access to a unique culture and the opportunity for that to be expressed in many forms.*
- *Since 1991 there has been evidence that the rate of decline [of speaker numbers] has begun to slow down and, in particular, that the number of young Gaelic speakers has risen.*

- *Gaelic is important, as it provides Scotland with an active bilingual community. There is growing consensus regarding the benefits of bilingualism in education, culture and in personal life.*
- *Research shows that children learning through the medium of Gaelic achieve on an equal footing with their peers in English medium education in curricular subjects such as science and mathematics and usually perform better than their peers in English-medium education in reading and writing English.*
- *There are proven health benefits for those using two languages, for example the delayed onset of mental health problems, such as Alzheimer's.*
- *Gaelic has been shown to generate significant economic benefits. This is particularly true in areas of low population and increasingly as young people educated bilingually find opportunities to use their Gaelic skills in employment and further and higher education.*

The National Gaelic Language Plan also makes the following observations:

Communities

The future of Gaelic in Scotland requires increased support for communities and networks of speakers of Gaelic and for community initiatives that have the purpose of expanding the use and learning of Gaelic.

Workplace

The future of Gaelic in Scotland requires the increased use of Gaelic in places of work, providing the opportunity for Gaelic skills to be used and developed in different work contexts and to enable the provision of Gaelic medium services.

Arts & Media, Heritage & Tourism

The future of Gaelic in Scotland requires increased use of Gaelic in the arts, media, heritage and tourism sectors, demonstrating the place of Gaelic in Scotland's cultural life and providing the opportunity to strengthen the appeal and awareness of Gaelic in Scotland, with opportunities for both expression and employment.

Corpus

The future of Gaelic in Scotland requires that careful attention is given to initiatives focusing on terminology, translation, orthography and place-names for the purpose of ensuring Gaelic continues to develop and to achieve greater strength, relevance, consistency and visibility.

2.2 The Highland Council / Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

The following commitments are drawn from The Highland Council's Gaelic Plan 2012-16 ¹³:

- *The Council aims to create and maintain a sustainable and seamless Gaelic Education provision (from Pre-school through to Primary School and on to Secondary education) in order to develop a solid foundation for Gaelic Education, language and culture in a strategically placed network of schools across the Highland area.*
- *We will engage with partners and contribute to national strategic initiatives and policy formulation for Gaelic in the arts, media and heritage sectors.*
- *We will increase the profile and build the use of Gaelic within Council funded organizations and events within the Highlands.*
- *We will develop opportunities for people to engage with Gaelic through the media, arts and creative industries.*
- *We will increase Gaelic usage and the profile of the Gaelic language and internal Gaelic services, across the Council.*
- *The Council will aim to gain a heightened profile for the economic benefits of Gaelic and bilingualism ... and will work to establish the profile of Gaelic in general economic development initiatives and in tourism.*

2.3 Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

The following are a selection of HIE commitments to the Gaelic language in the organization's Gaelic Plan (2012-15) ¹⁴:

- *[HIE will] encourage and provide financial support for private sector businesses and third sector organizations to adopt Gaelic marketing and bilingual signage.*
- *HIE is known as Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean and has adopted this bilingual identity for all of its forms of physical and digital communication.*
- *[HIE will] ensure that equal respect is given to both Gaelic and English as signage is renewed or updated.*
- *[HIE will] encourage and facilitate the use of Gaelic amongst staff.*
- *All main HIE corporate publications will be produced bilingually.*

- *Where Gaelic and English appear in the same publication, equal respect will be accorded both languages.*
- *We will further develop our website to be entirely available in Gaelic and English, and availability of Gaelic will be prominently displayed on the website.*
- *[HIE will] offer advice, flexibility, and up to 100% financial support to all members of staff wishing to raise their Gaelic skills.*
- *HIE staff and board members will be provided with an introduction to Gaelic pack and be recommended to attend a Gaelic awareness session... This will form an ongoing part of the induction process for new employees.*
- *We will enter Gaelic as a desirable element in all recruitment processes.*

2.4 University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) / Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

The following is an extract from the UHI Gaelic Plan (2014-18) ¹⁵:

The University of the Highlands and Islands recognises that Gaelic and its associated culture is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life. The university is committed to the objectives set out in the National Plan for Gaelic, including the National Gaelic Education Strategy, and to playing an important part in ensuring that Gaelic has a sustainable future as a living language.

The University of the Highlands and Islands will be proactive in:

1. *Contributing to the visibility and usage of Gaelic through its own materials and activities.*
2. *Promoting Gaelic culture through the university's curriculum, publications and events.*
3. *Recruiting staff with appropriate Gaelic language skills, relevant to their roles in the university.*
4. *Encouraging and supporting all staff, regardless of their role, to acquire and develop Gaelic language skills.*
5. *Promoting opportunities within the university's curriculum for Gaelic learning, including Gaelic medium learning, Gaelic language learning and Gaelic culture. Gaelic learning opportunities will be available through intensive immersion models as well as being made available throughout*

the university and beyond. This will include Gaelic language learning embedded within other areas of the university's curriculum.

- 6. Undertaking research through Gaelic and research into Gaelic language and culture, including the pedagogy of Gaelic-medium education.*

2.5 National Museums Scotland

In its Gaelic Language Plan 2012-2015, National Museums Scotland makes the following commitments:¹⁶

- We will incorporate Gaelic into our corporate identity when we next rebrand, giving equal respect to both languages.*
- We will develop a Gaelic logo to use on material produced primarily in Gaelic.*
- We will continue to provide side by side English and Gaelic interpretation based on demand, cost and relevance.*
- We will produce visitor information in Gaelic.*
- We treat all our visitors language needs with equal respect, using language-neutral pictograms, and will develop guidelines for the use of Gaelic in signage where appropriate.*
- We will publicise the availability of Gaelic material in our collections, subject and language material in our research library, and tours given in the Gaelic language.*
- We aim to work with Gaelic educational organisations, in particular the Gaelic schools, to assist them to develop learning packages in Gaelic across all aspects of our collections and research resources.*
- Where relevant and applicable, we will seek third parties supplying us with goods or services to take cognisance of the principles and commitments set out in the Plan.*

2.6 Creative Scotland / Alba Chruthachail

Creative Scotland is a national public body that supports the arts and creative industries. The following are drawn from the organization's Gaelic Plan (2012-17)¹⁷:

- Creative Scotland has one logo and that is bilingual, English and Gaelic. There are no optional versions of this brand.*

- *Creative Scotland has two offices ... Both offices have bilingual signage and corporate branding already in place, with fully bilingual signage in Edinburgh and partially bilingual signage in Glasgow. Areas for Development: Ensure that both Creative Scotland offices incorporate fully bilingual signage.*
- *We recognise the importance of ‘normalising’ the use of Gaelic in our communications activity by creating opportunities for the practical use of the language ... as such, we are committed to increasing our practical use of Gaelic in both our formal and informal communications.*
- *Creative Scotland recognises the importance of Gaelic language skills within our organization as an essential communications tool and as a desirable benefit to our customers and stakeholders. We also recognise the value of staff awareness of the language, culture and the role that it plays in our arts and culture and in life in Scotland more generally.*
- *We recognise the role that investment in arts and culture can play in strengthening Gaelic language and its recognition as a key part of public life.*

2.7 Historic Environment Scotland / Àrainneachd Eachdraidheil Alba

This is the (still developing) successor body to Historic Scotland/Alba Aosmhor, incorporating the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). The following points are drawn from Historic Scotland’s Gaelic Plan (2012-17) ¹⁸:

We will ... take the following steps to create a supportive environment for increasing the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland:

- *The provision of Gaelic material and education programmes at our visitor sites which provides opportunities for family learning in Gaelic in the context of the historic environment.*
- *An increase in our educational resources in Gaelic for schools.*
- *The production of Gaelic publications and the development of our current Gaelic website.*
- *A commitment to provide Gaelic classes and training for staff.*
- *Making information about Gaelic-Medium Education available for members of staff who may be interested in Gaelic learning resources for their children and families*

We undertake to:

- *Make training and a range of Gaelic language resources available to staff.*
- *Increase the use and prominence of Gaelic in the workplace through the introduction of Gaelic signage at Historic Scotland offices and sites.*
- *Enhance our services to Gaelic education in communities throughout Scotland, particularly by creating site-specific material for schools and learners.*
- *Continue to expand the provision we make for visitors to our heritage sites through the introduction of more Gaelic information panels, Gaelic guided tours and the inclusion of Gaelic in our public performances.*

GHM should also note that Historic Scotland has been working with RCAHMS and the National Trust for Scotland to create a unique glossary of Gaelic terms relating to the historic environment which can be used to create consistent translations. These should be useful for exhibits, although it is important to note that local Gaelic terms should maintain precedence in GHM over those chosen for a national context where a difference exists between the two.

2.8 VisitScotland

VisitScotland is the national tourism promotion organization. The following are drawn from its website and Gaelic Plan (2012-15).¹⁹ VisitScotland is in the process of selecting an official Gaelic name and moving to a bilingual brand:

- *At VisitScotland we recognise that the Gaelic language is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, identity and culture, which makes it vital when we are marketing Scotland to our visitors.*
- *A visitor study carried out in 2011-2012 revealed that 51% of visitors were either very interested or fairly interested in Gaelic Language and culture and would like to learn more. Our Gaelic Language Plan acknowledges this interest from our visitors, as well as the importance of ensuring the long term sustainability of the Gaelic language.*
- *VisitScotland recognises the importance of extending the visibility of Gaelic and increasing its status.*
- *VisitScotland recognises the importance of creating opportunities for the practical use of Gaelic in a wide range of everyday situations and is committed to increasing its level of provision in this area.*
- *VisitScotland recognises the importance of seeing Gaelic as a valuable job skill and of identifying situations in which its use is essential or desirable.*

2.9 Social Attitudes in Scotland

A national social attitudes survey conducted (through random sampling in Scotland) by a team from the University of Edinburgh in 2012 made the following findings:

- 76% of people considered Gaelic to be ‘important’ or ‘very important’ to Scotland’s cultural heritage.
- 81% of people hoped that the number of Gaelic-speakers in 50 years’ time would be about the same as now or greater.
- 32% of people thought that Gaelic should be encouraged throughout Scotland. A further 55% said that Gaelic should be encouraged in areas where it is already spoken.
- Only 6% of people felt uncomfortable when hearing Gaelic spoken.

The authors of the study concluded as follows: *‘On our first two research questions – whether Gaelic is ... seen to be a core part of Scottish identity – we can reasonably conclude that it is. Not only is there almost no hostility to the language, but there is a quite widespread willingness to accord rights to use it, and a quite widespread hope that it will be more widely used. Gaelic is seen by a large majority of people as being important to the heritage of the whole of Scotland, even though only a small minority believe that being able to speak Gaelic is important to being Scottish.’*²⁰

2.10 Tourists

The Scotland Visitor Survey, conducted for VisitScotland by TNS in 2011-12, found that 51% of visitors were ‘interested’ or ‘very interested’ in the Gaelic language and culture and would like to learn more. 29% of German visitors, 26% of Americans and 25% of Canadians put themselves in the ‘very interested’ category.²¹

This finding is significant to GHM in terms of achieving a growth in visitor numbers and extending the length of their stay, both at GHM and in the Gairloch area. Gaelic is now understood as an asset to tourism and can be used to market the experience of visiting GHM and to attract an expanded clientele. Support for Gaelic in the context of tourism is likely also to be viewed favourably by funding bodies.

2.11 Businesses

A study for Highlands and Islands Enterprise on the economic and social value of Gaelic as an asset, published in May 2014 (entitled *Ar Stòras Gàidhlig*)²², made the following key findings:

- Almost 70% of businesses consulted said that Gaelic is currently an asset to their business.
- More than half the businesses and enterprises surveyed stated that Gaelic is used, or features, as a key element of their main activities, products or services.
- Almost two thirds of businesses consulted described Gaelic as moderately, very, or critically important to the success of their business.
- The potential economic value of Gaelic as an asset to the Scottish economy was assessed as being in the region of £82m to £149m.

This recognition of Gaelic as an economic asset fits in with GHM's Strategic Plan, particularly Cross-cutting Objective 2 'Plan for a sustainable future', which includes the ambition to generate an increasing and sustainable income through the activities of GHM.

The HIE study found that the most common major benefits for businesses from using Gaelic as an asset are that it:

- Enhances the distinctiveness/ uniqueness of products/ services.
- Enhances customer perceptions of authenticity and provenance of products/services.
- Increases the appeal of products/services to target markets.

Although the research above relates to businesses in the private sector, it is relevant to bodies like GHM who may wish to view themselves as a business, selling a heritage product (and often operating a shop and/or café in association with the museum). The findings regarding authenticity and provenance of products are certainly of relevance to museums and heritage centres, and all enterprises in the Highlands and Islands should be encouraged to understand that Gaelic is an asset to business.

SECTION 3

GAIRLOCH HERITAGE MUSEUM'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan (SP) currently runs from 2011-16, at which point it will be reviewed. The current development of a Gaelic Strategy for GHM will allow specific aims and objectives relating to Gaelic to be incorporated into the new SP.

It is pertinent to make the following points:

- The SP recognises that ‘Gairloch is a strategic hub for an area with a rich cultural heritage’ that includes ‘a rich oral history in storytelling, poetry and Gaelic music’. This is in addition to ‘significant crofting and fishing traditions’, ‘the practice of traditional skills’ and ‘the memories of our community’. All of these are based upon the heritage of a Gaelic-speaking community. This paper supports that recognition with suggestions as to how the Gaelic language can be made more central to the visitor experience at GHM.
- According to the SP, GHM ‘has demonstrated that it has maintained strong community support’. This paper agrees with that assessment and recognises the importance of the community in maintaining the work of GHM on a voluntary basis. It suggests that Gaelic Awareness training, Gaelic language training and sharing of information about the importance of a Gaelic Vision and Gaelic Strategy should be offered across the board to volunteers and community supporters, and that all friends of GHM, regardless of their own linguistic capacity or cultural background, should be encouraged to fully support the Gaelic Strategy.
- The SP states that the vision is for GHM to be ‘a vibrant centre for the living heritage and culture of the communities of the Gairloch area’. As the communities of the area are bilingual, this means support for Gaelic as a living language. This paper supports that vision.
- This paper supports all five points of Core Objective 1 of the SP ‘sustain our living heritage through conserving our collection, maintaining local traditional skills and promoting these locally, regionally and internationally’. There is a Gaelic aspect to all of them. Of particular note is point (2) – ‘develop a programme of skills training for the Museum’s professional and volunteer staff which will enable them to support the best possible use of its collections and facilities’. This clearly must include training in the core skill of interpreting a bilingual exhibition to visitors, and presenting a culture that is based on Gaelic. Gaelic language training

must be viewed as an ongoing requirement in the years ahead to give staff the requisite skills to meet this Core Objective.

- This paper supports both points of Core Objective 2 ‘promote and support our cultural heritage and contemporary activity’. The new facility at AAOR will provide opportunities for supporting contemporary activities, and it is envisaged that some of these activities will be inspired by Gaelic and its heritage, and will have a Gaelic component.
- This paper strongly supports Core Objective 3 ‘become the cultural focal point for the community’. Although English has become the dominant language locally, Gairloch and its surrounding area are nevertheless bilingual communities, and GHM should be seen as a bilingual space, and that acceptance and promotion of the use of Gaelic will ‘ensure relevance and ownership for all’ and will help to deliver the social and economic benefits highlighted at point 3.4.
- This paper strongly supports Cross-cutting Objective 3 of the SP, particularly with regard to point (2) ‘recruit new members to improve [the board’s] skills base, expertise and demographic representation’ and ‘plan opportunities for board training.’ New, and younger, Gaelic-speaking members on the board would extend the skills base in a direction that would assist the fulfilment of the ambitions highlighted in this paper, and Gaelic Awareness and language training for non Gaelic-speakers on the board would contribute to a unified approach towards provision for, and representation of, the language at GHM. This also applies to points (3) and (4) regarding the development and training of staff, including volunteer staff.

SECTION 4

THE MUSEUM AND GAELIC: A SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION IN A SIGNIFICANT LOCALITY

4.1 Gaelic Resources

The Gaelic resources held by GHM have been characterized by Professor Hugh Cheape of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, who worked for many years in National Museums Scotland, as ‘exceptional from a Scottish museum point of view’. The richness of this collection makes it incumbent upon GHM to make it more widely available, and more widely appreciated within the context of the exhibition and activities run by the museum.

Below is a brief resumé of the extensive Gaelic resources available – both those currently held by GHM and those which might become associated with GHM through the development of a broadly-based Gaelic strategy. A list of many of the Gaelic resources has been made recently, although it is not claimed to be exhaustive. It contains over 470 entries. Many of the audio recordings made by Roy Wentworth and Kay Matheson have been digitized, but others remain only in various analogue forms.

While it is relatively straightforward to exhibit and interpret a community’s tangible heritage, such as its books, works of art and artefacts, it is a trickier issue to present the intangible heritage, such as folklore, traditions, language and knowledge. Yet the intangible heritage associated with Gaelic is significant. If GHM is to be true to, and reflective of, the area’s Gaelic heritage, it must engage with the intangible aspects of that heritage and present it to the community, and to the wider world, in a creative way. It already does this, for example, by hosting storytelling sessions, but there may be opportunities for an expansion of such activities.

Roy Wentworth’s widow Magaidh, a native of the Gairloch area and a fluent Gaelic-speaker, has an extensive collection of materials from Roy’s archive. Much of it has been photocopied, with copies held by GHM. A worthwhile future project would be to examine Magaidh’s archive in detail and to make copies of material not currently held by GHM, so that there is more than one copy and that it is available to the public through GHM. Magaidh has indicated her willingness to co-operate with GHM in that regard.

The resources currently held can be briefly summarized thus:

- An extensive collection of printed works about Gaelic culture and heritage in the GHM library.

- Information (some typed, some handwritten) about the lives of local bards, plus copies of their poems.
- Audio recordings, mostly of songs and oral history (local interviewees).
- Printed versions of local folklore, mostly collected in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Extensive detailed information about local place names.

4.2 Gaelic Bards

For many people, the most significant part of the local Gaelic heritage is the work of its many bards, some of whom were well-known far beyond the north-west Highland mainland. The celebrated 18th century poet William Ross (Uilleam Ros, 1762-91), who lived in Gairloch (to which his mother was native) has a national reputation as one of the country's outstanding love poets. It is essential that such an important literary figure (often referred to as the 'Gaelic Burns'), whose songs are still sung today, be celebrated in the new exhibition space. His life and early death make a poignant story and, at the very least, what are arguably his two most famous songs – *Is Truagh Nach d' Rugadh Dall Mi* and *Nach Gòrach Mi gad Chaoineadh* – should be available at soundposts in the exhibition. Versions are available on the Tobar an Dualchais website ²³.

Another significant literary figure of the 19th century, born and raised locally, is John Mackenzie (Iain MacCoinnich, 1806-48) who popularized Ross's work. Mackenzie was a translator, editor and lexicographer, and is most famous for his anthology of Gaelic poetry *Sàr-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* ('The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry'), published in 1841. He also published the songs of William Ross which had been collected by Alexander Campbell (Alasdair Buidhe MacÌomhair), thus ensuring the survival to this day of much of Ross's superb wordcraft.

Other major bards of the Gairloch area include:

- Iain Dall Mackay ('Am Pìobaire Dall') 1656-1754
- Alexander Grant ('Bàrd Mòr an t-Slagain') 1742-1820
- Alexander Campbell ('Alasdair Buidhe' MacÌomhair) 1760-1844
- Duncan MacKenzie ('Bàrd Cheann Loch Iù') 1831-1909
- Alexander Cameron ('Bàrd Thùrnaig') 1848-1933
- John MacLennan (Inverasdale) 1861-1948
- John MacLennan (Achgarve) 1861-1949
- Donald MacDonald ('Dòmhnall Theadaidh', Wester Alligin) 1874-1954
- Roderick Cameron (An Lòn Dubh) 1886-1965
- William Mackenzie ('Botha', South Erradale) 1898-1964

- Duncan MacKenzie (Strath) b. 1901
- Murdo MacDonald ('Mordo Dollan', Àiliginn) 1908-1995
- Duncan MacKenzie (North Erradale) 1913-
- Iain Cameron ('Bàrd an Iubalai', Inverasdale) 1918-1989
- William Mackenzie ('Willie Doindsidh', Poolewe b. 1935

This is a very substantial list of talented bards (and there are other 'minor' ones) from the one small geographical area with a relatively small population, and it stands comparison with any part of Gaelic Scotland. In addition to William Ross and John Mackenzie, Ross's maternal grandfather, Iain Dall (Am Pìobaire Dall), also had a national reputation, not only as a poet but as a very fine piper (his nickname means 'the blind piper'). His life and legacy ought to be told in the new exhibition and should be accompanied by audio of some of his pipe tunes. Talented poets continued to appear into modern times, a prime example being Iain Cameron (1918-1989) of Inverasdale who was awarded An Comunn Gàidhealach's prestigious bardic crown at the National Mod in Oban in 1953 and is therefore often referred to as 'The Jubilee Bard'.

It is clear that the bardic legacy of the Gairloch area is far too important to be ignored or sidelined in the new exhibition. Indeed, there is a very strong argument for making it one of the central themes to be promoted in the new GHM. What rival is there for it as a celebration of the creative genius of the people of this parish?

Not only should GHM prepare materials for a major permanent exhibition, perhaps associated with a publication, on the Gairloch poets, in the new facility, but it should examine the feasibility of setting up a 'Bardic Trail' in the area, where visitors are directed to places connected with some of the area's major bards and where lines from their songs could be etched into slabs or standing stones. For example, William Ross and John Mackenzie ('Beauties') could be celebrated in the vicinity of the Gairloch Old Burial Ground, where Ross has a gravestone and next to which is a large obelisk in memory of Mackenzie. Given the geographical spread of the places associated with the bards, the trail would have to be based on vehicular travel, rather than walking. Assistance would need to be sought from scholars of Gaelic bàrdachd, and the MOU with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig should prove particularly useful in this regard. Another source of scholarly assistance would be the celebrated Gaelic bard Maoilios Caimbeul from Skye, who was at one time a Gaelic teacher at Gairloch High School and who brought the collection of Iain Cameron's poetry made by Roy Wentworth to publication (he has expressed his interest in participating in any such project).

It has been suggested locally that John Mackenzie's obelisk might be relocated to the vicinity of the new GHM to provide a cultural focus there, and to help overcome the current difficulties in upkeep of the site – which would need better care (eg cutting back vegetation) if it were to be promoted as part of a Bardic

Trail. Such a move would require the consent of Mackenzie's descendants and relations, and of the local community. It ought to be considered but is not a high priority.

Much of the material of the Gaelic bards was written to be sung, and there are many songs that belong to the Gairloch area. The material held by GHM should in time be made available on the internet, once a process of digitization and detailed cataloguing is complete. Tobar an Dualchais, a website operated in conjunction with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig which has digitized and made available thousands of hours of audio recordings, has indicated its willingness to provide advice and training in cataloguing to GHM ²⁴. Currently, however, because of a downturn in staff numbers, it is unable to accept more material to be presented on its website and this is likely to be the case for some time, in the absence of an increase in funding.

In this paper it is proposed that Gairloch be developed and branded as a 'Home of the Bards / Dachaigh nam Bàrd' (working title), promoting the area nationally and internationally as a place of creative genius with a strong bardic heritage. The writing of poetry and song remains a living tradition, as exemplified by Hector Mackenzie (Inverasdale), the nephew of Iain Cameron (the Jubilee Bard) who writes and sings mostly in English, but who also speaks reasonably good Gaelic. He has performed at GHM and is keen to support an increased interpretation there of the local bardic tradition. He would also be happy to be recorded on video, singing local songs, including those of his own composition.

Steven MacIver of Naast, a former pupil of Gairloch High School and son of Gaelic singer 'Donar' MacIver, is himself a fine singer, and winner of the Gold Medal at the 2009 National Mod. He is a fluent Gaelic-speaker and works in a senior position for Bòrd na Gàidhlig in Inverness. Steven is willing to be interviewed for the exhibition (preferably in Gaelic with English subtitles) about why Gaelic is important to him, and to be filmed singing local songs. He should also be invited to take a personal interest in the development of the new GHM. The local Gaelic choir, Còisir Ghàidhlig Loch Iù, and the new local pipe band could similarly be showcased in the new exhibition.

The Acting Chief Executive of Fèis Rois, Rachael Duff, has indicated her organization's interest in discussing co-operation with GHM with regard to performance of music and song. Fèis Rois promotes teaching and performance of traditional music throughout Ross-shire, particularly with young people, and with a strong Gaelic emphasis. They commissioned a CD (released this year) 'The Voyage of the Hector' to tell the story of the emigrant ship that sailed from Loch Broom to Nova Scotia in 1773, and which includes Gaelic vocals. There is potential for a similar type of musical project concerning the heritage of the Gairloch area.

GHM would be central to the branding of Gairloch as 'Home of the Bards', both in its permanent exhibition and by the holding of events (Gaelic, English or

bilingual) that showcase creative writing (of all genres) as a living tradition. It would also be central, geographically and conceptually, to the proposed Bardic Trail. The local community, particularly those involved in tourism, should be encouraged to support and participate in the Bardic Trail. It is envisaged that a strong branding of this nature would promote the area's standing nationally, and have benefits in tourism.

4.3 Local Place-names

For many visitors, as well as local residents, the rich nomenclature of the Gaelic landscape of Highland Scotland provides an entry point to the language. Gairloch parish boasts particularly fascinating, detailed and diverse place-names (mostly Gaelic but also with a Norse layer) which highlight the richness of the area's cultural heritage. Place-names can provide valuable information about history, land use, ecology, wildlife, geology and folklore, and an understanding of the local toponymy induces a sense of belonging to the landscape and ownership (in a cultural, and perhaps spiritual, sense) of it.

GHM has several notable resources which should be useful in this regard. One is the large amount of scholarly research conducted by Roy Wentworth, and which is held in the GHM archives. There is also miscellaneous other place-name material in the archives, and the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh has material which was collected several decades ago as part of the Scottish Place-Name Survey. Another resource is Gairloch native Ian Fraser (Iain Friseal, Iain Mhurchaidh Alasdair) who worked for years at the School of Scottish Studies and who is an acknowledged expert on Scottish place names, particularly the Gaelic and Norse names of the north-west Highlands. Ainmean-Aite na h-Alba (AÀA), which operate in association with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, have expressed an interest in the development of the materials. Dr Jake King of AÀA has visited GHM to look at its archives, and is able to access archival materials relevant to the Gairloch area at the School of Scottish Studies.

Ian Fraser and Jake King have indicated a willingness to be of assistance in the development of an exhibit and publications on local toponymy. Ian is willing to be recorded on video, speaking on the topic (ideally, speaking in Gaelic with English subtitles, which would make his message accessible in both languages), and Jake is aware of funding opportunities relevant to this type of work. Another local person with an interest in, and knowledge of, local place-names is Nevis Hulme, Deputy Head Teacher at Gairloch High School, who has produced detailed Gaelic maps of the area close to GHM, based on research conducted by Roy Wentworth. Most of Roy Wentworth's notes are handwritten; a Gaelic-reader would need to type the materials up as a precursor to making them more widely available.

It is proposed that GHM give an important place to the interpretation of the richness of the Gaelic landscape in its new exhibition space. In so doing, it should be aware of what has already been done (in a limited manner) in Scottish

Natural Heritage's new exhibition for the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve near Kinlochewe. There should also be a project or projects to collate the work done by Roy Wentworth and others on place-names of the parish, and make it available more widely, ideally in digital format. Scottish Natural Heritage published (as hard copy) two excellent works by Roy – *Ainmean-Àite air Tèarmann Nàdair Nàiseanta Beinn Eighe / Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve* and *Ainmean-Àite air Tèarmann Nàdair Nàiseanta Eileanan Loch Ma-Ruibhe / Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands National Nature Reserve* – and the level of his unpublished scholarship on other local place-names appears to be of the same high order. AÀA would be interested in working with GHM, Magaidh Wentworth, SNH and any other interested parties to publish further materials on local place-names at both academic and 'popular' levels.

SNH could be encouraged to make the two publications above available for download as pdf files from their website, and they could be approached, in co-operation with GHM and Ainmean Àite na h-Alba, to produce a 'popular' publication on the place names of both National Nature Reserves as part of their series of bilingual *Gàidhlig air Aghaidh na Tìre / Gaelic in the Landscape* publications. Or this work could be incorporated into a book on the entirety of the Gairloch parish. In the context of such a publication, SNH could be encouraged to contribute funds towards the place-names exhibit at GHM, as it would stimulate a greater understanding of landscape and nature among the general public (see Section G 'Funding Opportunities'). It is recommended in this paper that GHM work closely with Ian Fraser, AÀA, SNH and other interested parties in the production of materials on place-names.

4.4 Stories from History and Folklore

Gaelic Scotland is internationally significant for its folkloric heritage and the Gairloch area has a particularly notable heritage of stories, some recorded and published (eg in Dixon), others unpublished, and some of them still told today in both languages. This is an extremely important part of the cultural heritage of Gaelic Scotland, particularly where stories relate to identifiable locations. The populating of a landscape with stories and legends is one of the marks of a people who have developed a strong relationship with that landscape (and who have also named it in their language), and is akin to the relationship that indigenous peoples around the world have with their homelands. This rich heritage is undoubtedly something that should be celebrated in the new museum. It also ties in with the presentation of material on local place-names, some of which have stories attached to them.

Storytelling, eg by summer seasonal staff and local volunteers, would add to the attractiveness of GHM to visitors. While most storytelling would be in English, Gaelic-speakers and learners should be encouraged to participate, and training in Gaelic pronunciation should be given to non-speakers of the language so that they can be authentic and authoritative in their pronunciation and delivery.

Local Gaelic-speakers should be video-recorded, telling a variety of the best-known stories in Gaelic, with subtitles in English.

This rich heritage should be encouraged to blossom in the new exhibition, so that GHM sees itself not only as a place to celebrate this heritage within its fixed exhibition, but that it continues to hold storytelling and oral history sessions in both languages as part of a commitment to being a living cultural hub. Many, if not most, of the local stories, or tales with a local reference, were collated by Roy Wentworth and Kay Matheson and exist as hard copy in the GHM archives. There are also oral recordings of stories and historical anecdotes within the audio archives.

A very valuable project would be to collate and digitize local stories so that they are brought together as a discrete collection. Another valuable project would then be to retell a selection of local stories in a book for a modern audience – in contemporary and accessible Gaelic and English – which would act as a boost for local heritage. It could be accompanied by a CD or links to audio on an app or website. Such a popular publication would probably sell well in the museum shop.

As part of the Gaelic Strategy, GHM should also make contact with Donald Smith, Director of the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh to discuss the possibility of outreach support and to seek advice on the folkloric aspects of the new exhibition.²⁵

Below is a list of 28 of perhaps the most significant local stories (in no particular order), of which versions exist in the GHM archive or library:

<i>Story Name in Gaelic</i>	<i>Story Name in English</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Eoghann MacGabhar, sometimes called 'Mac an Rìgh'	<i>Ewen MacGabhar or 'the King's son'</i>	'the son of the goat', a long story connected to a cave near Loch Maree.
Tòrr na h-Ulaidhe	<i>The Treasure Hill</i>	Hidden treasure (close to the AAOR)
Gille Dubh Locha Druing	<i>The Black Lad of Loch Druing</i>	A fairy story from near Rudha Rèidh
Freiceadan a' Choire Dhuibh	<i>The Watch of the Black Corrie</i>	a clan raid and battle (Gairloch and Torridon)
Mar a Theich Clann Bheatha à Loch Tollaidh	<i>How the MacBeaths were Driven from Loch Tolly</i>	Local story of clan warfare
Mar a Thàinig Clann Choinnich a Gheàrrloch	<i>How the Mackenzies came to Gairloch</i>	Local

Sgeulachd Sgìre mo Chealag	<i>The Tale of Sgìre mo Chealag</i>	Collected from John Campbell, Strath
Eachdraidh a' Cheabharnaich	<i>The History of the Ceabharnach</i>	Collected from John Campbell, Strath
Sgeulachd Chonaill	<i>The Tale of Connal</i>	Collected from Kenneth MacIannan, Poolewe
Na Trì Saighdearan	<i>The Three Soldiers (Diabaig Version)</i>	From 'West Highland Tales'
Nighean Dubh Gheal Dearg	<i>The Daughter of Black-white-Red</i>	Collected in Gairloch
Donnchadh Eilein Iù agus an Gille Glas	<i>Duncan of Ewe Isle and the Sallow Lad</i>	Local
Mac Gille Mhaoil na Cruit	<i>MacMillan the Harpist</i>	Concerning Inverasdale
Uilleam Ruadh agus Iseabail nì'n Fhionnla	<i>Red-haired William and Isobel, Finlay's daughter</i>	Concerning Loch Bad nan Sgalag
Ùisdean Mòr mac Gille Phàdraig agus a' Ghobhar Mhaol Bhuidhe	<i>Ùisdean Mòr mac Gille Phàdraig and the Hornless Yellow Goat</i>	Supernatural story connected with the Tom Buidhe north of Diabaig
Càrn Dinag	<i>Càrn Dinag</i>	A murder in the mountains
Bàs air Loch Ma-ruibhe	<i>The Tragedy of Isle Maree</i>	The Scandinavian Prince and his lover on Loch Maree
Fuadachadh nan Leòdach	<i>The Banishing of the MacLeods</i>	Involves many local place names
Beatha Eachainn Ruaidh	<i>The Life of Hector Roy</i>	History of the Mackenzie chief
Leac nan Saighead	<i>Leac nan Saighead</i>	Clan warfare and explanation of local place name
Bac an Leth-choin	<i>The Hillock of the Lurcher</i>	Explanation of a local place name
Ath nan Ceann	<i>The Ford of the Heads</i>	Clan warfare and explanation of a local place name

Mac ìlle Riabhaich	<i>The son of the brindled man</i>	A daring deed in the hills and an explanation of a local place name
Alasdair Breac	<i>Alasdair Breac</i>	Clan raiding and local place names
Alasdair Mòr an t-Sealgair	<i>Big Alexander of the race of the hunter</i>	A supernatural tale with local place names
Murt a' Ghille Bhuidhe	<i>The Murder of the Yellow-haired Lad</i>	A story of Jacobite times and local places
Crogan an Òir	<i>The Cask of Gold</i>	Hidden gold in Jacobite times & local places
Bàthadh Iain MhicRuairidh	<i>The Drowning of John McRyrie</i>	A magical tale, and a drowning on Loch Maree

4.5 The Local Gaelic Dialect

The parish of Gairloch has a distinct dialect of Gaelic which is still spoken by older members of the community who grew up there. While sharing some characteristics of other Wester Ross dialects, it is distinct from those of Applecross to the south and Loch Broom to the north. Even within Gairloch parish, there can be subtle differences between different settlements. The late Roy Wentworth conducted major research into the dialect and produced a PhD thesis (awarded posthumously in 2004 by the University of Aberdeen) on its phonology.²⁶ He also produced a major printed work 'Gaelic Words and Phrases from Wester Ross', again published posthumously.

Both of these publications constitute significant resources for study and presentation of the dialect (the PhD thesis is, unusually for a Scottish University, written in Gaelic). GHM should make visitors aware, not only that Gaelic is the major heritage language of the area, but that there is a rich and distinct dialect spoken here. The presentation and interpretation of the Gaelic heritage should allow opportunities to hear the Gairloch dialect through audio and video technology. There should also be a presumption that, where there is a disagreement between a local Gaelic dialect word or expression, and a version which would be used in a national or 'official' context, the local version will be favoured by GHM (See Section H 'The Gaelic Vision').

A future project would be for GHM to put Roy's 'Gaelic Words and Phrases from Wester Ross/Faclan is Abairtean à Ros an Iar' on its website in electronic format as an important educational and research resource. This would require permission from Magaidh who holds the rights to the publication, and assistance from Cassandra and Leo McNeir of the European Language Initiative (TELI)

who have the material on file. Both parties have indicated their willingness to be of assistance to GHM in this regard.

4.6 Crofting, Fishing, Gamekeeping and Oral History

There is an ideal opportunity to make video recordings of people speaking in Gaelic (subtitled in English) about traditional life in the communities of the Gairloch area, and their memories of their lives as children and young adults. This could be woven into the presentation of objects in the exhibition, such as implements and tools used on the croft or in the home, demonstrating how they were used. Examples would be the *speal* ‘scythe’, *corrán* ‘sickle’ and *cas-chaibe* or *cas-chrom* ‘foot plough’; interestingly, with regard to the last, it is called either a *cas-chaibe* or *cas-chrom* depending on which community within Gairloch parish the speaker belongs to. Therefore, both terms should be in evidence at GHM.

4.7 The Gaelic View of Nature & the Achtercairn Paths

The extensive Achtercairn path network, which is due to be extended to the back door of the new exhibition space at the AAOR, is an excellent resource which GHM can, and should, use for enriching and prolonging the experience of visitors. Much work has been done to reveal a remarkable collection of roundhouse buildings and archaeological remains dating from Neolithic to Bronze and Iron Ages and through to modern times. In addition to archaeology, it provides an excellent resource for interpretation of geology and landforms, settlement patterns, transhumance and the cattle economy, place-names, folklore and the Gaelic view of the natural world.

Place-names would include hills, mountains, burns, villages, islands and other geographical features visible from the paths. Folklore could include several local stories, including the tale of Tòrr na h-Ulaidhe; the hillock can be visited, as it is in close proximity to the paths. But perhaps the most exciting possibility is to use this resource to provide a completely unique experience for a Scottish museum – learning about the Gaelic view of nature in a natural setting. What do the Gaels call the native plants and animals? What stories do they tell about them? This heritage is unique to Highland Scotland and is extremely closely linked to the country’s native environment and ecology. GHM could provide a unique experience of a unique heritage.

There is a good mix of habitat, from bog to woodland to open hillside on the Achtercairn paths, and thus a large variety of native species can be viewed at close quarters within a short period of time. Very few Scottish museums or visitor centres have such a stunning resource on their doorstep, and it is one area of development which would have been difficult, if not impossible, on the current GHM site.

Seasonal rangers would need to be trained to gain the appropriate knowledge to pass on to visitors (presumably the same rangers would be able to guide visitors

on walks with other themes eg archaeology or place-names). Clearly, the more Gaelic-speaking rangers or guides that were available, the easier it would be to cater for all client groups. Gaelic medium training in such skills and knowledge is available each summer on a course on Skye ²⁷, although training through the medium of English could be organized for non-fluent speakers of the language. In the absence of rangers, self-guided walks could be organized, with audio or written material, or an app, made available.

Roy Wentworth collected an extensive vocabulary of plant and animal names in the local Gaelic dialect, so guides can easily check they are using the correct local word. And, although presentation of the 'Gaelic View of Nature' by GHM might arguably be largely confined to an outdoors experience during the summer months, it would be sensible to take a bilingual approach to any internal exhibition concerning the natural heritage of the area, particularly in providing the Gaelic names for species of plant and animal.

This experience would concern the natural environment and would be very different from the Gaelic alphabet trails set up in a few places, which are mostly artificial and involve species planting. Because of the nationally unique nature of this experience, it is likely that funding bodies like Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Scottish Natural Heritage would look favourably upon requests for financial assistance.

SECTION 5

THE MUSEUM AND GAELIC: LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS

There are two major strands to be considered with regard to a language strategy for any museum or heritage centre in a region, such as the Gàidhealtachd of Scotland, where a minority community language is also the major heritage language. These are:

- The rights and aspirations of the minority language community to see, hear and use their language in the museum.
- The interpretation of the language's heritage for all visitors.

These strands will be considered in turn.

5.1 The 'Rights' of the Minority Language Community

The Gaelic Language Act of 2005 classifies Gaelic as a 'national language' of Scotland and aspires to achieve 'equal respect' for Gaelic vis-à-vis English in Scotland.²⁸ In practice, museums and heritage centres have been slow to demonstrate an acceptance of that principle, although a few of them now carry some Gaelic in their exhibitions – notably the National Trust's Culloden Battlefield Centre, the Clan Donald Centre on Skye, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, and Taigh Chearsabhagh and Kildonan Museum in Uist. The new Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway (see below), in contrast to all other museums in Scotland, will give full rights to Gaelic-speakers.

To this point in time, the practice of GHM has effectively been in line with the 20th century orthodoxy that bilingual Gaelic-speakers should use English when in a museum or heritage centre and that very little, if any, provision should be made for them to see, hear or use their own language within the exhibition space or ancillary facilities. This is despite the fact that Gaelic is often the base language for the culture and heritage that is being interpreted in the museum. There has been little provision for Gaelic to be seen, heard or spoken in GHM, beyond some labelling of artefacts in Gaelic and the occasional bilingual information panel (for which there appears to be no consistent policy). And the museum's Temporary Exhibitions Policy makes no mention of the Gaelic language.

The late Roy Wentworth, a former Curator of GHM, was firmly of the opinion that, if society is to invest in educating local children in Gaelic, then those young people should have opportunities to see, hear and use the language outside school, and after they have left school. Gaelic is not simply a language of education or heritage – it is a living part of an active community. Museums,

including GHM, should recognise that they have an important role in encouraging daily usage of the language. In so doing, they not only meet the aspirations (and, many would argue, rights) of members of their own community to use their preferred language, but they also emphasize the continuity of the cultural heritage they are exhibiting, thus enhancing the value of the exhibition.

Many visitors from all over the world like to hear and see Gaelic being used as part of their experience of being in Scotland. Below are some comments made by respondents to the HIE study published as *Ar Stòras Gàidhlig* in 2014 ²⁹:

- *‘It is a distinctive part of our identity that differentiates us from the competition and other businesses in our field’.* [arts centre/hub]
- *“Our guests are not Gaelic speakers, but some of our staff are, and the guests are often interested in hearing Gaelic spoken”.* [hotel and restaurant business]
- *“Locals, especially the older ones, like to use their native language. Visitors find it interesting to hear the language being used”.* [retail business]
- *“It plays a part in the overall experience that people expect to find here, along with walking and wildlife”.* [accommodation provider business]

There is no absolute ‘right’ under the Gaelic Language Act for public exhibitions to be fully bilingual in Scotland. However, there is a strong moral case, backed up by the principles embodied in the Act, for the language to have a strong presence. Nearly one in every five residents in Gairloch parish has Gaelic language skills. Many visitors from the wider Highlands and beyond will have Gaelic language skills. Currently, these people are poorly catered for by GHM. This paper proposes that a much greater use of Gaelic in the new exhibition would correct those deficiencies. Below is a consideration of the situation in National Museum Wales/Amgueddfa Cymru and the new Museum nan Eilean in the Western Isles.

5.2 National Museum Wales/Amgueddfa Cymru

While the Welsh language in Wales is numerically stronger than Gaelic in Scotland, it is nevertheless instructive to consider the following points drawn from the Welsh Language Scheme for National Museum Wales (revised March 2012), particularly in the light of Gaelic’s official status as a national language of Scotland and in the fact that the percentage of Welsh speakers in some communities in Wales is lower than the percentage of Gaelic-speakers in Gairloch (for example in Blaenau Gwent where 9.9% speak Welsh). ³⁰

- *Amgueddfa Cymru is committed to ensuring that our visitors can enjoy the collections in our care equally through the medium of Welsh or English through provision, for example, of texts and interpretation in Welsh and*

English, and that visitors can make enquiries, whether in person or otherwise, as far as reasonably possible in either language.

- *[We] make every effort to recruit bilingual staff to reflect the needs and requirements of our visitors. Information on responding appropriately to requests from Welsh speakers over the telephone, by email and in person is included in our induction training for all staff. We will also provide ongoing language awareness training to staff, Trustees and Friends.*
- *Where a symbol cannot be used, we will ensure that all our permanent and temporary signs will be Welsh and English with the Welsh and English text being treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence. If separate Welsh and English signs are provided, they will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.*
- *We will develop an exhibition programme that reflects our commitment to Wales and both its official languages. We will ensure that all texts for permanent exhibitions, temporary exhibitions, displays and activities that we develop, such as audio guides, AV items, dramatic reconstructions and so forth, are in Welsh and English. All merchandise we develop associated with exhibitions, displays and the collections will be in Welsh and English.*
- *Where no suitable Welsh-speaking candidate can be found for a post where Welsh is desirable, the person appointed will be encouraged to learn Welsh. A candidate unable to speak Welsh may be appointed to a post for which Welsh is considered essential, but where time can be allowed to learn the language.*

5.3 Museum nan Eilean, Stornoway

The largest museum in the Western Isles, Museum nan Eilean, is in the process of moving to a new site in Lews Castle (it might receive a new name as a legacy of the move but this has not yet been decided). It will open in 2016. In a situation which is clearly analogous to the move of GHM to the AAOR building, this has provided an opportunity for a revamping of the museum's exhibits and a strengthening of its language policy. Following extensive discussion with the community, including the use of focus groups, and in the light of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's language policy, it was decided to give primary place to Gaelic in the new exhibition, while still catering fully for non Gaelic-speaking visitors with the use of English. While Bòrd na Gàidhlig has made a contribution to the funding of the exhibition, the main funders of the museum development – the Heritage Lottery Fund – required to be satisfied on the language issue before giving the go-ahead. The developers were able to fully satisfy them.³¹

The narrative for the exhibits has been written separately in each language, with primacy given to Gaelic. The English narrative, however, is not a direct translation of the Gaelic – the texts are a little different. This is important –

encouraging Gaelic-speakers not to simply read the English text and ignore the Gaelic (which might happen if the texts were exactly equivalent, because of the historically poor literacy rates in Gaelic, a result of the education system). It also means that a bilingual (Gaelic/English) visitor will get a little more from the exhibits than someone who can, or chooses to, only read one of the languages. This principle is well-established in exhibitions that seek to cater fully for two language groups, where one is a minority or minoritised tongue and the other almost universally understood.

The exhibits in Museum nan Eilean will also contain soundposts with audio provided in Gaelic and English. There will be videos in both languages, with the Gaelic videos being subtitled in English, and discussions are taking place as to whether front-of-house staff will welcome visitors in the first instance in Gaelic or English. The use of Gaelic to welcome a visitor (who might be from a foreign non English-speaking country) can serve as a great awareness-raiser as to the existence of this language in the community (and in the exhibition), and it encourages Gaelic-speakers and, very importantly, Gaelic-learners to use that language in preference to English. In the absence of comprehension of the language, the conversation naturally switches to English. A skilled reception staff member can make this introduction a rich and rewarding part of a visitor's experience both to the exhibition and to the locality, for which the exhibition is a showcase.

Non Gaelic and non English-speakers will be catered for at Museum nan Eilean by guides who belong to the Western Isles Tour Guides Association; they can cater for visitors in a large number of foreign languages.

There is clearly a need for GHM to address the issue of the use of Gaelic in interpretation. This does not mean that GHM should follow Museum nan Eilean's policy to the letter, but it does require that Gaelic be used much more widely in the exhibition space and that no exhibit (eg on local geology or archaeology) should be classed, formally or informally, as a 'no-go' area for the language. Gaelic could, and should, be visible and/or audible in all parts of the museum space. And all amenity and direction signage eg reception, toilets, education room, car parking, which will need to be created from scratch for the new museum site, should be fully bilingual from the start.

The staff at Gairloch Primary School, which has a Gaelic medium unit, when asked (by the author) about their aspirations for the new GHM, were strongly of the opinion that Gaelic should be accorded equal respect to English at GHM and that all signage should be fully bilingual, including amenity signage. They also expressed the hope that GHM would appoint a Gaelic-speaker as a staff or volunteer guide or host on a regular and predictable basis (they suggested one day a week) so that Gaelic-speakers would know that they could use their own language in the facility at that time. This paper endorses the latter suggestion.

5.4 Interpretation of the Gaelic Heritage for all Visitors

The use of Gaelic, both audio and visual, in an exhibition space ought not to detract from the appreciation and enjoyment of the facility by non-speakers or non-readers of the language. Indeed, it should be presented in such a way as to enhance the visitor's experience, by making it obvious that the main heritage language of the exhibition's cultural exhibits is still a living part of the community, both in the Gairloch area and in wider Scotland. It is presumed that most visitors will follow the English-language interpretation but many will be attracted by the fact that Gaelic is visible and audible in the exhibition. Thus, not only should the Gaelic heritage of the area be interpreted through the medium of English (and Gaelic), but there should be an important place (as outlined above) for Gaelic in the general exhibition space.

5.5 The Café and Other Ancillary Enterprises

It is envisaged by GHM that an external enterprise will be invited to operate a café on the site of the new museum at the AAOR. Non-local visitors are likely to view the café as an integral part of the museum complex, and it is important, for the success of GHM's Gaelic strategy, that the café operate under the same philosophy as the museum eg with bilingual signage and menus, and an indication (such as with badges) of which staff speak the language (there is, for example, a Gaelic-speaking member of staff at the Shieling Restaurant next door to the AAOR). There is a strong argument for the Gaelic training received by staff and volunteers of GHM to be offered also to café staff.

SECTION 6

THE MUSEUM AS A CENTRE FOR GAELIC RESEARCH, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY USE

The new facility at the current AAOR will permit the development of spaces where research and learning can take place, and where community use can be encouraged. All of these could include a Gaelic component. The issues are considered below.

6.1 Partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

GHM and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO), the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture on the Isle of Skye, which is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) network, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in February 2015. This agreement is potentially of enormous importance to GHM, allowing it to further develop its resources, enhance its status nationally, attract funding, ensure a stronger Gaelic presence in the museum and develop beneficial links both with local Gaelic-speakers and with the Gaelic community nationally.

SMO are keen to develop this partnership and hope to allocate students, particularly those at post-graduate level, to work on the collection of Gaelic literature, oral history, folklore and place-names already held by GHM, notably the papers and recordings of the late Roy Wentworth and Kay Matheson, and to enhance that by further research where appropriate. There are obvious opportunities for MSc students who are studying the *Cultar Dùthchasach agus Eachdraidh na Gàidhealtachd* ('Material Culture and Gàidhealtachd History') MSc course set up by Professor Hugh Cheape, but there will also be opportunities for research at PhD level, for example, on place-names and the work of local bards.

Opportunities of this nature are likely to attract local Gaelic speakers, who have been and continue to be, represented among the student body at SMO. Among the spin-offs from the research, therefore, would be strengthening of the language within the community, the presence of a Gaelic-speaker (or perhaps more than one) who could answer queries and assist in interpretation at GHM, and the creation and development of further materials to be used in interpretation.

SMO could also provide video-recorded material for the exhibition, as they have modern studios and filming facilities and equipment. This would incur a cost, but grants could be sought to cover this. And, very importantly, the MOU allows GHM to seek assistance from SMO when formulating a language plan for the museum. The MOU can be put into practice at any time and does not depend on waiting for the move to the AAOR.

6.2 Links to Local Schools

There have already been fruitful links forged between GHM and the Gaelic classes at Gairloch High School, as was demonstrated in the shortlisting of the entry made to the FilmG competition for the Best Community Film category in 2015. Other possible links should be explored, including the further development of social media output, a young people's bilingual blog and website development.

GHM's website is currently only in English. To achieve the strategic outcomes recommended in this paper, there ought to be much more Gaelic on the website. In fact, there is an argument for making the website entirely bilingual. GHM should investigate the possibility of working with the Gaelic classes at Gairloch High School, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and members of the community, with oversight by the Gaelic Champion (see below), to achieve more Gaelic on the website. Such a development would not only make the website more accessible to Gaelic speakers – and thus be of benefit to the museum – but it would involve young members of the community in the work of GHM, thus achieving a stronger community presence. It would also enhance the Gaelic skills of secondary students studying the language, by allowing them to use it in a practical, and local, setting. To ensure the quality of the writing or translation, oversight by a Gaelic authority would be advisable.

Links to the Gaelic medium unit at Gairloch Primary School should also be encouraged, by the provision of learning packs and loan-boxes in simple Gaelic. These could be developed in conjunction with the new exhibitions and would be eligible for financial assistance.

6.3 Board Membership and a 'Gaelic Champion'

In the light of an acceptance of the Vision and Strategy outlined in this paper, which would ensure a strengthening of GHM's commitment to Gaelic, the Board of the Gairloch and District Heritage Society should attempt to recruit more Gaelic-speakers to its membership. In the absence of a Gaelic-speaking employee who would have responsibility for the language, a board member should be nominated as a 'Gaelic Champion' (*Gaisgeach na Gàidhlig*) for GHM. His or her remit would be to ensure that GHM was doing as much as possible to implement its Gaelic strategy. He or she would provide support to the Curator on Gaelic issues and, in co-ordination with the Curator, would sponsor links with other bodies, local, national and international, with an interest in the language. He or she would report annually to the Board on the progress made with regard to Gaelic at GHM. An alternative to having a Champion would be to create a Gaelic Steering Group to spread the responsibilities.

6.4 GHM as a Community Gaelic Hub

It is envisaged that GHM will not only do justice to the Gaelic language and heritage within its exhibition space and activities, but that it has the ambition to

be a community hub for groups and activities, which will include Gaelic groups and Gaelic-related activities. The local Pàrant is Pàiste (Gaelic parent and toddler) group, the local branch of An Comunn Gàidhealach and the local Gaelic choir have indicated an interest in using the new facilities at GHM, should they be suitable for their activities. This would have the added advantage of bringing more Gaelic speakers into direct contact with GHM and of encouraging community involvement with the museum. At an early stage, GHM should speak to all of these groups to ascertain if they have particular requirements in terms of space and facilities, so that these can be considered in the drawing up of the plans for the development of the AAOR. For example, the Pàrant is Pàiste group would be looking for a working space with low sinks that would be suitable for practical activities with young children.

6.5 Partner Museums in the North-west Highlands

Distinct opportunities exist to work in closer co-operation with two sister institutions in Wester Ross – the Applecross Heritage Centre/Ionad Dualchais na Comraich and Ullapool Museum. Both are situated in locations where, like Gairloch, Gaelic is the main heritage language, and all three share a great deal of commonality in terms of culture, history and way of life. In Ullapool's case, there are also Gaelic-speaking children and teenagers, with Gaelic medium education being available at the local primary and secondary schools. While Applecross currently has no official curatorial staff and Ullapool's is only part-time, both the former curator in Applecross, Gordon Cameron (who has a watching brief there) and the curatorial adviser in Ullapool, Helen Avenell, are interested in the possibilities of continuing and extending co-operation with GHM, particularly on Gaelic-related projects or projects with a Gaelic content. Gordon, a fluent Gaelic-speaker, has a particularly useful skill set for any co-operative project. Ullapool Museum have yet to develop a Gaelic Strategy but are aware that this issue will need to be addressed in the near future.

Some funding applications are more likely to be successful if they can demonstrate co-operation between organizations and communities, and it is proposed in this paper that GHM discuss such matters with both Applecross Heritage Centre and Ullapool Museum.

6.6 Sister Museums Overseas

GHM has two 'sister museums' in Nova Scotia (actually a collection of museums across the province) and in Waipu, New Zealand. While the Gaelic language has now largely gone from New Zealand, Gaelic identity through language and cultural expression remain as significant components of Nova Scotia's diversity. There are opportunities for GHM's Gaelic strategy to include the strengthening of links with the Highland Village Museum/Baile nan Gàidheal in Iona, Cape Breton Island, which boasts several fluent Gaelic speakers on its staff and has a Gaelic community outreach focus. Highland Village Museum is interested in strengthening those links, particularly if GHM were to increase its commitment

specifically to the Gaelic language and cultural interpretation in accordance with this proposed Strategy.

The language and culture of Nova Scotia Gaels is supported in Nova Scotia by Gaelic Affairs Division, Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, which among numerous community-based initiatives has provision to provide some assistance to Nova Scotians in travelling to Scotland for educational purposes. Based upon our shared language and common cultural origins, in 2002, the Government of Nova Scotia initiated a Memorandum of Understanding with Highland Council.

GHM should explore the opportunities to welcome Gaelic-speakers from Nova Scotia to work in the museum while conducting research on the archival material held by GHM. The possibility of reciprocal visits by young Gaelic-speakers from Gairloch for a summer working at the Highland Village Museum or other related Gaelic organizations and institutions in Nova Scotia should also be investigated.

6.7 Partnership with Crofting Connections / Ceanglaichean Croitearachd

Two of the aims of Crofting Connections are to:

- Safeguard crofting heritage and traditions unique to local communities.
- Increase public knowledge and appreciation of crofting.

Both of these aims have a clear Gaelic component, and Crofting Connections has supported activities related to crofting that have a Gaelic component. HIE has committed to ‘continue to support the Crofting Connections programme run in partnership with the Scottish Crofting Federation and Soil Association Scotland, which celebrates the connection between Gaelic and crofting.’³¹

GHM should speak to Crofting Connections about the possibility of a partnership which would inform the development of exhibits and activities about crofting, and which are bilingual, or have a Gaelic component.³³

SECTION 7

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

7.1 Gaelic Innovation Investments (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

In 2015, HIE commenced support for a new Gaelic Innovation Investments product (GII), based on the findings of the research project *Ar Stòras Gàidhlig – the Economic and Social Value of Gaelic as an Asset* which made a strong case for the language to be viewed as an economic asset. HIE says the following: ‘Specifically designed to provide initial investment/seed funding, the Gaelic Innovation Investments product aims to enable businesses and third sector organizations develop innovative ideas for products and services that enhance the economic and social use of Gaelic from idea stage to market readiness. Applicants need to clearly demonstrate the potential of the proposed product or service to use Gaelic as an asset to enhance their business and/or social objectives.’

HIE have confirmed that an organization such as GHM would be eligible to apply for funding under the scheme, as long as they could demonstrate that their proposal would produce appropriate, and sustainable, economic and social outcomes. A feasibility study into a proposed Gaelic-related development would also potentially qualify for financial assistance, again as long as an assessment were made that the development is likely to produce the requisite economic and social outcomes.

The following should be noted as extremely relevant to GHM. GII can be used to support

- costs relating to product innovation, branding, marketing and Gaelic translation.
- the development of a product or service that increases community participation in Gaelic-related activities, leading to enhancing participants’ sense of identity and community confidence, and instilling a greater sense of place (Gaelic as a social asset).

There is the possibility of seeking funds for salary purposes, but this would have to be in the light of the employee working to create a specific product or service that would fulfil the aims of the scheme within a given time frame.

The HIE intervention rate is up to 75% for business and third sector organizations with a requirement for applicants to commit financial resource and in-kind contributions such as internal allocation of key staff time to contribute to the product/service development. The investment award is up to a maximum of £20,000. ³⁴

It is proposed that GII funds be sought to employ a consultant to create a fully developed plan of how to make, promote and brand Gairloch as a 'Home of the Bards', with GHM as central to that project. The consultant would work in conjunction with the Curator and Board of GHM.

7.2 Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

This funding programme, affording grants of up to £5,000, was established to help community groups undertake projects in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan.³⁵ Bòrd na Gàidhlig offers organizations the opportunity to bid for funding for initiatives which will encourage and increase the learning and use of Gaelic within communities, by supporting at least one of the following National Plan priorities:

1. Home and Early Years
2. Education: Schools and Teachers (extra-curricular activities only)
3. Education: Post-school Education
4. Communities
5. Arts and Media
6. Heritage and Tourism

Top priority is given to projects which focus on the use and/or acquisition of Gaelic and which have a strong community involvement.

GHM clearly is in a strong position to argue for funding on the basis of priorities 4 and 6 (although that does not preclude other priorities). It should be noted, however, that the Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd programme operates annually and will require rapid action to secure funding for 2016. It will open for bids shortly before Christmas 2015 and will close in February 2016. This provides an ideal opportunity to secure funding for a Gaelic learning programme for staff and volunteers of GHM during 2016, to ensure a strengthening of Gaelic language skills and awareness within the organization. The provision of a grant under this programme is not dependent on raising finance from other sources. Enquiries should be made to Eilidh NicIain at Bòrd na Gàidhlig (eilidh@gaidhlig.org.uk)

7.3 Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) – Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Funding under GLAIF is for bodies which have a Gaelic Language Plan that has been approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. GHM would therefore have to apply through a partner body that has a Gaelic Language Plan. It has the choice of applying through Highland Council or Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (through the MOU with the latter). Financial assistance could be sought for preparation of materials for the new exhibition, particularly where there is community involvement. Video and audio recording of local Gaelic-speakers, and preparation of bilingual exhibition

materials would qualify for assistance; a number of local museums and heritage centres in the Highlands, including Applecross Heritage Centre, have already received funding under GLAIF for their exhibitions. Funds under GLAIF can also be used for salary purposes if a case can be made for employing somebody to achieve the outcomes in question.

GLAIF funding could also be sought for Gaelic Awareness training for staff, board members and volunteers of GHM, concentrating in particular on the richness of the local Gaelic heritage, so that they are all fully aware of the creative possibilities associated with the new exhibition space. This should be held as soon as possible ie in early to mid 2016 in order to inform discussions with regard to GHM's Gaelic Strategy. In addition (or alternatively), funding could be sought for a symposium which would be attended by staff, board members, volunteers and local supporters, where experts would be invited to speak about the local (and wider) Gaelic heritage and its interpretation. Examples of speakers might include Ian Fraser (place names), Coinneach Maclean (Gaelic heritage and tourism), Seumas Grant (dialect issues), Hugh Cheape (Gaelic and material culture), Catriona MacCuish (bilingualism at Museum nan Eilean) and other experts on song, music, folklore and the Gaelic interpretation of nature.

GLAIF operates annually. It is currently closed for 2015-16 but will open early in the new year for 2016-17, with the window for bids closing in April 2016. Bòrd na Gàidhlig usually funds up to 80% of a project, with the recipients obtaining the balance from other sources. Enquiries should be made to Eilidh NicIain (eilidh@gaidhlig.org.uk)

7.4 Bòrd na Gàidhlig – miscellaneous funding

Although finances are tight across the public sector, Bòrd na Gàidhlig sometimes has uncommitted funds available towards the end of the financial year. GHM should therefore inform the Bòrd when their Gaelic Strategy is finalized and enquire as to the possibility of funds being available, on an ad-hoc basis, towards the end of the financial year 2015-16 that would assist in implementation of the strategy (and annually in subsequent years).

It should be noted that the grant for bilingual public signage which was at one time administered by Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) no longer exists, and that CnaG no longer disburses grant monies. But it is possible to receive funding for signage through Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Enquiries on all Bòrd na Gàidhlig funding should be made at the earliest juncture to Eilidh NicIain (eilidh@gaidhlig.org.uk).

7.5 Creative Scotland – Open Project Funding

Creative Scotland/Alba Chruthachail offers funding through its Open Project programme for:

- Projects that develop skills or artistic practice
- Projects that create something new and of high quality
- Projects which either present work to audiences, or which try to develop and reach new audiences
- Projects which encourage more people to get involved in artistic and creative activity.

Support is available for up to 2 years in duration and ranges from £1,000 to £100,000. While a fixed exhibition is unlikely to receive support, the vision that Gairloch become a ‘Home of the Bards’ and a hub for the celebration of creative writing, old and new – through creative activities – should allow it to meet the criteria for funding. One of their categories is ‘artistic or creative projects that are based on the traditional arts of Scotland, or which use the languages of Scotland, such as Gaelic and Scots’. The creation of a Bardic Trail, particularly if there are events to celebrate it and tours given of it, might also be eligible for funding. Creative Scotland, for example, already funds activities in Edinburgh associated with its status as a UNESCO City of Literature.³⁶

7.6 Highland Council – Tourism Grant

This is a grant to encourage tourism-related projects among tourism businesses and community tourism projects, particularly where there is co-operation between two or more groups. The levels of financial support are relatively low. Particular note is made of Gaelic viz. ‘the use of Gaelic within the project must be given due consideration. Applicants are encouraged to make use of Gaelic in a way that enhances the visitors’ experience of the Highlands’.

There is an opportunity here for GHM to seek funding on the basis of its attracting tourists to the Gairloch area, and extending the duration of their stay, but an application is only likely to be successful if it involves other bodies. This fund may provide opportunities for co-operation with other West Highland Museums/Visitor Centres on a tourism-related project which has a Gaelic aspect. The information on the website is not fully accurate, but more information is available from Colin Simpson on 01463 702957 or at *colin.simpson@highland.gov.uk*.

7.7 Museums Galleries Scotland – Skills Development Fund

Gaelic training activities could be run in collaboration with other Highland museums or GHM could work collaboratively with non-accredited museums eg tourist enterprises to create skills development and training opportunities for staff, board members and volunteers. This would equip those involved with GHM to better fulfil the requirements of this Gaelic Strategy. This fund offers assistance of between £1,000 and £5,000 for training, mentoring, skills-sharing and exchanges, and up to 100% funding is available. Applications are open permanently, the funded project must be started within 3 months of receipt and all monies must be spent by 8 March 2017.³⁷

7.8 The Weir Charitable Trust

The Weir Charitable Trust provides grants to Scottish-based community groups and small charities (GHM would be eligible, according to current level of annual turnover). One of their categories is ‘Culture: supporting the heritage – tangible or otherwise – of Scotland, through projects that encourage participation in and preservation of Scotland’s distinctive culture.’ The grants are generally small (the average to date is £3,500) although in exceptional circumstances the Trust will consider applications for funds up to £25,000. GHM might investigate the possibility of seeking funding for a Gaelic-related project, such as collating the local legends and stories connected to place, with a view to interpreting them in the new exhibition, and of creating a bilingual publication to accompany this work.³⁸

7.9 Scottish Natural Heritage

Once a vision has been created for a place-names exhibit, perhaps associated with popular publications, Scottish Natural Heritage should be approached to see if they would provide financial assistance, given that a better community understanding of landscape and nature would deliver on their Funding Priority 2 ‘to help and empower communities to become more resilient and better connected with their natural assets’ and Funding Priority 4 ‘to support nature-based tourism, wild foods and innovative enterprises based on sustainable use of natural assets’.³⁹

Contact should also be made with the Ordnance Survey to investigate how partnership with GHM could be of benefit to both parties, particularly in terms of the provision of mapping (perhaps interactive) for the exhibition space.

SNH should also be approached for funding to support a seasonal Ranger Service in association with GHM (eg on the Achtercairn paths) and on interpretation materials for a Gaelic Nature Trail adjacent to the new museum at the AAOR site. Again, these activities would support SNH Funding Priorities 2 and 4 (see above).

7.10 The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

In addition to SNH, funds might be sought from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to create the Gaelic Nature Trail. Among the foundation’s priorities are ‘Connecting people with nature: We fund organizations that know their communities well and encourage them to engage with nature, enjoy it and take action to protect it.’⁴⁰

7.11 Highland LEADER Programme

The programme for 2014-2020 will be launched officially in February 2016 and is already open for Expressions of Interest. The fund is summarized as follows: 'The aim of LEADER is to increase support to local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills, and encourage innovation and cooperation in order to tackle local development objectives... It is a bottom up method of delivering support for rural development aimed primarily at small and medium sized community driven projects that are pilot and innovative in nature.' The recommendations in this strategy paper fit neatly into that narrative, and GHM should seek LEADER funds for their development programme, either to bring to fruition elements of the Gaelic Strategy or to use the Gaelic Strategy to bolster the case for wider development aspirations associated with the new museum site. LEADER funds have supported projects of the Applecross Historical Society which runs the Applecross Heritage Centre/Ionad Dualchais na Comraich. A successful application is likely to attract a funding level of between several thousand and several tens of thousands of pounds.

Highland LEADER is administered on a regional basis, and the Local Action Plan for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh is only in draft form but is likely to be published on their website early in the New Year ⁴¹. Following its publication, meaningful guidance will be available on funding applications. LEADER funds are only available as match-funding so that other funding arrangements also have to be in place. Although the scheme runs to 2020, it is likely that most of the budget will have been allocated by the end of 2017. Thus, will be necessary to make an early Expression of Interest to LEADER. Contact Liz Whiteford on 07920 543719 or liz.whiteford@highland.gov.uk.

7.12 Scottish Funding Council – Innovation Voucher Scheme

This scheme provides an opportunity for small and medium-sized companies to work with academic experts to help solve problems that may help expand their company and offer solutions which cannot be obtained commercially. The aim is to fund projects with a value up to £5,000 which drive innovation, leading to new products, services or processes that will benefit the company, university, research institution or further education college and the Scottish economy, such as securing or creating jobs, or allowing the company to expand into new markets.⁴²

7.13 Forestry Commission Scotland – Community Fund

One for the future. As the woodland (planted, of native species) on the Achtercairn Paths complex behind the AAOR grows and becomes a recognised woodland, there will be opportunities to develop the area further in connection with the Gaelic Nature Trail, given the strong relationship between the language and our native trees. This fund currently offers assistance to groups that promote the use of woodlands.⁴³

7.14 The Morrisons Foundation

This foundation supports registered charities with grant funding for projects that have community benefits in the UK. There is no limit on the amount applied for, but most grants are in the low thousands of pounds. ⁴⁴

SECTION 8

THE GAELIC VISION

It is essential that GHM develop a Gaelic Vision for the future of the language in the exhibition, services and activities that it offers. This will smooth the way for a Gaelic Strategy to be implemented and will guide future policy. It will also make clear to potential funders that GHM has a strong commitment to the language. The Vision should contain the following points:

- GHM views the Gaelic language as a cultural, social and economic asset.
- GHM has an ambition to be inclusive towards, and supportive of, the Gaelic language in its day-to-day work.
- By enhancing the use of Gaelic and celebrating its cultural legacy, GHM would expect to grow visitor numbers, and to prolong the duration of their visits.
- GHM will encourage Gaelic-speakers to apply for staff and volunteer positions and will view the ability to read, write, speak or understand Gaelic as an asset in the workplace.
- Visitors who are Gaelic-speakers, learners and readers will be given parity of esteem with English-speakers/readers at GHM.
- The Gaelic language will be treated by GHM with equal respect to the English language, as enunciated in the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act (2005).
- Gaelic will have a major place in the exhibition space, both in terms of text and audio.
- All amenity signage at GHM will be fully bilingual (Gaelic and English).

- A Gaelic-speaker will be able to fully enjoy the exhibitions at GHM through the Gaelic language.
- Gaelic will be presented in GHM as the main heritage language of the Gairloch area, and also as a living language within the country and local community.
- Gaelic bàrdachd (poetry), Gaelic place-names, Gaelic folklore, and Gaelic song and music will be major themes to be interpreted and celebrated at GHM.
- GHM will welcome local Gaelic-speakers and groups to use its facilities, and will be proud to support the Gaelic language in the local community.
- For exhibits, publications and activities at GHM, where there is disagreement between local (dialect) Gaelic terms for material items or cultural practices and those used in a general national context, local terms will be given priority.

SECTION 9

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

These recommendations were drawn up after consultation with GHM, in the light of the proposed Gaelic Strategy.

9.1 HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS:

	Issues	Possible funding support	Indicative Costs	Follow up in...	Time-scale
<p>Action 1: A Gaelic Champion or Steering Group to be appointed to assist the Curator in promoting the place of Gaelic within GHM.</p>	<p>A voluntary unpaid position. Would benefit from training/research eg visiting Museum nan Eilean, possibly Welsh museums</p>	<p>(Training costs)</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>Activity Plan</p>	<p>Early 2016</p>
<p>Action 2: An articulated Vision to be developed for the place of Gaelic in the new museum (exhibitions, operations and activities).</p>	<p>The Gaelic champion to promote this</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>Interpretation Plan</p>	<p>Completed in time for Stage 2 submission (Aug 2016)</p>
<p>Action 3: Video recordings to be made of Ian Fraser speaking on the topic of local place names (Gaelic with English subtitles) – to be included in exhibition.</p>	<p>Liaise with Ian on content; see if University would do recording</p>	<p>Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd (Bòrd na Gàidhlig) SFC Innovation Voucher Scheme</p>	<p>£3,000</p>	<p>Interpretation Plan</p>	<p>2016/17</p>

Action 4:

Co-operation to be initiated with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Highland Council to ensure all wayfinding and amenity signage in the new GHM, where language-neutral pictograms are not employed, is fully bilingual.

Ensure that the choice of Gaelic words and terms complies with local usage

N/A

Interpretation Plan

Commence discussions in 2016

Action 5:

Discussions to take place with Hugh Cheape about co-operation with staff and students at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (through the MOU) in the development of the Gaelic component of exhibitions at GHM.

Ensure local dialectal input into selection of terminology

N/A

Nil

Interpretation Plan

Commence discussions in 2016

Activity Plan

Action 6:

Gairloch's bardic legacy to be developed as a central theme of the new museum. To include concept development of Gairloch as 'Home of the Bards', including a Bardic Trail.

Content requires development

Gaelic Innovations Investment (HIE)

Several thousand £ for expert consultants

Activity Plan

Development from 2017 onwards

GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

Action 7:

A Gaelic loan box suitable for primary school children to be created, based on the content of the new exhibition.

Co-operate with Gairloch Primary School

Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

£2,000

Interpretation Plan

This is already in hand (2016)

Activity Plan

9.2 MODERATE PRIORITY ACTIONS:

Action 8:

Volunteers, staff and board members who wish to improve their Gaelic language skills and knowledge of Gaelic culture and heritage to be identified. A training programme to be commenced in preparation for the opening of the new GHM, preparing staff and volunteers to interpret a bilingual exhibition to visitors.

Will assist the fulfilment of the Gaelic vision. Co-ordinated by Gaelic Champion/Steering Group

Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

Skills Development Fund (Museums Galleries Scotland)

£2,000

Volunteer Training Plan

Fundraising

Apply 2017 for training in 2018

Action 9:

Gaelic Awareness training to be run for board members and volunteers who are not involved in Action 8.

Necessary for the fulfilment of the Gaelic vision. Generic and Gairloch-specific content

Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

£1,000

Volunteer Training Plan

2018/19 prior to new museum opening

Action 10:

Video recordings to be made of local Gaelic speakers telling well known local stories (recorded in Gaelic and English).

Build in to 'Securing the Memories' oral history project. Ask Two Lochs Radio and Alice Mackenzie for advice and assistance.

GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

£200

Interpretation Plan

2017/18

Activity Plan

Action 11:

Songs of William Ross to be made available at soundposts in the exhibition space.

To be included in the interpretation

GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

£1,500

Interpretation Plan

2017/19

Action 12: The life and legacy of Iain Dall Mackay to be interpreted in the new exhibition space, accompanied by audio of his pipe tunes.	To be included in the interpretation	GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)	£1,500	Interpretation Plan	2017/19
Action 13: Co-operation with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and other experts to develop bilingual interpretation of local place-names for the exhibition, and type up handwritten materials in GHM archive.	As part of a placement or student project	N/A		Activity Plan	Will depend on finding appropriate students
Action 14: Consideration to be given to working with Crofting Connections on development of exhibits and activities about crofting with a Gaelic component.	Possibility of a special project which might attract funding	Look for cost-neutral option		Interpretation Plan Activity Plan	2017

9.3 LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS:

Action 15: Other local tourism providers to be encouraged to support and participate in the Bardic Trail.	A possible project for the destination management organisation	Highland Council Tourism Grant	£2,000	Activity Plan	Post 2019
Action 16: Magaidh Wentworth's archive of Roy's work to be examined and copies to be made of materials not currently held by GHM.		N/A		Activity Plan	Post 2019

<p>Action 17: Funds to be sought to appoint a Gaelic-speaking staff member. Gaelic skills will be included as a desirable qualification for any new post.</p>	<p>Difficulties with maintaining a permanent post. Look initially for 2 year contract with specific development aims</p>	<p>Highland LEADER Programme GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)</p>	<p>£50,000</p>	<p>Activity Plan</p>	<p>Post 2019</p>
<p>Action 18: A fluent Gaelic-speaking volunteer guide to be appointed, to ensure regular availability of a Gaelic-speaker within GHM.</p>	<p>Will not be necessary (although still desirable) if a fluent Gaelic-speaking staff member is appointed. Will require training.</p>	<p>Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd for training</p>	<p>£1,000</p>	<p>Activity Plan</p>	<p>Post 2019</p>
<p>Action 19: Local stories to be collated and digitised, to be brought together as a discrete collection and retold in a book for a modern audience in contemporary Gaelic and English.</p>	<p>Possible assistance from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig students under MOU Publishing costs in addition to development costs</p>	<p>Possible co-operation with Gaelic Books Council, Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig SFC Innovation Voucher Scheme Weir Charitable Trust</p>	<p>£5,000 development costs</p>	<p>Activity Plan</p>	<p>Post 2019</p>
<p>Action 20: Information about local Gaelic dialect, including examples of words and phrases, to be put on GHM website.</p>	<p>Possible assistance from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig students under MOU</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Activity Plan</p>	<p>Post 2019</p>	

Action 21: Opportunities to be explored for exchange visits by Gaelic speakers between Gairloch and the Highland Village Museum (Cape Breton).	This is already underway at board level	Possible partnership with Highland Council and Scottish Government		Activity Plan	Post 2019
Action 22: Application to be made for funding for a symposium of experts invited to speak about local Gaelic heritage and its interpretation.	Once the exhibition is up and running	GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)	£5,000	Fundraising Activity Plan	Post 2019
Action 23: Application to be made for funding for performance-based activities connected to the Bardic Trail, some to be held at GHM.	Opportunities for co-operation with Feis Rois and An Comunn Gàidhealach	Creative Scotland Open Project Funding	£5,000	Fundraising Activity Plan	
Action 24: A bilingual website to be developed for GHM.	Might involve co-operation with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (student project)	GLAIF (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)	£3,000	Activity Plan	Post 2019
Action 25: A number of other fundraising and development issues outlined in the Gaelic Strategy to be explored when circumstances permit.	Look for partnerships with new organizations eg SNH			Fundraising	Post 2019

As an adjunct to these recommendations, one further point should be made. It would be appropriate for GHM to express a recognition of, and gratitude to, the local people, living and deceased, who have contributed to the archival collection. Most notable among these are the late Roy Wentworth and Kay Matheson. Both have fascinating life stories which should be told at GHM.

SECTION 10

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