

[West Dunbartonshire Council]



**DRAFT
GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN
2026-2031**

This plan has been prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on [approval date]

1. Foreword

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to giving equal respect to the Gaelic language in recognition of its status as one of Scotland's national languages, its contribution to the richness and diversity of Scottish culture and its importance within our nation's heritage.

This is the second edition of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan and it demonstrates our commitment to maintain the progress made in recent years and to increase momentum in line with aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan.

Significant progress has been made in raising awareness of Gaelic and increasing the visibility of the language in our authority, and this edition of the Plan aims to further increase the use and learning of Gaelic and to further promote a positive image of Gaelic in West Dunbartonshire.

Peter Hessett
Chief Executive

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to giving equal respect to Gaelic and English, recognising Gaelic as one of Scotland's national languages and an integral part of our shared cultural heritage. This Gaelic Language Plan 2026–2031 sets out how the Council will strengthen the use, visibility and learning of Gaelic across our services, communities and educational settings, in line with the priorities of the [National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028](#).

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that Gaelic continues to grow as a vibrant, community language in West Dunbartonshire. It outlines the Council's strategic commitments to increase opportunities for people to use, learn and engage with Gaelic across the lifespan - from early years through to adulthood - and to embed the language more visibly across all corporate and public - facing aspects of the organisation.

Introduction

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to supporting and promoting Gaelic as an integral part of Scotland's cultural, historical and linguistic heritage. This Gaelic Language Plan 2026–2031 has been prepared in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under the **Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005**, which establishes Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to English.

The Council also recognises its responsibilities under the **Scottish Languages Act 2025**, which strengthens national commitments to Scotland's indigenous languages, including Gaelic and Scots. The plan acknowledges and includes that the 2025 Act places renewed emphasis on “strengthening language rights for speakers, increasing access to learning opportunities, and ensuring WDC contributes to the national effort to sustain and grow Scotland's minority and lesser-used languages”. Together, these Acts provide the legislative foundation for the Council's work to protect, promote and develop Gaelic across West Dunbartonshire.

Development of the Plan

This second edition of the Gaelic Language Plan has been developed through a process of assessment, consultation and review. Bòrd na Gàidhlig assessed Draft Edition 02 of the plan on **12 November 2025**, taking into account the **2024 Statutory Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans** and the **National Gaelic Language Plan 2023–2028**.

The development process has also been shaped by internal data, ongoing partnership work, and the progress achieved during the Council's first Gaelic Language Plan (2020–2025), which significantly expanded Gaelic learning and cultural opportunities across the authority.

Gaelic in West Dunbartonshire: Local Context

West Dunbartonshire lies to the west of the City of Glasgow bounded by the River Clyde, Kilpatrick Hills and Loch Lomond, covering an area of 98 square miles. Bordering Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire and Stirling, West

Dunbartonshire Authority is a significant location for economic and environmental development between the City of Glasgow and the Gateway to the Highlands through Loch Lomond National Park. West Dunbartonshire includes sites of natural beauty and heritage with good transport links in close proximity to Glasgow and its airport. The area boasts a rich heritage shaped by world famous shipyards along the Clyde with many visitor attractions including; The Titan Crane, Dumbarton Castle (Dumbarton Castle being the medieval capital of the region), Dumbarton Rock, Whisky Distilleries, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.

With a population of 88,399 ([2022 Census](#)) West Dunbartonshire is one of Scotland's mid-ranked Authorities in terms of population and area size. West Dunbartonshire Authority is a mix of urban and rural communities with Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria being its key towns. Other towns and villages include Duntocher, Old Kilpatrick, Milton, Bowling, Gartocharn and Balloch.

West Dunbartonshire includes significant pockets of social and economic deprivation; the number of West Dunbartonshire data zones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland has increased from 35 to 38. This equates to 31.4% of all West Dunbartonshire data zones in the 15% most deprived category. The number of West Dunbartonshire data zones in the 20% least deprived in Scotland has increased from 5 to 7. This equates to 5.8% of all West Dunbartonshire data zones in the 20% least deprived category. [Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\) 2020 \(west-dunbarton.gov.uk\)](#)

West Dunbartonshire Council is one of 32 unitary authorities in Scotland. It is responsible for a broad range of services including education, social work, housing, environmental health, planning, economic development, employment and financial support, Roads and Transportation, Contact Centres and One Stop Shops based in Council Headquarters, Clydebank and Alexandria. West Dunbartonshire Authority has one of the best established Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland and was one of the first Authorities to set up a Community Health and Care Partnership with the NHS.

West Dunbartonshire comprises 22 locally elected Councillors covering 6 multi-member wards. The Council is the governing body for West Dunbartonshire's decision-making and is the source of all delegated powers to strategic Committees.

West Dunbartonshire Council has a 2024/25 net expenditure of 296.585m in 2024/25, with 5571 employees making it the largest employer in the area.

West Dunbartonshire Council prepared its Gaelic Language Plan under obligations set out in the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, which established Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to English.

The Council also recognises its responsibilities under the Scottish Languages Act 2025, which reinforces the national commitment to supporting Scotland's indigenous languages, including Gaelic and Scots.

The 2025 Act places a renewed emphasis on:

- Strengthening language rights for speakers
- Increasing access to learning opportunities

- Ensuring public bodies contribute to the national effort to sustain and grow Scotland's minority and lesser-used languages
- Delivering transparent progress reporting and community-centred language development

Together, these Acts underpin the Council's responsibility to actively support Gaelic as a vital part of Scotland's cultural, historical and linguistic landscape.

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HISTORY OF GAELIC IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

The town name Dumbarton comes from the Scottish Gaelic Dùn Breatann meaning fort of the Britons. West Dunbartonshire is close to the Highlands, and Gaelic language had influence on place names throughout West Dunbartonshire. The source of some of the information is John Irving's 'Place Names of Dumbartonshire' (1928). Here are some of the prefixes of [Gaelic place names](#), which feature in our area:-

achadh ('field')- e.g. in Auchincarroch; Auchentorlie

baile ('town' or 'farm') - e.g. in Ballagan

dail ('meadow') - e.g. in Dalreoch; Dalmuir; Dalnottar; Dillichip

druim ('ridge') - e.g. in Drumry

dùn ('fort' or 'rounded hill') - e.g. in Dunglass; Duntocher; Dumbarton

cill ('church') - e.g. in Kilpatrick; Kilmaronock



[Gaelic Station Names](#) are visible at ScotRail Stations across West Dunbartonshire, for example: Bruach Chluaidh | Clydebank, Bolan | Bowling, An Dail Mhòr | Dalmuir.

West Dunbartonshire Council use [Ainmean Àite na h-Alba](#) to translate any official new signage or documentation that is used throughout the authority.

GAELIC IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE TODAY

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to promote Gaelic language and culture. There are many strategies in place to develop and expand its Gaelic Speaking community which have been successfully implemented in our first Gaelic Language Plan. An average of 1500 young people have had experience of Gaelic language learning each year across the 0-18 spectrum.

West Dunbartonshire Council recognises Gaelic to be equal to English. To provide further opportunities and increase numbers of Gaelic speakers, in partnership with the Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, West Dunbartonshire Council deploys a Gaelic Development Officer, a Gaelic Teacher and a Gaelic Early Years Leader. Secondary teachers in St. Peter the Apostle High School have committed to Gaelic Language Learning as part of their professional development.

Opportunities continue for West Dunbartonshire residents to learn Gaelic and these are located strategically to ensure access for all. These sessions include: Gaelic Bookbug in two West Dunbartonshire Libraries, Gaelic Learning in 8 Early Learning Centres, 8 feeder Primary Schools and BGE and Senior Phase Gaelic Language Learning in St. Peter the Apostle High School. In addition, Gaelic language classes and cultural experiences are run by Fèis Dhùn Bhreatainn an Iar, and Clydebank and District Highland Association run regular cèilidhs and dances throughout the year.

West Dunbartonshire does not have Gaelic Medium provision but supports parent/carers requests - further is available on our [authority webpage](#). Children and young people are supported to access Gaelic medium education in neighbouring authorities where capacity allows.

West Dunbartonshire Council has a small number of staff with varying levels of Gaelic language and we have continued to expand the offer of Continued Professional Development to all Education Staff when funding allows.

GAELIC ORGANISATIONS IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

West Dunbartonshire has two main Gaelic organisations: Fèis Dhùn Bhreatainn an Iar and Clydebank and District Highland Association. The Gaelic Development Officer continues to work in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal to offer Gaelic language and cultural opportunities to Primary aged children.

GAELIC IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE TODAY

The number of Gaelic speakers in West Dunbartonshire is 684, up from 510 in 2011. Gaelic learning continues to grow since our first Gaelic Plan and the number of young people across our authority learning Gaelic is approximately 1500 annually.

Consultation

A Community Consultation was carried out from 23/4/26 until 8/06/26. It was open to the public through an online questionnaire hosted on the **West Dunbartonshire Council** website. To encourage broad participation, the consultation was actively promoted to the public and key stakeholders through the following channels:

- **West Dunbartonshire Council social media** platforms
- **Community Planning West Dunbartonshire** Participation & Engagement structures
- Local **Gaelic interest groups** operating within West Dunbartonshire
- **Education communications** distributed to all schools
- **Internal staff communications** via corporate channels
- **Health and Social Care Partnership Locality Groups**

Posters containing a QR code linking to the questionnaire were displayed in all public libraries across West Dunbartonshire. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also made available for individuals preferring a hard-copy format. The six-week parent/carer [Gaelic Medium Education in West Dunbartonshire Survey – Results](#) are available.

The findings from this consultation have directly informed the development of the actions contained within this plan. For more detailed information, please refer to **Appendix 1**.

1. Strategic commitments/Aims

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Education and Learning	GLPS Expansion of GLPS: The original plan noted that Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) was established in only two schools (Edinbarnet and Gavinburn). Progress: GLPS has expanded significantly by introducing Gaelic learning to nine further primary schools, including; Braehead, Gartocharn, St. Eunan's, St. Mary's, Our Lady of Loretto, Our Holy Redeemer, St Joesph's, St. Stephen's and Gavinburn Primaries. Fèisean nan Gàidheal deliver Blasad Gàidhlig Gaelic Taster sessions to GLPS establishments.	GLPS Further develop Gaelic Learner Education (GLE), expanding Gaelic learning opportunities across the Broad General Education (BGE) – embed Gaelic learning in the SPTA local learning community, building staff capacity and pupil confidence Continue partnership with St. Peter the Apostle Learning Community.	GLPS	GLPS June 2028 Aug 2026 – June 2029 Aug 2026 - June 2031

Education and Learning	Early Learning & Childcare (ELCC): The 2020 plan identified Early Years as "paramount" to the Gaelic journey. • Progress: Gaelic learning has been successfully embedded in six ELCCs, matching the expansion in the primary sector. Namely: Gavinburn ELCC Braehead ELCC Gartocharn ELCC St. Eunan's ELCC St. Mary's ELCC Our Holy Redeemer ELCC • Teacher Professional Learning: The plan committed to giving all teachers the opportunity to attend GLPS training. • One Primary teacher has progressed to a Postgraduate course at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.	Early Learning & Childcare (ELCC) WDC will continue to strengthen Gaelic learning across Early Learning and Childcare Centres, primary schools and secondary education.	Early Learning & Childcare (ELCC): Gaelic Development team	Aug 2026 - June 2031
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Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
	GME The first plan stated that WDC will provide transport for GME young people attending Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu. Progress: West Dunbartonshire Council supports Gaelic Medium Education and currently funds transport for 7 young people to attend Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, 3 pupils to attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and 2 pupils to attend Bun-sgoil an Iar in Paisley. In line with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, West Dunbartonshire Council promotes and supports current Gaelic language learning provision. There is detailed information on the rights of parents to request GME on the official Gaelic Education webpage with clear links to the assessment process.	GME Continue to support access to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in neighbouring authorities, including the continued provision of transport where required. West Dunbartonshire Council will explore cross-boundary GME transport protocol; to ensure that pupils, and any future successful applicants have access to travel to their designated GME hubs in Glasgow and Paisley for the duration of their schooling.	GME Central service	June 2031 June 2030

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Education and Learning	Secondary and Further Education Senior Phase Development: WDC has maintained Gaelic learning in Broad General Education (BGE) at St. Peter the Apostle, supported by e-Sgoil. Positive Destinations: The original plan aimed to improve life chances and attainment. Progress: Two notable individual successes include a student continuing Gaelic at Edinburgh University and another completing National 5 Gaelic with the intent to continue in further education.	Secondary and Further Education Senior Phase Development: To increase the number of pupils engaging with Gaelic in S1–S3 by reducing the reliance on a digital interface Positive Destinations Establish links with Universities that offer Gaelic courses and invite to the Careers event held in St. Peter the Apostle High School.	Secondary and Further Education Senior Phase Development: Gaelic Development team Positive Destinations Gaelic Development team	Positive Destinations February 2027

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Education and Learning	Gaelic Learning Curriculum The Council will continue to strengthen Gaelic learning across Early Learning and Childcare Centres, primary schools and secondary education. This includes: • Further developing Gaelic Learner Education (GLE), expanding Gaelic learning opportunities across Broad General Education (BGE)	Gaelic Learning Curriculum In line with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, create a formal curriculum alignment so that the "Gaelic Awareness" taught in nursery leads directly into the "L3 Gaelic" taught in Primary, which then feeds into the "e-Sgoil" sessions in Secondary. Develop a standardised kit of physical and digital resources (books, flashcards, and links to Go! Gaelic) to every BGE classroom in the St Peter the Apostle Learning community. Promote and expand professional learning opportunities for teachers within the SPTA local learning community.	Gaelic Learning Curriculum Gaelic Development team Gaelic Development team	June 2027

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Increase Gaelic in Homes	Gaelic in Homes Development: The WDC Gaelic Plan 2020-2025 aimed to support families to engage with Gaelic from the earliest stages: • Gaelic Bookbug sessions • accessible online resources • family learning opportunities • improved signposting to Gaelic learning pathways.	Gaelic in Homes Where demand arises we will expand bookbug sessions to families in WDC We will actively continue to promote Gaelic bookbug session on social media platforms Continue to deliver and develop Stòiridh le Sandra/Story with Sandra (learning through play and story) within the SPTA local learning community. Continue to deliver and develop Fèisean nan Gàidheal's Blasad Gàidhlig as fundiing allows, ensuring expansion across the SPTA learning community	Gaelic in Homes Gaelic Development Team	May 2026 Aug 2026 – Jun 2029 Aug 2026 - Jun 2031

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Gaelic in Communities and culture	Gaelic in Communities and Culture Working with local Gaelic organisations and regional/national partners including Fèis Dhùn Bhreatann an Iar, the Council aimed to widen access to Gaelic cultural activity, strengthen community learning opportunities and encourage participation in events such as Seachdain na Gàidhlig. West Dunbartonshire will explore through public consultation, the provision of Gaelic language learning opportunities in the community, where demand and funding allows.	Gaelic in Communities and Culture The Council will develop links between Gaelic organisations including as Comunn na Gàidhlig, An Comunn Gàidhealach, An Comunn Gàidhealach and Còmann nam Pàrant and the local economy, particularly in tourism and heritage, highlighting the Gaelic history of West Dunbartonshire to visitors. West Dunbartonshire will gauge interest annually through public consultation to provide Gaelic language learning opportunities in the community, where demand and funding allows.	Gaelic in Communities and Culture Gaelic Development team and others Gaelic Development Team Gaelic Development Team	Gaelic in Communities and Culture Aug 2026 - June 2031 Aug 2026 - June 2031
Gaelic Orthographic	The Gaelic Orthographic Conventions has been followed in relation to all materials that have been produced by WDC.	To continue to use The Gaelic Orthographic Conventions in relation to all materials that have been produced by WDC.	Gaelic Development Team	Aug 2026 – Jun 2031

2. Corporate Commitments

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Strategic Aim Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Corporate Commitment Identity: Corporate identity Signage	Corporate identity Corporate Translation: West Dunbartonshire's Gaelic Language Plan 2020-2025 aimed to provide Gaelic translations for key documents and respond to complaints or correspondence in Gaelic. Progress: A Gaelic translation service is now active and available on request, fulfilling the commitment to equal respect for the language	Corporate identity WDC will continue to provide Gaelic translations for key documents and respond to complaints or correspondence in Gaelic when requested Adapt the corporate logo and branding in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity as part of any renewal process. The logo should demonstrate equal status for both languages.	Corporate identity Gaelic Development team Gaelic Development Team and Central Team	Corporate identity Aug 2026 - Jun 2029 Aug 2027

Corporate Commitment	Signage: In the 2020-2025 plan WDC committed to including Gaelic on all new signage for schools, leisure centres, and Council buildings as part of a replacement programme. Progress: WDC has integrated Gaelic signage on all new Council building signs as part of the "new and renew" programme. Communication Staff that currently use Gaelic as part of their remit have bilingual email signatures WDC currently does not have any front-line staff at the main reception that can communicate in Gaelic	Signage: The Council will continue to enhance the visibility and use of Gaelic across its corporate identity and signage. Communication To increase the number of WDC employees using bilingual signatures beginning with staff in the SPTA LLC WDC is focused on developing internal Gaelic capacity to expand our front-line services. Although a full Gaelic reception and telephone service is not yet available, we will offer staff training to work toward this goal.	Signage: Gaelic Development Team Communication Central Service	June 2031
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Corporate Commitment	Currently we have not been requested to, or held bilingual meetings Information WDC have promoted communications from wider bodies and Gaelic partners Currently there is Information on the WDC webpage about the Gaelic language Act. Gaelic language resources have been developed and posted on the e-learning webpage and YouTube channel.	Where appropriate and staffing permits we will aim to host public meetings bilingually as requested by the public. Gaelic training will be expanded to increase staff confidence and skills, supported by a comprehensive staff audit to inform future provision. Information WDC will support the National Plan's focus on Gaelic Media by utilising and promoting BBC Alba and Radio nan Gàidheal resources in schools and community hubs and increasing the Council's own Gaelic-language multimedia content (videos/podcasts). Develop more information on Gaelic learning and signpost parents and learners to Gaelic learning materials on the WDC e-learning platform.	Information	Information
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Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Strategic Aim Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Corporate Commitment	Staffing An Audit took place to establish the number of Gaelic speakers during WDC's Gaelic Language Plan 2020-2025	Staffing Conduct a Council wide audit of Gaelic skills and training needs to gain accurate statistics and establish potential for growth Gaelic Awareness Video on digital platforms to promote that Scottish Gaelic preserves a vital pillar of Scotland's living heritage, enriches communities through the proven cognitive and educational benefits of bilingualism, and fuels economic growth in the creative and tourism sectors. Gaelic Language skills training to be offered where funding allows to increase the number of WDC employees speaking and using Gaelic.	Staffing Gaelic Development Team Gaelic Development Team Central Team	Staffing Communication in Gaelic will be accepted and replied to in Gaelic Jun 2031 Feb 2027

Strategic Aim	Current Practice/ progress	Strategic Aim Next steps/ Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
Corporate Commitment	Recruitment In recruitment, where appropriate, Gaelic as desirable skill has been included in Job application specification.	Recruitment To increase the number of job opportunities where 'Gaelic as desirable' is offered.	Recruitment	
	Tourism West Dunbartonshire Council promotes Gaelic cultural accessibility in: Fèis Dhùn Bhreatann an Iar The Highland Society Pipe Band Dumbarton Highland Games Loch Lomond Highland Games	Tourism To continue to develop existing, and build new partnerships with wide ranging organisations.	Tourism Citizen, Culture & Facilities Gaelic Development Team	Jun 2031 Jun 2031

Implementation and Monitoring

Following approval by Council, West Dunbartonshire's Gaelic Language Plan 2026-2031 will be available on our website in Gaelic and in English. The plan will be made known to the public and employees through our communications team.

This Gaelic Language Plan will be reviewed annually, and actions will be extended, or added to where appropriate. West Dunbartonshire Council will have overall responsibility for the progress of the plan and this will be monitored by West Dunbartonshire's Gaelic Development Officer.

Regular updates will be provided to the Equality & Diversity Forum, and annually to Council.

Resourcing the Plan

West Dunbartonshire has established a Gaelic team with the responsibility for implementing and monitoring different aspects of the plan.

Cost implications have more recently been met by continued West Dunbartonshire Council funding and the Scottish Government's Gaelic Specific Grant. Bòrd na Gàidhlig have previously funded Gaelic learning across our authority.

This document is available in other languages, large print and audio format on request including:

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.



British Sign Language users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL.

Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaighinn ann an cànanan eile, ann an clò mòr, agus ann an cruth claisneachd ma thèid iarraidh

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

Ukrainian

Цей документ також доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та в аудіоформаті за запитом.

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