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We are writing to you on behalf of the Tiree community.

We are deeply troubled by the recent decision to end the Gaelic Development Officer Scheme due to cuts in Bòrd na Gàidhlig's budget. This decision has significant negative implications for our community, directly impacting two crucial positions at Urras Thiriodh (Tiree Community Development Trust) and undermining efforts to revive and promote the Gaelic language on the Isle of Tiree.

The decision is short sighted and deeply damaging to island communities.

The reduction in funding for Bòrd na Gàidhlig, an organisation already struggling with insufficient resources, exacerbates an already dire situation for the Gaelic language, whose preservation is vital not only to our cultural heritage but also to the vibrancy and future of our community.

Urras Thiriodh recently initiated a project aimed at increasing the use of Gaelic within the community, especially among current speakers, with the goal of normalising the language's presence in daily interactions. This effort comes in response to research indicating a significant decline in Gaelic usage in Tiree, positioning the language at a critical juncture.

The discontinuation of funding for the Gaelic Development Officer Scheme, following three years of extensions to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's budget, represents a severe blow to these efforts. This jeopardises not only the progress made thus far but also the livelihoods of those dedicated to this cause. The decision sends a disheartening message to Gaelic-speaking communities and native speakers in the islands, suggesting a lack of priority and support at the governmental level.

We urge reconsideration of the implications of the budget cuts on Gaelic development efforts in Tiree and across Scotland. Investing in the Gaelic language and its communities is not merely a matter of preserving a linguistic heritage; it is about fostering a vibrant, inclusive future for all Scots.

The inclusion of Gaelic Development Officer positions within the main Gaelic budget, rather than relying on uncertain top-up funding, is essential for providing stability and demonstrating a genuine commitment to the language's future.

We look forward to your response and hope for a constructive dialogue on how we can better support Gaelic development in Tiree and beyond.

Is sinne le spèis,

Rhoda Meek, Chair, Tiree Community Development Trust (Urras Thiriodh)
Phyl Meyer, Convenor, Tiree Community Council