



Jannoo Shickyry Traa Ry-heet y Ghaelg

A Strategic Review for 2010-15 (revised 2013)

1. The purpose of this review

To revisit the language situation and make some recommendations as to where we should be focusing our resources in the short-term. This is not meant to be a prescriptive report but an attempt to reassess an ever changing linguistic situation in the Island. The long-term objective of this strategy is to create an environment in the Island where Manx Gaelic can flourish and be accepted as an integral part of the Island's cultural identity

2. Why now?

The Manx Language Development Programme produced by my predecessor is now over 10 years old; its impact on the language since then cannot be understated; however, it is now appropriate to revisit its recommendations.

In the last 10 years the language has made remarkable advances much of which is a consequence of the recommendations made in the 2000 report. An evaluation of our objectives is now felt appropriate.

The last 10 years has seen Strategic Reviews in Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, Nova Scotia and a number of other jurisdictions; the conclusions drawn from these can help us format our own language strategy.

We are living in a changing financial and political climate in the Island which inevitably will impact on the decisions we can make within the language community: it is now appropriate for us to prioritise.

3. Why Manx?

Although there has been a sea-change in the attitudes towards Manx Gaelic over the last 20 years it is worth reminding ourselves of the importance of the language to the Island and the role it can play in our future. Some of these include the following:

Students at the Bunscoil Ghaelgagh, where the curriculum is taught through the medium of Manx Gaelic, benefit from the well attested advantages associated with



bilingualism. The children who receive their education there can now be described as effective bilinguals.

The revival of Manx Gaelic is a good-news story for the Island; the work at Bunscoill Ghaelgagh, in particular, has attracted wide-ranging press attention throughout the world.

The teaching of Manx at all levels goes some way to meeting Government policy of developing a Positive National Identity. Given that less than 50% of the Island's population was born here, the teaching of Manx can ensure that children educated in the Island's schools are aware of the different history and culture of the Island. In this sense the teaching of the language can be seen as culturally inclusive.

There is an increasing emphasis on the teaching of 'citizenship skills' at schools at present. The language and accompanying culture can provide a rooted identity for all the Island's children and can illustrate the links between the traditional and modern, global and local.

Demand for the teaching of Manx and interest in the Island's distinct culture remains high. The 2001 Mori poll recorded that nearly 25% of respondents would be interested in learning Manx whilst the Culture and Heritage Survey conducted for the Branding exercise indicated that 75% thought that language and culture were important for national identity and that 86% thought that there should be more encouragement for children to learn the language.

4. What has been achieved since 2000?

The last ten years have seen a remarkable change in the fortunes of Manx Gaelic. Some of these include:

The establishment of the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh at St Johns. As of September, 2013, 71 children will receive their education through the medium of Manx Gaelic.

A number of children choose to receive part of their post Bunscoill Ghaelgagh education through Manx at QE2 where, from years seven to nine, two or three classes are taught through Manx.



Mooijer Veggey operates a number of play-groups and nurseries for pre-school aged children.

More than a thousand children a year opt to study Manx Gaelic as a subject at either Primary or Secondary School level.

There are now seven embedded Primary School Manx Gaelic teachers.

Manx Gaelic is now a properly timetabled option at two of the five secondary schools on the Island. There are a number of children who have or are taking A-Level Manx. Some of these are continuing their interest in Celtic Studies / Linguistics at university level.

The establishment in 2009 of a Manx Gaelic Youth Group in Peel

A Manx Gaelic writer has been appointed to work with the Bunscoil Ghaelgagh to develop quality learning materials in Manx.

In conjunction with the Centre for Manx Studies a new grammar of the Language, *Practical Manx* has been published.

Culture Vannin supports the work of the Manx Language Development Officer whose role includes increasing the status and improving the public perception of the language.

Culture Vannin is now working towards the establishment of a professionally run and administered adult language programme

The Manx Language Development Officer for Culture Vannin has developed a wide-ranging PR programme for the language which has gone some way towards changing public opinion about the language

The language has a first-class and high-profile internet presence at www.learnmanx.com together with a wide range of material on Facebook and Twitter

There is an excellent on-line searchable Manx Gaelic dictionary at: <http://mannin.info/MHF/>



Culture Vannin now supports a properly run and funded translation service

The recordings of the Irish Folklore Commission's interviews with native speakers has been published by Manx National Heritage as *Skealyn Vannin*

2012 saw the high-profile publication of *The Gruffalo* into Manx as well as the development of the first Manx Language learning app.

5. Structure of this review

In drawing up this Language Strategy I have engaged the four different types of language planning used by my predecessor in 2000 and which have been used since then in budget proposals for Culture Vannin.

- **Planning for language acquisition** - includes supporting language transmission in the family, pre-school and at Manx Medium education level.
- **Planning for language use** - includes developing the use of Manx in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- **Status Planning** - the visibility of the language needs to be raised and Government encouraged to work towards compliance with the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.
- **Corpus planning** - the need for linguistic standardisation and the development of specialised terminology.

Securing the future of Manx can only be achieved by key partners working together for the common interests of the language. These **Key Partners** include:

Culture Vannin and its Manx Language Development Officer
Mooijer Veggey and the Bunscoil Ghaelgagh
Department of Education and Children
Department of Education and Children's Unnid Gaelgagh
Yn Çheshaght Ghailckagh
Manx National Heritage
Gaelic Broadcasting Committee



6. The Strategic Plan

Language Acquisition

The priority areas to address here are:

1. Manx Medium Education and Preschool Manx
2. Manx in English medium schools
3. Manx for adults

1. The importance of Manx Medium education to the survival of the language cannot be underestimated. Education at the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh will provide a cohort of fluent young Manx Gaelic speakers as well as effective bilingual students.

Priority areas:

- a. The Manx Language Development Officer for Culture Vannin in conjunction with Mooinjer Veggey to ensure that the benefits of bilingual education are well known in the Island and that the quality of preschool education remains high
- b. That Key Partners work towards ensuring quality educational resources are available for use at the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh.
- c. That Key Partners work together to ensure that the transition from Bunscoill to Secondary school is a smooth one and that adequate provision is available for children wishing to learn subjects through Manx at Secondary School.
- d. That a pool of potential teachers willing to teach through Manx is identified and that assistance is made available for them to improve the quality of their Manx.
- e. That the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh and the Manx Language Development Officer for Culture Vannin identify parents willing to develop their own language ability and that resources are made available to help them to do this.
- f. Support needs to be maintained and, where appropriate, extended for the Manx Gaelic Youth Group



2. The work of Department of Education's **Unnid Gaelgagh** ensures that children outside of the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh have access to the language. For the vast majority of children in the Island they will access the language as a taught subject.

Priority areas:

- a. To see more children in both primary and secondary schools having access to the language
- b. To see Manx as a properly timetabled subject in all secondary schools
- c. Support those children learning Manx at GCSE and A Level

3. In addition to language acquisition at school we recognise the importance of the adult language sector. There is considerable interest among adults and we must work towards ensuring that those who start learning the language end up speaking it.

Priority areas:

- a. That Culture Vannin continues to work towards an effective and professionally ran adult language programme
- b. That teacher training for adult tutors is made available and that we move towards the appointment of a part-time adult language tutor
- c. That resources are made available in order to remunerate tutors for their time and effort
- d. Working with Culture Vannin a dedicated learners' association is established which will provide greater opportunities for learners to use their Manx
- e. That classes are made available outside of evenings and in conjunction with businesses
- f. The publication of a Manx-English / English-Manx pocket dictionary for learners



g. That the www.learnmanx.com website continues to provide material suitable for all levels of learners

Language Use

We would like to see an increasing number of people on the Island choosing to use Manx as a normal and accepted mode of communication. As identified in the 2000 Report language use can occur in two major areas:

- i) the **instrumental use** of Manx for economic use
- ii) the **integrative use** of Manx for social, cultural and community use

Priority areas:

1) The **instrumental use**

a) We recognise the importance of encouraging businesses to use Manx in ways that are appropriate for them and to this end Culture Vannin will continue to provide a free translation service for business on the Island

b) The Manx Language Development Officer to publish a digital version of the very successful **Gaelg son Dellal – Manx for Business Guide**

c) The Manx Language Development Officer will provide training seminars and courses for those in Government Departments, Local Authorities and the private sector

d) For Government departments to identify an employee who can liaise with Culture Vannin's Manx Language Development Officer to ensure that their division of Government can strive to make greater use of Manx

e) Manx National Heritage to ensure that Manx is more visible throughout its work

f) The Manx Language Development Officer to work closely with Local Authorities to assist them in following the recommendations of the 1985 Tynwald Report on street names, village and town boundary signs.

g) The media

There still remains a massive gap in the amount of Manx available in the broadcast media. For minority languages a presence in television, radio and the internet is of



crucial importance in generating credibility for the language but also in facilitating language acquisition and usage.

The Manx Language Development Officer in conjunction with the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee to develop a co-ordinated, but realistic development strategy, for the production of Manx Language material in all currently available media

ii) the **integrative use**

In order to extend and develop community based language activity the number of domains in which the language can be used needs to be gradually expanded

Priority areas:

- a) The establishment of a Manx Learners' Association with funding for an administration post which will provide a co-ordinated programme of events for learners and speakers
- b) The Manx Language Development Officer to work towards a professionally ran Manx Gaelic summer school for learners, speakers and children
- c) The language movement should work towards a 'Language Centre' in Douglas based on the Culturlann model in Northern Ireland
- d) The Manx Language Development Officer to work closely with Music Officers to ensure a high profile for the language at all cultural festivals



Status Planning

Every aspect of Manx language use is important to the status of the language - this holds for every event and occasion on which Manx is used by institutions and individuals. The factors which confer status on Manx are many and complex, and span the whole range of language use, from the use of Manx in Tynwald to Manx adverts on the radio.

Parents are influenced by a variety of factors when deciding whether to raise their children in Manx or English, or whether they wish their children to attend Manx language lessons. The value which children attribute to the Manx language in education will be affected by such status factors. Similarly adult learners' perceptions of language status will influence their commitment to learn and then go on to speak the language.

Priority areas:

a) The creation of a **Manx Language Advisory Committee** which can advise Government Officers and others on the general development of Manx Gaelic. It is envisaged that this would be a voluntary body which would work beyond the remit of Coonceil ny Gaelgey and the post of The Manx Language Development Officer but which could help unify policy towards the language. It is anticipated that membership of the committee would consist of:

The Manx Language Development Officer for Culture Vannin

The Department of Education's Manx Officer

A representative from the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh

A representative from both Mooinjer Veggey and Yn Çheshaght Ghailckagh

One other co-opted member

b) The Isle of Man Government to work towards signing up to **Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**. In order to facilitate this, the Manx Language Development Officer would work towards the establishment of an Official Translation Service for Manx Gaelic.

c) The Manx Language Development Officer to continue to disseminate information that leads to a positive image of the language both on and off Island

d) The Manx Language Development Officer to continue to work towards high visibility of the language



Corpus Planning

Corpus planning centres around two areas:
the need for linguistic standardisation and
the need to develop a popular form of Manx

Priority areas:

- a) Culture Vannin to continue to fund the work of a paid translator and administrator of Coonceil ny Gaelgey
- b) For specialised terminology word lists and dictionaries to be made available on www.learnmanx.com
- c). The publication of a Manx-English / English-Manx pocket dictionary for learners
- d). For Manx National Heritage to work towards making the recordings carried out by Yn Çheshaght Ghailckagh activists of native speakers in the 1950s widely available
- e) For Key Partners to support academic research into Manx Gaelic which will specifically improve the quality of language instruction on the Island