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INTRODUCTION

Fèisean nan Gàidheal ends 1996/97, having made significant progress in various areas of its work. The organisation is moving in to an exciting stage of its development, following the preparation of a new Development Plan for the years 1997-2001, and having secured 3 year funding from the Scottish Arts Council.

This year saw the publication of a well-received music book entitled Ceòl nam Fèis, which was compiled for us by Valerie Bryan, with assistance from many Fèis organisers and tutors. It contains a wealth of songs and tunes from the Gaelic tradition, and I am pleased to say that it has already sold in excess of 1100 copies.

Our other Ceòl nam Fèis - the concert held in Eden Court Theatre in January 1996 - looks set to be repeated early in 1998. The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall has asked us to put together a similar concert for the Celtic Connections festival. I hope this will be as enjoyable as the Inverness concert, and will succeed in raising the profile of the Fèis Movement, at the same time as offering the Fèis participants the opportunity of performing in one of Scotland's most successful festivals. We look forward to your cooperation in making this a success.

Comedia's report The Social Impact of the Fèisean, was published towards the end of 1996, and created a great deal of interest in the Fèis Movement. We feel that it has proved beyond any doubt the great value of the Fèisean, not only in passing on artistic skills, but in building up confidence in young people who participate.

As usual, I would like to thank all the bodies who have funded the general work of Fèisean nan Gàidheal over the past year. All of them are credited below, but once again I would like to single out the Scottish Arts Council, who have now offered us a 3 year funding agreement, with a significant increase in grant.

A grant of £48,331 was secured from the SAC National Lottery Department, to enable us to develop our Musical Instrument Bank, and this was a welcome boost.

The Grants Scheme for Fèisean, run by Fèisean nan Gàidheal with support from SAC, continues to work well, and our new Grants Scheme for Post-Fèis Activity, with funding from The Scottish Arts Council, Comataidh Telebheisinn Gàidhlig, The Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean, helped to fund over 1300 regular classes throughout Scotland.

I would like to thank all the Directors of Fèisean nan Gàidheal who have served over the past year. The Fèis organisers must also be thanked for their continued enthusiasm and hard work in running their community events, and for their support of Fèisean nan Gàidheal.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal is here to support the community Fèisean and it is hoped that we do that to the best of our ability. I hope we can be of assistance in the coming year. Arthur Cormack should be your first point of contact for Fèisean nan Gàidheal. He is available at Quay Brae, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9DB, or by phone on 01478 612990 or fax on 01478 613263.

John MacDonald
Fèisean nan Gàidheal Chairman
May 1997
STAFFING

The Development Officer has continued to be responsible for the day-to-day running of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, with ad hoc part-time administrative assistants, as required. However, it is hoped that Fèisean nan Gàidheal will be employing a permanent administrator in the near future. There are more and more administrative tasks which, if taken on by an administrator, would free the Development Officer to become involved in more projects.

STATISTICS

Over the year, 1980 young people took part in 22 Fèisean, with 362 tutors employed to teach them. The rate of pay for tutors averaged at $220 for a 5 day Fèis. The cost to children varied between $8 and $85, depending on whether the Fèis was residential or not, and the total cost of the 22 Fèisean was in the region of $189,340 of which $109,000 was raised in the community. These figure do not include Fèis Rois Inbhirch, which does not receive assistance from Fèisean nan Gàidheal.

FINANCE

Financial support remained stable in the last year, with similar allocations to those of 1995/96 from the Scottish Arts Council and Comunn na Gàidhlig/HIE, towards our core costs.

The Highland Council increased our grant from $1,800 to $5,000, and we were successful in securing project funds from Comhairle nan Eilean, Argyll & Bute Council, Comataidh Telebhisein Gàidhlig and the Scottish Arts Council Music Committee. Grampian Television continued its sponsorship of Fèisean nan Gàidheal with a $2,500 donation.

Our Grants Scheme for Fèisean and Grants Scheme for Post-Fèis Activity enabled us to commit $45,766 - almost 41% of our turnover - to the Fèisean, in grant-aid.

We again applied to the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department for core funding, which, if successful, would have freed up much more of our funds for the Fèisean. We were again unsuccessful.

In 1996/97, there was trading surplus, in contrast to the deficit sustained in 1995/96. Our financial situation has been turned around, and we have been able to add to our reserves.

General and project funding for Fèisean nan Gàidheal and the Fèisean has come from a wide variety of sources, and we are very grateful for the support of the following bodies:

Scottish Arts Council Highlands & Islands Enterprise
The Highland Council Comhairle nan Eilean Argyll & Bute Council
Grampian Television Plc Comataidh Telebhisein Gàidhlig
HI-Arts Pròiseact nan Ealan Comunn na Gàidhlig BBC Children in Need Appeal
Lochaber Limited Inverness & Nairn Enterprise Western Isles Enterprise

The Financial Statement for 1996/97, prepared by Alex Graham C.A., forms part of this report.
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors met 4 times since May 1996, to discuss policy issues as a representative body of the Féisean.

Minutes of all meetings, along with the Development Officer's Progress Reports have, as usual, been circulated on a regular basis to all members, and are available on request to others.

The current members of the Board of Directors are:

John MacDonald (4/4), Chairperson (Co-opted)
Rita Hunter (3/4), Company Secretary (Féis Rois)
Cathryn Bingham, Treasurer (2/3) (Fèis Spè)
Josie Brown (1/4) (Fèis Thiriodh)
Karen MacIsaac (2/4) (Fèis nan Garbh Chriochan)
Margaret Ann Beggs (3/4) (Fèis Bharraigh)
Coll MacDougall (4/4) (Fèis Latharna)
Nan MacLeod (2/4) (Fèis Eilean an Fhráoich)
Tommy MacDonald (0/4) (Fèis Tir a’ Mhurain)
Kirsteen Graham (3/3) (Fèis an Earraich)
Jim Morrison (4/4), Co-opted
Beathag Morrison (2/4), Co-opted (Comunn na Gàidhlig)
Malcolm MacLean (1/4), Co-opted (National Gaelic Arts Project)
Murdo MacIver, Attending (1/3) (North Lanarkshire Council)
Cllr Donnie Murray, Attending (2/4) (Comhairle nan Eilean)
Callum MacDonald, Attending (3/3) (An Comunn Gàidhealach)

The numbers in brackets indicate the attendance of Directors at meetings out of a possible 3 or 4 depending on when they were elected.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Grants Scheme for Féisean

Féisean nan Gàidhleann granted £22,961 to 22 Féisean in 1996/97, utilising part of our allocation from the Scottish Arts Council Combined Arts Department. Funding was awarded to the Féisean following receipt of an application, and an agreed formula was then applied, whereby all Féisean received 12.5% of their eligible costs.

Follow-on tuition: Grants Scheme for Post-Féis Activities

The most extensive programme of community tuition workshops to date, undertaken with assistance from Féisean nan Gàidheal, took place over the past year. This was due to the much appreciated support of the Scottish Arts Council Music Committee, Comataidh Telebhisein Gàidhlig, The Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean. Féisean nan Gàidheal was able to fund around 1313 workshop sessions involving 17 Féisean, 80 tutors and over 2500 participants. Grants totalling £19,172 were committed.

This is an extremely important aspect of the work of the Féisean, and we are hopeful of securing the necessary funding to enable us to continue running the programme.
Ceòl nam Fèis Music Workbook

The book was successfully launched in October, and has now sold over 1100 copies. There were several favourable reviews in the press, and the book has been well received within and outwith Gaelic music circles, as well as by the Fèisean and other teaching institutions.

Musical Instrument Bank

A major boost in our development of the musical instrument bank came in the shape of a $48,000 grant from the SAC National Lottery department. The effect of this has already been seen, with many more instruments now available.

Annual General Meeting and Conference

A successful AGM and Conference was held in Fort William in May 1996, for the second year running. The Alexandra Hotel proved to be a good venue, and is still used for our regular Board meetings.

Funding for the 1996 Conference was secured from Lochaber Limited, HI-Arts, Comunn na Gàidhlig and Pròiseact nan Ealan.

The 1997 AGM and Conference will be held in Skye.

Training programme

Training workshops took place in Inverness and Oban, and both weekends were very successful. Over 30 people took part in the Inverness workshops, and although the Oban events were only attended by small numbers, the exercise was very worthwhile.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal Development Plan 1997-2001

A new Development Plan has been prepared for Fèisean nan Gàidheal for the years 1997-2001. This has been an ongoing project throughout the year, and the views of the Fèisean were sought at various stages. The Board members discussed various drafts at regular intervals. We now feel we have a plan which will successfully build on the core services provided by Fèisean nan Gàidheal, as well as involving the organisation in projects which will benefit the Fèisean over the next few years.

The Social Impact of the Fèisean

An independent study carried out by Francois Matarasso of Comedia, was published towards the end of 1996. This attracted wide interest, and threw up some very interesting opinions and statistics. There is no doubt that The Social Impact of the Fèisean has proved the worth of the Fèis Movement, and has opened up several opportunities for funding. Plans are afoot for a more formal launch of the report.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Directory of Fèis Tutors

A new condensed version of the Directory of Fèis Tutors will be published at the 1997 Conference. Morven McKerrell form Strathclyde University was on placement at Fèisean nan Gàidheal for two
weeks, and she completed the work on the Directory. It was then passed on to the JET 2000 Ltd (Skye), who maintain our database, to produce the final layout.

Faileas

3 issues of the newsletter were circulated in 1996/97, regularly to well over 700 people. This continues to be a useful tool for disseminating information on the work of the Féisean and Féisean nan Gàidheal to the wider public, and articles from the Féisean are always welcome.

Highland Council

The Highland Council maintained its support of the Féisean in 1996/97, even though it promised to be a very difficult year for funding. There is genuine support among a large group of the Councillors, which translates into very good financial and in-kind assistance.

The Council’s Culture & Leisure Department convened a meeting of agencies involved in developing traditional music in the Highland area during the year, to seek their views on how best the Council could support the work being done by the various agencies.

Morag Ann MacLeod, formerly of Fionan, has been appointed as Gaelic Development Officer for The Highland Council, and took up post in April 1997.

Comhairle nan Eilean

Cllr Donnie Murray has continued to be the Western Isles Council’s representative on the Board of Féisean nan Gàidheal, and this has proved to be very useful.

The Council supported the Féisean in the Western Isles with grant-aid from the Arts & Leisure Committee, and free use of schools. Project funding was provided for Féisean nan Gàidheal for our follow-on classes and training programme, and this was very welcome.

Ryno Morrison, formerly of NGAP, has been appointed as the Council’s Arts Officer, based in Uist, and he should be a valuable point of contact for the Western Isles Féisean.

Argyll & Bute Council

Since local authority re-organisation, Argyll & Bute Council seems to have been dogged with funding problems. Despite that, the Council continued to support the Féisean with grant-aid. The problem of the cost of schools in Argyll & Bute continues to threaten the viability of the Féisean, and despite the fact that we were assured earlier in the year that the Council was to address the issue, there still has not been a satisfactory outcome.

We will require to work alongside the Argyll & Bute Council members and officers to enhance support for the Féisean in their area.

Other Local Authorities

We are aware of the importance of the support for Féisean in other local authority areas, and will have to work more closely with the two city Féisean in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, to see if there is anything we can do to assist them in gaining fair support from their authorities.
National Lottery Charities Board

During the year, the National Lottery Charities Board operated two schemes which seemed to suit the Féisean very well. Féis Bharraigh was successful in gaining a sizable grant in the first round.

Several other Féisean, unsuccessful in the first round, have applied in the current round, and await the outcome of their applications.

A newly introduced Small Grants Scheme for applications under £5,000 should benefit the Féisean.

SAC New Directions National Lottery Funding

The Scottish Arts Council has changed its lottery funding in response to a directive from the Department of National Heritage. Instead of all lottery funding being spent on capital schemes, the Arts Council has set up a new committee to disburse approximately £9.5 million to projects, much of which will be aimed at making the arts more accessible, particularly to young people. There are potentially a great many ways in which the Féisean could benefit from this scheme.

Jean Urquhart, who runs The Ceilidh Place in Ullapool, and is a Director of Fèis Rois, chairs the New Directions Committee, and Arthur Cormack is also a member.

Insurance

Féisean nan Gàidheal continues to offer insurance as part of membership, and this was extended last year to encompass musical instrument cover.

ADVOCACY

HI-ARTS Music Industry Working Party

The Development Officer continues to be a member of MIDAS, the group set up by HI-Arts to look at the development of the music industry in the Highlands & Islands. Maeve Ryan has been employed, for a 6 month period initially, to implement some of the recommendations contained in the original study carried out by Argyll Associates.

Comunn na Gàidhlig’s Còmhdhail na Gàidhlig

CnaG’s annual conference in June 1996 concentrated on how to achieve official status for Gaelic, similar to that enjoyed by the Welsh for their language. A working party was set up, which released a document to all Gaelic organisations, and the media, on 5 March 1997.

This is a very important initiative, and Féisean nan Gàidheal will be happy to support CnaG in any way to help them achieve their goal.

SAC Consultation

Throughout the year, the Scottish Arts Council Music Department carried out a very thorough consultation with literally hundreds of people, on what its role should be in relation to the development of traditional music in Scotland.
HI-ARTS Board of Directors

The Development Officer is a member of the HI-Arts Board, and attended 5 meetings during 1996/97.

SAC New Directions National Lottery Funding

As indicated previously, the Development Officer is also a member of the New Directions Committee which will spend the forecast £9.5 million available to the New Directions programme.

CnaG Board of Directors

The Chairman of Fèisean nan Gàidheal represents the organisation on the new Gaelic Council set up by Comunn na Gàidhlig, which meets twice a year, to draw up a strategy for Gaelic development in general.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Ceòl nam Fèis Concert at Celtic Connections

The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, the organisers of Celtic Connections, have confirmed that they wish to proceed with a celebratory concert on Saturday 24 January 1998 at 2.00 pm in the Main Auditorium.

This follows a series of meetings, involving Rita Hunter and Arthur Cormack, with staff at Celtic Connections, and should be a high profile event within next year’s festival.

Fèis Alba

Fèis Alba has been discussed over the past few months by members of the working party, administered by Fèisean nan Gàidheal. The members are John MacDonald, Rita Hunter and Arthur Cormack from Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Malcolm MacLean from Pròiseact nan Ealan, Callum MacDonald from An Comunn Gàidhealach, Robert Livingston from HI-Arts and John Murphy from the Scottish Arts Council.

Earlier this year, Bryan Beattie was commissioned to carry out a feasibility study, to seek the views of all Fèis organisers, Board members of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, a sample of tutors, and all other interested parties, to recommend how best to progress the plans for Fèis Alba.

Cultural Youth Exchanges

Jim Morrison of Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s Board, carried out training workshops with Fèis Bharraigh’s committee, who were preparing to set up an exchange with a group in Ireland.

Following a short workshop by Jim at last year’s Conference, several Fèisean expressed an interest in becoming involved in exchanges of a similar nature, and there seems to be plenty of scope for this to happen, so much so that Fèisean nan Gàidheal will be happy to assist Fèisean with training, if they wish to go ahead with an exchange.
FEISEAN


There is a possibility that as many as 5 new Féisean may be established in 1997, with groups in Dumbarton, Loch Lomond, Glenelg, Kilmorar and Arran working on plans. This is very welcome, but does raise the issue of available funding, and eligibility, which will be addressed over the coming months.

The Development Officer cannot visit every Féis as it is taking place, but will maintain regular contact with all the Féisean, and will try to visit each committee at least once a year, if requested to do so, and if practical. Féisean should however feel free to contact the Development Officer at any time if there is a way in which Féisean nan Gàidheal could assist. The Development Officer, or any Board member, will be happy to discuss any information pertaining to the organisation, and to pass on suggestions for discussion at Board meetings.

Minutes of all meetings of the Féisean nan Gàidheal Board and all other relevant papers will continue to be sent to all Corporate members of Féisean nan Gàidheal.

The newsletter, Faileas, has succeeded in bringing the main points from these meetings to the attention of a wider group, with a circulation in excess of 700.

Arthur Cormack
Féisean nan Gàidheal Development Officer
May 1997
Fèisean nan Gàidheal
Trading Account for the year to 31 March 1997

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<td>Net surplus/(deficit) for the period</td>
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## Fèisean nan Gàidheal
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 1997

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<td>Profit and loss account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22515</td>
<td>9288</td>
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Appendix 1

Board Members 1996/97

1. **John MacDonald, Chairman**, Lônach, Kilmore, Sleat, Isle of Skye, IV44 8RG  
   (Co-opted) Telephone 01471 844351

2. **Rita Hunter, Secretary**, The Stables, Allangrange, Munlochy, Ross-shire, IV8 8NZ  
   (Fèis Rois) Telephone 01349 862600

3. **Cathryn Bingham, Treasurer**, Doire Bheag, Newtonmore Road, Kingussie, PH21 1HD  
   (Fèis Spè) Telephone 01540 661141

4. **Karen MacIsaac**, Smirisary, Glenuig, Inverness-shire, PA38 4NG  
   (Fèis nan Garbh Chriochan) Telephone 01687 470261

5. **Josie Brown**, 4 Coruain, Carinish, Isle of Tiree, Argyll, PA77 6UZ  
   (Fèis Thiriodh) Telephone 01496 302051

6. **Coll MacDougall**, Central Cottage, Stafford Street, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5NJ  
   (Fèis Latharna) Telephone 01631 563058

7. **Margaret Ann Beggs**, 1 Cnoc a’ Chonais, Skallary, Isle of Barra, HS9 5UP  
   (Fèis Bharraigh) Telephone 01871 810562

8. **Tommy MacDonald**, 9 Howmore, South Uist, Western Isles, HS8 5SH  
   (Fèis Tir a’ Mhurain) Telephone 01870 620283

9. **Nan MacLeod**, Gleannan, Gareabost, Isle of Lewis, Western Isles, HS2 0PL  
   (Fèis Eilean an Fhraoich) Telephone 01851 870264

10. **Kirsteen Graham**, 14 Lower Breakish, Isle of Skye, IV42 8DA  
    (Fèis an Earraigh) Telephone 01471 822671

11. **Beathag Morrison**, 22 Mansfield Street, Glasgow, G11 5QP  
    (Co-opted; Project Executive; Comunn na Gàidhlig) Telephone 0141 339 2022

12. **Jim Morrison**, 30 Wyvis Crescent, Conon Bridge, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV7 8BZ  
    (Co-opted; Development Officer, CYBE) Telephone 01549 861110

13. **Malcolm MacLean**, 10 Shell Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2EA  
    (Co-opted; Director, National Gaelic Arts Project) Telephone 01851 704493

14. **Clr Donnie Murray**, Comhairle nan Eilean, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis  
    (In attendance; Comhairle nan Eilean Representative) Telephone 01851 705773

15. **Murdo MacIver**, North Lanarkshire Council, Kildonan Street, Coatbridge, ML5 3BT  
    (In attendance; North Lanarkshire Council) Telephone 01236 812269

16. **Callum MacDonald**, An Comunn Gàidhealach, 109 Church Street, Inverness, IV1 1EY  
    (In attendance; An Comunn Gàidhealach National Mòd Officer) Telephone 01463 231126

17. **Arthur Cormack**, Quay Brae, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9DB  
    (In attendance; Fèisean nan Gàidheal Development Officer) Telephone 01478 612990
Appendix 2  Féis Contacts

Féis an Earrach
Kirsteen Graham
14 Lower Breakish
Breadford
Isle of Skye
IV42 8DA
01471 822671

Féis Eilean an Fhraoich
Nan MacLeod
Gleannan
Garrabost
Isle of Lewis
Western Isles
01851 870264

Féis Asainte
Agnes Dickson
Achnas
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