

South Ayrshire Council

Gaelic Language plan

2026-2031

Appendix 1



Appendix 1

South Ayrshire Council Gaelic Language Plan Public Consultation Report

In 2005, the Scottish Government passed the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Under this legislation, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the national organisation responsible for promoting and supporting the Gaelic language issued a statutory requirement for all Scottish public bodies to develop a Gaelic Language Plan.

In response, South Ayrshire Council has created its Gaelic Language Plan covering the years 2025 to 2030.

To promote openness and community engagement, any new plans or policies that could impact residents of South Ayrshire are subject to public consultation. This process allows the Council to gather input and take community views into account before implementing any such measures.

Consultation Overview

The main method of consultation was an online questionnaire, which was accessible through the South Ayrshire Council website. It was open to the public from 18 August 2025 to 12 September 2025.

To encourage wider participation, the consultation was actively promoted to the public and key stakeholders through the following channels:

- South Ayrshire Council’s official social media platforms
- The Community Planning Participation and Engagement Group
- Prestwick Gaelic Group
- Education Update distributed to all schools
- Clann Gàidhlig, an organisation dedicated to promoting Gaelic language and culture in the West of Scotland
- Internal communications to staff via Viva Engage
- Health and Social Care Partnership Locality Planning Groups

Additionally, posters featuring a QR code linking to the questionnaire were displayed in all public libraries. Paper versions of the questionnaire were also provided for individuals who preferred to complete and return a hard copy.

A dedicated focus group session was held on 30 August 2025 with the Prestwick-based Gaelic Group. During this session, participants engaged in a general discussion regarding the presence and future of Gaelic in South Ayrshire, offering suggestions for advancing the Gaelic Language Plan (see page 9).

Furthermore, Council officers met with representatives from the Broadway Cinema in Prestwick, who expressed a strong interest in incorporating Gaelic language into their venue. This initiative is being supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Results of the consultation

Demographics of the individuals completing the form:

A total of 190 individuals participated in the online survey. Only 184 respondents chose to tell us about their gender. Of these respondents 123 identified as female, 49 as male, and 12 chose not to disclose their gender

Likewise, only 188 of the respondents chose to tell us about their age. The age of the individuals completing the survey were as follows:

16-25	5
25-34	16
35-44	50
45-54	33
55-64	32
65-74	30
75 and over	11
Prefer not to say	11

Questions regarding the use of the Gaelic Language

- Of the individuals completing the questionnaire 32% (61) knew South Ayrshire Council had a Gaelic Language Plan and 68% (128) did not with one respondent choosing not to answer.
- 59% (111) respondents were not a speaker or a learner of Gaelic, 16% (30) wanted to become a learner, 14% (26) considered themselves to be a beginner learner, 10% (18) are intermediate learners and 2% (4) are fluent speakers, one respondent chose not to answer.
- Most people (168) do not use Gaelic in their daily lives with 21 people stating that they did, one respondent chose not to answer.
- At home the 21 people, 52% (11) use it daily, 19% (4) use it weekly, 19% (4) stated it would depend on the situation and 10% (2) don’t use it at home.
- Of the 21 people who use Gaelic in their daily lives 1 person uses Gaelic at work daily, 3 people use it weekly, one uses it monthly, 3 use it depending on the situation and 12 do not use it at work.
- Within an education setting, 2 people use Gaelic daily, 8 use it weekly, 3 use it depending on the situation and 8 do not use it in an educational setting.
- 11 of the respondents use Gaelic in some social situations, 1 uses it monthly, 4 uses it weekly and 2 use it on a daily basis.
- Of the Gaelic speakers 14 note that they used the language on holiday, some of the reasons for this are:
 - Depending on where they are holiday i.e Scottish Highland and Islands
 - Because it is part of who I am
 - To practice and improve their skills
 - To use it when I can i.e. at the shops or in a social context
 - I try to engage speakers in conversation
 - They want to use the language
 - For cultural reasons



Wider use of Gaelic within Local Communities

181 people responded when asked where people see/ hear Gaelic being used in the community. Of the 179 31% (56) said they hadn't. From the respondents who had heard/see Gaelic being used:

- 34% (62) said that they had seen it used in signage or on public sector vehicles such as Ambulances or Police cars or on correspondence from the Council.
- 9% (17) had heard or seen this in another local authority including the Highlands and Islands of Scotland
- 6% (11) had heard or seen it used on TV including BBC Alba, the radio or other media sources.
- 8% (16) had heard or seen it used at Gaelic Clubs or Groups (including a children's group)
- 1 person said that they heard and saw it everywhere
- 5% (9) use it at home or with family members
- 2% (4) are aware of it being used in school with one respondent's children attending a Gaelic Medium Education setting
- 1% (2) are aware of Gaelic in their workplace
- 3% (6) hear Gaelic being used by other speakers or learners
- 3% (6) are aware of Gaelic being used at Events or Music Venues.

178 people responded to what Gaelic services or activities you use or take part in.

Of the 177 61% (108) said none, of the participants who did respond they answered that:

- 19 people used online courses
- 14 attended Gaelic Groups
- 1 was part of a national organisation
- 11 took part in Gaelic Education
- 2 attended Gaelic Events
- 2 attended Gaelic toddler groups
- 3 accessed Gaelic through television or radio
- 1 used it as part of their work signature
- 1 listened to Gaelic Music

6 people noted that they would be interested in attending local Gaelic Education classes.



Extremely Important	68 (36%)
Somewhat Important	21 (11%)
Neutral	10 (5%)
Somewhat not Important	7 (4%)
Extremely not Important	81 (43%)

When asked how important it was to promote and protect Gaelic in the local area 185 people answered the responses were as follows:

When asked to tell us about any Gaelic Initiatives, events or resources they were aware of in the area, 63 of the 155 respondents said none. Other responses included:

- Knowledge of the Gaelic Group meeting in Prestwick Library
- Gaelic Bookbug Bags/ books available on request
- Signage
- Books in Libraries
- Initiatives funded by Creative Scotland and Scottish Government
- Gaelic Forum in East Ayrshire
- School Gaelic Choir with Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra
- Gaelic Performances in the Cutty Sark and at other local festivals
- Gaelic in Primary Schools
- Concern for it being taught in schools especially for dyslexic children

5 respondents highlighted that they didn't think promoting the Gaelic Language was important in South Ayrshire.

105 people responded to the question regarding what Gaelic Support would be most useful for you or your community. The results were as follows:

Classes for Adults	84
Gaelic in Schools	86
Bilingual signage	40
Events / Arts in Gaelic	46
Digital / Media Content	49

When asked what other suggestions would be useful, 30 people responded by saying that they did not think that in this financial climate, Gaelic should be promoted, and any money committed could be used for other purposes.

Other suggestions that were made included:

- Gaelic lessons both in person and online for adults and children
- Support for native speakers
- Gaelic writing competition
- Promotion of the history of Gaelic in South Ayrshire
- Taught in nurseries
- Have a Gaelic phrase of the week on social media channels
- Scottish Government should make it compulsory in schools
- Promotion of Gaelic speaking opportunities



151 people responded to tell us what they thought the main barriers to learning or using Gaelic locally. The main themes coming through were as follows:

- Lack of Gaelic presence in the community
- Limited access to Learning Opportunities
- Shortage of speakers and practice opportunities
- Negative attitudes

67 respondents told us that nothing would encourage them to them learning Gaelic, generally this was because of a lack of interest or that they could not see the relevance to their day-to-day life. Of the 94 respondents who made suggestions about what would encourage them to learn Gaelic, the following themes were clear:

- Improved access to Gaelic Learning
- Educational system support
- Community Engagement & Promotion
- More resources

71 respondents told us that they did not have any suggestions for specific Gaelic Programmes or initiatives. Of the 54 who responded their answers included:

- Gaelic Language learning opportunities
- Integration of Gaelic into community activities
- Culture events & celebrations of the language
- Workplace support for those with Gaelic skills to discuss initiatives
- Visibility & Promotion

Of the 134 who told us which places a Gaelic presence would be most helpful, 56 told us that there would be no places where this would be the case, with 8 expressing that they don't think this would be a good use of resources. Of the other responds the helpful places stated were mainly schools, libraries and community centres but in addition some mentioned it would be good to have it at big events such as the Air Show, on internal communications within the council and in Early Years Centres.

Gaelic Language Plan 2025-2030

When asked to comment on South Ayrshires 4 key commitments in the Gaelic Language Plan 118 people responded. 30% (36) felt strongly that implementing the Plan would be an inefficient use of funds and 20% (24) did not have any comments. Of the comments made, the key points are:

- Gaelic is more than a language – it's part of our identity, wellbeing, and has wider economic and cultural value.
- If the government is serious, invest in Gaelic through education, not superficial efforts.
- Gaelic feels redundant – few speak it and fewer want to.
- There's value in Gaelic, but little active promotion. A dedicated Gaelic officer and local GME provision could help long-term growth.
- Combat negativity by promoting the benefits of bilingualism.
- Follow-through matters – I was once given Gaelic tapes with no translation or support.
- Core commitments are good, but boosting learner numbers is vital.
- Gaelic learning should be optional and paid for by those interested.
- Too costly – staffing and delivery require significant resources.
- Extra cost to the council – if encouraged, Gaelic would need funding for tuition and staff time.
- Gaelic is deeply tied to identity, especially for children. But raising Gaelic-speaking kids can be isolating. The emotional impact is real and complex.

- Small steps like bilingual greetings by staff could help normalise Gaelic, similar to “Hello, Bonjour” in Canada.
- These initiatives lack impact – focus should shift to more meaningful priorities for South Ayrshire.
- Older people could benefit from Gaelic classes to stay mentally active and socially connected.

When asked if the respondents had any further comments to make the majority of comments echoed the answers already provided in the rest of the questionnaire, with many stating that they felt the plan should not be a priority over other council services. Of the other responses many wanted to see the promotion of the language in the area through events and education accessible at all stages of life

Gaelic Language Plan Consultation	Focus Group - Prestwick Gaelic Club
30th August 2025	9 Members of the Gaelic Club Present
<p>Discussed the use of Gaelic in South Ayrshire and that there are number of Gaelic speakers spread across the locality with one member of the group attending from Girvan.</p> <p>The key discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond this group and informal networks, there are no real opportunities to speak or learn Gaelic in South Ayrshire. • No adult learning options exist locally; one member had to travel to Stranraer College. The group suggested Thriving Communities could pilot beginner classes. • Parents of nursery-aged children may be interested in learning Gaelic; a group could be offered to gauge demand. • Libraries lack Gaelic books beyond beginner level. • The group wants Gaelic to be promoted like Scots, given it's historical roots in the area. • A Gaelic education base is requested in South Ayrshire, similar to those in East and North Ayrshire. • The Council should review how the Gaelic budget is spent, not just on signage. • More investment is needed in Gaelic teaching resources for schools. • The group asked for clarity on Gaelic training available for teachers. • Learning Gaelic is seen as beneficial for keeping the brain active later in life. • Further education in Gaelic exists but not locally; the closest is Kelvin College in Glasgow. • The group asked is transport funding could help residents access learning outside the area, as costs are a barrier. • Suggested local research into interest in learning Gaelic, possibly in partnership with Glasgow University. • Noted that many use apps like Duolingo, but real progress requires opportunities for spoken practice. 	
Policy Officer Community Engagement	