

# ABERFELDY GAELIC PLAYGROUP

All Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary  
Camserney Mill  
Aberfeldy  
Perthshire

The Gaelic Unit  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh EH991SP

Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 2003

Dear Sirs

## **Consultation on the Draft Gaelic Bill**

We are delighted that the Scottish Executive has taken the first step to fulfilling the pre election promise to legislate on behalf of the language, and we hope that our comments will be seen as supportive of the process rather than as a negative criticism.

We agree that the principal of the Bill is sound, however we are more concerned by what the draft Bill does not say than what it does. In as far as we are actively involved in the education of children in the Gaelic Language we are extremely concerned that the draft makes no explicit mention of education. We understand that the Bord na Gaidhlig has rightly made education a principal part of its strategy for the recovery of the language.

This group is cognisant that present policy has identified Gaelic as a National Priority in the Scottish Education Act 2000, however this is not sufficient justification for failing to mention education in what will be seen by all as the principal piece of legislation on behalf of Gaelic.

We are aware that it is not economically realistic to make GME a right on an individual basis, however we cannot see why the any future Act cannot make GME a right where reasonable demand is demonstrated. We cannot comment on the details of Parliamentary Draughtsmanship, but we feel that "reasonable" demand should be defined as at least the established demand thresholds as demonstrated by current good practise in existing units throughout Scotland.

As ever it is clear that a balance must be found between the many interest groups in our land, and that in pragmatism a way forward must be found that does not antagonise the

many enemies that our language appears to have. However it seems completely without point if such pragmatism leads to a bill that fails to deliver any real support to the Education that has been identified as one of the principal strategies for recovery.

We hope that our comments will find favour with the Executive for further consideration.

Yours Faithfully

*Shirley Simpson*

Shirley Simpson (Mrs)

Chair, the Aberfeldy Gaelic Playgroup.