

Curator's Report

Annual Leave

- 15 days of annual leave taken.

Gaelic

- Signed up to the three-day '*Exploring, Understanding and Practising in the Gàidhealtachd*' workshop series run by the Fearn project conveners.
- Reviewed draft Scottish Government guidance on Areas of Linguistic Significance for Gaelic, circulated by BnG.
- I recommend submitting an organisational response to this guidance (PDF attached). Influencing the guidance at this early stage is a valuable opportunity, ahead of the formal public consultation expected next year.
- A draft response is included at the end of this report for board review and amendment.

Acquisitions

- Continued appraisal of the Dollol photograph collection.
- Bookshop sign formally added to the collections.

Grants

- No further updates from HES, NLHF or ESGA.
- HES are considering our application outside their usual meeting schedule and will provide feedback once review is complete; no date has been given.
- The Communities Regeneration Fund wants us to submit to a later funding round (deadline 16 March) for a decision by 27 April, as match funding for the Roundhouse project.
- A further application to the Garfield Weston Foundation will be submitted once we receive an update on the planning application, as this is a required condition.
- If ESGA is unsuccessful, I am monitoring the Julia Rausing Trust for the next funding round to support *Whatever the Weather*.
- Tom and I submitted the SocAnts application to complete reporting on the Roundhouse excavations.

Roundhouse

- The planning decision has been delayed to the mid-January committee meeting, as Transport were unable to comment in time for the earlier committee.
- A traffic survey has been requested as a planning condition, to be completed in summer 2026.
- Two quotes have now been obtained and ARC are passing them on to the Council to confirm whether they meet council requirements.
- These costs have been added to current grant budgets.

IT issues

- Low disk space: I have done a file- and app clean-up, but an upgrade may be required in future.
- OneDrive: a sync issue resulted in all Quick Links and PC disconnecting; this took approx. three hours of research and troubleshooting to resolve.
- Having access to ad-hoc IT support would be beneficial.

AV set-up

- I reviewed film theatre manuals and system set-up to determine whether additional screenings can be programmed. This is now understood and will allow greater flexibility for future programming, including the RSA film screening pack during exhibitions.
- Trialled projector mounting and AV set-up in the small gallery space for Jessica Potter's installation, enabling screening of her film *Mountain Song*.

Permanent displays

- Developed interpretation and ordered mounts for:
 - John Maclennan gold fob watch and chain
 - Duncan Mackenzie (1901, Strath) objects: sporran, tuning fork and Mòd medal

APPENDIX

ScotGov guidance on Areas of Linguistic Significance for Gaelic, Gairloch Museum response (DRAFT)

Gairloch Museum strongly support the recognition that ALS designation will not be based solely on speaker numbers or density, but also on wider cultural characteristics, including historic lineages, heritage impact, cultural events, and contemporary as well as traditional artistic practice. This reflects a welcome and realistic understanding of Gaelic as a living culture, not only a spoken language, and acknowledges its relevance in many areas where speaker numbers may be in decline or fluctuate over time. Many of these criteria clearly apply across Wester Ross.

However, we are concerned about a policy gap within the Act arising from its necessary focus on public authorities. While this focus is politically understandable, it creates a cultural gap in practice. In many Gaelic-rich areas, including Wester Ross, the public experience of place, language, and heritage is shaped largely by independent museums, community trusts, cultural organisations, and visitor attractions. These organisations often carry a large share of cultural responsibility, but fall outside the scope of statutory Gaelic standards.

Wester Ross has no local authority museum. As a result, there is no formal requirement for Gaelic standards to be met within the heritage sector locally, despite strong cultural significance. Following ALS designation, expectations from funders, partners, communities, and visitors are likely to rise, but without guaranteed resources or capacity to meet them.

This creates a situation where cultural responsibility increases without corresponding support.

We recommend that the Community Arts and Heritage provisions within the ALS framework more explicitly include support for community-led and independent organisations, building on the intent expressed in point three of that section (p.44.). Specifically, we propose the creation of a voluntary designation for independent organisations, recognising museums as key delivery partners. This should be accompanied by ring-fenced funding, access to translation and language support, and clear, proportionate, and supported expectations.

For context, museums in Wester Ross have already participated in the Gaelic Development Officers scheme, developed Gaelic statements and plans, and are well placed to contribute meaningfully to Gaelic as a community and place-based language. With appropriate recognition and support, independent museums could play a central role in delivering the aims of the Scottish Languages Act.