

# Cross-Party Group on Scots Language

Date and Time 2nt May 2023 1800-1930

Minute – Virtual Collogue

Present - Praisent

## MSPs

Jackie Dunbar MSP  
Audrey Nicol MSP  
Emma Harper MSP

## Invited guests

Anne Marie Anderson  
Shane Strachan

## Non-MSP Group Members

Scott McElvanney (MSP staff)  
Catherine Demetriadi (MSP staff)  
Ann Marie Anderson  
Jean Anderson  
Ann Bruce  
Michael Dempster  
Bruce Eunson  
Iona Fyfe  
Hazel Gardiner  
William Hershaw  
Billy Kay  
Neil Kirk  
Sarah (name displayed)  
Sonja (name displayed)  
Todd J2 (name displayed)  
Dawn Leslie  
Claire Needler  
Stuart Pescodd  
Phil Reid  
Marc Sherland  
Shane Strachan  
Martin Travers  
Rory Turnbull

## Apologies

Arianne Burgess MSP, Sarah Boyak MSP

## Agenda item 1 – item ane:

Walcome and excuses

## Agenda item 2 – item twa:

Meenits an Maitters arisin

Meenits fae the last sederunt approved, proposed Iona Fyfe,  
seconded Ann Bruce

Nae maitters arisin

Meenits fae the last sederunt approved, proposed Iona Fyfe,  
seconded Ann Bruce

Nae maitters arisin

## Agenda item 3 – item three:

Talker Ane: Shetland ForWirlds **Ann Marie Anderson** has been going to schools, retirement homes, etc. to talk about the Shetland dialect. In 2020 she became co-convenor and the Shetland Dialect App was set up. The project is now linked into the Curriculum for Excellence.

**Jackie Dunbar MSP** asked how easy it is to speak to teachers – are they makkin students speaker the proper English? Ann said that a lot don't speak the dialect tongue but the offer is to help out. **Phil Reid** commented that this was an amazing example of a community group for the Scots leid.

## Agenda item 4 – item fower:

**Emma Harper MSP** and **Jackie Dunbar MSP** enjoy getting as mony Scots words into the Scottish Parliament as possible. Emma has been pittin oot the Scots 'Word o the Week' with guid responses. "Folk are getting used tae us speaking wir ain language."

**Audrey Nicol MSP** has a motion in the Scottish Parliament about 'Cloudy Blue' regarding Doric birthday cards. **Scott McElvanney** said that Martin Whitfield has used some Scots words. 'fankle' and 'forfochan' have been used, with Jackie making sure they knew what the words mean in the Official Report.

**Todd J2** said the East Ayrshire Council has now used keich and scunnert.

**Emma Harper** has written to the BBC to ask if they will come to the CPG to present how the BBC promotes the Scots language. A recent debate in parliament highlighted 100 years of BBC with little mention of Scots. Emma has created and distributed posters at Scottish Parliament campus. Posters display a QR code to get to the Scots Language Centre.

**Hazel Gardiner** from Arran suggested 'jilly oan' meaning hurry up.

**Dawn Leslie** talked about the words "div" and "dae", they mean the same thing but you put them in context and the grammar is important: "Fit div ye dae fir a livin".

**Jackie Dunbar** A'body kens that is the right way "What do you do for a living" but it doesn't work if you swap them round. "Fit dae ye div fir a livin" isn't correct.

(We welcome clarification on this word at next meeting)

## Agenda item 5 – item five:

### A makar's turn

**Shane Strachan**, Scots Scriever, who has been reading pieces for school bairns using favourite Doric and Scots words.

He recited his 'Fash' poem; a poem about Aberdeen's relationship with oil and gas; talked about his ballads for the Northeast and the Scottish Border about child murder and references to child neglect ("With a certain grimness, for instance in 'Tooth Fairy', the wrong tooth is pulled out!); and gave examples of his haiku ('Doric dwams') put up in Aberdeen shops.

**Emma Harper** discussed the issue of grammar to show that Scots is not just slang, for instance, "He had the Covid" or "I'm goin' to ma bed" vs "I'm going to bed". Scots is its own language: "Has went" was originally "has wended." **Dawn Leslie** talked about the word "div": "Fit div ye fir a livin". She pointed out that Scots is judged by the grammar of English. Emma asked if the way we use "the" related to French grammar? **Billy Kay** mentioned classical Scots coming from the time of the makars: "Why wiz ye?" and "Those boys were goan" **Dawn** talked about different pronouns and use of words: "I've learned him to drive" is the same usage as in other Germanic languages. Often folk are corrected for saying "learned

tae drive” Instead of “taught tae drive”. **Rory Turnbull:** “The windows need washed” vs “The windows need to be washed” and “Tell us” meaning “Tell me” are shared in Scottish English and Scots alike.

**Iona Fyfe** talked about ‘Gies us a Scots poem day’ and posted a link to <https://projects.handsupfortradscot/handsupfortrad/gies-a-scots-poem-day-frieday-9th-June/>

## Agenda item 6 – item sax:

### **Office bearer’s reports Emma Harper:**

Emma discussed Tartan Week in New York. **Angus Robertson MSP**, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, has been engaging with the Scottish diaspora, which is some 40 million strong worldwide. Emma also met Jerry O’Donovan, Irish Consul General, at St Patrick’s celebration in parliament. Jerry is very interested in minority languages including Ulster Scots and wants to meet Emma and Jackie.

**The Culture, Sports and Media Committee** of the UK Parliament missed out on contacting Scots CPG members, which could have submitted to the call for evidence for their inquiry in to minority languages. Action point - The Scots CPG formally agreed to write to the UK Culture Committee to highlight the work of the Scottish parliament CPG and the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly recent report in to minority languages which has been completed. (Letter sent – please see attachment)

We need a wider discussion about grammar. She is waiting on the Presiding Officer for another Time for Reflection in Scots

Jennifer Smith is to be invited to upcomin CPG about <https://scotssyntaxatlas.ac.uk>

**Treasurer’s report:** no treasurer – therefore nothing to report

**Secretary:** minutes were approved

## Agenda item 8 – item eicht:

### **Future speakers/makars**

Suggestions include Thomas Clark, Ashley Douglas about Firefox translation work; Iona Fyfe on performing arts; something about education, Scots language award; James Robertson; Neil Kirk.

**Neil Kirk** offered to present work on psychology/bilingualism in Scots speakers.  
[N.kirk@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:N.kirk@abertay.ac.uk)

**Bruce Eunson** said Jamie Fairbairn and Sylvia Warnecke would be good as speakers. There is an Open University course for cross-curricular teachers that is about to get registered with GTCS – General Teaching Council for Scotland, which is the 'gold standard'.

**Iona Fyfe** suggested a topic of Scots in the heritage sector.

**Dawn Leslie** asked how Scots is featuring in SQA reform. **Emma** said she had spoken last week to **Jenny Gilruth MSP**, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. She is a Fifer, well-versed in Scots. Emma will ask about Scots in the SQA and curriculum.

**Mark Sherland** said the Burns Federation are keen to develop the Scots leid work within their schools competitions.

**Emma Harper** asked if anyone knows what is happening with Duolingo and Scots. **Neil Kirk** has a good contact and said Scots is "kind of on the radar".

## Agenda item 9 – item nine:

### Action Pynts

Culture, Sports and Media CPG letter as discussed above. Emma would write the letter. The CPG agreed. BBC to be invited to speak to the CPG. Follow up on list of future speakers.

## Agenda item 10 – item ten:

### Convener's Leet o Scots Wirds o the Week

Gan forrit - Emma is trying to put easy words up that folk can use, such as fankle, jalouse, puckle/pickle, glaickit, stooshie.

## Agenda item 4 – item eleeven:

### Date o Neist Gaitherin

Will be 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of September.