
COMHAIRLE NA GÀIDHLIG BULLETIN, NOVEMBER, 2009

Our new bulletin is intended to familiarize you with the work of the Comhairle na Gàidhlig. This issue is an update of the Council's activities following our AGM in June, 2009. We welcome your feedback and participation in our planning and projects.

CORRESPONDENCES & OUTREACH

Over the last year, in an effort to raise awareness about community level Gaelic development, we have been making connections with various political parties within the province. Before and after the summer provincial election, we issued letters to MPs, MLAs, and party leaders. In response, we were pleased to receive a letter from Premier **Darrel Dexter** expressing his interest in working with us.

We also were pleased to receive a letter from **Lewis MacKinnon**, CEO of the Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs, welcoming our new board members, and thanking those who have completed their terms.

At the September meeting of our Board of Directors, we discussed an upcoming meeting with **Nova Scotia Economic Development** which is intended to explore how that department can provide long-term funding to support our goals of community-level Gaelic development. Jessica MacLennan, Council President, and Caroline Cameron, Administrative Officer, attended this informative meeting with Neal Conrad and Don Cameron from NSED. We were also joined by Catriona Parsons from the OGA. This meeting is the first of a new series of discussions that will be followed up before Christmas. One of the main messages, and a very positive one, from NSED at this meeting was that the Gaelic Community should keep its objectives well in sight, and not be distracted by the objectives of other bodies that provide funds.

In June, representatives of the Gaelic Council attended a '**Stakeholders Reception**' in Halifax for the new Minister of Gaelic Affairs, Maureen MacDonald. We also attended a more intimate and informal reception in Antigonish in September.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig attended the October launch in Baddeck of 'Cape Breton Island, the **Celtic Heart of North America**'. This marketing cooperative which "celebrates, shares and preserves the only living Celtic culture in North America" is to promote Cape Breton Gaelic language and culture as a tourist attraction internationally.

The Administrative Officer represented Comhairle na Gàidhlig at the October '**Creative Nova Scotia**' Conference and Awards in Yarmouth.

SUMMER STUDENTS

It was our first year hiring **summer students**, and we were fortunate to receive funding from both the federal and provincial governments for 8 and 9 weeks respectively. Colin Watson of Queensville, and Ashley MacKay of Stewartdale are both from Inverness County, where the

Administrative Office is located. However, we hope that as we gain more experience in directing student work, we can consider basing student applications in other counties.

The students had skills well suited to the tasks they were given: researching the potential of community language forums, and developing a handbook to assist community groups in holding successful events. They also attended and participated in Gaelic language events while providing information on what the Gaelic Council does.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

- Comhairle na Gàidhlig was represented by board, staff and students at a variety of **community activities** and events over the summer. These ranged from milling frolics to an **international conference** in Scotland on Community Gaelic development.
- The Administrative Officer attended a workshop on **media training** this spring which provided some good direction in awareness-raising. This area will continue to be an important focus for the Comhairle.
- The Comhairle made connections with the Nova Scotia chapter of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (**CASLT**) which was noted in their recent newsletter.
- We have been meeting regularly with the **OGA** to ensure that both groups are aware of each other's activities and can provide support where needed.

The Administrative Officer has been doing **routine** maintenance of the website, updating its events calendar, membership, issuing press releases and attending to requests and communications through their E-mail account, which is *always* busy. Recent tasks have been assisting committees with their special projects and supervising the summer students. The newsletter will be coming out again this fall and we, as ever, welcome any submissions.

FINANCES

Comhairle na Gàidhlig has been working to build **a base for long-term stability** for community work. Resources for project-based work are relatively easy to secure, compared to finding funding for on-going work. Long-term work in support of communities, for which we require staff, includes coordinating communications, resources and activities, as well as advocacy, awareness raising, and facilitating planning. We will be continuing to talk with the province, and develop financial strategies in order to maintain staff. Our meetings with Economic Development are encouraging in this regard.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- We began planning last winter for a summer **Tutor Training Workshop**, to be based on the work of the Tutor Planning Group which met in May 2009. We had great difficulty scheduling this during the summer, but were able to settle on November 2-6, daily, 9 am to 3:30 pm. We are *very* excited about the success of this project. Gàidhlig aig Baile Gaelic

classes were provided for students, while training new tutors – and for the first time, we engaged our own Nova Scotian instructors to host the session.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTION COMMITTEE

- We hosted a meeting in May to discuss how to best utilize May as **Gaelic Awareness Month**. The outcomes are presented in a report posted on our website www.gaelic.ca, and they provide a few pieces in the overall puzzle. We will be continuing this discussion in autumn, 2009.
- Currently we are working on a **brochure on Gaelic signage** to assist local residents and travelers in interpreting meanings and pronunciations of community names. This brochure will also serve to draw people's attention to language learning resources and opportunities in the province.
- We are looking at getting into the '**social networking**' scene by producing a Facebook page which directs people to our website, and acts as a portal to a range of Gaelic resources.
- The **Comhairle na Gàidhlig website** continues to be developed, and we encourage you to forward your Gaelic related activities for posting on our calendar of events.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- The work of this committee is currently being addressed in monthly meetings with the OGA. Comhairle na Gàidhlig feels it is important to provide definition around the question of what roles each of these bodies undertake, in order to encourage more efficient use of resources and time.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Comhairle Executive forms this committee, which ensures that the Council operates in an effective and forthright manner.

- In the coming months, we will be updating and adding to our **by-laws** which will be amended at the 2010 Annual General Meeting.
- In November of 2008, the Comhairle Board of Directors spent a day developing a strategic plan for the council's future, and establishing a list of **priority projects** for the coming year-and-a-half. At the November 2009 Board of Directors meeting we evaluated our progress over the past year and will be adjusting our strategy as necessary.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig - The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, is a non-profit organization promoting and developing Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia. Our Board of Directors meets quarterly, alternating between Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia. The Executive holds ten meetings per year, sometimes corresponding with the quarterly meetings. Anyone interested in addressing a particular topic, please contact:

Caroline Cameron, Administrative Officer
Comhairle na Gàidhlig - The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia
PO Box 123 Iona, NS
B2C 1A3

(902) 258-5768
comhairlenagaidhlig@gmail.com