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NEWS RELEASE
USE IMMEDIATELY

BORD NA GAIDHLIG BOOST FOR GAELIC PUBLISHING

Two new Gaelic publishing initiatives have received significant support from the Gaelic development agency Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Speaking at the Literary awards ceremony at the 100th National Mod in Oban, Bòrd na Gàidhlig chief executive Allan Campbell announced that a new initiative by the Gaelic Books Council, to produce a range of new Gaelic books under the series title Ur-Sgeul, will receive grant support of £60,000 over two years, and the establishing costs of the new quarterly Gaelic magazine "Gath" (Sting) will also be assisted with a grant of £5,000.

Ur-Sgeul (New Story) will enable the development and presentation of previously unpublished Gaelic writing for adults, and will bolster the fragile Gaelic publishing sector, as well as encouraging new and existing writers. The scheme, to allow publication of a series of new works for adults, will facilitate the publication of a minimum 7 new titles (in paper and audio formats) over a two-year period, and a contract is contested annually by all publishers who can demonstrate a commitment to, and competence in, Gaelic publishing. Titles will be selected in co-operation with a small project Advisory Board, set up and supported by the Gaelic Books Council, to ensure a high level of artistic quality. Previously unpublished work from artists such as Angus Peter Campbell and Iain Crichton Smith will be brought to new audiences. A partnership approach to funding will be employed, including contributions from the SAC National Lottery Writer's Factory as well as Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Gaelic Books Council chairman Professor Donald Meek said, " This is a most welcome boost to Gaelic publishing and an important early recognition by Bòrd na Gàidhlig of the urgent need for support within this vital sector of Gaelic culture. There is a severe shortage of Gaelic literature being published for adults in Scotland today, and Ur-Sgeul will begin to address that. I am delighted that the second title in this exciting project will be launched at the Mod here tomorrow (Thursday) evening when Angus Peter Campbell will introduce his novel "An Oidhche Mus Do Sheòl Sinn" (The night before we sailed)." (The first book in the series, "Ath-Aithne", by Martin MacIntyre was launched at the Edinburgh Book Festival on 24th August.)

Chris Hardie, a member of the Gath production team said " We are extremely grateful to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for this assistance in setting up Gath. The first edition was published in July and has been very well received, and work is now underway to get the second edition out in December. Gath is seeking to fill a serious void in Gaelic publishing, which resulted from the cessation of the quarterly magazine Gairm last year, after fifty years. Gairm made an enormous contribution to Gaelic, but Gath will create its own identity and style and reflect the developmental aspirations of the Gaelic community in the new millennium."

Bòrd na Gàidhlig also announced that it will convene a Gaelic publishing seminar in November to seek to agree a strategy for Gaelic publishing and a suitable structure to take that forward. Allan Campbell added that the Bòrd's future funding policy for Gaelic publishing will be informed by the outcome of the seminar, but pending the seminar result the Bòrd also announced interim grant aid to Gaelic publisher "Acair", and the Gaelic quarterly newspaper "An Gaidheal Ur", of up to £10,000 each.

"These decisions demonstrate Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognition of the importance of publishing to the future of Gaelic, but the Bòrd is determined to establish a consensus on an integrated strategy for the sector. The seminar will enable us to discuss and agree that strategy with the Gaelic publishing practitioners with whom we hope to implement Gaelic publishing development".

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Information for editors:

Bòrd na Gàidhlig (Alba) is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and the Bòrd is appointed by, and accountable to, Scottish Ministers. The Bòrd aims to promote and celebrate Gaelic's contribution to Scottish cultural life; to assist and promote the creation of new opportunities to use Gaelic in Scotland; to encourage and support wider use of Gaelic in all aspects of life in Scotland; and strengthen Gaelic as a family and community language and so increase the numbers of speakers and users of Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has existed as a legal entity since March 2003 and was set up in response to the Gaelic Taskforce (Macpherson) Report of September 2000, which recommended the establishment of a statutory Gaelic development agency. This recommendation was developed to what is now Bòrd na Gàidhlig by the Ministerial Advisory Group (Meek) Report, which was published on 22 May 2002.

The Minister with responsibility for Gaelic at the time, Mike Watson MSP, announced the creation of Bòrd na Gàidhlig at Comunn na Gàidhlig's annual Congress in Nairn on 14 June 2002. The establishment of Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been widely recognised as a key milestone in the fight to revitalise and develop Gaelic.

The Bòrd Chairman took up office on 1st December 2002 and the other five Bòrd members took office on 1st January 2003. The membership of the Bòrd is as follows:

Mr Duncan Ferguson (Chairman)
Mrs Agnes Rennie
Mr Boyd Robertson
Mr Arthur Cormack
Mrs Rosemary Ward
Miss Ceit Anna MacLeod

