A' GHÀIDHLIG AIR TAOBH AN EAR NA H-ALBA

♦

GAELIC ON THE EAST COAST
PAST, PRESENT AND POSSIBLE FUTURES

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CONTENTS | CLÀR-INNSE

Summary / Geàrr-Chunntas (Gàidhlig) 2
Summary / Geàrr-Chunntas (English) 3
Summary Geàrr-Chunntas (Scots) 4
Introduction / Ro-Ràdh 5
Abbreviations 9
1. Aberdeen City / Baile Obar Dheathain 10
2. Aberdeenshire / Siorrachd Obar Dheathain 30
3. Angus / Aonghas 45
4. Dundee / Dùn Dè 54
5. Fife / Fiobha 66
6. Perth & Kinross / Peairt & Ceann Rois 75
Conclusions / Co-Dhùnadhean 95
Bibliography / Leabhar-Liosta 97

An t-Samhain / November 2020
A' Ghàidhlig air Taobh an Ear na h-Alba
Geàrr-chunntas (Gàidhlig)

Chaidh an rannsachadh seo a dhèanamh leis an Oll. Donnchadh Sneddon agus an Àrd-Oll. Michelle NicLeòid, Oìlthigh Obar Dhethain. Chaidh a maoineachadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig, agus a h-iarradh le Comhairle Obar Dhéathain, Comhairle Machair Aonghais, Comhairle Dhùn Deagh, Comhairle Fhìobha agus Comhairle Pheairt is Cheann Rois.

B’ e amas na pròiseict rannsachadh a dhèanamh air caochladh cuspairean co-cheangailte ris a’ Ghàidhlig anns na sgìrean sin: a h-eachdraidh, a dìleab ann an ainmean-àite agus litreachas, coimhnearsnachdan na Gàidhlig gu eachdraidheil agus an latha an-diugh, polasaidhean gus a’ chànan a leasachadh, buidhnean a tha an sàs sa Ghàidhlig air ire na coimhnearsnachd agus fuasglaidhean airson leasachadh na Gàidhlig san ìm ri teadh. Chaidh rannsachadh leabharlainn a dhèanamh, a bharrachd air coinneamhan le luchd-labhairt ionada sna sgìrean fa-leth, conaltradh le oifigearan anns na comhairleachan aig a bhail dhleastanas airson na Gàidhlig agus daoine a tha an sàs ann an brosnachadh agus leasachadh na Gàidhlig aig ire na coimhnearsnachd.

Ged a tha eachdraidh, suidheachadh agus polasaidhean na Gàidhlig gu math eadar-dhealaichte anns na sgìrean seo, faodor co-meas a dhèanamh eadar na caibidielean fuarasta, oir tha iad uile a’ cleachdadh aon structair agus a’ deileagadh ris na cuspairean cheudna. Tha barrachd ann ri ràdh air cuspairean àraidh ann an cuid de na h-àiteachan na tha ann an cuid eile (m.e. tha earran shubstainteach ann air a’ Ghàidhlig ann an Oìlthigh Obar Dhéathain, agus gu soilleir chan eil a leithid ri ràdh mu Mhachair Aonghais; tha earran ann air dualchaintnt Siòrrachd Pheairt, agus chan eil a leithid ann ri ràdh mu Fhìobha); ach a dh’oindein sin tha co-measan furasta ri dhèanamh, m.e. faodor an aon seòrsa fiosrachaidh leughadh on chunntas-sluaigh o Dhùn Deagh agus Machair Aonghais, no faclan-iasaid a chaidh on Ghàidhlig do Beurla Gallta ann an Siòrrachd Obar Dhéathain agus ann am Fhìobha.

’S e ar n-amas gum bi an aithisg seo feumail ann an deasbadan mu polasaidhean leasachaidh na Gàidhlig, agus eagrachadh aig ire na coimhnearsnachd, agus ann a bhith a’ foillseachadh fiosrachaidh mu staid na Gàidhlig anns na sgìrean seo. Faodor an fiosrachadh air leithid ainmean-àite agus faclan-iasaid a bhith an cleachadh gu furasta ann an cùisean-brosnachaidh ionadail (can, ann am bileagan air ainmean-àite, no stuthan air na meadhanaidhean sòisealta faclan-iasaid air, can, Latha Eòrpach nan Cànanan). Aig a’ cheann thall, ’s e inneal a th’anns an aithisg seo dhan fheadhainn a tha an sàs ann am polasaidh agus brosnachadh na Gàidhlig aig ire sam bith, agus tha e ann cuideachd gus fiosrachadh a thoirt dhan fheadhainn a tha airson barrachd fhaighinn a-mach mun Ghàidhlig san sgìre aca. Ma fhreagras i an dà amas seo, bidh an luchd-rannsachaidh sàsaichte.
Gaelic on the East Coast
Summary (English)

This research project was undertaken by Dr. Duncan Sneddon and Prof. Michelle MacLeod of the University of Aberdeen. It was funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and was commissioned by Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council and Perth & Kinross Council.

The aim of the project was to investigate different aspects of the Gaelic language in these areas: its history, its legacy in place names and literary culture; historical and contemporary Gaelic-speaking communities; policy provision; community organisation; and possibilities for future development. Desk-based research was supplemented by meetings with Gaelic speakers living in each council area, regular contact with council officials with responsibility for overseeing and implementing Gaelic provision and with people involved in Gaelic activities at grassroots level.

While the history, present situation and provision for Gaelic in all of these areas is quite different, the report is arranged in such a way that the information in the chapters is directly comparable as far as possible – they follow the same structure and cover the same basic issues. While there is more to say in certain regards about some areas than others (for instance there is no equivalent to the section on the University of Aberdeen in the chapter about Dundee, and no equivalent to the section on the East Perthshire dialect of Gaelic in the chapter on Fife), direct comparison is still fairly straightforward: one can easily compare the census data from Angus with that from Dundee, or the Gaelic loanwords in Scots in Aberdeenshire with those in Fife.

The information in this report is intended to be useful in informing policy discussions and community organisation as well as giving general information about the present “state of play” of Gaelic in the six council areas investigated. The information about such matters as place names, connections with the Scots language and local Gaelic history can also easily be used in the production of local Gaelic promotional materials (for instance leaflets about Gaelic place names, or social media content about Gaelic loanwords in Scots on, say, the European Day of Languages). Ultimately, this report is intended to be a tool for people involved in Gaelic activities in all capacities, and to be of interest to those who want to find out more about Gaelic in their area. If it meets these two aims, the researchers will be satisfied.
Gaelic on the East Coast
Summary (Scots)

This resairch projeck wis cairried oot by Dr. Duncan Sneddon an Prof. Michelle MacLeod o the University o Aiberdeen. It wis fundit by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, an commissioned by Aiberdeen City Cooncil, Aiberdeenshire Cooncil, Angus Cooncil, Dundee City Cooncil, Fife Cooncil an Perth an Kinross Cooncil.

The aim o the projeck wis tae invesgiate different aspecks o the Gaelic language i thae airts: its history, its heirskip in place-names an literature, the Gaelic-speakin communities baith historical an the day, organisation amang the community, policy provision an whit weys thae policies could be biggit up i the future. Desk-based resairch wis supplementit wi meetins wi Gaelic-spikkin fowk in aw the airts investigate, as weill as consultation wi the cooncil offishers wi the responsibility for Gaelic an fowk involved wi Gaelic community organisations.

While the history, present situation an policy provision for Gaelic is gey different in aw thir cooncil areas, this report is set oot in siccan a wey that comparisons atween the chaitpers can be made aisily. They aw follae the ae structure an investigate the ae basic issues. While there is mair tae say aboot sum issues i sum places nor ither (for instance, there a section on Gaelic at the University o Aiberdeen an there is o coorse nae siclike section for Angus; there a section on the Gaelic dialeck o Perthshire an o coorse nae siclike section for Fife), direck comparison is aye strauchtforrit: ye can easily compare census data frae Dundee wi that frae Angus, or the Gaelic loanwurds intae Scots in Aiberdeenshire wi thaim i Fife.

We howp that this report wull be o uise tae discussions anent Gaelic policy provision an community organisation, as weill as gein an insicht tae the situation o Gaelic the day in aw sax areas investigate. The information anent siclike maitters as place-names an Gaelic loanwurds intae Scots can be aisily adaptit tae produce locally-appropriate informational materials, sic as leaflets anent place-names, or social media content on, say, the European Day o Languages. Ultimately, this report is intendit tae be a tool for fowk that's involved in Gaelic at onie level, an tae be o interest tae fowk that wants tae ken mair aboot Gaelic whaur they byde. Gin it fulfills thae twa aims, the researchers wull be pleased eneuch.
Introduction / Ro-Ràdh

This report is about the past, present and possible futures of the Gaelic language on Scotland’s east coast. Although Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth and Kinross lie outside what is now considered the language’s heartland, the six local authority areas considered in this study all have histories of Gaelic being spoken within them, histories that stretch back to the early medieval period, as is made abundantly clear from documentary and place-name evidence. While, with the exceptions of Highland Perthshire and upland areas of Aberdeenshire, all saw large-scale language shift to Scots in the medieval period, all also saw growths in their Gaelic-speaking populations in the nineteenth century, and continue to be home to Gaelic speakers today. Some of these areas have been sites of major significance in Gaelic history: a gospel book from Old Deer in Aberdeenshire, for instance contains notes which appear to be the earliest surviving identifiably Scottish Gaelic texts now known; the monumental manuscript known as The Book of the Dean of Lismore, compiled at Fortingall in Perthshire in sixteenth century is one of the most important collections of Gaelic heroic (or “Ossianic”) ballads and classical poetry in Scotland or Ireland, and Perth itself was an important centre of Gaelic publishing in the eighteenth century.

But beyond the undoubtedly important literary history of the east coast Gaels, this report aims to stress something that is often forgotten or not fully appreciated: that Gaelic speakers have lived and continue to live in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth and Kinross. Their language has been and still is an important part of their lives, and their lives – the lives of farm-hands, of oil workers, of domestic servants, of the herring girls (clann-nighean an sgadain), of university students and professors, of Aberdeenshire granite quarrymen, of primary-school children and of teachers – are as important to the past and present of the east coast as any others.

The chapters in this report, one for each council area, follow the same basic structure as far as is possible. The report has been designed to enable readers to compare across council areas easily, but also to focus on only one area if they wish. Each chapter includes historical information, information from the most recent (2011) census, what opportunities exist to learn Gaelic in each area, in schools, further and higher education and in adult education classes, information on Gaelic organisations operating in each area, commentary on aspects of each council's current statutory Gaelic Language Plans with thoughts on how they might be developed in the future, reports on meetings with local Gaelic speakers and their thoughts on Gaelic development and different aspects of the connections between the Scots and Gaelic languages in each area. These are supplemented, where appropriate, with information on the Gaelic literature and publishing history of the area.

There are also notes on place names in each council area which are of Gaelic origin. This calls for some comment at the outset. These place names are important for two reasons. Firstly, place names provide clear evidence of the historical presence of Gaelic speakers in all of the six local authority areas covered in this study. That Gaelic was once spoken widely all over the east coast is a plain historical fact, but one that many people do not know or do not accept. This is very apparent in the responses that very predictably follow announcements to promote Gaelic in some way, for instance in implementing the Gaelic Language Act of 2005. Whenever a bilingual logo is adopted or a bilingual roadsign erected the cries of “Gaelic has
never been spoken here” are never long in coming. These claims about the past, which are utterly without historical foundation, are deployed to delegitimise the presence of and provision for Gaelic in the present. While provision for Gaelic is and must be made based on the needs and aspirations of contemporary Gaelic communities, it is important to resist this historical erasure, and knowledge of our landscape helps us to do that. Knowing more about the linguistic history written on our landscape helps us to prevent the weaponisation of a misunderstood past against Gaelic speakers in the present.

The multitude of Gaelic place names on the east coast give the lie to this attempted erasure: place names like Baldaroch, Lundin, Blairgowrie, Drummaskeloch, Rescobie and Balmalcolm are derived from Gaelic, they are part of a landscape inhabited by, worked by, lived in and named by Gaelic speakers. Place names across the area covered by this study bear eloquent testimony to the historical presence of Gaelic speakers all over the east coast. Gaelic, simply, was historically spoken in these places and the place names demonstrate this clearly.

Secondly, understanding the meanings of Gaelic place names enables us to understand our landscape in a way that is simply impossible if we look at it only in English. Place names carry within them not only the evidence of which linguistic groups lived in a certain area, but a lot of information about how they lived. Place names are not merely labels that identify a spot on a map, they are embedded into the historical, cultural, economic, ecological, mythological and religious history of the landscape. Place names that are meaningless and arbitrary in English can tell us, if we can understand their Gaelic roots, a great deal about how a certain area of land was used, what animals were pastured or hunted there, what saints were believed to watch over a community, what kinds of churches existed in an area, the names of individual people who lived and died many centuries ago and who are now utterly unknown but for a village or a hill that bears their name. To look at our landscape through monoglot eyes is to see a land bled of meaning, bled of history, bled of context, bled of its relationship to the individuals and the communities who have lived in it over the centuries.

The information about place names given in this report is indicative, not comprehensive, and is intended simply to demonstrate the historical presence of Gaelic speakers in the areas under consideration. References to more detailed works are given, but it should be noted that scholarship on place names does not cover all of these areas evenly. There is, for instance, a magnificent collection of up to date scholarship in five hefty volumes on the place names of Fife by Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus, but nothing of comparable detail and comprehensiveness exists yet for any of the other local authority areas covered in this study – though references will still be given to useful works on those places.

For those interested in place names, the following three works are highly recommended:

John Murray, Reading the Gaelic Landscape (Dunbeath: Whittles Publishing, 2014)

W.F.H. Nicolaisen, Scottish Place-names: Their Study and Significance (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2001 [1976])

William J. Watson, The Celtic Placenames of Scotland (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1993 [1926])

But the story of Gaelic on the east coast is not only a story of the past. Thousands of Gaelic speakers, whether originally from the areas under discussion or people who have moved there
from elsewhere, live on the east coast. According to the 2011 census, over 12,000 people with some skills in Gaelic live across the six local authorities studied in this report.

**Table 0.1: Gaelic users on the east coast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaelic Skills</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>4,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>3,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>2,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td>12,424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2011 Census found that 87,100 people aged three or over had some skills in Gaelic, which means that the six east coast local authorities in this study are home to 14.26% of Scotland’s Gaelic speakers. This is not a negligible proportion. These speakers not only deserve to be taken into account when policy decisions by government, third-sector, activist and community groups are being taken at a national level, but they also have a role to play in the ongoing efforts to reverse language shift in Scotland. Their skills, their organisation, their enthusiasm, their efforts to find ways to revitalise and grow Gaelic in their own localities can provide examples for Gaelic speakers and organisations in other areas as well, both within and outwith the language's traditional heartlands.

Some of those Gaelic speakers also know Scots, and the census figures giving us the numbers of those with skills in both languages are included for each council area. It is simply not the case that the Gaelic and Scots languages exist in some essential opposition to each other, or that making provision for Gaelic need in any way be to the detriment of the Scots language. This report includes examples of joint provision that currently does exist or could exist in the future, as well as examples of Scots words of Gaelic origin with citations in the six council areas as found in the *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. These demonstrate that Scots and Gaelic speakers have been in contact with each other for a long time, and that the Scots-speaking culture of the east coast has been enriched over the centuries by its contact with Gaels.

It is hoped that this report will contribute to the continuing development of policy for Gaelic, of Gaelic community organisation and of the understanding of the place of Gaelic on Scotland's east coast, past, present and future.

I wish to thank Bill Findlay, Aileen Ogilvie, Doreen Phillips, Kirsty Strachan and Anne Thirkell, the council officers with responsibility for Gaelic, for their initiative in setting this project up and their unfailing assistance in arranging meetings with local Gaelic speakers and providing me with information about Gaelic policy and development in their areas, as well as providing helpful feedback on the first draft of this report. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the University of Aberdeen, Dr. Pía Coira, Prof. Michelle Macleod, and Dr. Moray Watson for their guidance and support. Finally, I would like to thank the Gaelic speakers in each council area who gave their time to speak and write to me and helped me understand about what was going on “on the ground” in their communities. Of these I would especially like to thank Wilma Kennedy, Margaret MacIver, John Morrison, Alex Mulholland.
and Maria Robertson. The advice and guidance given by all of these people have been invaluable, and any faults that remain are solely my own. Tha mi fada nur comain uile.
Abbreviations

CLPL – Career-long Professional Learning
DSL – Dictionary of the Scots Language
GME – Gaelic Medium Education
GLE – Gaelic Learner Education
GLPS – Gaelic Learning in the Primary School
RLS – Reversing Language Shift
SGS – *Scottish Gaelic Studies*
SSPCK – Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge
TGSI – *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*
1. Aberdeen City / Baile Obar Dheathain

1.1 History

1.1.1 Gaelic in medieval Aberdeen

There is evidence from place names that the area now covered by the City of Aberdeen was settled by Gaelic speakers in the medieval period. In the centuries between the extinction of Pictish around the turn of the first millennium and the establishment of Scots as the dominant language as the town became a burgh in the twelfth century, Gaelic was the dominant language in the area, and probably lasted longer in areas of the burgh’s hinterland that are now within the modern city. Indeed, it is likely that there were Gaelic-speaking clergy in the area even during the Pictish period, as suggested by the foundation legend of the monastery at Deer (see section 2.1.1.2, below). One such may have been the sixth-century Irishman Saint Machar. There are certainly a few early dedications to him in the north east, but most of the information we have about him dates from centuries after his supposed lifetime, and should not be relied upon too closely. Colm Ó Baoill of the University of Aberdeen has suggested that he may in fact have been the same person as St Mungo/Kentigern of Glasgow, and was later believed to have been a different man.¹ Whether or not Machar was indeed in Aberdeen in the early middle ages, other Gaelic speakers certainly were, and they left behind as evidence numerous place names, including Balnagask (Baile a’ Ghaisg, “the settlement of the tail of land”), Bogskethy (Am Bog Sgitheach, “the hawthorn bog”), Bendauch (Baile an Dabhaich, “the davoich settlement”), a davoich being a measurement of land, a word borrowed into Gaelic from Pictish), Derbeth (An Doire Beithe, “the birch grove”) and Mundurno (Am Monadh Dùrnach, “the pebbly hill pasture”). It is quite common for the -ach ending in Gaelic place names to become -o in Scots, as for example in Aberlemno, Obar Leamhnach in Angus).² Other examples include Kincorth (Ceann Coirthe, “end-place of standing stones” and Tillydrone (Tulach an Droighinn, “the mound of the brambles”). There are also mixed Gaelic-Scots place names, such as Gilcomstoun: this combines a Gaelic personal name (Gille Chaluim) with the Scots generic element toun (or toon – Old English tun, a settlement).

There has been very little research on the Gaelic community of later medieval Aberdeen, or indeed of any medieval urban centre. However, while further research is certainly needed to gain a fuller picture of Gaelic in medieval Aberdeen, there is certainly good evidence that there was a Gaelic-speaking community. The best-known explicit reference to Gaelic comes from the statues of the city’s grammar school, written in 1553. Among the regulations concerning the daily rounds of prayers, classes and meals is a stipulation concerning the languages the boys were allowed to use: Loquantur omnes Latine, Grece, Hebraice, Gallice, Hybernice, nunquam vernacule, saltem cum his qui Latine noscunt. (All shall speak Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French or Gaelic, never the vernacular, apart from those who do not know Latin).³ The forbidden “vernacular” in this case must have been Scots, and we can infer that the exception granted was for those very young boys who had not yet learnt Latin to a

1 Saints in Scottish Place-Names, https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/saint.php?id=129 (accessed 22.08.2019).
reasonable conversational level. This seems to imply that while the other languages listed were permitted, Latin was the language most commonly used by the scholars and instructors at the Aberdeen Grammar School. Given that the permitted languages included the Classical and Biblical languages, it is likely that the Gaelic which was permitted was the formal literary dialect we now know as Classical Gaelic, rather than vernacular spoken Gaelic. We can infer from this that it was expected that there would be Gaelic-speaking boys attending the school, but not how many actually did so.

Another valuable source for the history of Gaelic in medieval Aberdeen comes from the burgh records. These are registers from the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives, and are being made available through the University of Aberdeen’s project Aberdeen Registers Online: 1398-1511 by Edda Frankot, Anna Havinga, Claire Hawes, William Hepburn, Wim Peters, Jackson Armstrong, Phil Astley, Andrew Mackillop, Andrew Simpson and Adam Wyne. These records are in Latin and Scots and while they do not make direct reference to Gaelic as such, we can infer from personal names mentioned in the records that Gaels were living in and around the city and were involved in the civic and commercial life of the burgh. For instance, “Duncane Angousson” and “Duncane patrikson” both appear in the records in 1434,4 while in 1474 “Wil coupar” was obliged to “seel Donald gilfelanys [i.e. Gilfillan’s] chartir”5 and later in the fifteenth century “murdaicus glenmaluyn” makes fairly frequent appearances in the record.6 While we cannot say for certain that all of the people in the records who bear Gaelic names were Gaelic speakers, it seems reasonable to assume that most of them were. We should also bear in mind that the habit of translating names means that some Gaels could be “hidden” in the record behind what look like Scots names, for instance there is no way of knowing if the John Blak who appears in 1434 was a Scots speaker or a Gaelic speaker using a Scots name.7

While further research is needed into Gaelic in medieval Aberdeen, it is fairly certain that there was a community of Gaelic speakers in and around the city at that time. It was probably a small minority, but it was a minority that has left some documentary trace of itself, a trace that would repay further study.

1.1.2 Gaelic in modern Aberdeen
While there almost certainly were some Gaelic speakers in the city already, the growth of Aberdeen’s Gaelic community in the post-medieval period really dates from 1758 when a Mr Adams of London engaged Highlanders, of whom “most neither understood English nor could express themselves intelligibly in that language,” to work in his granite quarries.8

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5 ARO, ID: ARO-6-0300-06, Volume 6.; p. 300, Date: 1470-06-20 [accessed 29.07.2019].

6 e.g. at ARO, ID: ARO-7-0400-01, Volume: 7, p. 400, Date 1493-02-4 [accessed 29.07.2019].

7 ARO, ID:ARO-4-0004-01, Volume: 4, p. 4, Date 1434-03-16 [accessed 29.07.2019].

There quarry workers were men, Highland girls and young women, as in Edinburgh, often
worked as domestic servants. Gaelic speakers are thus part of the city’s working class history
from the early period of its industrial growth, and their labour was a key part of creating the
city’s striking visual identity. By 1785 Gaelic services were being held in the East Church (in
what is now St Nicholas Uniting Kirk), and within five years the city’s Gaels had fitted up St
Mary’s chapel, underneath the East Church, for their own use. They stayed there until 1795,
when public collections among the city’s Gaelic community and donations from prominent
citizens and the Breadalbane Fencibles (a Highland regiment then based in Aberdeen) enabled
the construction of a new chapel on Belmont Street, from which Gaelic Lane takes its name.
Worship in the new building was first conducted by Rev John Mackenzie on the 30th of August
1795. In 1788 the Church of Scotland estimated that there were about 800 Gaelic speakers in
the city, however it is possible that this is an underestimate, as they may have been counting
only Presbyterian Gaels and not included Episcopalians and Catholics in their figure. By 1815
there were two Gaelic schools in the city, though these do not seem to have lasted for very
long.

It was not until 1881 that the census first asked if respondents spoke Gaelic, but it is likely that
most of the 1,762 people (i.e. 2.44% of the city’s population) who lived in Aberdeen in 1851
but were born in Highland parishes were Gaelic speakers, to say nothing of those from
Highland families but born in Aberdeen itself. The 1881 figure of 150 Gaelic speakers (0.14%
of the city’s population) seems rather on the low side, especially given that the 1891 and 1901
censuses record 660 (0.52%) and 712 (0.46%) respectively. As can be seen from Table 2,
this is considerably lower than the Gaelic-speaking population of today’s Aberdeen.

1.2 Gaelic in Aberdeen today
1.2.1 Gaelic in Aberdeen in the 2011 Census
According to the 2011 Census, Aberdeen City has a population of 215,597 people aged three
or over. Of this total, those with skills in Gaelic can be counted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaelic skills</th>
<th>Number of Gaelic speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,197</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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9 Ibid., p. 165.
10 Ibid., p. 165.
13 Ibid., p. 207.
This means that 1.48% of the city’s resident population has some competence in Gaelic. As a proportion of the city’s population that is not very high, but the overall number is fairly substantial. Taking only those who can speak Gaelic (1,692) and leaving the others out of the equation, this shows us that Aberdeen has more Gaelic speakers than, for example Harris (1,212), Tiree (240) and Eriskay (104) combined. Taking all those with some competence in Gaelic together (3,197), what we could consider the city’s Gaelic community in its broadest sense is comparable in size to the combined populations of South Uist and Benbecula (1,754 + 1,283 = 3,037). While the concentration of Gaelic speakers is clearly much smaller in Aberdeen than it is in those Gaelic heartland areas, these numbers certainly demonstrate that the Gaelic speakers of Aberdeen, many of whom are native speakers who have moved to the city, is a substantial one with considerable potential for future development.

Those with Gaelic language skills in Aberdeen can be categorised by age as follows:

**Table 1.2: Gaelic users in Aberdeen City by age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes</th>
<th>Speaks but does not read or write</th>
<th>Speaks and reads but does not write</th>
<th>Reads but does not speak or write</th>
<th>Any other combination of skills</th>
<th>Total with any skills in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 19</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 34</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 49</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 54</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 – 79</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 +</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.2 Aberdeen City Council’s Gaelic Language Plan

In 2005, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic Language Act. Among other provisions, this legislation gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig the responsibility to require public sector institutions within the devolved competencies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.
The process under which such plans are developed is outlined by Bòrd na Gàidhlig: https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/

Aberdeen City Council's first Gaelic Language Plan was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2016 and will run from 2016 to 2021. The plan can be read in full on Aberdeen City Council's website: https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/strategy-performance-and-statistics/plana-gaidhlig-gaelic-language-plan

This plan was produced during the period of the second National Plan for Gaelic (2012 – 2017), and in accordance with that plan the council's Gaelic policy development is structured around the following four areas: Language Acquisition, Language Usage, Language Status and Language Corpus. The following comments on selected commitments in the plan are offered with a view to informing the development of the council's next plan, due in 2021.

The council carried out a survey of its workers in 2015, collecting information on Gaelic language skills, experiences and ideas for Gaelic development (pp. 16 – 21 of the plan). 517 out of around 8,000 council workers responded to the survey. Some responses were quite general, such as suggesting Gaelic be used to “[h]elp Scotland and Aberdeen City Council enhance its identity”, others had more specific application to council services, such as a call for Gaelic language training for care home workers, as that respondent had known of Gaelic-speaking residents suffering with dementia losing their ability to speak in English. In this case, as can readily be appreciated, a lack of Gaelic-speaking staff seriously reduces the council's capacity to give adequate care to some of the city's most vulnerable residents. There were also some rather negative responses from respondents opposed to the council undertaking Gaelic language provision at all, which revealed a lack of understanding of both Aberdeen's history, the existence of Gaelic as a living language in the present and of the council's statutory obligations under the 2005 Act. It is to be hoped that the present report and future work to improve awareness of Gaelic and its status will help to address such misunderstandings. Some of the objections invoke a lack of similar provision for Scots. While it is beyond the scope of this research project, and also beyond the scope of a statutory Gaelic Language Plan, to suggest or develop policy for Scots, it might be worth consideration on the Council's part to develop Scots provision along similar lines as those it develops for Gaelic, using Gaelic policy as a model for doing so. Not only worthwhile in its own right as support for another minority language, and one widely used in the city and the surrounding area, this would help to reduce some of the resentment directed against Gaelic which can be detected in the council's survey.

Progress has been made by the Council over the lifetime of its current Gaelic Language Plan. The Council has recruited a Gaelic-speaking Development Officer to work in education, which is extremely important in promoting GME, GLE and community Gaelic in the city. Furthermore with regard to staffing, the Council has been able to recruit GME teachers to meet the growing demand for GME in the city. Expanding the Council's capacity to deliver Gaelic education, Gaelic-medium CLPL is offered to GME practitioners, and there is also CLPL for English-medium teachers to enable them to deliver GLE. In accordance with the Plan, all Gaelic-related jobs at Aberdeen City Council are advertised bilingually.
In Section 1, the Plan makes commitments concerning corporate identity with respect to signage, logos and vehicle livery. These are mostly not very strong commitments, however, with wording (“Gaelic will be considered”, “Consideration will be given to the inclusion of Gaelic”, “will be considered on a case by case basis”) that allows considerable scope for no actual adoption of bilingual signage and logos in practice. While such largely symbolic acts of inclusion have little direct impact on language use, a more thorough policy line on these matters in the council’s next Gaelic Language Plan would contribute to the language's normalisation and acceptance as part of the city’s current, living, multilingual reality.

With respect to language acquisition, the plan makes specific commitments to increase the numbers of children in GME and of adult learners by 15% each by the end of 2020, as well as expand provision for Gaelic taster sessions and Gaelic as part of the 1+2 programme across the city. Gaelic is routinely included in local authority wide events focused on modern languages, such as the recent European Day of Languages event, in which Gaelic took its place alongside French, Spanish and German. The Council also supported, in partnership with Comann nam Pàrant a Gaelic John Muir Award for Gaelic-speaking secondary pupils in the school year 2017/18. With respect to the development of GME provision, this has been hampered by a shortage of GME staff, and recruitment of GME staff continues to be a priority. It should be noted that there is a Scotland-wide problem of a lack of Gaelic-medium teachers, with demand very much outstripping supply, and it can be a challenge to attract GME staff who wish to stay long-term in the north east.

Of the commitments outlined in the section on “Gaelic in the Arts and Communities” (a subsection of “Language Use”, pp. 48 – 51 of the plan), three are of particular interest. Under “Intergeneration Projects” there is the following: We will work with Aberdeen Gaelic Club to promote opportunities for age 65+ residents to share their language skills with younger residents and to access cultural programmes in Gaelic. Classes being considered features art classes, song workshops and music tuition in Gaelic. This would potentially be a very positive development, enabling younger speakers to benefit from learning from the idiomatic Gaelic of older native speakers, greatly enriching their own command of the language, and giving older speakers a chance to play an important role in community development, helping to bring people from different generational cohorts together and fostering a real sense of a Gaelic community in the city. This seems to have been the experience of those who have taken part in a project in Inverness, in which Gaelic-medium primary school pupils regularly visit residents at CrossReach's Cameron House care home, which might provide a useful model in Aberdeen.14 There are indeed some intergenerational events run to attract people from different age groups, including a Latha na Gàidhlig event aimed at speakers of all ages which encouraged young families with children in GME to interact with older Gaelic speakers. Aberdeen City Council also works with the community organisation Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain to organise and promote the Srùbag coffee afternoons with a children's club that attracts people from different age groups.

There is also the following commitment, under “Befriending Scheme”: We will work with Aberdeen Gaelic Club to increase the opportunity for elderly residents to attend Gaelic coffee afternoons/classes and events or meet with Gaelic speakers if in residential care.

14 https://www.crossreach.org.uk/our-locations/cameron-house
Along with the commitment under “Language Learning and Music Tuition” (Working with the Disability Advisory Group and Aberdeen Gaelic Club we will increase and promote Gaelic language learning, music and song opportunities for all: Explore the possibility of working with Aberdeen Gaelic Choir), we can see that the plan makes some very interesting commitments for seeing Gaelic as part of strategies for social inclusion. The potential for Gaelic language classes and song to enrich the social lives and opportunities of city residents who by reason of age or disability are often excluded from many social activities and learning opportunities is immense. These classes could make a real difference to people’s quality of life, and would certainly help to foster the image of Gaelic as something that is inclusive and of real practical utility.

The Council works with different organisations to develop and deliver Gaelic provision in the city. These include Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain, who run night and weekend classes as well as talks and support sessions for Gaelic parents, and also Fèis Obar Dheathain, which was attended by 65 children in April 2019.

1.2.3 Gaelic organisations in Aberdeen
Aberdeen Gaelic Choir, Coisir Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain

Founded in 1952, this choir draws members from both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. It competes in the Royal National Mòd, local mòds and performs at other events. The choir also organises other Gaelic-related community events in the city.

gaelicchoirs.org.uk/choirs/aberdeen.htm
facebook.com/AberdeenGaelicChoir/?ref=br_rs

Association of Celtic Students of Britain and Ireland

The Association of Celtic Students of Britain and Ireland brings together students in the field of Celtic Studies from many different institutions, including the University of Aberdeen. It holds an annual conference which is held at a different university each year.

facebook.com/CelticStudents

Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain – Am Baile agus an Sgìre

Club Gàidhlig holds and promotes different kinds of Gaelic events for the communities of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. These include classes for beginner, intermediate and advanced learners, a monthly informal conversation group and promoting Gaelic-related events at the University of Aberdeen’s May Festival. They have also held different kinds of events such the Great Gaelic Bake Off, a book launch and a cèilidh.

aberdeengaelic.wordpress.com

Comann Ceilteach Oilthigh Obar Dheathain
One of the oldest student societies at the University of Aberdeen, An Comann Ceilteach holds events and trips of different kinds, provides opportunities for students to socialise and meet their counterparts at other universities and to speak up for Gaelic on campus.

facebook.com/AUCelticsociety
twitter.com/AUCelticSociety

Comann nam Pàrant Obar Dheathain

Comann nam Pàrant is a national organisation giving support and advice about GME to parents. There is a very active branch of Comann nam Pàrant in Aberdeen, which works with Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain to support those GME parents who wish to learn Gaelic. Comann nam Pàrant also runs Sradagan, a Gaelic-medium club for primary school pupils, which runs on Thursday evenings at Harlaw Academy. They also organise other events for Gaelic-speaking families in the city.

parant.org.uk/index.php/gd
facebook.com/sradagan

Fèis Obar Dheathain

Fèis Obar Dheathain is the Aberdeen branch of the Scotland-wide Fèisean nan Gàidheal, and offers Gaelic music and arts tuition for young people aged up to eighteen years old. Its principal event is a three-day fèis during the Easter holidays. 65 children attended the most recent Fèis, in April 2019.

feisobardheathain.com
facebook.com/AberdeenFeis

Pàrant is Pàiste Obar Dheathain

Pàrant is Pàiste Beag is Mòr is a Gaelic playgroup for children aged 0-5 that meets on Wednesday and Friday mornings at Sunnybank Community Centre. A separate session for 3-5 years olds also runs on Thursday afternoons.

facebook.com/gaelicplaygroupaberdeen

PopUp Gàidhealtachd/Gaeltacht Obar Dheathain

PopUp Gàidhealtachd/Gaeltacht is an informal social evening for speakers and learners of Gaelic and Irish.

twitter.com/gaidhealtachdOD
facebook.com/groups/361488634405493
1.3 Learning Gaelic in Aberdeen

1.3.1 Gaelic in early-years learning in Aberdeen

Pàrant is Pàiste Beag is Mòr is a Gaelic playgroup for children aged 0-5 that meets on Wednesday and Friday mornings at Sunnybank Community Centre. A separate session for 3-5 years olds also runs on Thursday afternoons.

[Facebook link]

There is also a Gaelic Nursery based at Gilcomstoun Primary School.

Aberdeen also hosts Gaelic Bookbug sessions, a partnership between the Scottish Book Trust and the Scottish Government.

Note that these figures include children who live in Aberdeenshire but who access early-years provision in Aberdeen City. Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures do not distinguish between those children who are resident in Aberdeen City and those resident in Aberdeenshire.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for children in 0-3 Gaelic provision in Aberdeen, going back to school year 2011-12, are as follows:

**Table 1.3: Children in Gaelic 0 - 3 provision in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of children</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for children in Sgoiltean Àraich/Gaelic nursery provision in Aberdeen, going back to school year 2011-12, are as follows:

**Table 1.4: Children in Sgoiltean Àraich in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of children</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 For school years 2011-12 and 2012-13 these are listed as “Buidhnean Saor-thoileach Gàidhlig airson Ro-sgoil/ Gaelic Preschool Voluntary Groups”, and specified as provision for ages 0-3 thereafter.
1.3.2 Gaelic in schools in Aberdeen

There is GME provision at Gilcomstoun Primary School.

Gaelic is promoted alongside other modern languages in schools and has been taught as an additional language in some city schools, including in the English-medium provision at Gilcomstoun. GLE was also provided at St Joseph’s Primary School as part of the 1+2 languages initiative, though the teacher who delivered that has since left to work elsewhere.

Hazelhead High School offers GME, but only for Gaelic itself as a subject. Gaelic, whether taught through Gaelic or as GLE, is available at Hazelhead to Advanced Higher level. GLE is promoted through Aberdeen City Council’s City Campus, and pupils travel from other city schools, such as Dyce Academy, to learn Gaelic. English-medium pupils within Hazelhead Academy also have the opportunity to engage with Gaelic as an L3 additional language during the Broad General Education.

Note that these figures in these tables include pupils who live in Aberdeenshire but are brought in to Aberdeen City for school. Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures do not distinguish between those pupils who are resident in Aberdeen City and those resident in Aberdeenshire.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for pupils in GME in primary school in Aberdeen, going back to school year 2011-12, are as follows:

**Table 1.5: Pupils in GME (primary) in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for pupils learning Gaelic in primary school are as follows. There are no estimates provided of the numbers of pupils getting GLE in Aberdeen, and the numbers of schools providing it are listed only from 2017-18 and 2018-19.

**Table 1.6: Pupils receiving GLE (primary) in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1(^{16})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2(^{17})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{16}\) With Gaelic as L3.

\(^{17}\) Both with Gaelic as L3.
Bòrd na Gàidhlig's figures for the numbers of pupils receiving GME at secondary school level are as follows:

**Table 1.7: Pupils in GME (secondary) in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig's figures for the numbers of pupils receiving GLE at secondary school level are as follows:

**Table 1.8: Pupils receiving GLE (secondary) in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.3 Gaelic and the University of Aberdeen

The Gaelic tradition at the University of Aberdeen goes back centuries, possibly as far back as the its foundation as St Mary’s College in 1495, as it is possible that Bishop William Elphinstone, who founded the college, learnt to read the learned literary dialect now known as Classical Gaelic when he was Bishop of Ross between 1481 and 1483.

One prominent Gaelic scholar in the university’s history was Ewen MacLachlan (Eòghann MacLachlainn, 1775-1822). A native of Lochaber, he was educated at King’s College, Aberdeen of which he became the librarian in 1800. He began the work on the trilingual Latin-Gaelic-English dictionary that was published in two volumes as *Dictionarium Scoto-Celticum* in 1828, six years after his death (the work having been completed after his death by Rev Dr John MacLeod, Iain MacLeòid). His literary works included original poetry, editing the Gaelic translations of James Macpherson’s *Ossian* and a translation from Greek of the first eight books of Homer’s *Iliad*. His early death prevented the completion of that project.
The University of Aberdeen had and still has a tradition of attracting students from Gaelic-speaking communities, and these students as far back as 1853 formed Comann Ceilteach Oilthigh Obar Dheathain, The Aberdeen University Celtic Society, which is one of the oldest societies at the university today.18 The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw some of the most important scholars in Celtic studies graduate from Aberdeen, although there was no Celtic department at the time. These included John Strachan, Alexander MacBain and William J Watson. Strachan (1862 – 1907, born in Keith) was a scholar of Celtic languages, Greek and Sanskrit, and a professor at Victoria University of Manchester. His *Theasaurus Paleohibernicus* (co-edited with Whitley Stokes) and *Old Irish Paradigms and Glosses* (later revised by Osborn Bergin) are still in print and are indispensable reference works for any

18 [https://www.facebook.com/groups/auceltsoc](https://www.facebook.com/groups/auceltsoc) [accessed 01.08.2019].
student of Old Gaelic. MacBain (1855 – 1907), a native Gaelic speaker who was born in poverty in Badenoch, graduated with an MA in Philosophy and became one of the leading schoolmasters in the Highlands. His *Etymological Dictionary of Scottish Gaelic* (1896) is only now being surpassed with the work of *Faclair na Gàidhlig*. Watson (1865 – 1948), a native Gaelic speaker and the son of an Easter Ross blacksmith, studied Classics at Aberdeen and Oxford and took the chair of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh in 1914. His *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (1926) and scholarly editions of literary texts remain standard reference works in the field.

The university started teaching Gaelic when its Celtic department was founded in 1916, and in its early years the focus was on historical linguistics and literary study, and almost all if not all of the students were native Gaelic speakers. The first Gaelic lecturer at the university was John Fraser, a native of Inverness. He left in 1921 to become Jesus College Professor of Celtic at the University of Oxford, the only Scot to date to have held that post. Fraser’s successor as lecturer in Gaelic was John MacDonald, in whose tenure the journal *Scottish Gaelic Studies* was established. Published at the department since 1926 and currently edited by Professor Michelle Macleod and Dr Moray Watson, it is the leading journal in the field. Over the last century some of the most distinguished scholars in the field have taught at the University of Aberdeen, including Derick Thomson, Donald MacAuley, Donald E. Meek and Colm Ó Baoill.

The Gaelic department, which is part of the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, offers undergraduate, and postgraduate programmes to doctoral level, catering both for beginners and for students who already speak Gaelic. Programmes offered include courses on language instruction, translation studies, Classical Gaelic literature, modern Gaelic literature, folklore, dialectology and language planning.

The university also hosts the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, publisher of the literary periodical Causeway/Cabhsair, which publishes in Scots, Gaelic and Irish. The university is also a partner institution in Soillse, the research network for Gaelic revitalisation.

1.3.4 North East Scotland College
North East Scotland has run Gaelic courses in the past, but does not do so currently. There are no plans to reintroduce Gaelic courses at present.

1.3.5 Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain
Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain is a voluntary group which employs a class coordinator to run evening classes at three levels: Beginner, Recent Beginner/Intermediate and Advanced. This is crucial, as in many other parts of the country those trying to learn Gaelic are seriously hampered by a lack of courses for those at post-beginner level. At all three levels there is a 50% fee discount for parents of children in Gaelic Medium Education. These classes run over three terms of twelve weeks, twelve weeks and seven weeks.¹⁹ In addition to these courses, Club Gàidhlig annually runs stand-alone Gaelic weekend classes.

1.4 Summary of meeting with Gaelic speakers in Aberdeen

A focus group meeting was held in Aberdeen, at the Society of Advocates' Library, on the evening of 09.09.2019. For practical reasons, it was decided that this would be a joint meeting for Gaelic speakers and learners in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The meeting was attended by both native speakers and learners of Gaelic. The meeting was conducted mostly in English, with some contributions in Gaelic.

The observations made at that meeting have been supplemented here with conversations at Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain's “Srùbag” coffee afternoon, the PopUp Gàidhealtachd, a meeting with local parents of GME pupils, conversations with Gaelic-speaking colleagues who live Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and a meeting with Anne Thirkell, the Development Officer with responsibility for Gaelic Education at Aberdeen City Council. Since the meeting and comments brought in views of people who live, work, travel, access services and take part in Gaelic activities across both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, the comments and observations are reproduced in identical form in both the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire chapters of this report. People living in one area and accessing council services in another is of course not unusual, and hardly unique to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, but the degree of crossing between the two was much higher for these two council areas than for any of the others studied in this project.

Opportunities to use Gaelic: Most present, learners and fluent speakers, felt that they did not get enough opportunities to speak Gaelic. Some use Gaelic fairly often, especially those who work or volunteer in Gaelic education or youth activities. People who do not attend Gaelic events might use their Gaelic very seldom. One learner said they are aware of more opportunities than they take, being prevented from attending many events which occur in Aberdeen in the evenings since they live in Aberdeenshire - the practical difficulties of coming to Aberdeen for work, going home, picking up children from school and then coming back into the city for an evening event can be considerable.

Events: Several said that they would like to see more Gaelic events at May Festival. There was, however, an awareness that the relatively small number of people actively involved in organising Gaelic events does tend to skew the kinds of events which do exist towards their interests, and these are often centred around the school community and the need to support children. Some felt that there is relatively little on offer for those who are not singers or who do not have children. Some events – such as a recent talk about the Iolaire disaster – have succeeded in bringing significant numbers of native speakers together. It is a challenge to bring people from outside the school and choir networks into community events, especially older Gaelic speakers who may not use the internet and cannot be reached by social media and who may have no connection to the school community. Perhaps more promotion of events in The Press and Journal and on Radio nan Gàidheal, or indeed in papers like The Stornoway Gazette which people might have delivered to them in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, might help to get a wider reach. It was also noted that many of the events which are held are targeted at learners, and that more events for fluent speakers – i.e. events held in Gaelic – would be welcomed.
One suggestion was the creation of a post – perhaps paid for between the councils and the University of Aberdeen – for a worker tasked specially with arranging and promoting Gaelic events.

**Support with raising children with Gaelic:** There seems to be no specific support nationally available to help parents raising their children to speak Gaelic. It was felt that this a serious lack, with a disproportionate policy focus on schools, and not enough on the home and community. Such support as there is (such as Gaelic4Parents) is mostly aimed at parents who do not speak the language, and there is little in the way of advice for those who do. One suggestion was the creation of a group where strategies for raising bilingual children could be shared, possibly with advice from Bilingualism Matters. This need not be a Gaelic-specific group, but could include parents who speak such languages as Polish or Lithuanian and want their children to grow up knowing their heritage language. Another suggestion was the provision of more books and DVDs for young children in the councils' libraries.

One parent raised the possibility of creating resources for parents that would include the sorts of informal, intimate words that parents and young children use together – for instance, terms of endearment, words for different kinds of play, and nicknames for animals. Words and expressions such as these belong to a very important linguistic register, that of the most intimate domestic life which is such a vital domain for intergenerational transmission of the language, but it is a register that dictionaries and courses do not cover. The creation of resources, whether in print, on a website or as an app, could be of great help in securing Gaelic as the home language in a child's earliest years.

**Classes:** While learners appreciated the different levels of classes run by Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain, several expressed regret that the classes which had formerly been available in several places around Aberdeenshire are now no longer on offer. There are still at least two classes offered there, but the wider geographical spread of classes available before – which had long waiting lists – were much more practical for those living further from the city, and especially for those reliant on public transport. It was widely felt to be desirable to have those classes run again in the future, to enable wider access to the language in Aberdeenshire.

**Library resources:** In general, most people felt that the range of Gaelic books and other materials in the councils' libraries was not sufficient, consisting mostly of learning materials. With the much greater range of Gaelic books published in recent years, it should be possible to have more novels, biographies and other such books available. It was felt that library staff are generally quite supportive, but since they are mostly not Gaelic speakers themselves, have little idea of what can be bought in. It was suggested that organising requests to the library services through Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain might be one way forward.

**Gaelic in schools:** The growth of GME in Aberdeen in recent years was seen by all as a sign of progress, but it was felt that this growth is being restricted by a number of factors. The struggle to recruit GME teachers at Gilcomstoun, though this has now been addressed, had been of concern to parents in previous years, and it was felt that some parents were reluctant to send their children to the school while the lack of continuity in provision was an issue. Additionally, the recent decision by Aberdeen City Council to cease its previous transport support for pupils coming to Gilcomstoun from other areas was felt to be a serious blow, especially to parents who had other children at a secondary school in another part of the city and had now to factor much more travel at peak traffic times into their schedule if they were
to send their children to Gilcomstoun. Those at the meeting, which included GME parents, felt that the numbers to establish a fully GME school in the city probably do exist, or would if parents could be sure that such a school would provide a stable experience for their children, with continuity of provision assured. “It seems like a dream now,” said one. “But it seemed like a dream in Glasgow as well.”

Recent changes in the University of Aberdeen’s education courses were another point of concern. That the university now has no provision for Gaelic initial teacher education means that the school can no longer expect to have university students on placements. The loss of this connection also acts against the creation of integrated networks of Gaelic speakers from different parts of the city’s Gaelic communities, as the placements brought students (which of course has in the past included fluent, native speakers from Gaelic-speaking communities) into contact with GME parents, and with those running youth activities like the Fèis.

While the numbers of pupils in GME at primary school level has increased in recent years, the drop-off at secondary level (i.e. the number of pupils who go through GME in primary school but do not continue to do so in secondary school) was noted with some concern. It was suggested that efforts be made to promote Gaelic as an asset in the jobs market, for instance with school visits by Gaelic media workers whom children might know from television programmes, to encourage them to continue with Gaelic at secondary school level.

Opposition to Gaelic: The experience of those at the meeting was that opposition to Gaelic is fairly minimal, and comes mostly from a vocal minority in newspapers and on social media. Their general impression was that most people are supportive of Gaelic in a fairly non-committal way. Suggestions for creating greater awareness of Gaelic and its place in the north east included projects to educate people about place names (which people are often interested in, and which provide a good starting point for relating the language to what people know and see around them) and more campaigns to promote the cognitive, social and economic benefits of bilingualism. Disappointingly, one person reported hearing anti-Gaelic comments from a school teacher, which suggests that such awareness-raising efforts could usefully be directed at council staff, especially since such attitudes from teachers might influence pupils against taking Gaelic as a language option, thus denying them the opportunities the language has to offer them. It was also suggested that more events be held that bring Scots and Gaelic speakers together, such as joint Scots and Gaelic music concerts and ceilidhs, as an effort to reduce the hostility that sometimes gets directed at Gaelic in the north east (of the “Scots is the local language here, we should promote it and not Gaelic” sort). It was felt that mutual support would be to the benefit of both languages.

1.5 Aberdeen and Gaelic Literature
Over the centuries many important Gaelic writers have had an association with Aberdeen, often through studying or teaching at the University of Aberdeen. In addition to Ewen MacLachlan, discussed above, these have also included some of the most significant poets of the last hundred years, including Roddy Gorman, Ruairaidh MacThòmais (Derick Thomson), Meg Bateman, Màiri NicGumaraid, Pàdruig MacAoidh, Marcus Mac an Tuairneir and Dòmhnall MacAmhlaigh as well as the novelist and short story writer An Dr Fionnlagh MacLeòid. Iain Mac a’ Ghobhainn (Iain Crichton Smith), who in English as well as in Gaelic
ranks among the most important novelists, playwrights, poets, short story writers and cultural critics operating in Scotland in the twentieth century, was also a graduate of the university.

The Gaelic Bible also has strong Aberdeen connections. Donald E. Meek, former professor of Celtic at the University of Aberdeen, carried out a grammatical and orthographical revision of the Gaelic Bible, published by the Scottish National Bible Society in 1992. This is now the standard version of the Bible used in Gaelic churches. Two of the translators of the recently-published new translation of the New Testament from Greek into Gaelic were also educated in Aberdeen, Canon John Angus MacDonald at the Catholic seminary St Mary’s College, Blairs (also known as Blairs College) and Rev John Urquhart at the University of Aberdeen.

1.6 Aberdeen and the Royal National Mòd

1.7 Connections between Gaelic and Scots in Aberdeen
1.7.1 Grammatical and phonological influence of Gaelic on Scots in Aberdeen
Gaelic speakers and Scots have been in close proximity in the north east since the Scots language emerged in the area in the central medieval period. While Scots quickly established itself as the language of the new burghs, the expanding urban settlements were set within predominantly Gaelic-speaking rural hinterlands, and even after these areas largely underwent language shift to Scots, there were bilingual zones, especially in the upland areas in the east of Aberdeenshire. The close proximity of and interactions between the Gaelic- and Scots-speaking communities of course had mutual linguistic influence, although research on the Scots influence on Gaelic dialects in the north east is currently lacking.

It is likely, however, that some distinctive features of the north-east dialects of Scots (often collectively known as Doric, though this is a fairly recent name) can be traced to Gaelic influence. We can see this influence manifested in phonology, grammatical structures and vocabulary. In terms of phonology, the distinctive feature of North East Scots which sees initial /ʍ/ become /f/ (so that what other Scots dialects have as whit, wha, whan are realised in the North East as fit, fa, fan), a feature of North East Scots which evidence from Aberdeen’s burgh records proves goes back into the medieval period, is likely to be influenced by Gaelic. This is suggested by similar features in two now-extinct English dialects which used to be spoken in Ireland – Forth and Bargy dialect (also known as “Yola”) which was spoken in County Wexford and Fingallian, north of the River Tolka in County Dublin. Although the written corpus of those dialects is quite small, texts written in both of them show the same feature: initial /f/ for English wh, and it seems likely that Yola, Fingallian and North East Scots all picked this feature up from close contact with Irish and Gaelic. As regards grammatical structures, it is striking that unlike central and southern dialects, the northern dialects of Scots, including Doric, do not distinguish between the singular and plural.
of the pronouns *that* and *this*, in the same way that Gaelic uses *seo* and *sin*, while indicating number by the form of the definite article.\(^{20}\)

1.7.2 John Barbour

John Barbour (c. 1320 – 1395), Archdeacon of Aberdeen, is the first known named Scots language poet, and the author of the first substantial Scots literary work, *The Brus* (conventionally dated to c. 1375), a historical romance describing the wars and reign of Robert the Bruce and his immediate circle. While this mighty work, not far short of 14,000 lines long, is clearly steeped in a pan-European literary current, a chivalric romance cast in the mould of Chrétien de Troyes, Robert Wace and Thomas Mallory, Barbour shows at least a passing familiarity with Gaelic literary tradition. Near the beginning of Book III, Alasdair of Lorn – a Gael, and an enemy of the Bruce – admiringly praises Robert's martial prowess:

\[
\textit{Rycht as Gollmakmorn was wonne}
\]
\[
\textit{to haiff fra Fyn all his menge}
\]

(“He fights like Goll Mac Morna, defending all his men from Fionn”)

We cannot prove from this that Barbour was fluent in Gaelic, or even that he could read it, but it does show that right from the dawn of the Scots literary tradition, in the works of the first of the north east's many great Scots writers, there has been an awareness of and interaction with Gaelic culture, and a willingness to enrich Scots literature with engagement with Gaelic. While Barbour immediately then claims that Gaudifer de Larys would be a better comparison, he surely expected his literate, Scots-reading audience to understand the reference to Goll, suggesting that he could assume a certain base level of knowledge of Gaelic culture on their part, and that they would understand that it was a reasonable comparison for a Gaelic-speaking character to make.

1.7.3 Scots words of Gaelic origin in Aberdeen

As regards vocabulary, DSL lists the following words as having citations from Aberdeen and Gaelic etymologies. The definitions and etymological derivations here are all those given by DSL, unless otherwise noted. Note that while the citations are from Aberdeen itself, they may be taken from texts published there but composed in Aberdeenshire, so might not have been current in the city as such. In addition to these words, which are all attested from Aberdeen, even if not still in current use, there is a much larger store of words of Gaelic origin used more generally in Scots across the country, such as *ceilidh*, *glen*, *strath* and *whisky*.

- *calchen* (noun), a square frame of wood, with ribs across it, in the form of a gridiron, on which people would dry their “candle-fir” in the chimney. [Gaelic, *cealaich*, fire-place of a kiln. The suffix *-en* may be a reduced form of the Gaelic diminutive *-an*] (Aberdeen, 1808, 1938)

\(^{20}\) I am grateful to Professor Robert McColl Millar, Chair in Linguistics and Scottish Language at the University of Aberdeen, for these observations.
*calik* (noun) a gossip [DSL gives the etymology as Gaelic, *cèilidh*, visit, gossiping. However, since the only citation given is the sentence *Weemen are afa caliks*, I wonder if a derivation from Gaelic *caileach*, old woman, might be more likely.] (Aberdeen, 1935)

*dreishach*, (noun) the glowing embers of a peat fire. [Gaelic, *griosaich*, burning embers] (Aberdeen, 1900, 1940)

*etnach* (noun) (1) the juniper tree, *juniperus communis*; (2) the juniper berry; (adjective) of or belonging to the juniper, made of juniper wood [Gaelic, *aitionnach* (adjective, from *aitionn*, noun)] (Aberdeen, 1778, 1914; Banffshire, 1787, 1792; Buchan, 1932; North East Scotland, 1848. 1886).

*keerack, kerrach* (noun) a bit of peat [Gaelic, *caoireag*, a small dry peat] (Deeside, 1908; Aberdeen, 1932)

*kralak* (noun), a misreading of *kratag*, the game of shinty. [Gaelic, *cnèadag*, *cneudag*, the ball in shinty] (Aberdeen, 1721)

*leachie* (noun), the homelyn ray, *Raja montagui* [Possibly from Gaelic *leitheach*, *leathag*, plaice, flounder] (Aberdeen, 1878)

*machamore* (noun), apparently some kind of magical drug or augent. [Gaelic *macaomh mòr*, a hero or giant in folktales] (Aberdeen, 1874)

*teuch* (noun) a drink of liquor, draught, dram; (verb) to drink [Gaelic, *deoch*, a drink] (Aberdeen, 1910)

*torrachan* (noun), a tool used by granite-cutters to bore holes in stone, an auger. [Gaelic *torachan*, an auger, wimble etc.], (Aberdeen, 1939) Cf. the note above about Gaels brought in to work as quarrymen.

1.7.4 Gaelic-Scots bilinguals in Aberdeen

According to the 2011 census, the Gaelic-Scots bilinguals of Aberdeen (i.e. those reporting skills for both languages) can be counted as follows:

**Table 1.9: Gaelic-Scots bilingualism in Aberdeen City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aberdeen City</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak, read or write Scots</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes Scots</th>
<th>Speaks but does not write Scots</th>
<th>Reads or writes but does not speak Scots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads or writes but does not speak Gaelic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From all of this it should be clear that there is no essential opposition between Gaelic and Scots in Aberdeen. There is no need or justification for opposing provision for Gaelic on the grounds that Aberdeen is a traditionally Scots-speaking city. Not only does Gaelic have roots in the city that stretch back into the early medieval period, it continues to be woven into the Scots language as spoken in the city, contributing to the sounds, grammatical structures and vocabulary of this area’s rich and distinctive dialect of Scots. Furthermore, the existence of Gaelic-Scots bilinguals across all combinations of understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages demonstrates very clearly that no essential opposition between the two languages need be posited or accepted, as there are people in the city who carry both of them within them. While there is no census evidence for Scots from before 2011, it is certain that this has been the case for centuries, primarily surely as Gaelic speakers moved to the city and became linguistically integrated into it. Bilingualism, loan-words and the retention of Gaelic place names after community language shift to Scots all show that the Gaelic and Scots have a long history of co-existence and interaction in Aberdeen. It is to be hoped that a more widespread realisation of this will lead to a greater mutual support and solidarity among Gaelic and Scots speakers, activists and organisations. Both minority language communities have much to gain from shared learning and support.
2. Aberdeenshire / Siorrachd Obar Dheathain

2.1 History

2.1.1 Gaelic in Medieval Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire was part of the Pictish-speaking area in the early middle ages, but there was certainly a Gaelic-speaking presence in ecclesiastical institutions during the Pictish period. Gaelic gradually displaced Pictish and was probably the dominant language in what is now Aberdeenshire by the about the turn of the millenium. The long history of Gaelic in the area is demonstrated in a great many place names. Some of these incorporate the Pictish loanword pit (share, portion [of land]), such as Pitcaple (Old Gaelic capall, “horse, mare”, so presumably a place where horses were kept or grazed at one time), Pitsligo (Old Gaelic, slice, “shell”, “the shelly portion”) and Pitcarie (Gaelic, cairidh, “weir”). Other examples, chosen from a great many that could be cited, are Balmain (Baile meadhon, “middle steading”), Drumalan (Druim Ailein, “Alan’s ridge”) and Auchmore (Achadh mòr, “big field”). While these place names are adequate to establish a substantial Gaelic-speaking presence in medieval Aberdeenshire, we are fortunate in having the evidence of a set of early written texts as well, found in a manuscript now known as the Book of Deer.

2.1.1.2 The Book of Deer

The Book of Deer (Cambridge MS II6.32) dates to around the tenth-century and is named after the monastery at Old Deer, the exact location of which is now unknown. Also unknown is where the manuscript was produced, it may have been Ireland or somewhere in what is now Scotland. There is no particular reason to believe that it could not have been produced at Deer itself, but positive evidence is lacking. The manuscript consists mostly of the Gospels written in Latin, along with some other religious material. By the twelfth century, the monks at Deer were using blank spaces on the pages to record the monastery’s foundation legend and land-grants, and they did this in Gaelic. The degree to which the Gaelic contained in the Book of Deer shows signs of divergence from Irish norms and towards a distinctively Scottish Gaelic closer to the spoken dialect of the area than to the pan- Gaelic “standard” is a matter of debate, but it does certainly seem to be the case that the Book of Deer contains the oldest substantial texts in Gaelic that we know to have been written in Scotland. It is certainly the oldest Gaelic text to come from the former Pictland. The foundation legend claims that the monastery was founded by Saint Columba and a disciple of

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21 Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-names*, p. 197.


23 Ibid., pp.155, 172, 333.

24 The abbey ruins that can now be seen between the B9020 and the A950 to the west of Mintlaw are from a later Cistercian foundation, dating to 1219.

25 The earliest manuscript of Adomnán’s *Life of Saint Columba*, now held in Schaffhausen in Switzerland, was probably written at Iona and has a few words and phrases in Old Gaelic, but nothing as long as the notes in the Book of Deer.
his called Drostán who requested the land for it from a Pictish noble called Bede. While we should be wary of putting too much trust in the strict historical accuracy of the foundation legend, which is after all an example of a widespread literary genre and displays certain literary conventions, it is certainly important that the monastic community’s sense of its own history linked it directly to Iona, one of the most important ecclesiastical centres in the Gaelic world.

The Book of Deer can be seen in high-quality images for free on the University of Cambridge Digital Library. The Gaelic notes have been published as a critical edition with translation by Kenneth Jackson. There is also an educational website with information and resources about the manuscript, the early medieval church and other aspects of the history area. Aberdeenshire, then, has a strong claim to being the birthplace of Scottish Gaelic literature.

2.1.2 Gaelic in Aberdeenshire in the modern period
Gaelic continued to be spoken in Aberdeenshire well after the medieval period. While it had largely given way to Scots by about 1600 in the coastal and east-central areas of Aberdeenshire, well into the eighteenth century it was the dominant or only language spoken by many in the eastern Grampians, with accounts from 1716-17 and 1732 showing that the parishes of Crathie and Braemar, Glenmuick, Tulloch and Glengairn and Corgarff in Strathdon were largely Gaelic-speaking. Certainly the Church of Scotland considered that proper pastoral coverage in this part of the country could not be supplied without Gaelic, and sent a Gaelic-speaking probationer to Aberdeenshire in 1700. Church records also show that Gaelic Bibles and catechisms were distributed to parishioners in Crathie and Glenmuick in 1706, that Rev. James Dunbar was appointed to a parish in Braemar in 1739, but was recalled on the grounds that he spoke no Gaelic, and that in around 1770 the minister at Monaltrie habitually preached in both Gaelic and English. Gaelic worship continued at Ballater until 1809. The Gaelic-speaking population of the area declined sharply in the nineteenth century, in part due to the clearing of communities to make way for sporting estates for the elite (forty families were cleared from Glen Ey in the 1840s, for instance). Since the areas now comprising Aberdeenshire were not designated as crofting counties in the 1886 Crofters’ Holdings Act, the remaining Gaelic-speaking communities there had little legal protection from the landlords.

The language still had its strongholds. For instance, Gaelic was still

26 Possibly a confused form of the well-attested Pictish name Bruide/Bridei.
29 http://bookofdeer.co.uk/ (accessed 19.07.2019). This website is part of the Book of Deer Project, a community project in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen, Cambridge University Library, Aberdeenshire Council and BT Scotland. Though the website has information about Gaelic, it is not available in Gaelic.
31 Ibid., p. 36.
spoken by almost a fifth of the population of Crathie and Braemar as late as 1881, and a decade later over 80% of the population of the village of Inverey were Gaelic speakers. By the early decades of the twentieth century those communities had effectively ceased to exist, though the language was still transmitted within a few families for a while longer. The 1911 Census showed 527 Gaelic speakers in the county, of whom only twenty were under twenty years of age. The last fluent speaker of the Aberdeenshire dialect of Gaelic is believed to have been Mrs Jean Bain of Braemar, who died in 1984, though by the time she was recorded by researchers from the School of Scottish Studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s she had hardly used the language for fifty years.

The growth of the oil industry in the late twentieth century saw significant numbers of Gaelic speakers from the Western Isles move to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire for work, and the age profiles of the county’s Gaelic speakers presented in 2.2.1, below, suggest that substantial numbers of Gaelic speakers are still moving to the area for work, whether in oil or in other industries.

2.2 Gaelic in Aberdeenshire today
2.2.1 Gaelic in Aberdeenshire in the 2011 Census
According to the 2011 Census, Aberdeenshire has a total population of 243,826 people aged three and over. The numbers of people with Gaelic skills were as follows:

Table 2.1: Gaelic users in Aberdeenshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaelic Skill</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>1,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,731</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those in Aberdeenshire with Gaelic skills can be categorised by age as follows:

Table 2.2: Gaelic users in Aberdeenshire by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</th>
<th>Speaks but does not read or write</th>
<th>Speaks and reads but does not write</th>
<th>Reads but does not speak or write</th>
<th>Any other combination of skills</th>
<th>Total with any skills in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.2.2 Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan

In 2005, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic Language Act. Among other provisions, this legislation gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig the responsibility to require public sector institutions within the devolved competencies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.

The process under which such plans are developed is outlined by Bòrd na Gàidhlig: [https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/)

Aberdeenshire Council's first Gaelic Language Plan was adopted in 2016 and will run until 2021. The aims of the plan are threefold: to enhance the status of Gaelic; to promote the acquisition and learning of Gaelic; to encourage the increased use of Gaelic. The plan can be read on the council's website: [https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/20057/gaelic-plan-english-bngapp-071216.pdf](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/20057/gaelic-plan-english-bngapp-071216.pdf)

With respect to the council's vision statement, summarised on p. 7 of the plan, it is especially relevant to note that the council commits to “[work] with our partners in the North East” in service provision. In practical terms and with respect to Gaelic language provision, this primarily means Aberdeen City Council. Many Gaelic users and learners who live in Aberdeenshire make frequent use of services provided in Aberdeen City, such as GME provision and Fèis Obar Dheathain, as well as for Gaelic classes and events run by the Gaelic-speaking community rather than the council(s), such as Gaelic choir rehearsals or Club Gàidhlig's coffee mornings.

The following comments on specific commitments made in the plan are made with a view to informing the development of the council's next Gaelic Language Plan, due in 2021.

The council carried a survey of its workers in 2014 to assess Gaelic language skills and opinions on policy development, which is summarised on pp. 9 – 11 of the plan. 514 people (from an unspecified total number of workers) responded. This survey showed that there is interest in Gaelic lessons on the part of many non-Gaelic speaking council workers, and such
lessons were indeed offered in the early stages of the plan’s lifetime. There were also also suggestions for Gaelic development in the area, mostly focussing on educational provision at school level.

There were also some comments in opposition to Gaelic language provision. These mostly showed a lack of understanding of the history of Gaelic in Aberdeenshire, the existence of a Gaelic-speaking population there in the present, and of the council’s statutory obligations under the 2005 Act. For instance, one respondent wrote: *Our language in Scotland and Great Britain is English and any language plan should be focused on teaching the youngsters how to read, write and communicate properly in English not on some regional archaic tongue.* This comment, which does not in any way reflect Aberdeenshire Council’s own position, evinces an ideological commitment to monolingualism, a misapprehension that language policy is or should be exclusively concerned with “the youngsters”, a failure to understand that preparing a Gaelic Language Plan is a legal obligation on the council, and that the notion that Gaelic is in some sense “archaic”, as opposed to the modern, living language which it in fact is. It is to be hoped that this report and efforts to raise awareness about Gaelic in Aberdeenshire in the future can address these sorts of misunderstandings. Another strand of opposition to Gaelic provision came from respondents who were concerned about Gaelic being promoted at the expense of Scots. There is of course no reason why public sector provision for Gaelic should exclude provision being made for Scots, but in the absence of legislation giving a statutory basis for such provision there is nothing that obliges councils to provide services in Scots or to plan for RLS with respect to Scots. However, while a Gaelic Language Plan cannot be used to plan provision for any language other than Gaelic, there is scope for joint Gaelic and Scots provision in some areas, and the council could, on its own initiative, use its Gaelic Language Plan as a model for developing Scots provision as well. Aberdeenshire Council has developed policies and materials to support Scots.

The plan does in fact contain one commitment for joint Gaelic and Scots provision. The section on “Gaelic in the arts, media, heritage and tourism” includes the following: *Provincial Mod [recte: Mòd]: Interest in the set-up of a provincial [Mòd] will be established. If this is successfully received our longer-term ambition would be to invite the Royal National [Mòd] to Aberdeenshire for the first time in its history with a joint Doric/Gaelic festival as a feature, raising interest and opportunity to hear both languages to new audiences [sic.]* (p. 51). While at the time of writing (September 2019) no such local Mòd has been established, a commitment to a joint Scots and Gaelic festival in the Council’s next plan, independent of the question of the Royal National Mòd, could be an important step forward in cooperation between the Scots- and Gaelic-speaking communities, and valuable promotion for both languages.

With respect to language acquisition, the plan notes (p. 40) that attempts to provide GLE in Aberdeenshire schools has been hampered by the national shortage of Gaelic teachers. Gaelic CLPL training has been offered to teachers since 2017 and resource packs have been created and distributed to aid the delivery of Gaelic as an additional language. There are plans in place for local Gaelic sessions for teachers in school settings, and also an authority- wide session for teachers who may be considering Gaelic as an L3 as part of 1+2 provision.
Changing circumstances mean that the commitment made with respect to Gaelic Community Classes (p. 45 of the plan, listed among the commitments in “Language Usage” rather than “Language Acquisition”) will need to be rethought in the next Gaelic Language Plan. The current plan states there that the classes will be held in collaboration with CLÌ, but since that organisation has now ceased operations, alternative partners will need be found in the future. Classes were delivered with external funding, and they demonstrated a very high demand for classes across Aberdeenshire.35 While classes are still held in Alford and Banff, there has been a lack of continuity in other places, leaving many learners without the opportunity to continue past beginner level.

The same section (p. 46) includes the following commitment: *Promotion of activities: Awareness of the availability of Gaelic classes and events will be promoted more actively working in collaboration with Aberdeen Gaelic Club, Aberdeen City Council, Cairngorm National Parks and Aberdeen University, North East Scotland College and using social media more effectively.* The Council does use its internal communication networks to promote GLE opportunities in schools, including the opportunities to access Gaelic classes via e-Sgoil. Social media use has been less active, with very little Gaelic-related content posted via the Council's official Twitter or Facebook accounts. A more concrete commitment, for instance for at least one weekly social media post giving regular notice of classes, perhaps a word of the week or a post explaining the Gaelic origin of an Aberdeenshire place name would be a realistic and achievable goal in the Council's next Gaelic Language Plan.

Several commitments in the plan would also need to be made more strongly to ensure that they are actually implemented. For instance, on p. 50 we have the commitment: *Whisky Tour: The possibility of a Gaelic Whisky Tour is being explored or,* on the same page, *NESTRANS: The possibility of Gaelic leaflets for the new cycle paths is being considered. A historical tour via QR Codes will be looked at.* In future Gaelic plans, such possibilities should be considered during the plan's drafting stage, with firm and measurable commitments being included in the final plan.

2.2.2 Gaelic organisations in Aberdeenshire

**Aberdeen Gaelic Choir**

Founded in 1952, this choir draws members from both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. It competes in the Royal National Mòd, local mòds and performs at other events.

[gaelicchoirs.org.uk/choirs/aberdeen.htm](gaelicchoirs.org.uk/choirs/aberdeen.htm)

[facebook.com/AberdeenGaelicChoir/?ref=br_rs](facebook.com/AberdeenGaelicChoir/?ref=br_rs)

2.3 Learning Gaelic in Aberdeenshire

2.3.1 Gaelic in early-years learning in Aberdeenshire

There is no regular provision of Gaelic early-years learning in Aberdeenshire. There have been some joint Scots and Gaelic Bookbug sessions in libraries at Huntly, Alford, Kemnay

35 Given the size of Aberdeenshire, travel to and from Aberdeen in the evenings is not always a practical option for many people.
and Turriff. Some Gaelic Bookbug packs have been gifted at these sessions. Some library staff have been trained to lead simple songs and rhymes in Gaelic at Bookbug sessions.

2.3.2 Gaelic in schools in Aberdeenshire
Gaelic Medium Education is not provided in Aberdeenshire at present, though some pupils from Aberdeenshire attend GME in Gilcomstoun Primary School in Aberdeen. Some teachers have been trained to provide basic GLE in primary schools, which is a commitment within 1+2 Languages.

There is no Gaelic provision at secondary school level in Aberdeenshire, however e-Sgoil have provided some national qualification courses for a pupil in Banchory Academy, organised and funded by Aberdeenshire Council. Officers continue to promote e-Sgoil opportunities for secondary schools in Aberdeenshire who may wish to add Gaelic to their suite of languages.

2.3.3 North East Scotland College
North East Scotland College does not currently offer Gaelic courses and has no plans to run such courses at present.

2.3.4 Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain
Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain is a voluntary group which employs a class coordinator to run evening classes at three levels: Beginner, Recent Beginner/Intermediate and Advanced. This is crucial, as in many other parts of the country those trying to learn Gaelic are seriously hampered by a lack of courses for those at post-beginner level. At all three levels there is a 50% fee discount for parents of children in Gaelic Medium Education. These classes run over three terms of twelve weeks, twelve weeks and seven weeks. In addition to these courses, Club Gàidhlig annually runs stand-alone Gaelic weekend classes.

Although these classes are held in Aberdeen City, Club Gàidhlig is an organisation that covers both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, so this should be considered part of Aberdeenshire’s Gaelic infrastructure.

2.4 Summary of meeting with Gaelic speakers in Aberdeenshire
A focus group meeting was held in Aberdeen, at the Society of Advocates’ Library, on the evening of 09.09.2019. For practical reasons, it was decided that this would be a joint meeting for Gaelic speakers and learners in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The meeting was attended by both native speakers and learners of Gaelic. The meeting was conducted mostly in English, with some contributions in Gaelic.

The observations made at that meeting have been supplemented here with conversations at Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain's “Srùbag” coffee afternoon, the PopUp Gàidhealtachd, a meeting with local parents of GME pupils, conversations with Gaelic-speaking colleagues who live Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and a meeting Anne Thirkell, the Development Officer with responsibility for Gaelic Education at Aberdeen City Council. Since the meeting and comments brought in views of people who live, work, travel, access services and take part in Gaelic activities across both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, the comments and observations are reproduced in identical form in both the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire chapters of this report.

**Opportunities to use Gaelic:** Most present, learners and fluent speakers, felt that they did not get enough opportunities to speak Gaelic. Some use Gaelic fairly often, especially those who work or volunteer in Gaelic education or youth activities. People who do not attend Gaelic events might use their Gaelic very seldom. One learner said they are aware of more opportunities than they take, being prevented from attending many events which occur in Aberdeen in the evenings since they live in Aberdeenshire - the practical difficulties of coming to Aberdeen for work, going home, picking up children from school and then coming back into the city for an evening event can be considerable.

**Events:** Several said that they would like to see more Gaelic events at May Festival. There was, however, an awareness that the relatively small number of people actively involved in organising Gaelic events does tend to skew the kinds of events which do exist towards their interests, and these are often centred around the school community and the need to support children. Some felt that there is relatively little on offer for those who are not singers or who do not have children. Some events – such as a recent talk about the Iolaire disaster – have succeeded in bringing significant numbers of native speakers together. It is a challenge to bring people from outside the school and choir networks into community events, especially older Gaelic speakers who may not use the internet and cannot be reached by social media and who may have no connection to the school community. Perhaps more promotion of events in *The Press and Journal* and on Radio nan Gàidheal, or indeed in papers like *The Stornoway Gazette* which people might have delivered to them in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, might help to get a wider reach. It was also noted that many of the events which are held are targeted at learners, and that more even events for fluent speakers – i.e. events held in Gaelic – would be welcomed.

One suggestion was the creation of a post – perhaps paid for between the councils and the University of Aberdeen – for a worker tasked specially with arranging and promoting Gaelic events.

**Support with raising children with Gaelic:** There seems to be no specific support nationally available to help parents raising their children to speak Gaelic. It was felt that this a serious lack, with a disproportionate policy focus on schools, and not enough on the home and community. Such support as there is (such as Gaelic4Parents) is mostly aimed at parents who do not speak the language, and there is little in the way of advice for those who do. One suggestion was the creation of a group where strategies for raising bilingual children could be shared, possibly with advice from Bilingualism Matters. This need not be a Gaelic-specific group, but could include parents who speak such languages as Polish or Lithuanian and want
their children to grow up knowing their heritage language. Another suggestion was the provision of more books and DVDs for young children in the councils' libraries.

One parent raised the possibility of creating resources for parents that would include the sorts of informal, intimate words that parents and young children use together – for instance, terms of endearment, words for different kinds of play, and nicknames for animals. Words and expressions such as these belong to a very important linguistic register, that of the most intimate domestic life which is such a vital domain for intergenerational transmission of the language, but it is a register that dictionaries and courses do not cover. The creation of resources, whether in print, on a website or as an app, could be of great help in securing Gaelic as the home language in a child's earliest years.

Classes: While learners appreciated the different levels of classes run by Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain, several expressed regret that the classes which had formerly been available in several places around Aberdeenshire are now no longer on offer. There are still at least two classes offered there, but the wider geographical spread of classes available before – which had long waiting lists – were much more practical for those living further from the city, and especially for those reliant on public transport. It was widely felt to be desirable to have those classes run again in the future, to enable wider access to the language in Aberdeenshire.

Library resources: In general, most people felt that the range of Gaelic books and other materials in the councils' libraries was not sufficient, consisting mostly of learning materials. With the much greater range of Gaelic books published in recent years, it should be possible to have more novels, biographies and other such books available. It was felt that library staff are generally quite supportive, but since they are mostly not Gaelic speakers themselves, have little idea of what can be bought in. It was suggested that organising requests to the library services through Club Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain might be one way forward.

Gaelic in schools: The growth of GME in Aberdeen in recent years was seen by all as a sign of progress, but it was felt that this growth is being restricted by a number of factors. The struggle to recruit GME teachers at Gilcomstoun, though this has now been addressed, had been of concern to parents in previous years, and it was felt that some parents were reluctant to send their children to the school while the lack of continuity in provision was an issue. Additionally, the recent decision by Aberdeen City Council to cease its previous transport support for pupils coming to Gilcomstoun from other areas was felt to be a serious blow, especially to parents who had other children at a secondary school in another part of the city and had now to factor much more travel at peak traffic times into their schedule if they were to send their children to Gilcomstoun. Those at the meeting, which included GME parents, felt that the numbers to establish a fully GME school in the city probably do exist, or would if parents could be sure that such a school would provide a stable experience for their children, with continuity of provision assured. “It seems like a dream now,” said one. “But it seemed like a dream in Glasgow as well.”

Recent changes in the University of Aberdeen's education courses were another point of concern. That the university now has no provision for Gaelic initial teacher education means that the school can no longer expect to have university students on placements. The loss of this connection also acts against the creation of integrated networks of Gaelic speakers from different parts of the city's Gaelic communities, as the placements brought students (which of
course has in the past included fluent, native speakers from Gaelic-speaking communities) into contact with GME parents, and with those running youth activities like the Féis.

While the numbers of pupils in GME at primary school level has increased in recent years, the drop-off at secondary level (i.e. the number of pupils who go through GME in primary school but do not continue to do so in secondary school) was noted with some concern. It was suggested that efforts be made to promote Gaelic as an asset in the jobs market, for instance with school visits by Gaelic media workers whom children might know from television programmes, to encourage them to continue with Gaelic at secondary school level.

**Opposition to Gaelic:** The experience of those at the meeting was that opposition to Gaelic is fairly minimal, and comes mostly from a vocal minority in newspapers and on social media. Their general impression was that most people are supportive of Gaelic in a fairly non-committal way. Suggestions for creating greater awareness of Gaelic and its place in the north east included projects to educate people about place names (which people are often interested in, and which provide a good starting point for relating the language to what people know and see around them) and more campaigns to promote the cognitive, social and economic benefits of bilingualism. Disappointingly, one person reported hearing anti-Gaelic comments from a school teacher, which suggests that such awareness-raising efforts could usefully be directed at council staff, especially since such attitudes from teachers might influence pupils against taking Gaelic as a language option, thus denying them the opportunities the language has to offer them.37 It was also suggested that more events be held that bring Scots and Gaelic speakers together, such as joint Scots and Gaelic music concerts and ceilidhs, as an effort to reduce the hostility that sometimes gets directed at Gaelic in the north east (of the “Scots is the local language here, we should promote it and not Gaelic” sort). It was felt that mutual support would be to the benefit of both languages.

### 2.5 Aberdeenshire and Gaelic Literature

If we take the origin legend of the monastery at Deer to be the beginning of Gaelic literature in Aberdeenshire, then the beginning of the modern Gaelic literary and song tradition in the area can apparently be traced to Seumas MacShitich (James Shaw) of Crathienard and Daldownie. His “Òran Gaoil” (“Love Song”) was first published in the Gillies Collection of 1786. While Gillies and Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair believed Shaw to be from Glenisla in Angus, William J. Watson has cast doubt on this, and while keeping the ascription to Shaw in his edition, believes it to be unlikely.38 The Gaelic singer James Graham included a version of this song on his 2007 album *Greisean Grèine*.

Folk tales and songs in Gaelic were collected in Aberdeenshire by Donald Shaw for his book *Highland Legends* (1843). Most of the book is in English with some pieces in Gaelic and

37 The council are attempting to address this promotion of Gaelic as an L3 option for schools and providing access to beginner level language support and resources.

Scots. The book is of course long out of print, but the second edition (1859) has been made available online by the National Library of Scotland.39

Francis Diack, a librarian at the University of Aberdeen, collected folklore materials in Aberdeenshire in the early twentieth century, but most of his manuscripts have not been edited or published as yet.

In more recent times, Aberdeenshire was home to Rev Roderick Macdonald (An t-Urr. Ruairidh MacDhòmhnaill) of the Church of Scotland. He was born in North Uist and was minister in Stornoway and then at Insch. He was a respected Gaelic poet, being appointed Bàrd a’ Chomuinn (Bard of An Comunn Gàidhealach), 1977-78. His first collection is probably his best known. Leth-cheud Bliadhna includes original poetry, Gaelic translations of hymns such as “Descendo, Amor Santo”, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” and “The Breastplate of Saint Patrick” as well as his highly-regarded translation of “Tam o’ Shanter”.40 He also published a selection of a hundred translations from Burns, (Ceud Òran le Raibeart Burns, Crùisgean, 1990), two collected of (mostly translated) hymns, Laoidheam Molaidh (Crùisgean, 1983) and Seinn an Duan Seo (Crùisgean, 1990) and a further volume of original verse (Traoghadh is Lionadh, self-published, 1991).

Bringing the Gaelic literary history of Aberdeenshire right up to date is Graham Cooper of Alford. A fluent learner of Gaelic, his novel about the Gaelic poet and Biblical translator Dugald Buchanan, Dà Shamhradh ann an Raineach was published by Luath Press in 2019.

To my knowledge the only printed Gaelic book published in Aberdeenshire was Bartimeus an Dall, a sermon on Christ’s healing of the blind beggar Bartimeus in the synoptic Gospels. This was written by an American minister, William James Hoge (1825 – 1865), translated by a group of Free Church ministers in Lewis and published by D Matheson in Huntly in 1863, giving Aberdeenshire a place in the lively tradition of Gaelic evangelical publishing in the nineteenth century.

2.6 Dialect

While the Gaelic dialects of the north east Lowlands are now dormant, aspects of the dialect spoken in Aberdeenshire can be reconstructed from materials collected by Donald Shaw in his Highland Legends (1843), Francis Diack (1865 – 1939), a librarian at the University in Aberdeen with an interest in local folklore and dialect features, and by the Survey of the Scottish Gaelic Dialects of Scotland.41 While most of Diack’s materials remain unpublished, one of his texts, a short anecdote collected from an unidentified informant in the Braemar area in the 1920s, was edited by Seumas Grant with Diack’s somewhat idiosyncratic phonetic transcription, a transliteration into a more standard Gaelic orthography, an English translation and commentary on eleven Aberdeenshire dialect features identified in the text.42

Adam Watson and R.D. Clement’s article on Gaelic in Aberdeenshire is mostly a historical survey, but it does include notes on phonological and morphological features, some of which

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40 Ruairidh MacDhòmhnaill, Leth-cheud Bliadhna (Glasgow: Gairm, 1978).

show similarities to dialect forms attested in East Perthshire. Watson and Clement recorded Jean Bain, and their recordings are held at the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

While these materials are not so extensive as those available in other dialects, and while it now seems unlikely that any more native speakers of Aberdeenshire Gaelic will be found who can provide more information on the dialect, it would be possible to use the materials collected in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century to re-introduce at least some aspects of the historical local dialect, for example in Gaelic lessons in schools or in adult education classes. This may go some way to countering the common, though as we have seen entirely ahistorical, attitude that Gaelic has no connection with, or does not “belong to” the area.

2.7 Connections between Gaelic and Scots in Aberdeenshire

2.7.1 Grammatical and phonological influence of Gaelic on Scots in Aberdeenshire

Gaelic speakers and Scots have been in close proximity in the north east since the Scots language emerged in the area in the central medieval period. While Scots quickly established itself as the language of the new burghs, the expanding urban settlements were set within predominantly Gaelic-speaking rural hinterlands, and even after these areas largely underwent language shift to Scots, there were bilingual zones, especially in the upland areas in the east of Aberdeenshire. The close proximity of and interactions between the Gaelic- and Scots-speaking communities of course had mutual linguistic influence, although research on the Scots influence on Gaelic dialects in the north east is currently lacking.

It is likely, however, that some distinctive features of the north-east dialects of Scots (often collectively known as Doric, though this is a fairly recent name) can be traced to Gaelic influence. We can see this influence manifested in phonology, grammatical structures and vocabulary. In terms of phonology, the distinctive feature of North East Scots which sees /ʍ/ become /f/ (so that what other Scots dialects have as whit, wha, whan are realised in the North East as fit, fa, fan), a feature of North East Scots which evidence from Aberdeen’s burgh records prove goes back into the medieval period, is likely to be influenced by Gaelic. This is suggested by similar features in two now-extinct English dialects which used to be spoken in Ireland – Forth and Bargy dialect (also known as “Yola”) which was spoken in County Wexford and Fingallian, north of the River Tolka in County Dublin. Texts written in both of these dialects show the same feature: initial f for English wh, and it seems that Yola, Fingallian and North East Scots all picked this feature up from close contact with Irish and Gaelic. As regards grammatical structures, it is striking that unlike central and southern dialects, the northern dialects of Scots, including Doric, do not distinguish between the singular and plural of the pronouns that and this, in the same way that Gaelic uses seo and sin, while indicating number by the form of the definite article.

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2.7.2 Scots words of Gaelic origin in Aberdeenshire

DSL lists the following words as having citations from Aberdeenshire and Gaelic etymologies. In addition to these words, which are all attested from Aberdeenshire, even if not still in current use, there is a much larger store of words of Gaelic origin used more generally in Scots across the country, such as ceilidh, glen, strath and whisky. The definitions and etymological derivations here are all those given by DSL, unless otherwise noted.

**aiten** (noun) the juniper tree, *juniperus communis* [Gaelic, *aitionn*] (Braemar, 1886). See *etnach*.

**balloch** (adjective) plump and strong [Gaelic, *balach*, a sturdy fellow] (Banffshire, 1866)

**brochars** (plural noun) prickly-headed carex, *carex stellulata* [Gaelic, *bruchorc*, stool-bent or dirk grass] (Banffshire, 1866)


**crasack** (noun) the little cross-piece on the handle of a graip [Gaelic, *crasg*, cross + NE Scots diminutive suffix -ock] (Banffshire, 1933)

**creenack, creenie** (noun) the little finger [Gaelic, *crìon*, little] (Banffshire, c. 1927)

**cuak** (noun) a cuckoo [Gaelic, *cuthag*] (Buchan, 1894)

**currack, curra** (noun) tangle (seaweed), *laminaria digitata* (Banffshire, 1866, c. 1927, 1929, 1941)

**dorro, darro** (noun) (1) A trailing cord with hooked lines attached, used in catching cod, mackerel, ling, coalfish, etc.; (2) The hooks and small piece of lead used for sinking the line are called the *darra*, and the line, the *darra-shaft*; (3) Whip-chord; (4) The wooden frame on which fishing-lines are wound; (5) A net fixed to a hoop of wood or iron, used for catching crabs; the garbage of fish, etc. being thrown into the bottom of it for attracting them (verb) to fish in shallow water with a floating hand-line [The root is Old Norse *dorg*, a trailing fishing line, but in the North East (unlike Orkney and Shetland, where both the verb and noun are also widely attested) it probably entered Scots via Gaelic *dorgh*, *dorbh* rather than directly from Norse] (Mearns, 1825; Buchan, 1943; Banffshire, 1866, 1940, 1989)

**etnach** (noun) (1) the juniper tree, *juniperus communis*; (2) the juniper berry; (adjective) of or belonging to the juniper, made of juniper wood [Gaelic, *aitionnach* (adjective, from *aitionn*, noun)] (Aberdeen, 1778, 1914; Banffshire, 1787, 1792; Buchan, 1932; North East Scotland, 1848, 1886). See *aiten*.

**freuchan** (noun), the toe-cap of a boot [Gaelic, *froachan*] (Kincardineshire, 1900; Banffshire, 1933)

**keerack, kerrach** (noun) a bit of peat [Gaelic, *caoireag*, a small dry peat] (Deeside, 1908; Aberdeen, 1932)

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44 I am grateful to Professor Robert McColl Millar, Chair in Linguistics and Scottish Language at the University of Aberdeen, for these observations.
lugger (noun), a surge sent ashore by a wind at sea [Possibly from Gaelic, logar, a sea-swell after a storm, sea-wash] (Banffshire, 1911, 1919)

pliesk (noun) a garland of flowers, a daisy chain [Gaelic, pleasg, a string of beads] (Banffshire, 1890)

roshkan (noun) a dragged, muddy, tattered strip at the hem of a woman’s skirt [Gaelic, rùsgan, a rind, peeling or paring] (Banffshire, 1921)

scaln (noun) a rude hut or shelter, occasionally found in place names [Gaelic, sgalan] (Banffshire, 1770)

tronaich (noun) “the crupper used with a pack-saddle, consisting of a piece of wood connected to the saddle by a cord at each end” [Gaelic, dronnag, a pad for a creel from dronn, “back, rump” – see note in DSL] (Kincardineshire, 1808)

uve (interjection) alas, woe is me! [Gaelic, übh] (Deeside, 1872)

2.7.3 Gaelic-Scots bilinguals in Aberdeenshire
Jean Bain of Braemar, the last fluent speaker of Aberdeenshire Gaelic, was also a fluent Scots speaker, and the transcriptions of her stories and proverbs show her frequently switching between Gaelic and Scots.45

According to the 2011 census, the Gaelic-Scots bilinguals of Aberdeenshire (i.e. those reporting skills for both languages) can be counted as follows:

Table 2.3: Gaelic-Scots bilingualism in Aberdeenshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aberdeenshire</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak, read or write Scots</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes Scots</th>
<th>Speaks but does not write Scots</th>
<th>Reads or writes but does not speak Scots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads or writes but does not speak Gaelic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45 Watson and Clement, “Aberdeenshire Gaelic”, pp. 387 – 400, with notes on other Gaelic speakers in the area, including information on which were also speakers of Scots and/or English.
From all of this it should be clear that there is no essential opposition between Gaelic and Scots in Aberdeenshire. There is no need or justification for opposing provision for Gaelic on the grounds that Aberdeenshire is a traditionally Scots-speaking area. It is that, but significant parts of it were traditionally Gaelic speaking as well, and not only in the very distant past. Not only does Gaelic have roots in the county that stretch back into the early medieval period, it continues to be woven into the Scots language as spoken in the area, contributing to the sounds, grammatical structures and vocabulary of this area’s rich and distinctive dialect of Scots. Furthermore, the existence of Gaelic-Scots bilinguals across all combinations of understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages demonstrates very clearly that no essential opposition between the two languages need be posited or accepted, as there are people in the county who carry both of them within them. While there is no census evidence for Scots from before 2011, it is certain that this has been the case for centuries, primarily surely in bilingual zones along the linguistic border in the upland, inland areas of Aberdeenshire. Bilingualism, loan-words and the retention of Gaelic place names after community language shift to Scots all show that the Gaelic and Scots have a long history of co-existence and interaction in Aberdeenshire. It is to be hoped that a more widespread realisation of this will lead to a greater mutual support and solidarity among Gaelic and Scots speakers, activists and organisations. Both minority language communities have much to gain from shared learning and support.
3. Angus / Aonghas

3.1 History
While Angus was certainly part of the Pictish-speaking region while that language was still spoken, it had a Gaelic-speaking presence as well since the early medieval period. There is certainly no lack of Gaelic place names in Angus that demonstrate that the language was spoken there in the middle ages. These include Alltansileach Burn (Alt nan Seileach, “the burn of the willows”), Baldourie (Baile Dobharaidh, “steading of the little water”) and (The) Balloch (Bealach, “mountain pass”).

Indeed, the name Angus itself is a Gaelic one. Some members of the three of the major kindreds of the Gaelic-speaking kingdom of Dál Riata (based largely in what is now Argyll), Cenél nOengusso, Cenél nGabráin and Cenél Comgaill seem to have settled or re-settled in southern Pictland as part of what Gilbert Márkus describes as “one stage in the systematic absorption of powerful Gaelic lords – together with their military retinues – into the Pictish body politic in the seventh and eighth centuries.” This was part of a set of processes by which Pictish political power extended into the west while Gaelic culture, including the Gaelic language, extended into the east, and the names of Angus and Gowrie leave echoes of that history on the map to this day.

While, following the usual pattern in the Lowlands Scots became established as the dominant language in the emerging urban areas, Gaelic continued to be spoken into the second half of the eighteenth century in the parishes of Glenisla, Cortachy and Clova, Lethnot and Navar, Lochlee and Edzell,” with one observer in 1771 describing Glen Clova as the linguistic border.

While long the Gaelic-speaking communities in these areas remained has not been researched in detail yet, but certainly by the time of the Dialect Survey of the 1950s there were no native speakers to be found in Angus.

3.2 Gaelic in Angus today
3.2.1 Gaelic in Angus in the 2011 Census
According to the 2011 Census, Angus has a population of 112,447 people aged three or over. Of these, those with Gaelic skills can be counted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaelic Skills</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>825</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those with Gaelic skills can be categorised by age as follows:

**Table 3.2: Gaelic users in Angus by age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes</th>
<th>Speaks but does not read or write</th>
<th>Speaks and reads but does not write</th>
<th>Reads but does not speak or write</th>
<th>Any other combination of skills</th>
<th>Total with any skills in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 – 79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 +</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Angus Council's Gaelic Language Plan

In 2005, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic Language Act. Among other provisions, this legislation gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig the responsibility to require public sector institutions within the devolved competencies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.

The process under which such plans are developed is outlined by Bòrd na Gàidhlig: [https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/)

Angus Council's first Gaelic Language Plan ran from 2014-2019, and its second will run from 2019-2024. At the time of writing (September 2019), the second plan was still in draft form and was awaiting approval by Bòrd na Gàidhlig before being put into effect. Both the first plan and the draft of the second can be read on Angus Council's website: [https://www.angus.gov.uk/directories/document_category/angus_gaelic_plan](https://www.angus.gov.uk/directories/document_category/angus_gaelic_plan)

Since the second plan had not been officially approved at the time of writing, the following comments on it should be taken as provisional. They are comments on a work still officially in progress.
In line with the National Plan for Gaelic (2018-2023), Angus Council's Gaelic Language Plan is structured around acquisition planning, usage planning, status planning and corpus planning. Day to day responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the plan lies with Doreen Phillips, Senior Practitioner (Equalities) at Angus Council.

Some of the commitments in the plan are based on building on provision that already exists, and it is good to see specific, measurable aims included, such as the commitment to increase the number of children in Gaelic early-years programmes by 15% over the life of the plan (p. 13). Others point towards increased cooperation with other local authorities, such as the possibility of working with other councils to provide adult education in Gaelic (of which there is currently none in Angus or in Dundee) and Gaelic as part of CLPL for Angus Council workers (p. 13). Two Angus Council education workers have already taken Gaelic courses as part of CLPL. Both took courses at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye, and one has also done a distance-learning course.

The commitments concerning the council's corporate identity and communications are clear, reasonable and realistic, and the commitment to appoint a designated council spokesperson for Gaelic (p. 20) is a positive one that should ensure some consistency and coherence in dealing with public relations and media issues. In line with these commitments, the council has now adopted a bilingual logo, and bilingual street signs have been installed in Forfar. It is also good to see (p. 21) clear information about the council buying Gaelic books for both its own public library service and for the GME classes at Whitehills Primary School in Forfar.

(Fig. 3.1: GME is provided at Whitehills Primary School, Forfar)
The council undertook a skills audit to identify workers with Gaelic language skills in 2015, during the lifetime of its first Gaelic Language Plan speakers. This identified only one fluent Gaelic speaker, but a few dozen who had some degree of ability in the language, ten who had attempted to learn previously through classes or self-study and two who were speakers of Irish. A further 85 indicated interested in learning more about Gaelic, and it was these workers who were approached for Gaelic awareness training. The current draft plan includes a useful breakdown of the numbers who have taken different Gaelic awareness sessions and conversation classes, including elected council members as well as council staff. This demonstrates a commendable level of institutional “buy-in” for Gaelic provision, and it would be good to see this kind of information available in other institutional Gaelic Language Plans as well. The council has already started delivering Gaelic lessons for council workers.

With respect to early-years language acquisition, the plan notes (p. 27) that Comann nam Pàrant had provided an outreach officer who had delivered many Gaelic Bookbug sessions. While this has now ceased, other council employees and library staff are investigating being able to lead such sessions themselves. Since having consistency and continuity of provision is very important, it would be good to see a firm commitment on this being made by the council.

The commitments concerning school provision are also positive and reasonably specific, looking to double the number of pupils in GME over the life of the plan, and at year-on-year increases in those doing GLE. The plan gives laudable detail on issues of recruitment and training teachers in being able to deliver classes in Gaelic (p. 29), but it is clear that recruiting and retaining GME teachers is still a major challenge. As long as this is the case, the full implementation of the council’s commitments to expanding Gaelic education will be hampered, and consistency and continuity will be hard to achieve.

With respect to community education for adults, the plan notes (p. 31) that none currently exists. The commitment is makes is: We will develop a strategy for promoting Gaelic literacy and language skills from 3 years to adult.; We will promote Gaelic learning in the community; We will extend access to, and participation in, a wide range of Gaelic learning opportunities for adults within Angus, and increase the numbers progressing to fluency.; We will ensure opportunities for the continuity and progression of literacy and other language skills for adults learning Gaelic and for fluent speakers.

Angus Council’s Gaelic Language Plan is clearly written and makes reasonable and measurable commitments. However, some aspects of its implementation are, at this stage, not entirely clear. There is no commitment to either appointing a designated Gaelic Language Officer.

49 NB – not necessarily interested in learning Gaelic as such.
3.2.3 Gaelic organisations in Angus
Although parents of the pupils in GME at Whitehills Primary School are active in Comann nam Pàrant, and some members of the Dundee Gaelic Choir live in Angus, there are at present no Gaelic organisations or community groups active in Angus itself.

3.3 Learning Gaelic in Angus
3.3.1 Gaelic in early-years learning in Angus
There is no pre-school provision in Gaelic in Angus, however the Gaelic teacher at Whitehills Primary School in Forfar does attend the nursery on a weekly basis to deliver some Gaelic input.

3.3.2 Gaelic in schools in Angus
There is GME provision at Whitehills Primary School in Forfar. There are at present no schools in Angus offering GLPS (Gaelic Learning in Primary School), however Angus Council’s Gaelic Language Plan includes a commitment to “explore potential to provide Gaelic 1+2 in primary schools in the authority area”.

While there used to be provision for Gaelic at high school level in Angus, the teachers who delivered it have left and despite several attempts by the council to replace them no new teachers have been hired as yet. High school pupils can, however, go to Whitehills Primary School in Forfar for a one-hour weekly session with the Gaelic teacher there. Angus Council’s Gaelic Language Plan includes a commitment to expand provision for Gaelic Learner Education at high school level across Angus. Angus Council held a Gaelic open day a few years ago to raise awareness of GME among parents in the area.

(Fig. 3.2: GME is provided at Whitehills Primary School, Forfar)
Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for the numbers of pupils receiving GME in Angus are as follows:

**Table 3.3: Pupils in GME (primary) in Angus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is at present no provision for GME or GLE in secondary schools in Angus. The possibility of virtual learning at secondary level was investigated, but has proven to be impractical at present due to timetabling issues.

3.3.3 Dundee and Angus College

Dundee and Angus College does not offer courses in Gaelic, and has no plans to introduce such courses at present. Angus Council’s draft Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024 commits to “engag[ing] with Perth College/University of the Highlands and Islands to promote Gaelic Language courses available in Perth and Kinross.”

3.3.4 Community education

There are currently no community learning opportunities for Gaelic in Angus, see section 3.2.2, above for commitments in the draft of Angus Council’s Gaelic Language Plan, 2019-2024.

3.4 Summary of meeting with Gaelic speakers in Angus

A meeting was held on 11.11.2019 at Whitehills Primary School, Forfar, with Wilma Kennedy, the school’s GME teacher, and Coureen Peters, the school’s head teacher. The observations in the meeting have been supplemented by correspondence with Doreen Phillips, Angus Council’s officer with responsibility for Gaelic, and with conversations with Gaelic speakers and learners who either live in Angus now or have done so recently.

There are very few opportunities to use Gaelic at all in Angus outside the GME provision in Forfar, with no regular events, conversation groups known to exist.

There are numerous obstacles to developing the Gaelic community in Angus, all of which can be traced to the low number of Gaelic speakers in the area and the lack of means of contacting organising them. While the census returns for 2011 give a total of 825 people with

50 Angus Gaelic Plan (draft) 2019-2024, p. 17.
some Gaelic skills in the area, it is very difficult for anyone trying to arrange Gaelic events or to get people to come in to take part in activities with the GME pupils to contact people who might be interested in taking part. There is a fiddle tutor who comes into the school once a week to teach the pupils, herself a Gaelic speaker who is not entirely fluent but sees the tuition as a chance to regain her own fluency as well as pass on tunes to the children. This is an excellent example of working with Gaelic speakers in the community, giving valuable cultural education to the children as well as the experience of speaking Gaelic with someone else who is not their teacher (and, depending on where they are from, exposing them to a range of different dialects). It may well be that there are other Gaelic speakers in Angus who could come and do something similar with songs, stories, proverbs or simply more conversational practice, but at present neither the institutional infrastructure nor the informal community networks exist to help find them.

In the absence of adult classes, conversation groups or regular Gaelic community activities (such as Fèisean, a local mòd or events organised by a Gaelic society) most of what does happen clusters around the GME provided in Forfar. This however is limited by both the small (though growing) number of pupils in GME and by the fact that none of the parents currently connected to the school are Gaelic speakers. They make use of the Gaelic4Parents resources, but in the absence of classes for adult learners it is difficult to reach the degree of fluency needed to really be able to support their children's learning at home. It is likely that if classes for adults were on offer, a number of the GME pupils' parents would attend them, especially if this was presented to them as an opportunity to help their children develop their Gaelic skills and access the social, economic and cognitive benefits of bilingualism.

The small number of pupils also hampers the provision of activities for them, as it is difficult to run, for instance vists to Historical Environment Scotland properties, or trips with Spòrs Gàidhlig that are suitable for both P1 and P7 pupils. It might be more practical to have people coming from such groups to the school to do outdoor learning and sports sessions and the like, but this is likely to require funding to be viable.

Even so, the number of pupils in GME is growing, and if this continues the school will need either another Gaelic teacher or at least an assistant to cope with the larger class. It seems likely that once it reaches a certain critical mass, and there is more than one Gaelic-speaking teacher at the school, that it will become more viable to host events and programmes for the children in Gaelic. The current parent cohort, and the school more generally, are very supportive of Gaelic, but in the absence of Gaelic-speaking parents or more Gaelic speaking staff, the development of and provision for Gaelic education in Angus effectively rest on the shoulders of one teacher, a situation which is not sustainable if GME in the area is to grow, or even be maintained at its current level in the long term.

Strong support was expressed for closer cooperation with Gaelic speakers and organisations in other council areas, especially Dundee and Perth and Kinross, as it is believed that this would greatly expand the capacity to teach Gaelic and opportunities to use it over and above what is currently available.
One suggestion for the future was running a Gaelic taster weekend for adults and children, which could include talks on the benefits of bilingualism, learning basic phrases and simple songs. This could increase interest in GME among parents and children (as the current weekly Gaelic sessions in the early-years provision at Whitehills has already done), but it must be stressed that increased interest will need more support in terms of staffing at the school, opportunities for adults to learn the language and for children and adult learners to use their Gaelic outwith a classroom context in order to be successful and sustainable.

3.5 Angus and Gaelic literature
There is one song of mid-eighteenth century date which may be have been composed in Angus. This is “Óran Ghaoil” (“Love Song”), attributed to Seumas MacShithich (James Shaw), first published in the Gillies Collection of 1786. While Gillies and Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair believed Shaw to be from Glenisla in Angus, William J. Watson has cast doubt on this, and while keeping the ascription to Shaw in his edition, believes it to be unlikely. The Gaelic singer James Graham included a version of this song on his 2007 album Greisean Grèine.

Hugh and John McCallum’s anthology of Ossianic ballads (mostly of doubtful authenticity) was published at Montrose by J. Watt in 1816, with the title An Original Collection of the Poems of Ossian, Orrann, Ulin, And other Bards who flourished in the same age. It is usually known simply as the McCallum Collection.

There was also an edition of the poems and biography of the great Badenoch religious poet Mary MacPherson, usually known as Bean Torra Dhamh (c. 1720 – 1780), published at Arbroath (no date, but probably in the mid-1930s).

3.6 Connections between Gaelic and Scots in Angus
3.6.1 Scots words of Gaelic origin in Angus
DSL lists the following words as having citations from Angus and Gaelic etymologies. In addition to these words, which are all attested from Angus, even if not still in current use, there is a much larger store of words of Gaelic origin used more generally in Scots across the country, such as ceilidh, glen, strath and whisky. The definitions and etymological derivations here are all those given by DSL, unless otherwise noted.

*claische* (noun) a natural ditch [Gaelic, *clais*, a furrow, gutter, ditch] (Arbroath, 1458)


*klippow-cart* (noun), some kind of cart, possibly a tumble-cart or tumbril [? Gaelic, *cliobadh*, stumbling, awkward] (Brechin, 1577)

*luig* (noun) a hovel [? Gaelic, *log*, a hole, hollow] (Angus, 1825)

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51 Watson (ed.), *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*, pp. 53-54, 273-274.
3.6.2 Gaelic-Scots bilinguals in Angus

According to the 2011 census, the Gaelic-Scots bilinguals of Angus (i.e. those reporting skills for both languages) can be counted as follows:

**Table 3.4: Gaelic-Scots bilingualism in Angus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angus</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak, read or write Scots</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes Scots</th>
<th>Speaks but does not write Scots</th>
<th>Reads or writes but does not speak Scots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaks and reads Gaelic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reads or writes but does not speak Gaelic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From all of this it should be clear that there is no essential opposition between Gaelic and Scots in Angus. There is no need or justification for opposing provision for Gaelic on the grounds that Angus is a traditionally Scots-speaking area. Not only does Gaelic have roots in Angus that stretch back into the early medieval period, it continues to be woven into the Scots language as spoken there city, contributing a Gaelic strand to this area’s rich and distinctive dialect of Scots. Furthermore, the existence of Gaelic-Scots bilinguals across all combinations of understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages demonstrates very clearly that no essential opposition between the two languages need be posited or accepted, as there are people in Angus who carry both of them within them. While there is no census evidence for Scots from before 2011, it is certain that this has been the case for centuries. Bilingualism, loan-words and the retention of Gaelic place names after community language shift to Scots all show that the Gaelic and Scots have a long history of co-existence and interaction in Angus. It is to be hoped that a more widespread realisation of this will lead to a greater mutual support and solidarity among Gaelic and Scots speakers, activists and organisations. Both minority language communities have much to gain from shared learning and support.
4. Dundee / Dùn Dè

4.1 History

4.1.1 Gaelic in medieval Dundee
Numerous place names within Dundee attest to the presence of Gaelic speakers in the area in the medieval period, before Scots became the dominant language. For instance, the common Gaelic place name element baile (farmstead, settlement) can be seen in Balgowan (Baile a’ Ghobhainn, blacksmith’s steading) and Balgay (Baile (na) Gaoithe, the windy/marshy steading).\(^\text{52}\) The element Pit- that we can see in for instance Pitkerro (ceatheamh, a quarter, so “the fourth-part share”)\(^\text{53}\) comes from an originally Pictish place name element meaning “share, portion”, but since the second element in a Pit- place name is in almost every instance Gaelic, these are really Gaelic place names using a Pictish loanword.\(^\text{54}\)

4.1.2 Gaelic in Dundee in the modern period
The Gaelic-speaking population of Dundee began to be seen as a substantial community towards the end of the eighteenth century. While there must have been Gaels living there in previous decades, and indeed the presence of individuals with Highland names can be traced in tax records from as far back as the 1690s,\(^\text{55}\) there was a marked growth in the 1780s, to such an extent that the Gaelic Chapel was opened on Long Wynd in 1791, the first minister of which was Rev Mungo McFarlane. The Gaelic congregation, led by their minister Rev Charles MacAllister, left the Church of Scotland to join the Free Church at the Disruption of 1843. The Free Church built their own Gaelic church at Albert Square in 1869, though the use of Gaelic in the churches declined throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.\(^\text{56}\) Services in Gaelic continued to be held in the city until 1923.

Other important social institutions for Dundee’s Gaels included the Dundee Highland Society, established in 1814. Like many similar bodies in other Lowland towns, this was largely an upper-middle class body, established for “…the preservation of the dress and antiquities of the ancient Caledonians, also for Raising a fund for relieving distressed Highlanders at a distance from their native homes and such other Benevolent purposes the Society may deem proper.”\(^\text{57}\) The Society was wound up in 1868 and replaced by the very similar Dundee Gaelic Club, which also held Gaelic social evenings and other such events.\(^\text{58}\)

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\(^{52}\) gaoth can mean wind, marsh or shallow stream. Nicolaisen, Scottish Place-names, p. 180.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 190.

\(^{54}\) W.F.H. Nicolaisen, “Place-names of the Dundee region”, in S.J. Jones (ed.), Dundee and District (Dundee: Dundee Local Executive Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1968), pp. 144 – 152, at pp. 147 – 148.

\(^{55}\) Withers, Gaelic in Scotland, p. 183.


\(^{57}\) Withers, Highland Communities in Dundee and Perth, p. 62.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 63.
The Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools, a national body based in Edinburgh, had a local branch established in October 1817, The Dundee Auxiliary Gaelic School Society. The aim of this society, which drew members from different churches, was to provide Gaelic-speaking children with basic literacy in their own language to enable them to read the Bible, and it was expected that the children educated at the schools would be able to read it to their families at home, a model based on that of the Circulating Schools in Wales. The Society had ceased to exist by the middle of the century, but certainly for a time it demonstrated that the English-only educational model adopted with the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, which has done so much harm to both Gaelic and Scots, was not only the educational model available, and not the only path that might have been followed.

In 1851 there were 809 Highland-born people living in Dundee, 1.02% of the city’s population. While not all of these would have been Gaelic speakers, the figure also does not include those Gaelic speakers born in Dundee itself to Highland parents, of whom there must have been some. As in other areas, Fife and lowland Perthshire for example, the relatively low numbers of people recorded on the census should not blind us to the fact that the Gaelic-speaking community in Dundee fluctuated throughout the year, as seasonal migration for work in harvesting and the fishing industry brought large numbers of Gaelic speakers to the area for a limited amount of time each year. These were not Dundee residents, but they were part of the ordinary pattern of economic life in the city. The growth of the jute industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, along with the depopulation of vast swathes of the Highlands during the Clearances, saw the Highland-born and Gaelic-speaking population of Dundee increase, with many Gaels living in the Hawkhill and Scouringburn areas of the city.

Despite what must have been ongoing intergenerational linguistic assimilation, this growth saw the number of Gaelic speakers in Dundee increase from 237 in 1881 to 736 two decades later.

4.2 Gaelic in Dundee today

4.2.1 Gaelic in Dundee in the 2011 Census

According to the 2011 Census, Dundee City has a population of 142,489 people aged three or over. Of these, those with skills in Gaelic can be counted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaelic Abilities</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,073</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


60 Withers, *Urban Highlanders*, p. 88, table 4.1

61 Ibid., p. 124.

62 Ibid., p. 150.

63 Ibid., p. 207.
This represents a fairly small proportion of Dundee’s overall population, but is a community not much smaller than that of Barra. While clearly Dundee has a much smaller concentration of Gaelic speakers than a heartland area like Barra does, a community a thousand strong is a fairly substantial one. Considering that Dundee currently has no GME provision, no Gaelic adult education classes, no regular conversation circle and only distance courses at its university, we can say that it is a community with considerable potential for growth and development. With little in the way of educational provision or community organisation outside the choir, the infrastructure for Gaelic in Dundee is something of a tabula rasa. Depending on the kinds of provision and organisation made in the next few years, a starting point of just over a thousand is quite a high base from which to begin.

Those in Dundee with Gaelic skills can be categorised by age as follows:

Table 4.2: Gaelic users in Dundee City by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes</th>
<th>Speaks but does not read or write</th>
<th>Speaks and reads but does not write</th>
<th>Reads but does not speak or write</th>
<th>Any other combination of skills</th>
<th>Total with any skills in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 – 79</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 +</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Dundee City Council’s Gaelic Language Plan

In 2005, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic Language Act. Among other provisions, this legislation gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig the responsibility to require public sector institutions within the devolved competencies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.

The process under which such plans are developed is outlined by Bòrd na Gàidhlig: [https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/)
Dundee City Council's first Gaelic Language Plan was approved in 2015 and will run until 2020. The plan can be read on the council's website: https://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/service-area/chief-executive/chief-executives-services/g%C3%A0idhlig-gaelic

The following comments on certain commitments in the plan are made with the development of the council’s next Gaelic Language Plan, due in 2020, in mind.

The plan makes commitments to introduce Gaelic signage and bilingual exhibition materials, and these commitments have been met. The council has also, as per the plan, carried out a skills audit of its staff, and held Gaelic awareness sessions, led by Ruairidh MacLean. There are also two council workers who are currently taking Gaelic courses as part of their CLPL, part-funded by the council, one doing the distance-learning course run by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (University of the Highlands and Islands) and one doing a beginners' Ùlpan course in St Andrews. Assuming that both attain a good degree of communicative competence in the language and that both continue to work for Dundee City Council, there will be three staff members (one respondent to the council's skills audit reported being able to speak, read and write Gaelic) able to deliver at least some council services in Gaelic. This should enable the council, in its next Gaelic Language Plan, to plan for delivering some services in Gaelic, depending on the roles of the workers in question. For instance, there is currently no regular Gaelic conversation group in the city. Might the council be able to run one, led by one of its Gaelic speaking workers? It would certainly be worthwhile for the council official responsible for drafting the next Gaelic Language Plan to consult with these workers, and especially those learning Gaelic as part of their CLPL, to see what kinds of services they might be able to offer in Gaelic.

On p. 14 of the plan, there is a commitment to explore the possibility of the council holding Gaelic language classes for adults. This was indeed attempted, but not pursued due to a lack of demand. It is likely that was due to inadequate promotion, and the council intends to have another attempt. Assuming that a class can be run on a regular basis, the commitment regarding this in the council's next Gaelic Language Plan should include monitoring the numbers attending so that this can be used as the base from which growth can be attempted (i.e. so that the city's third Gaelic Language Plan would include a commitment to increase the number of adults learning Gaelic through its classes by X% over those who did so during the lifetime of the second plan). Furthermore, there should be a commitment to ensuring continuity of provision, so that intermediate and advanced courses are available for those who have completed beginners' courses. One major problem with Gaelic education for adults across many parts of Scotland is a lack of classes for post-beginners, so that cohorts of students are brought to a certain level of competence in the language and are then left there with no way of making further progress. Planning for continuity at the outset of setting up Gaelic community education would help to avoid this problem. It may be that this is best developed in cooperation with neighbouring local authorities.

64 I am grateful to Bill Findlay for forwarding me Dundee City Council's Annual Return Form to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for the year 2018-2019.

65 Bill Findlay, pers. comm.
In section 3.2 (p. 15), there is the following commitment: *Support local Gaelic organisations to provide and develop Gaelic language and culture, by advising and helping organisations to grow and meet the needs of the community and actively promoting liberal adult education learning*. One of the points raised during the meeting with members of the city's Gaelic-speaking community (discussed in 4.4, below) was the desirability of a dedicated Gaelic community space, a drop-in centre where classes, conversation groups and choir rehearsals could meet, as well as being a space for community meetings, public talks and other such events. The council's next Gaelic Language Plan should commit to exploring this possibility, in consultation with the city's Gaelic community.

Under 3.3 (p. 17), there is a commitment to erecting Gaelic signage at high-profile locations as part of the effort to increase the visibility of Gaelic. While this has been done to a certain extent, it would be good to have more specific commitments on this in the next Gaelic plan. Progress has been made, with Gaelic appearing on the three most recent high profile new buildings in the city – the V&A Museum of Design, the new Railway Station and the Regional Performance Centre for Sport. It would be good to have further specific commitments on this in the next Gaelic plan. For instance, a commitment to install bilingual plaques at the sites of the city's former Gaelic churches, or signs that explain the Gaelic origins of certain place names in Dundee would both contribute to raising Gaelic's visibility in the city, and to a greater understanding of the historical presence of Gaelic speakers in Dundee – thus countering the “never spoken here” canard.

4.2.2 Gaelic organisations in Dundee

*Dundee Gaelic Choir (Dundee Gaelic Music Association)*

First established in 1896, this choir went into abeyance in 1939 but was re-established in 1966. It performs in the Royal National Mòd, local mòds and holds various charity and community concerts as well. Though based in Dundee, it draws members from Angus, Fife and Perth and Kinross as well. Dundee City Council has helped to promote the choir and made a small financial contribution towards the cost of uniforms following an influx of new members.

[dundeegaelicchoir.co.uk/](dundeegaelicchoir.co.uk/)

[facebook.com/dundeegaelic/](facebook.com/dundeegaelic/)

4.3 Learning Gaelic in Dundee

4.3.1 Gaelic in early-years learning in Dundee

There is currently no GME provision at early-years level in Dundee. There are no regular Bookbug sessions in Gaelic, but the council is considering the possibility of running joint Gaelic and Scots Bookbug sessions in the future if they can find people to deliver them.

4.3.2 Gaelic in schools in Dundee

There is currently no provision for Gaelic in schools in Dundee, either primary or secondary, for GME or GLE.
4.3.3 Gaelic at the University of Dundee
The University of Dundee does not have a Gaelic department or offer degree programmes in Gaelic. It does however offer an online distance learning course, which it has run for the last two years. This is a 25-week course worth 20 SCQF credits, which runs a year from January to July. The course is recommended for students with some basic knowledge of Gaelic already.

4.3.4 Dundee and Angus College
Dundee and Angus College does not offer Gaelic courses at present and has no plans to do so at present.

4.3.5 Dundee City Council
Dundee City Council does not at present offer Gaelic classes for adults. The Council did attempt to run an evening class, but the numbers attending were insufficient to make it viable. However, the Council intends to attempt again in the lifetime of its next Gaelic Language Plan (2020 – 2025) with more marketing and promotion to try and get more students to attend.

A Gaelic-speaking council worker, who has taken Gaelic courses as part of CLPD, has recently started running support sessions for people who are learning Gaelic with the online learning programme Duolingo. The Gaelic version of this course has only recently (St Andrew’s Day 2019) become available, and has seen high levels of uptake so far (the number of sign-ups passed 200,000 worldwide in February 2020). While it is difficult to measure how many people continue with the course after signing up, it is clear that the popularity of the course demonstrates a demand for opportunities to learn Gaelic. The idea of running sessions aimed to support those learning with this course is an innovative one, and it will interesting to see how this develops in the future. I have heard of interest in emulating this idea among learners in Edinburgh, and it may be that the initiative taken in Dundee provides a template for what can be done elsewhere. All that is needed is a venue with reasonable WiFi access and someone on hand to help learners struggling with grammatical, lexical or idiomatic issues.

4.4 Summary of meeting with Gaelic speakers in Dundee
A focus group meeting was held in Dundee City Council's committee rooms in City Square on 18.09.2019. There was one native Gaelic speaker present, the rest were learners. The meeting was conducted in English. Most of the people who attended the meeting were members of the Dundee Gaelic Choir. The observations here are supplemented by correspondence with others who were not present at the meeting and a conversation with Bill Findlay, the council officer with responsibility for developing and implementing the council’s Gaelic Language Plan.
Opportunities to use Gaelic: There are at present few opportunities to use Gaelic, either for native speakers or learners, and all felt that it was imperative that there be more events held in Gaelic and giving people more opportunities to use it.

Classes: There are no Gaelic adult education classes in Dundee, and some learners in the city travel to Fife to attend classes. The choir has run beginners’-level courses using Ùlpan, funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as they needed to have a certain proportion of Gaelic-speakers in the choir for the Mòd. This has in fact been one of the reasons behind the growth of the choir in recent years, as some people have joined for the opportunity to attend Gaelic classes, rather than because they are especially interested in choral singing. It was reported that the Tayside Language Centre have considered running Gaelic courses as they are aware of significant demand, but they do not have any tutors capable of delivering them. One suggestion for increasing the language capabilities of learners within the choir was to have a conversation group or language practice sessions for half an hour before choir rehearsals.

Community centre: It was suggested that Dundee could have a Gaelic community centre, a building which could host classes, conversation groups, community meetings, perhaps a reading room. This would have a bigger impact on actual language use than ceilidhs and concerts, and would provide a space where people could go and know they would meet other Gaelic speakers. This was felt to be especially important for reaching older speakers who might not use the internet and might otherwise be hard to reach, and might not know other Gaels in the city. It might be possible to secure external funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to

(Fig. 4.1: *Spriorad Dhùn Dè*, with thanks to Bill Findlay, Dundee City Council)
work with the council to fix up one of a number of empty buildings around the city centre and to staff it with someone who could, for instance, run adult education classes.

**Library resources**: There has, over the lifetime of the council's Gaelic Language Plan, been an increase in Gaelic materials in the libraries which are run on the Council’s behalf by Leisure and Culture Dundee. This has included not only learning materials, but also fiction and books for children.

**Events**: There are few Gaelic-language events in the city, though a programme of Gaelic lunchtime concerts, featuring musicians and singers from around the country, has proven popular and is now on its third series of six concerts each time. At the meeting other kinds of events were discussed, such as a regular PopUp Gàidhealtacht, 66 meetings of a Gaelic reading group and a – perhaps annual – Gaelic language day, with language taster sessions, grammar workshops for learners, discussions on strategies for raising bilingual children, musical performances and FilmG screenings.

**Community organisation**: It was felt that there needs to be a greater degree of community organisation among Gaelic speakers and learners in Dundee than currently exists, in order to press for stronger Gaelic provision in the next Gaelic Language Plan, to publicise classes and Gaelic events. At present, it seems that this can best be achieved through the choir, though desire was also expressed to restart the Dundee Highland Society, perhaps in a different form to what it had before. The society went into abeyance a few years ago due to a difficulty in finding office bearers, and had a membership of about sixty at the time. The society held about five or six events a year, mostly musical events, but also tatties-and-herring suppers (oidheche buntàta ‘s sgàdan). One strength of the society was that it was a grassroots, community-led organisation, rather than being something that was run by or provided by the council or any such other official, “top-down” body. It was felt that this should continue to be the case were the society to be re-launched. One potential role for the society would be running conversation groups, bringing native speakers together and giving learners a chance to gain conversational experience with them.

There is a general feeling that it is difficult to reach Gaelic speakers outside of the choir's network. It was suggested that a Facebook group be established for Gaelic speakers in Dundee and Angus, and that this could be used to coordinate and promote events. 67

**Mòd**: The council and the choir have been exploring the possibility of Dundee hosting the Royal National Mòd, which it last did in 1974. For this to happen, there needs to be a local branch of An Comann Gàidhealach or an affiliated organisation, which at present there is not. It was felt that a more realistic short-term aim would be hosting a provincial mòd for Dundee, Angus and Perth and Kinross, and building on that experience.

66 An informal Gaelic social evening or afternoon, typically taking place in a pub, café or community centre.

67 Such a group has now been established: Gàidhig ann an Dùn Deagh – Gaelic in Dundee

https://www.facebook.com/groups/237904644054810/
Gaelic provision in Dundee: Dundee does not at present have a full-time Gaelic Language Officer. It was suggested that several local authorities (Dundee and Angus, for instance) could, possibly with at least some external funding, support and share a Gaelic Language Officer – ideally a fluent Gaelic speaker – who could not only develop Gaelic policy but also play a role in delivering it, for instance as a tutor for adult education classes.

It was felt at the meeting that the consultation for the council’s Gaelic Language Plan had not been adequately advertised and that contributions were not sought as actively as they might have been. Certainly a greater degree of organisation among the Gaelic community itself will make it easier to coordinate things like consultation responses, to organise a community meeting with council officials with the responsibility for developing Gaelic provision, etc.
4.5 Dundee and Gaelic literature and publishing

The story of Gaelic publishing in Dundee is largely the story of Malcom C MacLeod (Calum MacLeòid) of 183 Blackness Road, who published a broad range of materials in the early twentieth century. These included among other works an edition of the popular song collection *An Lòn Dubh* edited by Malcolm MacFarlane (c. 1910), an edition of the seventeenth century anthology known as the Fernaig Manuscript, also edited by MacFarlane (1923), *Chi Sinn Thall Thu*, a collection of writings by IB Stiùbhart, a soldier killed in the First World War (1918), John G. MacKay’s bilingual folktale collection *The Tale of the Cauldron* (1927) and the yearbook of the Dundee Highland Society from 1911 to 1918. There were also at least two books published at Dundee especially for members of the armed forces, *Cul-taic an t-Saighdeir* by Rev. Donald Tulloch MacKay, Free Church minister at Plockton (self-published, 1919) and *An Solus Làitheail*, published jointly by the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland in 1943.

(Fig. 4.4: From the collection of Prof. Murdo MacDonald)

4.6 Dundee and the Royal National Mòd


4.7 Connections between Gaelic and Scots in Dundee

4.7.1 Scots words of Gaelic origin in Dundee

William J. Watson, one of the foremost Celtic schoalrs of the twentieth century, recorded in 1930 that a Dundonian woman (the grandmother of a friend’s wife) used the following words
for the fingers (starting from the thumb): oorthac, colocach, mir fat, machanap, rakvervan. The first four of these are quite transparently loans from Gaelic: ordag, colgag, meur fada, mac an aba, and Watson suspected that the fifth must have originally been rag-mhierbhein (“still little slim one”). It was this information about Scots words in Dundee that set Watson off on his investigations into the names of the fingers used in different dialects of Gaelic.68

While research in DSL did not turn up words with Dundee citations and Gaelic etymologies, as was the case in the council areas considered in this study, several things should be borne in mind. One is that many words of Gaelic origin are used in Scots all over the country, even if they are not specific to Dundee as such. Words like brae, glen and loch, to confine ourselves only to landscape terminology, come from Gaelic and are part of the everyday vocabulary of Scots and Scottish English speakers. Secondly, dialects like languages do not respect council area borders. It is very likely that Scots speakers from, for instance, Angus or Perthshire do now or have in the past moved to Dundee, bringing with them their home dialects, including Gaelic-derived words that may not have been widely known in their new home. Thirdly, there may well have been Gaelic words that passed into Scots in Dundee during the growth of the Highland population of the city in the later eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, but they may have fallen out of use before becoming widespread enough to show up in the sources used by the scholars of DSL. It may well be the case that close examination of texts produced in Dundee in that period would show more Gaelic-derived terms, but that is beyond the scope of this study.

4.7.2 Gaelic-Scots bilinguals in Dundee
According to the 2011 census, the Gaelic-Scots bilinguals of Dundee (i.e. those reporting skills for both languages) can be counted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3: Gaelic-Scots bilingualism in Dundee City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dundee City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads or writes but does not speak Gaelic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From all of this it should be clear that there is no essential opposition between Gaelic and Scots in Dundee. There is no need or justification for opposing provision for Gaelic on the grounds that Dundee is a traditionally Scots-speaking city. Not only does Gaelic have roots in the city that stretch back into the early medieval period, it continues to be woven into the Scots language in words that Scots speakers use naturally. Furthermore, the existence of Gaelic-Scots bilinguals across all combinations of understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages demonstrates very clearly that no essential opposition between the two languages need be posited or accepted, as there are people in the city who carry both of them within them. While there is no census evidence for Scots from before 2011, it is certain that this has been the case for centuries, primarily surely as Gaelic speakers moved to the city and became linguistically integrated into it. Bilingualism, loan-words and the retention of Gaelic place names after community language shift to Scots all show that the Gaelic and Scots have a long history of co-existence and interaction in Dundee. It is to be hoped that a more widespread realisation of this will lead to a greater mutual support and solidarity among Gaelic and Scots speakers, activists and organisations. Both minority language communities have much to gain from shared learning and support.
5. Fife / Fiobha

5.1 History and Gaelic place names in Fife

The study of place names in Fife has been made much easier in recent years with the publication of Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márrkus, *The Place-Names of Fife* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2006 – 2012). This collection of five hefty volumes of up to date expert research, complete with maps, quotations from historical sources illustrating the different forms of place names over the centuries and discussions of their etymologies, will be the standard reference work on Fife’s place names for the foreseeable future and makes Fife one of the best-studied parts of Scotland as far as place names are concerned.

Taylor and Márrkus conclude from the development of place names that following language shift from Pictish towards the end of the first millennium, Gaelic was the predominant language in Fife for several centuries. Scots speakers seem to have arrived in the later twelfth century, and their language was probably the dominant one in Fife by about 1300 or so.\(^69\) It is likely, however, that Gaelic continued to be spoken for some time after that, especially in more rural areas. It can be seen from the work of Taylor and Márrkus that Gaelic place names are abundant in Fife, a clear testimony to the long history of Gaelic as a widely spoken language in the area.

To take a few examples at random from the hundreds recorded, we have for instance in the parish of Ceres we find Ladeddie, first recorded as *Ledochin* in 1140, which Taylor and Márrkus derive from Gaelic *leth* (half) and *dabhach*.\(^70\) *Dabhach* is a term signifying “tub” or “vat”, and from that a certain area of land. This was a loan word from Pictish that is quite common in Gaelic place names on the east coast. There is also Purin in the parish of Falkland, first recorded as *Pourane* in 1450, from *pòr* (crop-land) and the diminutive suffix *-an*, so “little crop-land”.\(^71\) There are also place names which include personal names as well, such as Balcormo in the parish of Largo, the *villa de Balcormak* as it first appears in 1178 or 1179, from *baile* (farm) and the personal name *Cormac*, so “Cormac’s farm”.\(^72\)

The place name record, then, gives clear evidence of the presence of Gaelic in Fife in the medieval period. While Scots came to be the dominant language later in the medieval period, the modern period saw many Gaelic speakers come to Fife. They did not always come to settle in Fife on a permanent basis, but rather sought seasonal work, especially as harvest hands (see 5.7.1, below for two Scots words attested in Fife that the editors of DSL attribute to these seasonal workers).\(^73\) By the nineteenth century this was augmented by Highlanders working in railway construction.\(^74\) Not all temporary migration was driven by the availability

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\(^70\) Taylor and Márrkus, *The Place-Names of Fife: Volume Four*, pp. 93 – 94.

\(^71\) Ibid., p. 180.

\(^72\) Ibid., p. 318.

\(^73\) Withers, *Ubran Highlanders*, p. 65.

\(^74\) Ibid., p. 72.
of work in the Lowlands, however. There were also years of bad harvest which drove large numbers of people from the Highlands to the Lowlands, at least on a temporary basis, and it is likely that some settled and remained in Fife even after conditions improved. This is known to have happened during the “Seven Ill Years” during the 1690s, and again in the 1840s, when the Highland Famine drove a great deal of migration from the Gàidhealtachd, both temporary and permanent, with notable movement from Kilmuir in Skye to Dysart.\textsuperscript{75} As we can see, it is certainly not the case that Gaelic was never spoken in Fife – this is an assertion often made, but entirely unfounded on evidence.

5.2 Gaelic in Fife today

5.2.1 Gaelic in Fife in the 2011 Census

According to the 2011 Census, Fife has a population of 352,558 aged three years old or older. Of these, those with skills in Gaelic can be counted as follows:

Table 5.1: Gaelic users in Fife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td>2,462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This total is a fairly small proportion of the overall population of Fife but as a number is fairly substantial, being roughly equivalent to the combined populations of Harris and Tiree, for example. While Gaelic clearly does not have the same concentration of speakers in Fife as such heartland areas of the language, a population of almost two and half thousand with some skills in Gaelic is one with considerable potential for organisation and development as a language community.

Those with Gaelic skills in Fife can be categorised by age as follows:

Table 5.2: Gaelic users in Fife by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes</th>
<th>Speaks but does not read or write</th>
<th>Speaks and reads but does not write</th>
<th>Reads but does not speak or write</th>
<th>Any other combination of skills</th>
<th>Total with any skills in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 72.
In 2005, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic Language Act. Among other provisions, this legislation gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig the responsibility to require public sector institutions within the devolved competencies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.

The process under which such plans are developed is outlined by Bòrd na Gàidhlig: https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/

Fife Council's first Gaelic Language Plan ran from 2015-2018. Its current plan was approved in 2019 and will run until 2024. The current plan can be read on the council's website: https://online.fifedirect.org.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication.pop&pubid=AAA43337-B542-76F9-31CDBBE9B00059CD

The plan includes a commitment (p. 3) to publish an annual report in March of each year during the life of the plan to enable people to track the progress of the implementation of the plan and of the growth of Fife's Gaelic community.

One interesting feature of Fife Council's Gaelic Language Plan is that its approach is one of social inclusion, and it lays particular emphasis on Gaelic as something to which all Fifers should have an equal opportunity to access. This approach, which runs directly counter to the common, if ill-informed, stereotype of interest in and advocacy for Gaelic as a hobby of the middle class, has great potential to both improve people's quality of life by helping them to access what Gaelic has to offer them and to provide a challenge to some of the lazy and hostile attitudes towards the language which hinder its development.

This approach is exemplified in, for instance the commitment in the “Opportunities for All” section (p. 5) to “[w]ork in partnership to reduce barriers to schools engaging in Gaelic learning and support progression routes across learning spectrums” as well as the commitment to actively promote the benefits of Gaelic skills in employment and volunteering. Similarly, the set of commitments in the “Thriving Places” section (p. 11)
aimed at supporting elderly or vulnerable Gaelic speakers in Fife is a very positive and laudable initiative, with real potential to increase the quality of people's lives.

It is clear that Gaelic provision in Fife is developing rapidly, and the plan contains ambitious commitments that will see it develop significantly further over the lifetime of the plan. With respect to looking to build on the current plan in the lifetime of the next one, it would be good to have figures by which growth can be measured in the future. For instance, with the commitment on p. 6 to “[i]ncrease adult learning opportunities across Fife, offering clear progression routes”, which importantly recognises the need for post-beginners' classes, it would be worthwhile to collect data on the numbers who go through the different routes, so that in the next Gaelic Language Plan the council could target X% growth in each of its streams (beginner, intermediate, advanced, etc.) from a known base. It is certainly clear that the demand for Gaelic classes in Fife far outstrips the supply of available teachers, so the corresponding commitment in the next plan to that on p. 6 of the current one to “[i]ncrease adult learning opportunities across Fife, offering clear progression routes” should be able to say how many tutors Fife Council has delivering classes in 2024, and to set a reasonable target for further increase from there (for instance if there are four tutors in 2024, to commit to having seven by 2029, or the like). Similarly, the commitment on p. 8 to run PopUp Gàidhealtachd events76 can be fleshed out in the next plan on the basis of experience gained, with more detailed commitments to hold, for instance, a monthly PopUp Gàidhealtachd in one town, a quarterly one in another and so on.

5.3 Learning Gaelic in Fife

5.3.1 Gaelic in early-years learning in Fife
There are Gaelic Bookbug sessions which meet in Cupar and the Carnegie Library in Dunfermline. Bookbug is a project run by the Scottish Book Trust and the Scottish Government to support early-years development.

[onfife.com/libraries-archives/bookbug-sessions](http://onfife.com/libraries-archives/bookbug-sessions)

There is also a recently-started parent and toddler group in Aberdour, Casan Beaga. This meets once a week and is run by volunteers.

[facebook.com/casanbeagafiobha/](http://facebook.com/casanbeagafiobha/)

Bòrd na Gàidhlig provide estimates of the numbers of children under the age of three receiving Gaelic medium provision in Fife on a weekly basis.

The available figures run from school year 2011-12 to 2018-19.

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76 A PopUp Gàidhealtachd is an informal Gaelic-medium social evening. Based on a model that has been pioneered in Ireland in recent years and since applied in various places in Scotland, the idea is one of people coming together in a pressure-free, social environment to create a temporary zone where Gaelic is normalised. See: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0dqarGCbSI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0dqarGCbSI)
### Table 5.3: Children in Gaelic-medium 0 – 3 provision in Fife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of children</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12(^{77})</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.3.2 Gaelic in schools in Fife

There is at present no GME provision in Fife.

Over the last two years there has been a GLE programme in five primary schools, and taster sessions in a few others, currently overseen by Fife Council’s Gaelic Language Officer, and prior to that by Fèisean nan Gàidheal (through Fèisgoil). Some teachers have undergone Gaelic Learning in Primary training using the Gaelic Go resource, enabling them to teach basic Gaelic. Four primary schools in Fife (Parkhill in Leven, Denbeath in Levenmouth and Warout and Rimbelton in Glenrothes) had Gaelic tuition in 2018-19. These tuition sessions were 25 minutes per week for P1 – 3/4, and 45 minutes per week for upper primary. Due to a restructuring in funding delivery, however, the Gaelic specific grant that supported this will now be moved to education, so anything the schools do in the future will be delivered internally. At the time of writing (August 2019) the details of how this will be delivered are still being negotiated.

There is no GLE provision at secondary school level, but a group of young people are looking to do Gaelic a skill for their Duke of Edinburgh Awards, by holding a basic conversation group at Auchmuchty High School.

#### 5.3.3 The University of St Andrews

The University of St Andrews used to offer Gaelic as part of its Evening Learning programme, but has not done so in recent years due to a lack of teachers. They would reinstate the classes if a qualified teacher could be found to lead them. The University currently supports Gaelic learning by allowing the Council to use their premises for adult education classes free of charge.

#### 5.3.4 Fife College

Fife College does not currently offer Gaelic courses, and has no plans to introduce such courses at present.

#### 5.3.5 Community education

Currently, Fife Council offers community-based classes for adults using the Ùlpan resources. There are six weekly classes across Fife, held in Glenrothes, St Andrews and Dunfermline.

\(^{77}\) NB, for school years 2011-12 and 2012-13 these are listed as “Buidhnean Saor-thoileach Gàidhlig airson Ro- sgoil/ Gaelic Preschool Voluntary Groups”; and specified as provision for ages 0-3 thereafter.
attended by about fifty people. Demand for these classes is very high, higher than the Council can currently meet, with a waiting list of over a hundred for beginners’ classes and about thirty for post-beginners’ classes. A lack of suitably qualified teachers is hampering the ability of Fife Council to meet a real, existing demand in the community.

There are currently plans to change the structure of the classes, with the Úlpan courses being used to develop fluency for more advanced learners, while also developing provision for beginners.

Two groups, one in St Andrews and one in Cupar, have organised themselves to run Gaelic classes. These are administered and paid for by the groups themselves, and not by Fife Council.

Fife Council also offers Gaelic Awareness sessions to employees of Fife Council, associated Trusts and Community Planning Partnerships as well as voluntary groups and members of the public.

5.4 Gaelic organisations in Fife
Aberdour Shinty Club

Aberdour Shinty Club, which was founded in 2011, runs teams for men and women at various age groups. In recent years, they have run a Gaelic Shinty Camp – a training camp for children and young people with Gaelic language lessons and taster sessions.

aberdourshintyclub.co.uk
facebook.com/aberdourshinty
twitter.com/aberdourshinty

Buidheann-leasachaidh Gàidhlig Fhìobha/ Fife Gaelic Development Group

Buidheann-leasachaidh Gàidhlig Fhìobha/ Fife Gaelic Development Group (also known simply as Fife Gaelic) is a voluntary community organisation which works in partnership with Fife Council to promote Gaelic language and culture. Among other things they have worked to promote Gaelic walking groups, workshops and ecumenical church services.

fifegaelic.com
facebook.com/pg/FifeGaelicGroup

5.5 Summary of meeting with Gaelic speakers in Fife
A focus group meeting was held at the Dell Farquharson Community Centre in Dunfermline on 24.10.2019. The meeting was attended by a mixture of native speakers and learners at various levels and was conducted in Gaelic and English. The meeting was attended by one Gaelic teacher and one parent trying to raise children bilingually. The following observations have been supplemented by conversations and correspondence with Kirsty Strachan, the Fife Council officer with responsibility for developing and implementing Gaelic policy.
Opportunities to use Gaelic: It was widely felt by both native speakers and learners that there were few opportunities to use Gaelic, though there has been a marked growth in such opportunities in recent years – the conversation group which hosted the meeting itself did not exist three years ago. The range of community events, outdoors events such as nature walks and conversation groups available now is far in advance of what existed prior to the council’s current Gaelic Language Plan. Fife covering as it does a fairly large area, some people found it more convenient to attend conversation groups in Perth, Stirling, Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Classes: While there have been classes running in Fife in the past, these have often been in fits and starts, with struggles to find tutors leading to a lack of continuity, and especially a lack of classes for post-beginners. This is now being addressed, but it remains true that a severe shortage of teachers is holding back the development of Gaelic in Fife, where the demand for courses at beginners’ and post-beginners’ level far outstrips the supply of tutors.

As with conversation groups, some people find it more convenient to attend classes outside Fife itself, especially in Edinburgh – though this is of course not a very practical option for many, especially those reliant on public transport.

Library resources: It was felt that the range of Gaelic materials available in the council’s libraries was not adequate, consisting mostly of books for young children and some learning materials. There is little in the way of fiction or non-fiction prose aimed at either fluent speakers or learners.

Technological issues: Some people at the meeting make frequent use of online learning materials, such as those on learngaelic.scot. It was suggested that live-streaming events and online “hang-outs” (using services such as Skype) might give more people access to opportunities to use Gaelic in virtual if not physical space. However, there are parts of Fife in which access to high-speed internet is quite patchy, so access to such online Gaelic opportunities might be difficult for some.

5.6 Fife and Gaelic Literature and publishing

A small amount of Gaelic literature has been published in Fife. James Cameron’s study of the history of the Clearances and the land reform movement, The Old and New Highlands and Hebrides from the days of the great Clearances to the Pentland Act of 1912 was published by the author at Kirkaldy in 1912, and includes the texts of six Gaelic songs.

There were also two books published by the great Gaelic folkorist John Lorne Campbell (Fear Chanaidh). One was a collection of songs by Seonaidh Caimbeul (Seonaidh mac Dhòmhnaill ‘ic Iain Bhàin of Loch Boisdale), edited by Campbell and published as Òrain Ghàidhlig le Seonaidh Caimbeul (Dunfermline: IB MacAoidh, 1936). The other was a translation of Henry Van Dyke’s Christmas novel The Other Wise Man, as An Draoidh Eile (Dunfermline, 1939 – this went through two editions). The translator was not Campbell himself but Eòin MacFhionghuin, best known as the editor of the Canadian Gaelic periodicals Mac-Talla and Fear na Cèilidh.
5.7 Connections between Gaelic and Scots in Fife

5.7.1 Scots words of Gaelic origin in Fife

DSL lists the following words as having citations from Fife and Gaelic etymologies. In addition to these words, which are all attested from Fife even if not in current use, there is a much larger store of words of Gaelic origin used more generally in Scots, such as *ceilidh*, *glen*, *strath* and *whisky*. The definitions and etymological derivations here are those in DSL.

*bledoch* (noun), buttermilk [Gaelic, *blathath, bladoch*] (Fife, c. 1500. The poem *Wfy of Auchtirmwcht* gives the oldest attested appearance of this word in Scots. It became common enough in Scots that it has citations from the Borders to Shetland well into the twentieth century.)

croagh (verb) to strangle with a rope [Gaelic, *croch*, to hang] (Fife, 1808)

delgin, dalgan (noun) the stick used in binding sheaves [Gaelic, *dealgan*, diminutive of *dealg*, a pin, a skewer. “Probably a borrowing from Highland harvest hands.”] (Fife, 1825)

drodliech (noun) a useless mass [Gaelic, *grodlach*, a mass of rottenness] (Fife, 1825)

footer (noun), activity, exertion, implying the idea of an end being gained. [Possibly from Gaelic, *fudar*, haste preparation. “The word may conceivably have been current only among Gaelic harvesters in Fife”.] (Fife, 1825)

gawrie (noun) the red gurnard, *trigla cuculus* [Gaelic, *gabharag*] (Fife, 1710)

*munched* (noun), the red bilberry [“Perhaps of Gaelic origin.”] (St Andrews, 1660s)

*stronachie* (noun), the fifteen-spined or sea stickleback. [Gaelic, *srònachaidh*] (Fife, 1710, 1803)

5.7.2 Gaelic-Scots bilinguals in Fife

According to the 2011 census, the Gaelic-Scots bilinguals of Fife (i.e. those reporting skills for both languages) can be counted as follows:

**Table 5.4: Gaelic-Scots bilingualism in Fife**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fife</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes Scots</th>
<th>Speaks but does not write Scots</th>
<th>Reads or writes but does not speak Scots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads or writes but does not speak Gaelic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7.3 Shared provision for Gaelic and Scots in Fife

Fife has hosted a session with the Gaelic poet Marcas Mac an Tuairneir as part of the Mither Tongue/Cainnt Mhàthaireil project, in which creative writers visit schools to talk with pupils about writing in Gaelic and Scots. At the time of writing, it is hoped that some other Gaelic and Scots writers will run sessions, and that an anthology of their work will be produced. The project is funded by the Scottish Book Trust.

There are joint Gaelic and Scots Bookbug sessions in Rothes Halls Library: onfife.com/libraries-archives/bookbug-sessions

From all of this it should be clear that there is no essential opposition between Gaelic and Scots in Fife. There is no need or justification for opposing provision for Gaelic on the grounds that Fife is a traditionally Scots-speaking area. Not only does Gaelic have roots in Fife that stretch back into the early medieval period, it continues to be woven into the Scots language as spoken in the area, contributing a Gaelic strand to Fife’s dialect of Scots. Furthermore, the existence of Gaelic-Scots bilinguals across all combinations of understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages demonstrates very clearly that no essential opposition between the two languages need be posited or accepted, as there are people in Fife who carry both of them within them. While there is no census evidence for Scots from before 2011, it is certain that this has been the case for centuries, primarily surely as Gaelic speakers moved to Fife and became linguistically integrated into it. Bilingualism, loan-words and the retention of Gaelic place names after community language shift to Scots all show that the Gaelic and Scots have a long history of co-existence and interaction in Fife. It is to be hoped that a more widespread realisation of this will lead to a greater mutual support and solidarity among Gaelic and Scots speakers, activists and organisations. Both minority language communities have much to gain from shared learning and support.
6. Perth & Kinross / Peairt & Ceann Rois

6.1 History of Gaelic in Perth and Kinross

Perth and Kinross represents the south-eastern extremity of the traditional Gàidhealtachd, as expressed in the proverbial expression of the Gàidhealtachd’s extent, bho Arainn gu Gàllaibh agus bho Pheairt gu Hiort (“From Arran to Caithness and from Perth to St Kilda”). It was in the area around the modern Perth and Kinross that the Kingdom of Alba, a Gaelic-speaking entity founded on the core of southern Pictland, emerged in the early tenth century. While Pictish must still have been spoken in parts of that area at the time, it was replaced with Gaelic within a few generations and was probably extinct by the eleventh century. While the Scots language became established in the low-lying and especially urban areas from the central middle ages onwards, Gaelic remained the dominant language in Highland Perthshire for centuries.  

Gaelic place names dominate the landscape of Perth and Kinross. The oldest of these reach back into the early medieval period, when what is now Perth and Kinross was still part of southern Pictland. Gowrie seems to be derived from the name of one of the major kindreds of the Gaelic-speaking kingdom of Dál Riata (based largely in what is now Argyll), Cenél nGabráin. Some members of this kindred, along with some from Cenél nÓengusso and Cenél Comgaill seem to have settled or re-settled in southern Pictland as part of what Gilbert Márkus describes as “one stage in the systematic absorption of powerful Gaelic lords – together with their military retinues – into the Pictish body politic in the seventh and eighth centuries.” This was part of a set of processes by which Pictish political power extended into the west while Gaelic culture, including the Gaelic language, extended into the east, and the names of Angus and Gowrie leave echoes of that history on the map to this day.  

Some place names are anchored in the Gaelic legendary tradition, such as Ben Gulabin, a mountain formed from the body of the great boar slain by the Ossianic hero Diarmaid. Diarmaid himself gives his name to the nearby Tulach Dhaimhid (anglicised as Tulach Diarmid), “Diarmaid’s mound”, i.e. his grave mound, as the ballad recounts how he himself was slain immediately after. Indeed, the landscape of Perth and Kinross is so rich with Gaelic place names that John Murray used names Highland Perthshire to investigate the different kinds of hill and mountain as conceived of in Gaelic, counting no fewer than nineteen different types of mountain, each with their own Gaelic name (beinn, bioran, caisteal, càrn, cnap, cnoc, cruach, dùn, maol, meall, sgiath, sgòrr, sídhean, sliabh, sròn, stob, stuc, tom and tòrr).

78 Withers, Ubran Highlanders, p. 203.
79 Márkus, Conceiving a Nation, pp. 108-110.
80 Watson, Place names in much of north-east Scotland, pp. 20,45.
81 Murray, Reading the Gaelic Landscape, pp. 43 - 67.
(Figs. 6.1 and 6.2: The Gaelic Chapel after its relocation to Canal Street. There is now a block of flats at the site where the chapel used to be. With thanks to Culture Perth & Kinross.)

Church records give very useful evidence for the extent of Gaelic-speaking communities in the period before the collection of language data in the census (which began only in 1881), as ministers needed to be able to speak the language(s) of their parishioners if they were to be effective in preaching and carrying out their other duties. So, even though there is no census data from the seventeenth century, the fact that a record from 1683 shows that the minister at Kirkmichael habitually preached in Gaelic, or that in 1700, the fact that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland decided to send a Gaelic-speaking probationer to Dunkeld tells us that these areas were understood to be Gaelic-speaking, and needed to be provided for accordingly.82 Over a century later, in 1825 the parishioners of Little Dunkeld challenged the presentation of a candidate for the ministry of that charge on the grounds that he could not speak Gaelic. While many of them could understand and speak English, they estimated that fully three quarters of their number would not derive any benefit from a sermon preached in English.83 Likewise in 1836, the parishioners of Dunkeld and Dowally protested the decision taken by the presbytery to appoint a minister who spoke no Gaelic, writing that “…many of the Parishioners of Dowally are altogether ignorant of the English language, and the greater part of them understand it so imperfectly as not to be benefited by having the Services of Religion performed in that Language.”84 By the middle of the twentieth century there were still enough native Gaelic speakers for the fieldworkers of the Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland to find informants in Blair Atholl, Strath Tummel, Loch Rannoch, Blairgowrie, Pitlochry, Kincraigie, Aberfeldy, Keltneyburn, Fearnan and Loch

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82 Watson and Clement, “Aberdeenshire Gaelic”, p. 374; Withers, Gaelic in Scotland, p. 36.

83 Watson, Gaelic in Scotland, p. 172.

84 Ibid., p. 172.
Tay, and I have heard accounts of a handful of effectively monoglot elderly Gaelic speakers living in Highland Perthshire as late as the 1980s.

The Gaelic speaking population, however, was by no means confined to these areas. Many Gaels came to towns, especially Perth, for work, especially during years in which poor harvests led to scarcity in upland rural areas, as happened in 1623, the 1690s and the “Seven Ill Years” of the 1690s. This was often temporary migration, and these Highlanders would usually return to their home parishes when matters improved. There was, however, a small but settled Gaelic-speaking population in Perth, drawn almost entirely from Highland Perthshire – people born there made up just over 5% of the town’s population in 1851. This community had been there for some time, though, as individuals with Highland names can be found in tax records from the 1690s. By the time the census started to include questions on language use the Highland community in the town had probably undergone a degree of linguistic assimilation, but there were still 391 Gaelic speakers recorded in Perth in 1881, increasing to 800 in 1891 and 789 in 1901. The first important institution for Perth’s Gaelic community was its church. St Stephen’s Gaelic Chapel opened in 1787, its first minister being Rev. Duncan McFarlane, a native of Argyll. At the Disruption of 1843 the congregation joined the Free Church and became Free St Stephen’s Gaelic Church. Within two years of the establishment of the Gaelic chapel, the SSPCK had established a school, believed to have been on Barossa Street, for Gaelic-speaking children, and this continued to operate into the early nineteenth century. Another important social institution was the Perth Gaelic Society, which was founded in 1880 and still exists. In comparison with other Gaelic societies in the Lowlands, Perth’s was uncommonly activist one, campaigning for reform of land laws and land tenure systems, as well as in the campaign to establish a chair of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh, the first such chair in Scotland.

6.2 Gaelic in Perth and Kinross today
6.2.1 Gaelic in Perth and Kinross in the 2011 Census

According to the 2011 Census, Perth and Kinross has a population of 142,277 people aged three or over. Of these, those with skills in Gaelic can be counted as follows:

86 Withers, Urban Highlanders, p. 63.
87 Withers, Urban Highlanders, p. 88.
88 Withers, Gaelic in Scotland, p. 183.
89 Withers, Urban Highlanders., p. 207, table 7.1.
90 Withers, Highland Communities in Dundee and Perth, p. 54.
91 Withers, Gaelic in Scotland, p. 195.
92 Ibid., pp. 63 - 64
93 Withers, Urban Highlanders, p. 192.
Table 6.1: Gaelic users in Perth and Kinross

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks but does not read or write</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads but does not speak or write</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Gaelic</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with some Gaelic skills</strong></td>
<td>2,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total community of a little over two thousand is fairly small as a proportion of the overall population of Perth and Kinross, especially when we consider that Gaelic was spoken natively as a community language in significant parts of Perth and Kinross in recent centuries. Nevertheless this is in fact slightly higher than the current population of Harris, for example, and seen in that light can be seen as a substantial number of people with considerable potential for organisation and development as a language community.

Those with Gaelic skills in Perth and Kinross can be categorised by age as follows:

Table 6.2: Gaelic users in Perth and Kinross by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understands but does not speak</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes</th>
<th>Speaks but does not read or write</th>
<th>Speaks and reads but does not write</th>
<th>Reads but does not speak or write</th>
<th>Any other combination of skills</th>
<th>Total with any skills in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 34</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 44</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 49</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 54</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 – 79</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 +</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.2 Perth and Kinross Council's Gaelic Language Plan

In 2005, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic Language Act. Among other provisions, this legislation gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig the responsibility to require public sector institutions within the devolved competencies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans.

The process under which such plans are developed is outlined by Bòrd na Gàidhlig: https://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/gaelic-you/tools-and-resources/development/

Perth and Kinross Council's first Gaelic Language Plan ran from 2012-2017. Its current plan was approved in 2018 and will run until 2023. The plan can be read on the council's website: https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/17836/Gaelic-language-and-cultural-support

The development of Gaelic policy in the plan is structured around the following four “steps”:

**STEP 1**

*We recognise Gaelic as a living language.*

*We will increase the visibility and use of Gaelic with our staff, communities and partners.*

**STEP 2**

*We will continue to develop and invest in front line services which enable Gaelic to be spoken and learned at home, at school and in the community.*

**STEP 3**

*Our people are central to delivering great public services.*

*We will develop and invest in their Gaelic learning.*

**STEP 4**

*Gaelic is part of our heritage and our modern-day Story of Place.*

*We will actively promote it as part of the unique cultural identity of Perth and Kinross.* (p. 19).

The plan makes specific and measurable commitments, such as those to “include questions relating to Gaelic Medium early learning and childcare in the statutory biennial parental consultation” and to increase the number of children in Gaelic education by 15% year on year for the duration of the plan (p. 25). The plan also recognises the Scotland-wide problem of a large drop-off in numbers taking (or able to take) Gaelic in the transition from primary to secondary school, and looks to address that with commitments outlined on p. 27. This is an important step in ensuring continuity of Gaelic educational provision.
Looking forward to the council’s next Gaelic Language Plan, there could be development of the commitment on p. 31, to “support and facilitate the development of a Gaelic community forum for Perth and Kinross.” One point raised at the research meetings with Gaelic speakers in Perth and Kinross (discussed in 7.4, below) was the possibility of a community forum on a wider scale that would include Gaelic speakers and organisations in Dundee, Angus and Fife as well as Perth and Kinross. Another was the desirability of a Gaelic community centre, a hub which could host classes, conversation groups and community events. Perhaps when the council is preparing its next Gaelic Language Plan, some consideration to these suggestions should be included in the corresponding commitment(s) to this one in the present plan.

Another commitment that could be strengthened is this, on p. 33 of the current plan, to “work with local partners to develop an annual programme of accessible Gaelic events and activities for people of all ages in the Perth and Kinross area featuring a broad range of situations where Gaelic can be used. This includes cultural and sports activities.” This could be made more specific, or be divided into several related commitments, including some like those made by Fife Council and Aberdeen City Council, discussed in this report, aimed specifically at the inclusion of Gaelic-speaking senior citizens, and opportunities for them to spend time with Gaelic-medium school pupils. Such opportunities would benefit the children, who would get to learn from the idiomatic Gaelic of older speakers and thus enrich their own command of the language, and the seniors would benefit from increased social contact with community members and the sense that they had an important role to play in Gaelic development locally. It would also foster connections between different age cohorts, and help to develop a sense of a wider Gaelic community by connecting groups of people who might not otherwise meet.

Similarly, with respect to developing the Gaelic community in Perth and Kinross specifically, the commitment on p. 33 to “build a collection of modern Gaelic self-learning resources available in selected Perthshire Libraries and provide links to online resources via the Council website” could be developed by working with the East Perthshire Gaelic Group, whom the council already supports, to make materials and resources about the East Perthshire dialect in particular more widely available. This could help to foster a sense among learners in particular, of Gaelic as something that belongs in the area, that is part of their own local culture and patrimony, part, as the council words it, of their story of place. This could also be developed with respect to the commitment on p. 41 to “develop Gaelic heritage resources linked to the Perth and Kinross area, including place names, stories, Gaelic in the landscape, etc.”

6.2.2 Gaelic organisations in Perth and Kinross

Aberfeldy and District Gaelic Choir

Founded in 1967. Participates on the Royal National Mòd, the Aberfeldy Mòd and other music festivals, as well as other performances such as charity concerts and Christmas carol services.

aberfeldygaelicchoir.co.uk/
Birks Cinema, Aberfeldy

Birks Cinema in Aberfeldy has a range of Gaelic events, including a monthly Gaelic café. 
birkscinema.co.uk/community-hub/arts-culture-heritage/gaelic-related-activities/

Cearcall Còmhraidh (Peairt) Cabadaich

Cearcall Còmhraidh (Peairt) (formerly called Cabadaich) is a Gaelic conversation group that meets every second Saturday at Perth Concert Hall, 10:00 – 11:30.

Comann nam Pàrant

Comann nam Pàrant is a national organisation to give support and advice to parents about GME. It has two branches in Perth and Kinross, one in Perth and one in Aberfeldy. 
parant.org.uk/index.php/gd/

Comunn Gàidhlig Pheairt: Gaelic Society of Perth

Founded in 1880. Runs a weekly Gaelic conversation group, Abair Thusa, on Wednesdays from 2 – 4pm at Glenearn Campus, Perth. Hosts a monthly cèilidh with musicians and Gaelic singers, occasional lectures. Holds an annual ecumenical Gaelic church service. 
gaelicsocietyofperth.com/
facebook.com/PerthGaelic/

Comunn Gàidhlig Shiorrachd Pheairt an Ear/ East Perthshire Gaelic Group

Comunn Gàidhlig Shiorrachd Pheairt an Ear was established in 2018 to work towards the revival of Gaelic in East Perthshire, and especially of the East Perthshire dialect of Gaelic. Although now spoken natively or fluently by only a very small handful of people, the dialect is quite well documented thanks to the work of twentieth-century linguists. The group’s classes aim to teach standard Gaelic, but this is always supplemented with information on East Perthshire dialect forms and information about such things as local place names and oral tradition. The project is still in its early days, but it provides an interesting example of an effort to revitalise dialect that has been marginal and effectively moribund for many decades. Its development over the coming years may provide a model for revitalisation efforts which are rooted in local history, culture and sense of place – a crucial way of rebutting the common but baseless objection that Gaelic does not belong in certain parts of the country, and that its promotion and use should be confined to places like Skye, the Western Isles and a few islands in Argyll. It will interesting to see if the effort to root Gaelic

94 Ó Dochartaigh, Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland; Máirtín Ó Murchú, East Perthshire Gaelic: social history, phonology, texts, and lexicon (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1989).

95 Another example is the work of Àdhamh Ó Broin with the dialects of mid Argyll, which are again quite well attested but now spoken natively by very few people.
in an more “authentically” local cultural experience in East Perthshire will bear fruit in the years so come, and if so what lessons can be learnt for places like but not limited to Aberdeenshire, Sutherland, Caithness and mainland Argyll.

The group is preparing resources to help people learn the dialect. They have already created some online tools using the Memrise platform and a few short videos are available on YouTube. They also hope to produce new audio resources to supplement those already available through Tobar an Dualchais.

eastperthshiregaelic.wixsite.com/home
twitter.com/psdialect
facebook.com/Eastperthshiregaelic
youtube.com/channel/UCy93Xv8OVKVEhGp3ABj2ceg
decks.memrise.com/course/5487615/beginners-east-perthshire-gaelic-part-1

Fèis Thatha

September 2019 saw the first Fèis Thatha, held at Breadalbane Academy, Aberfeldy. This will be a two-day youth festival with classes in Gaelic and Gaelic music and arts.

feisthatha.com
facebook.com/feisthatha19
twitter.com/FeisThatha

Perth Gaelic Choir

This choir was refounded in 2011, and takes part in the Royal National Mòd, local mòds and other performances.

facebook.com/PerthGaelicChoir1/

Perthshire and Angus Provincial Mòd

Founded in 1923, this is the local mòd for Perth and Kinross, Angus and Dundee. It is held annually in June in Aberfeldy.

aberfeldymod.org.uk/index.html
facebook.com/AberfeldyGaelicMod/
6.3 Learning Gaelic in Perth and Kinross

6.3.1 Gaelic in early-years learning in Perth and Kinross
There are Gaelic Playgroups (Cròileagain) in Perth and Aberfeldy, providing support for 0-4 year olds and their parents. The Perth group meets during term time on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 – 12:00 in the Garden Room at Tayside Christian Fellowship. The Aberfeldy group meets during term time at Breadalbane Community Campus on Wednesdays and Fridays from 09:00 – 11:00.

Gaelic Bookbug sessions are held at the AK Bell Library in Perth on the first Wednesday of every month. There is also a monthly session at Goodlyburn Primary School, but at the time of writing (September 2019) dates for the coming year had not been confirmed. There are occasional joint Gaelic-Scots Bookbug sessions at Blairgowrie Library and Crieff Community Library.

Table 6.3: Children in Gaelic-medium 0 – 3 provision in Perth and Kinross

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of children</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12³⁶⁶</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
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<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4: Children in Sgoiltean Àraich in Perth and Kinross

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of children</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>&lt;11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB, for school years 2011-12 and 2012-13 these are listed as “Buidhnean Saor-thoileach Gàidhlig airson Ro-sgoil/ Gaelic Preschool Voluntary Groups”, and specified as provision for ages 0-3 thereafter.
6.3.2 Gaelic in schools in Perth and Kinross

GME is offered at primary school level at Goodlyburn Primary School and Breadalbane Academy.

Through the Gaelic Language in Primary Schools initiative, weekly Gaelic sessions are delivered to over six hundred pupils at six schools across Highland Perthshire.

At secondary school level, Perth Academy and Breadalbane Academy both offer Gaelic for both learners and fluent speakers, and pupils at all four secondary schools within Perth can study Gaelic for learners at National 4 level.

Perth and Kinross’s Gaelic Language Plan (2018-2023) includes a commitment to increase uptake on Gaelic education by 15% year on year for the duration of the plan.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for the number of primary school pupils receiving GME in Perth and Kinross are as follows:

**Table 6.5: Pupils in GME (primary) in Perth and Kinross**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig's figures for the number of primary school pupils receiving GLE in Perth and Kinross are as follows:

**Table 6.6: Pupils receiving GLE (primary) in Perth and Kinross**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;97&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;98&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig's figures for the number of secondary school pupils receiving GME in Perth and Kinross are as follows:

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97 All three with Gaelic as L3.

98 One with Gaelic as L2, two with Gaelic as L3.
Table 6.7: Pupils in GME (secondary) in Perth and Kinross

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
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<td>2013-14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>No estimate provided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s figures for the number of secondary school pupils receiving GME in Perth and Kinross are as follows:

Table 6.8: Pupils receiving GLE (secondary) in Perth and Kinross

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Estimated number of pupils</th>
<th>Number of locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.3 Adult education
Perth and Kinross Council run Gaelic classes in three locations across the local authority area.
Perth College, UHI have run community education classes in Gaelic in the past, but do not do so currently.

6.3.4 Perth College, UHI
Perth College is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands/ Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean. It offers a BA (Hons) in Archaeology with Gaelic Studies, which has Gaelic modules in the first two years as well as courses about Gaelic literature, traditional culture, language awareness and language policy.

Perth College also offers a PGDE in Gaelic Medium (Primary) and a PGDE in Gaelic Medium (Secondary). These are for fluent speakers and train teachers to work in Gaelic medium education.

The following degrees do not include Gaelic language modules, but include modules about the linguistic history of the Highlands, Gaelic literature and Celtic art: BA (Hons) Culture, Heritage and Criminology; BA (Hons) Culture, Heritage and Politics; BA (Hons) Culture, Heritage and Sociology; BA (Hons) Literature; BA (Hons) Literature and Criminology; BA (Hons) Literature and Sociology. As part of the University of the Highlands and Islands/ Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean, Perth College is covered by the institution’s
Gaelic language plan, prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, 2005. The current plan, the university’s third, will run from 2019 to 2022.99

6.4 Summary of meeting with Gaelic speakers in Perth and Kinross
Two focus group meetings were held at Glenearn Community Campus, Perth on 11.09.2019. The first was during a conversation circle, Abair Thusa. This was attended mostly by native Gaelic speakers and advanced learners. The meeting was conducted in Gaelic. There was another meeting in the evening, attended mostly by learners, which was conducted mostly in English with some contributions in Gaelic. Those at the meetings included parents of GME pupils, Gaelic teachers and adult education level and volunteers who help to deliver GLPS.

The following observations from those meetings have been supplemented by conversations with Aileen Ogilvie, Perth and Kinross Council's officer with the responsibility to develop and implement Gaelic policy and with Alex Mulholland of the East Perthshire Gaelic Group.

Opportunities to use Gaelic: Many people, both fluent speakers and learners, felt that they did not have as many opportunities to speak Gaelic as they would like to. Some learners felt that the conversation groups they attend are at too high a level for them to be able to take part, though it was noted that the monthly Gaelic café in the cinema at Aberfeldy has a table for beginners. One problem is that Gaelic speakers are rather widely dispersed in Perth and Kinross, which is a large local authority area. It was felt that having a regular conversation group meeting in the evening would be a positive development, enabling those who are unable to attend those held during the day or on Saturdays to get more conversation practice. Alex Mulholland reported that learners in classes in Blairgowrie were desperate for more opportunities to speak with native speakers, and learn from their intonation, use of idiom and wide range of vocabulary. Several native speakers say that they would like to give more support to learners, but some did not know how and where to go about doing so and others are worried about their lack of technical knowledge about the language, and especially being asked about aspects of grammar they would find difficult to explain. All felt that it is important that learners and native speakers have more contact with each other.

Classes: Although those learners who attend classes were on the whole positive about them, there was felt to be a lack of courses for post-beginners, meaning that many people get to a certain level with their language learning but struggle to break through to fluency. The courses run by the East Perthshire Gaelic Group in Blairgowrie do now have a post-beginner class. A common problem is a lack of tutors – Alex Mulholland estimates that based on the level of demand the East Perthshire Gaelic Group could run a class every night of the week in Blairgowrie alone, but do not have the tutors to meet that demand. While it is very encouraging to see such demand for Gaelic classes – and this is also the case in Fife and Aberdeenshire – the lack of tutors desperately needs to be addressed.

Library resources: The AK Bell Library in Perth holds an important historical collection of Gaelic books, but little in the way of contemporary ones, outside of learning materials and books for young children. A few at both meetings said that more contemporary books such as novels and non-fiction would be welcome, especially those for learners and young adults (for

instance those in the Lasag series published by Sandstone Press). A few native speakers reported that they very seldom read anything in Gaelic, since having been denied education in their mother tongue when they were at school they find reading it very difficult. In light of this, it might be worthwhile exploring the possibility of running some classes aimed at Gaelic speakers wanting to improve their reading skills.

**Events**: While people at the meetings were pleased with the kinds of Gaelic events that currently exist, some felt that there was too strong an emphasis on music and that some musical events were too formal. In order to attract more people, especially young people and young families, a range of other kinds of events were discussed that people would like to see – or would like to see more of. These included sporting events, outdoors activities (such as nature walks and picnics), day-long or weekend-long FilmG events with workshops and support in making amateur films and cooking events. Regarding to sporting events, the possibility of setting up a shinty club with a Gaelic focus. One person suggested that the template of the Basque Korrika\(^{100}\) could be adapted to a Gaelic context, providing a high-profile boost to the language outside the usual Mod and traditional music contexts.

**Gaelic in schools**: A stand-alone Gaelic school was seen as being desirable, but probably as a relatively long-term goal. For the time being, it was felt that one priority is making sure that GME pupils – most of whom do not come from Gaelic-speaking households – have more regular contact with native speakers, in school and/or in extra-curricular activities.

**Community centre**: The possibility of a Gaelic community centre was raised, a dedicated space where such things as classes, conversation groups, meetings and performances could be held. Several people felt that such a space for Gaelic would also help to raise the profile of the language locally, as well as providing a focus for the community and increase people's opportunities for meeting other Gaelic speakers and using the language more frequently.

**Gaelic forum**: The Council's Gaelic Language Plan commits to establishing a Gaelic community forum with representatives of different Gaelic groups, to guide the development of Gaelic policy and provisions in the area. It was suggested at both meetings, however, that it might better if the forum's scope were expanded geographically to bring in at least Dundee and Angus and possibly also Fife as well. This could help to coordinate, for example, the running of adult education classes, of which at present there are none in Dundee or Angus. It was felt that there needs to be stronger community organisation to press for stronger Gaelic provision, and that a community forum might be a good means for bringing that about.

**Latha na Gàidhlig**: Several people at both meetings had attended Latha na Gàidhlig, and felt that expanding this event would be worthwhile. An annual day with taster sessions, grammar workshops, music events, parent and child language strategy workshops (perhaps with Bilingualism Matters) was felt to be something that could help develop Gaelic in the area.

**Opposition to Gaelic**: Few people had encountered opposition to Gaelic in Perth and Kinross, though complaints about spending on Gaelic do surface from time to time. More common is ignorance about Gaelic’s historical and continuing presence in the area, and it was felt that more could be done to raise awareness, perhaps using place-names of Gaelic origin as a useful starting point. One person stressed the importance of Gaelic signage and logos as

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\(^{100}\) See: [http://www.korrika.eus/en/](http://www.korrika.eus/en/)
maintaining a distinctive local and national identity, and contrasted this with the proliferation of corporate logos that are the same across Britain and America.

**Gaelic officer assistant:** It was suggested that developing Gaelic provision in Perth and Kinross is too big a job for one person, and that the Gaelic Officer ought to have an assistant, perhaps a tutor who could deliver adult education classes as well as helping with other duties.

6.5 Perth and Kinross and Gaelic Literature
The Gaelic literary tradition of Perth and Kinross is a rich and diverse one, and can be no more than outlined in brief here. It stretches back to the middle ages, including the compilation of the Book of the Dean of Lismore, the most important manuscript collection of medieval Gaelic poetry, containing a vast quantity of Ossianic and Classical Panegyric verse.

Perthshire is well-represented in some of the most important modern collections of Ossianic ballads, including those of Jerome Stone, dominie of the school in Dunkeld (1755), Dr Irvine of Little Dunkeld (c. 1800), as well as more miscellaneous manuscript collections like those of Rev MacDiarmaid, minister at Weem (1760s) and General Robertson. Indeed, Donald Meek has argued that Laoidh Dhiarmaid, one of the most popular and widely-known of the Ossianic ballads, may well have been composed in Perthshire. The area has also been home to some of the most important Gaelic poets, perhaps most notably Dùghall Bochanan (Dugald Buchanan) (1716 – 1768), a highly regarded composer of religious poems, including “An Gaisgeach”, “Mòrachd Dhè” and the long poem “Latha a’ Bhreitheanais”, and who was also one of the translators of the Gaelic New Testament.

Just as Perth and Kinross can lay claim to the most important Scottish collection of medieval Gaelic poetry, it has a similar claim for the eighteenth century as well. The manuscripts of Rev James McLagan (1728 – 1805), are a major source for the works of many of the most important Gaelic poets, including Iaim Lom, Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, as well as Ossianic ballads. McLagan was born in Ballechin in Perthshire and died in Blair Atholl, and after education at the University of St Andrews he was minister first at Amulree near Loch Freuchie. He was chaplain of the Black Watch (originally an Aberfeldy regiment, of course) from 1764-88, and finally parish minister at Blair Atholl and Strowan. His collection, which amounts to some 250 manuscripts written by forty seven individuals and containing materials from the Isle of Man and Ireland as well as Gaelic Scotland, are not held in the Special Collections at the University of Glasgow. The cosmopolitan nature of Gaelic intellectual life is clearly revealed in these manuscripts, which

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103 Donald E. Meek (ed.), Laoidhean Spioradail Dhúghaill Bhochanan (Glasgow: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 2015).

104 This is another Gaelic place name: Àth Maol Rubha – “the Ford of Maol Rubha”. Maol Rubha, or Máel Rubha, was a saint of the seventh – eighth century.
also feature items in Latin, Scots and English and translations into Gaelic from Classical Greek. As Robbie Anndra MacLeòid has pointed out, the range and nature of the collection are summed up in the manuscript University of Glasgow MS Gen 1042/52, in which the great Classical Gaelic poet Cathal MacMhuirich shares a page with the Archaic Greek poet Sappho.\footnote{Robbie Anndra MacLeòid, https://gaelicenlightenment.wordpress.com/2016/07/26/obair-ranachaidh-robbe-mhicleoid-air-maclathagain-robbe-macleods-research-on-mclagan-072106/ (accessed 06.08.2019).} A large-scale research project into McLagan, his collections and his milieu is ongoing at the University of Glasgow, led by Dr Sim Innes and Dr Geraldine Parsons.\footnote{https://gaelicenlightenment.wordpress.com/ (assessed 06.08.2019)}

There was also a great store of Gaelic folktales collected by Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray (1868 – 1940), daughter of the seventh Duke of Atholl. She collected over 240 tales, mostly from around the Atholl estate, as well as songs and other folklore items. These are now held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives at the University of Edinburgh. Sadly, the prevailing social attitudes of her time held that it was improper for a young woman of her class to be engaged in such work, and this combined with health problems meant that she was unable to collect more, and there must indeed have been much more to collect. Her collection of folktales was published, with English translation, in 2009.\footnote{Sylvia Robertson and Tony Dilworth (ed. and trans.), Tales from Highland Perthshire collected by Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray (Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 2009).} This collection is a valuable source of information about the dialect of Gaelic spoken in the area.

(Fig. 6.3: Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray. Wikimedia.)

Perth and Kinross, and in particular the town of Perth itself, also has a very important place in the history of Gaelic publishing. This began in 1786 with the publication of Sean Dàin agus Òrain Ghàidhealach (A Collection of Ancient and Modern Gaelic Poems), edited and published by John Gillies, usually known as “The Gillies Collection”. This book, one of the first Gaelic anthologies to appear in print, is a collection that includes spiritual verse, a version the late Classical long poem Òran na Comhachaig, Ossianic and pseudo-Ossianic ballads, a rowing song, a version of Ailean Donn, songs from across the Gàidhealtachd and some of obviously local origin (e.g. Òran air Sealgair am monadh Adhoill, Soighdear Ghlinn- Liòbhuinn, while the version of the Ossianic ballad of Fraoch is also localised “...on the south...
shore, and on the Island near south side of Loch-Cuaich, or Lochfraochy about two miles to the westward side of Amalrie and eleven west from Dunkeld and encouraging Highland soldiers before a tour of duty in America, works by major poets like Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and Iain Lom and many by unknown poets. It is a fascinating collection, a broad-ranging sample of Gaelic literature, a snapshot of Gaelic literary culture as the Gaelic print tradition was gathering steam, scholarly and antiquarian interest in the Highlands was emerging and the Gàidhealtachd entered a period of profound social and cultural upheaval.

There were also a great many Gaelic translations of Christian books published in Perth. Most of these were evangelical Protestant works and published by D. Matheson, who published thirteen such books. The dates of publication are not known for all of them, but those which are dated are all from the 1860s. Matheson seems to have translated some of the texts himself, but at least eight of his publications were translated by Ailean Sinclair. Matheson’s Gaelic religious publications included works by Charles Spurgeon, Jonathon Edwards, Robert MacCheyne (whose sermons and letters went through two editions in 1865) and John Bunyan. Eòghann MacEachainn, a priest based in Inverness, also had translations of Catholic works published in Perth, Il combattimento spirituale by “Don Laurans Sgubuli Eadaildeach” (Lorenzo Scupoli) (Perth: Morisons, 1835), and De Imitationi Christi by Thomas à Kempis in 1836 (the date on the title page, 1826, is erroneous).

(Fig. 6.4: Leanmhuinn Christi’, archive.org (accessed 07.08.2019) )

While Perth did not see the same volume of publishing as other major publication centres such as Glasgow or Edinburgh, it did keep up a fairly constant level of literary, religious and occasional political publications throughout the later eighteenth, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making it a key centre of the dissemination of ideas about religion, politics and literature across Gaelic Scotland.

6.6 Dialect
Since Gaelic continued to be spoken natively as a community language in Perth and Kinross until well into the twentieth century, it is one of the best-documented “peripheral” Gaelic dialects. Though it is now spoken natively or fluently by only a very small handful of people, the work of twentieth century linguists and recordings made in more recent times as well, enable a relatively full picture of Perthshire Gaelic to be built up.109

The classes run by the East Perthshire Gaelic Group, although they teach a standard, pan-dialectal Gaelic, aim to re-introduce Perthshire dialect forms to the area, and they are preparing resources to enable people to learn them. See the entry on this group in section 6.2, above.

6.7 Perth and Kinross and the Royal National Mòd

The Mòd was also hosted by Blairgowrie in 1996.

6.8 Connections between Gaelic and Scots in Perth and Kinross
6.8.1 The Book of the Dean of Lismore
One of the most remarkable examples of the connections between the Scots and Gaelic languages comes from Perth and Kinross. It comes in the form of a manuscript of the first half of the sixteenth century called the Book of the Dean of Lismore.110 The manuscript, Edinburgh NLS Adv.MS.72.1.37 consists mostly of Gaelic poetry, including Classical Gaelic panegyrical verse and heroic (“Ossianic”) ballads. There is at present no complete modern edition of the Book of the Dean of Lismore, but parts of it have been published in separate volumes.111 The manuscript’s Scots connections are of two kinds. Firstly, it contains some texts in Scots. Though primarily known as one of the most important duanairean


110 Though Lismore is of course in Argyll the titular dean, James MacGregor, also had the benefice of Forthingall, where he seems to have spent most of his time. He, his brother Duncan and possibly their father Dugald were the scribes who compiled the manuscript. The manuscript has been digitised and made available on the website of the National Library of Scotland: https://digital.nls.uk/gaelic-manuscripts-of-scotland/archive/75251773?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=-1419%2C-199%2C5337%2C3956 [accessed 12.09.2019]

(anthologies) of medieval Gaelic poetry, it also includes extracts from works by the great Scots makars William Dunbar and Robert Henryson.

Secondly, and most famously, it is written using a Scots-based orthography rather than using the usual Classical Gaelic spelling system of the time. This, while not unique, is certainly significant – not least because it is by far the largest work to employ this spelling system. While this does render parts of the text obscure (and the difficulties thus introduced are the main reason why there is at the time of writing no complete scholarly edition of the Book of the Dean of Lismore), the spelling system in the manuscript is crucial evidence for two things. Firstly, it allows us to check how the development of Scottish Gaelic as a spoken language was progressing, as the pronunciations which would be obscured by the standard Classical Gaelic spelling are more apparent in a phonetic system based on another language. Secondly, it demonstrates that literacy in Scots was common in learned circles in at least some parts of Gaelic Scotland, something which Donald Meek has discussed looking specifically at the work of scribes in Perthshire.112

6.8.2 Scots words of Gaelic origin in Perth and Kinross

DSL lists the following words as having citations from Perth and Kinross and Gaelic etymologies. In addition to these words, which are all attested from Perth and Kinross, even if not still in current use, there is a much larger store of words of Gaelic origin used more generally in Scots across the country, such as ceilidh, glen, strath and whisky. The definitions and etymological derivations here are all those given by DSL, unless otherwise noted.

boddach (noun) a mutchkin – a unit of liquid measurement equivalent to 424 ml or three quarters of an imperial pint [Gaelic bodach] (Taymouth, 1627)

cendue (noun) a kind of trout found in Loch Leven. [Gaelic, ceann dubh, black head] (1710)

chintie-chin (noun comb.) a long chin, a chin which projects [Gaelic, sinte, stretched or sinteach, straight, extended] (Perthshire, 1825)

fintock (noun) cloudberry, rubus chamaemorus [Origin obscure. The first syllable is perhaps Gaelic, fionn, “white”, from the colour of the cloudberry’s flowers] (Perthshire, 1825)

frochan (noun) the toe-cap of a shoe [Gaelic, fraochan] (Perthshire, 1975)

furroch (verb) to stay, stop, tarry [Gaelic, fuìrich] (Perthshire, 1857)

glaslaw (noun) handcuff, manacle [Gaelic, glaslàmh] (Taymouth, 1603)

glormach (adjective) garish, gaudy [Gaelic, glòrmach, full of pomp] (Perthshire, 1950)

grope (verb) to darn roughly [Gaelic, gròb, to sew roughly, to cobble] (Perthshire, 1950)

guissock (noun) a superstitious observance or notion [Gaelic, giseag – a charm, spell, superstitious ceremony] (Perthshire, 1900)

**juskal** (noun) a tale [Gaelic, ỳr-sgeul] (Perthshire, 1836)

**keir** (adjective) dark-coloured [Gaelic, ciar] (Perthshire, 1709)

**leeack** (noun) a sea trout [Gaelic, liathag, sea trout, “the grey one”] (Perthshire, 1940)

**ochra** (interjection) my dear! [Gaelic, a ghràidh, my love, my dear] (Perthshire, 1896)

**oghe** (noun) grandchild [Gaelic, ogha] (Perthshire, first half of the sixteenth century – The Book of the Dean of Lismore)

**ropach** (adjective), untidy, slatternly [Gaelic, ròpach, viscous, squalid, slovenly] (Perthshire, 1968)

**trewchtchacheadis** (plural noun), thirty hundreds, notionally of fighting men, hence a land measure, consisting of the amount of land which could support those men [Gaelic, tríocha chéad] (Perthshire, first half of the sixteenth century - The Book of the Dean of Lismore)

**turchie** (adjective) short, thick and squat [Possibly from Gaelic, torc, a boar – from its shape] (Perthshire, 1808)

### 6.8.3 Gaelic-Scots bilinguals in Perth and Kinross

According to the 2011 census, the Gaelic-Scots bilinguals of Perth and Kinross (i.e. those reporting skills for both languages) can be counted as follows:

**Table 6.9: Gaelic-Scots bilingualism in Perth and Kinross**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Perth and Kinross</strong></th>
<th>Understands but does not speak, read or write Scots</th>
<th>Speaks, reads and writes Scots</th>
<th>Speaks but does not write Scots</th>
<th>Reads or writes but does not speak Scots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads or writes but does not speak Gaelic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.8.4 Shared provision for Gaelic and Scots in Perth and Kinross

There are occasional joint Gaelic-Scots Bookbug sessions at Blairgowrie Library and Crieff Community Library.

From all of this it should be clear that there is no essential opposition between Gaelic and Scots in Perth and Kinross. Not only does Gaelic have roots in the area that stretch back into the early medieval period, it continues to be woven into the Scots language as spoken in the city, contributing a Gaelic strand to Scots as spoken in Perth and Kinross. Furthermore, the existence of Gaelic-Scots bilinguals across all combinations of understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages demonstrates very clearly that no essential opposition between the two languages need be posited or accepted, as there are people in the area who carry both of them within them. While there is no census evidence for Scots from before 2011, it is certain that this has been the case for centuries, primarily surely in bilingual zones along the linguistic borders and in the Scots-speaking towns when Gaelic speakers moved to them and became linguistically integrated. Bilingualism, loan-words and the retention of Gaelic place names after community language shift to Scots all show that the Gaelic and Scots have a long history of co-existence and interaction in Perth and Kinross. It is to be hoped that a more widespread realisation of this will lead to a greater mutual support and solidarity among Gaelic and Scots speakers, activists and organisations. Both minority language communities have much to gain from shared learning and support.
It is my hope that this report will prove both interesting and useful. I hope that it helps people – Gaelic speakers and non-Gaelic speakers alike – gain a deeper understanding of the importance of Gaelic to Scotland's east coast, in terms of the history (distant and not so distant) and literature of the east coast, of the relationship of the Gaelic and Scots languages, and of the Gaelic communities and community organisations of the present day. I hope that it helps people to lay a few hoary clichés and misunderstandings (“It was never spoken here!”) to rest, and that it proves useful to those working to develop Gaelic policy and provision, as well as Gaelic community organisations. I hope that it helps to facilitate cooperation across the east coast (indeed, the commissioning of the report is itself an example of such cooperation), and that the Gaelic communities of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth and Kinross find it a useful resource as they look to develop Gaelic provision, opportunities to use the language, and community infrastructure in the ways they see fit.

But I hope that this report has demonstrated something else as well, and that is the importance of the east coast to Gaelic. This importance is manifested in a number of ways. Firstly, the east coast is home to a substantial proportion of Scotland's Gaelic speakers, and contains several sites of significant growth in Gaelic among young people through GME provision. In the here and now, and in the foreseeable future, the Gaelic speakers and learners in the six local authority areas studied in this report will have a significant role to play in efforts to reverse language shift in Scotland. Their needs and aspirations should certainly be included in national-level conversations about the development of Gaelic.

Secondly, the history of Gaelic on the east coast – which as we have seen from documentary and place-name evidence stretches back to the early medieval period – demonstrates quite clearly that Gaelic has its place in the story of Scotland far beyond the language's current heartland areas. Gaelic was part of the history of how the Christian faith took root among the Picts, Gaelic was part of how the people of the east coast saw and named their land, it was part of the story of the industrial revolution, of the Disruption in the cities as well as in the Highlands, it was – and remains – the language of literature and scholarship, of songs and of families right across Scotland. Nobody who pays attention to the evidence can honestly say that Gaelic can be or must be confined to certain heartland areas, out of sight and out of mind of the majority. Such an attitude is an ignorant rejection of the history and the present reality of the east coast.

Thirdly, the work being done by Gaelic speakers and learners in east coast areas and which this report has discussed can provide useful models which can be adapted to local circumstances in other parts of the country. There is excellent, innovative, interesting work being done on the east coast which others could learn from and apply fruitfully in their own areas. To take just two examples, the work of the East Perthshire Gaelic Group to reintroduce local Gaelic dialect features is something that be done in other parts of the country where Gaelic has largely ceased to be spoken at community level, but which have well-attested dialects with materials that could be used to “reactivate” at least some dialect features as part of local language revitalisation efforts. This could give a sense of local ownership to RLS
efforts, a sense of “buy-in” that could help local communities as they reclaim Gaelic, helping them to see Gaelic as something really and authentically theirs – which would also disarm criticisms about Gaelic “not belonging here”, of course. Similarly, the emphasis placed by Fife Council on Gaelic as part of social inclusion provides some very interesting possibilities that could be applied in other parts of the country. The stereotyping of Gaelic as a middle-class concern by those opposed to Gaelic provision can perhaps put working class people off engaging with the language, and makes it vulnerable to being seen as a nice add-on, but inessential and hard to justify in straitened economic circumstances. The work of Fife Council to use Gaelic as a means of social inclusion not only undercuts that (inaccurate) stereotype, it also points out ways that Gaelic can be used to make a real difference in people's lives, and is something that could be learnt from in many parts of the country.

For those reasons, I hope that this report is also of interest to Gaelic speakers, Gaelic supporters and those who work to develop Gaelic provision outwith the east coast as well.

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