

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 18 June 2025
11th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

PE2098: Provide essential investment in the Gaelic language to secure its future

Introduction

Petitioner Màrtainn Mac a' Bhàillidh on behalf of Misneachd

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to bring investment in the Gaelic language to sustainable levels by increasing Bòrd na Gàidhlig's annual budget to at least £8.5 million and increase funding in line with inflation each year.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2098>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 11 September 2024](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Scottish Government which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 11 June 2024](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing 1,152 signatures have been received on this petition.
8. The [Scottish Languages Bill](#) is currently at Stage 3. The Stage 3 debate is due to take place on Tuesday 17 June 2025.

Action

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
June 2025

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2098: Provide essential investment in the Gaelic language to secure its future

Petitioner

Màrtainn Mac a' Bhàillidh on behalf of Misneachd

Date Lodged

14 May 2024

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to bring investment in the Gaelic language to sustainable levels by increasing Bòrd na Gàidhlig's annual budget to at least £8.5 million and increase funding in line with inflation each year.

Background information

Investment in Gaelic development creates jobs, particularly in marginalised rural and island communities, and has a positive impact across numerous policy priorities.

Two panels of Government appointed experts estimated in the early 2000s that to fulfil its obligations Bòrd na Gàidhlig would need an annual budget of £10 million. It has only ever received around £5 million per year, which has never risen in line with inflation.

Gaelic community development is chronically underfunded and suffers real-terms cuts year on year. This comes against a worsening trend of language-shift in the island and rural communities and insufficient support nationally. We face the very real threat that Gaelic will cease to exist as a community language.

If Bòrd na Gàidhlig's initial budget had increased in line with inflation it would have reached between £8.5m and £10m for 2024/25. Even that increase would leave it below the level recommended in the early 2000s.

If the Scottish Government, and Parliament, are serious about securing Gaelic's future then investment in it must be brought to adequate levels.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2098 on 11 September 2024

The Convener: Our next petition is PE2098, which was lodged by Màrtainn Mac a' Bhàillidh on behalf of Misneachd, calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to bring investment in the Gaelic language to sustainable levels by increasing the annual budget to at least £8.5 million and increasing funding in line with inflation each year.

The SPICe briefing explains that, over the past decade, the Scottish Government's direct funding for Scots and Gaelic has stayed fairly stable in cash terms, which represents a real-terms cut of around a fifth. During this time, Bòrd na Gàidhlig's annual budget has remained at £5.1 million. The Scottish Government's response to the petition states that, following feedback, additional funding of £175,000 was provided for its Gaelic officer scheme. Bòrd na Gàidhlig was asked to report on the scheme by the end of June this year.

The petitioner's submission shares his view that nowhere near enough is being done or spent in vernacular communities to address the intensifying language shift. He highlights the view of two panels that stated in the early 2000s that Bòrd na Gàidhlig would require an annual budget of £10 million to fulfil its obligations. The petitioner states that there will not be a second chance to preserve the language as a spoken vernacular language in Scotland.

Do members have any comments or suggestions for action?

David Torrance: Could we consider writing to the Scottish Government to seek an update on the Gaelic officer scheme following the funded six-month extension and subsequent reporting from Bòrd na Gàidhlig?

The Convener: Are colleagues content to proceed on the basis that we will keep the petition open and initiate enquiries?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submission

Scottish Government written submission, 29 April 2025

PE2098/C: Provide essential investment in the Gaelic language to secure its future

First, let me apologise for the delay in providing a response. At a meeting of the Civil Participation and Public Petitions Committee it was noted that a six month extension had been granted to the Gaelic Officers' Scheme and the Committee requested an update on this matter. The Scottish Government has now provided an update on this matter.

Following the six month extension to the Gaelic Officers' scheme the Scottish Government then provided further funding to ensure the Scheme was able to continue until the end of financial year 2024-25. The Scottish Government provided Bòrd na Gàidhlig with a further £510k to support the Gaelic Officers' Scheme in 2025-26. This allocation of £510k was part of a £5.7m uplift for Gaelic which was included in the Scottish Government's budget for 25-26.

I hope this information is clear and helpful and demonstrates the importance which the Scottish Government attaches to Gaelic projects that operate at a community level. If anything else is needed, please don't hesitate to make contact.