

Item	Gaelic updates
Committee	Learning Teaching and Research Committee
Date paper prepared	23/02/2026
Date of committee meeting	11/03/2026
Subject	Gaelic update
Author	Diana MacLeod and Joe MacPhee
Action requested	☒ For Information ☐ For Discussion ☐ For recommendation ☐ For Endorsement ☐ For Approval
Purpose of the paper	To outline current Gaelic provision and activity.
Brief summary of the paper	UHI North, West and Hebrides continues to expand and strengthen its Gaelic language, culture, and community provision across Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE), cultural partnerships, and regional development initiatives. The 2024/25 to 2025/26 period shows sustained growth in Gaelic learning demand, enhanced partnerships, new curriculum development, and significant facility and community focused investments. FE and HE provision: Growth in several key FE areas and HE provision remains steady. Gaelic Language Plan and World Gaelic Week: The Gaelic Language Plan 2025–2030 was approved by <i>Bòrd na Gàidhlig</i> (20 Nov 2025) and formally launched in Stornoway (24 Feb 2026) as part of World Gaelic Week. Appointment of Jayne Macleod, Gaelic Officer, from 9 March 2026. Collaboration with Police Scotland, enabling Western Isles officers to take fully funded Gaelic courses through UHI NWH. e-Sgoil: Continued provision in partnership with e-Sgoil, though staffing issues reduced Higher and Advanced Higher enrolments this year. Cultural Development and Partnerships: Music Residency South Uist – 20-22 March. £3,000 awarded from UHI Rural Community Fund to run an immersive Gaelic/arts residency. Ceolas and Cnoc Soilleir – Phase 2 completion expected May 2026 and formal opening in September 2026. Area of Linguistic Significance – Confirmed under the Scottish Languages Act 2025.

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	Curriculum Development: Bòrd na Gàidhlig is funding (£9,000) a new SCQF Level 11 module. This module will sit within the new PGCert Sustainability and Regeneration: Gaelic Communities, launching recruitment in January 2026, with delivery planned from September 2026. Research and Academic Activity: PhD candidate Mhairi Ferrier (based at Cnoc Soilleir) awarded SGSAH funding for an internship with National Library Scotland. Barra and Harris Unearthed archaeology project progressing, with new staffing and investment. Funding approved for MSc Digital Archaeology module development for AY 2026/27. Taigh Chearsabhagh: Growth in Fine Art degree numbers. Senior Phase: Strong online and face-to-face curriculum for Sgoil Lionacleit, Nicolson Institute and Sir E Scott, with progression pathways in areas such as ESOL, Psychology, Aquaculture, Construction and Hairdressing. Home Educated Learners: Broad mix of online and face-to-face provision accessible across the islands.
Consultation How has consultation with partners been conducted?	With relevant teams and managers.
Resource implications What are the risks with this proposal?	If applicable, outlined within paper.
Risk implications	If applicable, outlined within paper.

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Link with strategy	Curriculum Strategy, Curriculum Delivery Plan.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Not required but key performance indicators analysed by protected characteristics where required.
Island Community Impact	UHI are the relevant authority.
Paper status	Highlight the paper status in the list below: ☐ Open – the paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. ☒ Restricted – the paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. ☐ Confidential - the paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests, as specified in the next section].
Freedom of information (FOI)	Highlight the FOI status in the list below. Refer to NWH Freedom of Information Site for more information: ☒ Open ☐ Closed – disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research. ☐ Closed – disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. ☐ Closed - Disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation. ☐ Closed - Disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court. ☐ Closed - Disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act. ☐ Closed - Other, please specify.
Freedom of information (FOI) disclosure date	If closed/ withheld is selected above, enter the date when this will become 'open': Click or tap to enter a date.

UHI North, West and Hebrides Gaelic Provision

Further Education Courses Course Titles	Number of Students		Mode of Delivery
	2024/25	2025/26	
Advanced Higher Gaelic Learner SCQF 7 (in collaboration with e-Sgoil)	11	N/A	Online
Gaelic Conversation (Intermediate) Level 4	22	25	Online
Gaelic for Work Purposes Level 3	5	8	Online
Gaelic Song as an Introduction to Gaelic Language Level 3	3	N/A	Cnoc Soilleir
Higher Gaelic Fluent SCQF 6 (in collaboration with e-Sgoil) School link	1	1	Online
Higher Gaelic Learner SCQF 6 (in collaboration with e-Sgoil) School link	4	3	Online
National 4 Gaelic Learner SCQF 4 (in collaboration with e-Sgoil)	N/A	12	Online
National 5 Gaelic Fluent SCQF 5 (in collaboration with e-Sgoil)	2	N/A	Online
National 5 Gaelic Learner SCQF 5 (in collaboration with e-Sgoil)	38	20	Online
Sgilean Canain Level 6	4	11	Online
Speak Gaelic A2 Level 3	4	19	Harris and Online
Speak Gaelic A1 Level 3	23	46	Stornoway, Portree, Benbecula and Online
Treanadh Oidean (Tutor Training) Level 6	N/A	5	Online
Ulpan Level 3	N/A	21	Barra and Online

Higher Education Courses Course Titles	Number of Students		Mode of Delivery
	2024/25	2025/26	
Culture and Heritage BAH	N/A	7	Stornoway
Gaelic and Education BAH	5	5	Stornoway
Gaelic BAH	4	1	Stornoway
Gaelic Language and Culture BAH	2	N/A	Stornoway
Gaelic Scotland BAH	1	1	Online
PGDE Primary (Gaelic medium)	1	2	Stornoway, Benbecula, Fort William
PGDE Secondary (Gaelic medium)	N/A	2	Stornoway, Benbecula, Fort William

World Gaelic Week

Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2025-2030

The UHI North, West and Hebrides [Gaelic Language Plan 2025-30](#), which will deliver the strategic aims and objectives of the UHI North West and Hebrides [Gaelic Strategy 2024-2029](#), was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 20th November 2025. The launch of the Gaelic Language Plan was undertaken in our Stornoway campus on Tuesday 24th February to link in with World Gaelic week 2026. We have recruited Jayne Macleod to the role of Gaelic Officer, start date 9th March 2026, please see the profile for Jayne in the **Reading Room**.

Highlands and Islands Police Scotland

To kick off World Gaelic week, some of the police officers from the Western Isles are strengthening their Gaelic Skills with fully funded courses from UHI North, West and Hebrides, supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

[News - Island police officers strengthen Gaelic skills with UHI North, West and Hebrides](#)

e-Sgoil

We have a Service Level Agreement between UHI North, West and Hebrides and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar e-Sgoil e-Learning Service with a planned number of eligible enrolments of 65 for the term of each agreement year. We are the enrolling partner and provide the registry function along with presenting the student information to Qualifications Scotland. Unfortunately, due to staff sickness at e-Sgoil this year, they have been unable to meet their agreed enrolment requirements for Higher and Advanced Higher. We have however, made arrangements with e-Sgoil, through our SLA to ensure this issue does not reoccur in future and to improve the speed at which issues are communicated to UHI North, West and Hebrides.

Music Residency

First Traditional Music Residency in South Uist – 20-22nd March

This new residency which will be held in Cnoc Soilleir offers an immersive weekend of traditional music-making, bringing together confident players of fiddle, piping, accordion, and guitar for intensive workshops, informal sessions, and collaborative learning. Rooted in the landscape, culture and Gaelic heritage of South Uist, the programme provides a unique opportunity for musicians to develop their skills while drawing inspiration from the island's rich traditions and sense of place. Gaelic music, song and culture will be an integral part of the residency.

Designed for confident instrumentalists aged 16 and over, the residency combines focused, instrument specific tuition with opportunities for collaboration, listening, and reflection. Alongside structured workshops, participants will be encouraged to take part in informal sessions and to immerse themselves in island life.

This residency represents an exciting new development in UHI North, West and Hebrides' traditional music offering in South Uist, where learners can already study the HNC Music programme at Cnoc Soilleir. The course supports students to build their performance, creative, and industry skills, ensuring that high quality music education is accessible across the region.

New Course Development funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is providing £9,000 to UHI North, West and Hebrides to support the development of a new 20-credit SCQF Level 11 module, *Revitalising Gaelic: Strategies for Community Empowerment and Language Confidence*. The module will be designed to inform students about Gaelic communities, community development, and related subject areas.

This new module will form part of the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Sustainability and Regeneration: Gaelic Communities, approved by UHI. The PGCert will comprise three modules:

- *Revitalising Gaelic: Strategies for Community Empowerment and Language Confidence*
- *Working with Communities*
- *The Economics of Community Wealth Building*

The qualification will sit within a wider suite of postgraduate programmes offered through the UHI Sustainability Studies Scheme, under the MSc Sustainability and Rural Regeneration framework.

Two of the modules are already established, and the third—*Revitalising Gaelic: Strategies for Community Empowerment and Language Confidence*—is currently in development, with the intention that it will be available from September 2026. Recruitment for students wishing to begin the certificate is planned to commence in January 2026.

Ceòlas and Cnoc Soilleir

UHI North, West and Hebrides and Ceòlas previously agreed a shared commitment to the preservation, curation, development and dissemination of the Uist Gaelic language, arts and culture, and of the unique attributes of archaeology, landscape and environment of Uist.

A successful bid of £3,000 was made to the UHI Rural Community Fund to run an 'Immersive Hebrides Experience' – a place-based music residency programme with a Gaelic element. Provisional dates for this are 20th-22nd March 2026. Staff undertook a fact-finding mission at the end of November to gauge the scope and make up of various immersive exhibitions, as a starting point to develop a similar exhibition in Phase 2 of Cnoc Soilleir.

The Uist Gaelic Language Plan was launched in early February. It is proposed to work in partnership with Ceòlas on areas of joint working to ensure language plan activities are complementary.

Areas of Linguistic Significance (ALS) designation was confirmed under the Scottish Languages Act 2025. Further information and formal announcement of areas and funding is awaited.

The Cnoc Soilleir Phase 2 construction project is progressing well with the main project due for completion at the end of May 2026. It is anticipated that the formal opening of the new facility will be in early September. The new 200 seat auditorium will provide a world class facility to enable delivery of high-quality professional performances to showcase Gaelic arts including traditional and contemporary music, dance and performance and to capitalise on and strengthen the natural resources within a vibrant natural Gaelic community.

PhD student Mhairi Ferrier, based at Cnoc Soilleir, has just been awarded SGSAH funding to carry out an internship with National Library Scotland. Mhairi is in the process of submitting a full chapter of her thesis for upgrade review panel.

The Barra and Harris Unearthed project led by our two Archaeology staff is progressing well. A third member of staff was recently appointed to provide project support. In addition, funding has been approved for 0.5FTE to develop MSc Digital Archaeology modules for delivery in AY 26/27 and to develop and deliver a further four archaeology courses (short and residential) for delivery in AY26/27.

North Uist – Taigh Chearsabhagh

We have seen growth in our Fine Art degree student numbers, supported by three, week-long residencies that allow students to work onsite at Taigh Chearsabhagh. With the campus based within the Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, learners benefit from direct access to exhibitions, artist talks, and the vibrant creative activity within the building.

As new developments progress within the museum, our students have even more opportunities to develop their skills in a supportive, engaging environment alongside resident artists and a growing artistic community. Students from our HND Art programme have joined the third year of the fine art degree this year which is an excellent progression opportunity which we hope will continue to be seen as a feeder course. The unique atmosphere and location of Taigh Chearsabhagh continue to offer creative inspiration and connection to the history and culture of the Uists.

Senior Phase

Sgoil Lionacleit

There is a range of online courses available to school pupils such as National 4 qualifications in NPA Aquaculture, ESOL, E-sport and National 5 in the likes of Business Management, Built Environment, Maritime. There are some good progression opportunities in some of the areas such as Level 4 ESOL to Level 5 and Higher. There is also a good progression for Psychology from National 5 up to Degree programmes.

The Nicolson Institute

Like Sgoil Lionacleit, there is the offer to join our online programmes that are available to school pupils through the levels. We also offer a collection of face-to-face learning at levels 4, 5 and 6 in programmes such as Aquaculture, Construction Craft and Hairdressing.

Sir E Scott

Again, offering a wide range of online offering to pupils to join the courses available. We also offer a level 5 face to face in Digital Recording Student Experience at level 5 however over the last couple of years there has been no uptake on places.

Home Educated

There is a wide range of courses being offered for Home Educated pupils. These courses are for pupils who are looking for learning options beyond what they do at home and are offered face to face in some of our locations and others are fully online.