

**Parent Council Forum
Sgoil Ghaidhlig Ghlaschu
19 February 2013**

Chair: Donald Iain Brown

In attendance: Maureen McKenna, Director of Education GCC; architect from GCC

The meeting was the latest concerning the proposed English-medium/Gaelic-medium shared campus development at Glendale, Pollokshields. DI Brown provided brief background, following which GCC architect gave a presentation. MM and architect then took questions from parents present. Main issues as follows:

1. Building

Proposal is one of three Scottish Futures Trust newbuilds mooted by GCC. MM emphatic that this the only funding mechanism available to GCC, and Glendale the only site where a Gaelic-medium proposal can go ahead. Glendale campus will consist of a three story building sensitive to conservation area location, topped off by roof garden cum playground on Level 3. Gaelic facilities accessed via separate entrance will accommodate 217 children, P1-7, in seven dedicated classrooms, along with separate head teacher's room, teachers' rooms, two music rooms, breakout spaces, and library shared with English medium school. Multifunctional 'assembly' space shared by both schools on timetabled basis will cater for drama, gym and cafeteria. External pitch area to be used when available to enhance playground provision.

Campus to open August 2015. Gaelic-medium school will need a name.

2. Catchment

Possible criteria for separating the new school catchment from that of SGG include the river, or postcodes. Discussions already underway. Catchment must be subject to public consultation over a minimum of six weeks. MM favours reaching agreement on criteria first, and then having public consultation. Suggested whole process needs to be completed by end 2013.

Placing requests from other local authority areas could be made, but priority to children within Glasgow; onus on other authorities to provide for their own.

3. Transport

Concerns about lack of public transport links. MM: School Travel Plan must be included within the planning process. Parents could seek to influence this by raising issues with SPT, perhaps forming a parents' group to do so.

Architect to consider provision of drop-off area for children coming by car.

4. Nursery provision

None included in present plans. Experience to date suggested that robust nursery provision vital to successful growth of Gaelic-medium schools. Desirability of extended day provision also highlighted.

MM emphatic that resources not there to establish new Gaelic-medium nursery near new school. Nor did she favour suggestion of sacrificing P7 provision at new school to create room for a nursery. Extended day provision expensive. Only option she sees is partnership with existing nurseries in locality – but spaces in Pollokshields virtually all taken already – or reliance on existing Gaelic nursery provision at SGG and elsewhere. No easy answer.

5. Teaching provision

Concerns about present shortfall in numbers of Gaelic-medium secondary teachers, which new school will only exacerbate: this the critical choke point in the system. Suggested that numbers training in Gaelic-medium teaching healthy this year; and that former and present pupils of SGG be targeted. GCC has commenced an internal scheme, seeking to encourage English-medium teachers to switch through contracts committing them to gaining competence to teach in Gaelic. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has now established a national working party with the same or similar remit.

Emphasised that GCC has an absolute commitment to provide teachers, and a responsibility to liaise with BnaG to ensure that any national strategy is coherent; also a responsibility on the Gaelic parent body to contribute.

6. 'Gaelic Advisory Group'

Following on from 5, suggested that the evident need for coherent strategic thinking and co-ordination with regard to Gaelic-medium education in Glasgow would be advanced by setting up such a group: a forum for representatives from Gaelic community and GCC to resurrect and pursue a Gaelic plan for Glasgow, liaising with BnaG etc.

(DI Brown)