

MEITHLEACHA 2021

DEFINITIONS

Ball (pl. Baill) - Member

Cisteoir/Sparánaí - Treasurer

Meitheal (Meithleacha, pl.) - Working Group

Rúnaí - Secretary

Bord - CnaG Executive Board

Dáil (Pl. Dálaí) - Meeting of the leads

Meithleoir (Pl. Meithleoirí) - Lead

Tionól (Pl. Tionóil) - Work group meeting

STRUCTURE

Meithleacha (Working Groups) will consist of a Meithleoir (lead) and Baill (members)

The Meithleoir (lead) will convene a Tionól (consultative meeting) on a schedule determined by the needs of the group, moderate discussions, and present updates at the Dáil (Meeting of the Leads)

Working groups may add to their group membership at their own discretion. The Taoiseach is an ex-officio member of each working group. Sole final control over group membership, group creation, or group dissolution remains with the Taoiseach as well as final appointment or removal of meithleoirí from the lead position.

There is no minimum quorum for the groups. Membership in more than two groups is to be discouraged to avoid member fatigue.

TIONÓL Rules

Harassment or disrespect will not be tolerated, and attitudes such as excessive negativity will be discouraged. The Meithleoir will discourage negative behaviour, maintain order, and encourage every member to have a say in matters before closing discussion on a topic

“No, but” rather than “No” - Every idea has merit. An idea should be modified or another idea proposed, rather than stifling conversation through dismissal

As these are Meithleacha, not board meetings, there is no requirement to rigidly adhere to parliamentary procedure

Meithleacha are supportive of comments in Irish, English or French, with comments translated into any of the three if requested and possible

Minutes will be kept for the benefit of the working group in whatever language is preferred

Members missing more than three meetings will be removed from a group, at the discretion of the remaining Meitheal members



First Meetings

Nominate a Meithleoir from the group membership (some Meithleacha have suggested Meithleoirí). The position of meithleoir is held at the sole discretion of the Taoiseach and is not installed or removed by the Board. The active Rúnaí may be called upon to provide meeting minutes if required.

A mandate is provided below - review and add to the mandate as required, understanding that these are from the guiding vision provided by the membership.

Using the attached “Meitheal Planning Process”, develop short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals with milestones and timelines for completion.

Create a working budget for expenses and income, and revise in the future as needed. At each annual AGM a budget projection will be required to pre-approve expenses, including 10% of total requested funds for use at Meithleoir’s discretion.

Subsequent Meetings

Subsequent meetings should be held with sufficient frequency to attain the mandated goals, meeting at least quarterly.

Each member should be provided tasks to accomplish, with every member having a purpose.

The mandates and goals of the Working Group should be frequently reviewed and updated to guide the work of the group.

The Meithleoir will report the progress towards the stated goals at the Dáil when convened.

The working budget projection of each group should be updated as required and submitted to the Sparánaí for approval prior to the AGM, to allow for blanket authority to be provided by the Bord.

Working groups will be expected to present on their work accomplished and future goals at each annual AGM.



Meitheal Planning Process

Getting Started →	Elect Meitheoir	Create Meeting Schedule	Gather Documents
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1: Determine Needs ↓	2: Develop Strategy ↓	3: Build the Plan ↓	4: Implement ↓
What do we do well? What can we do better?	What will our Meitheal accomplish?	Set priorities from vision	Communicate the plan to the Dáil
How will we grow? How and where must we change?	Create a vision of what success in 5-10 years will look like	Set short (1 yr) to mid-term (1-3 yrs) SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based)	Establish schedule for progress reviews
Assess current satisfaction	Develop a 3-year list of 6 or less objectives to meet that vision	Plan how to track progress	Hold progress reviews and modify the plan
Determine opportunities and desired results	How can we achieve these objectives?	Assign specific goals to group members	Annually review the year's progress
		Create 1 year budget aligned with the plan	Begin again at step 1 to plan for next year



Caidreamh Poiblí (PR)

Meithleoir: Diarmaid Ó Maolagáin

Objectives and Responsibilities

Create workflow for creation of web content and share content with IT

Different approach during pandemic - weekly or biweekly posts to social media (varied to maintain interest: history, culture, fun words, etc.)

Build more local buy-in and attendance

Raise recognition and awareness of the Gaeltacht with the general public and internationally

Communication with Ireland and building connections with the Irish Gaeltacht areas

Communication with the Diaspora and connecting with Irish speaking groups (Canada, UK, USA, Australia)

Promote and develop the Gaeltacht with local businesses, artists, and other groups and encourage their participation

Reach out to journalists frequently for more coverage/interviews, especially closer to March

Organize and maintain a list of people with the language skills to field interview questions, and what their area of expertise is

Vet journalist questions with approved answers when required and connect journalists with appropriate interviewees

Connect with the Irish embassy in Canada, and the Canadian embassy in Ireland, to promote the Gaeltacht whenever possible (we are not currently listed as a cultural organization by the Irish embassy)

Guiding Questions / Vision

How can we attract more people to the language?

How can we provide support and connect with communities across the country? What services could they use and what could we provide? Is there a way our Gaeltacht can support the Irish Gaeltacht areas?

How can we connect with more Irish people in Quebec? How can we make more local connections? How can we better connect to people interested in Irish Gaelic culture and entice them to participate? How can we make deeper connections with the global movement, so that the Gaeltacht becomes internationally known for its efforts?



Tumsheachtáin (Immersion Week)

Meithleoir: Dónall Ó Dubhghaill

Objectives and Responsibilities

Organize and run the summer and winter immersion week. Review the format of the week, taking into account previous feedback

Create a detailed budget for expenses vs. income, running the event as a net-positive

Create and maintain a list of teachers (language, workshops) and organize the teaching schedule of the week

Create more opportunities during the week to invite local Indigenous people to share language, cultural, and craft workshops, or plan trips to Indigenous communities

Work with local arts community to promote and participate in Gaeltacht events

Create a list of places to stay near to the Gaeltacht for those who will not camp, and field inquiries

Review the feedback and comments each year and revise the immersion week plan accordingly

Identify people with first aid training

Work with the Cultural Events Meitheal to organize workshops and field trips

Expand to having an online Gaeltacht immersion event in the Spring. Organize more regular events or activities where there are chances to use the language, including more language weekends outside the summer immersion week

Guiding Questions / Vision

How can we create a better flow for finding teachers?

Are we able to further expand into a full 4 immersion events a year?

Is there a way travel burden can be lessened? Shuttle buses, organized ride-sharing, etc?

Should we develop a different guiding vision for the Irish immigrants and those of Irish heritage?

Develop ways to contribute without needing to actually speak Irish

What can we learn from Cape Breton's Gaelic College and the Irish Gaeltacht areas' summer courses? How can we grow to something like this?



Oireachtas 7 Imeachtaí Cultúrtha (Oireachtas & Cultural Events)

Meithleoir: Ellen MacIsaac

Objectives and Responsibilities

Reconsider the structure and format of the Oireachtas, evolving into a cultural celebration similar to the Maxville Highland Games, with cultural and language workshops, vendors, displays, and competitions.

Revise the list of competitions to include fiddle, flute, whistle, and bodhrán, as well as more forms of dance (Munster solo step, festival step, etc.) and more areas of Canadian interest (Old-Tyme fiddling, Ottawa Valley Step, Canadian ballad singing, etc.); Consider in the future dividing amateur and professional competitors

Create a detailed budget for expenses vs. income

Work with the youth Meithleoir to invite school submissions. Connect with cultural groups across the country to promote the competitions and events.

Work with IT on a format for archiving submissions; include publication rights in the submission guidelines

Coordinate with Glór na nGael and the Irish Oireachtas to achieve more recognition and maintain the Sean-nós and Learner of the Year award. Choose and award the yearly Uachtarán distinction

Organize or promote events outside the established Immersion Week and Oireachtas, both on-site and off, including in major centres like Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa.

Dance and music events, concerts, workshops, including inviting artists from Ireland or the Diaspora. Connect with culturally related artists travelling through Canada to promote their work/concerts (Presented by Gaeltacht an OÚ) to normalize the Irish language in Canada

Arrange local events, where the focus is not on Irish speakers coming to Tamworth but instead geared towards providing Irish cultural exposure to the local people, including music, dance, and language workshops. We should also participate in the Tamworth Fiddle Festival in September.

Guiding Questions / Vision

How can we introduce more regular presence on-site and in the Tamworth/Erinsville area?

How can we create a better flow for sourcing immersion week workshops?

How can we bring more people to the language through cultural activities?

How can we encourage participation in events or the Oireachtas if moving back offline (video link, livestream, video submissions) and do we need to have separate categories for live and video submissions?



Caidreamh Óige (Youth Engagement)

Meithleoir: Nioc Bridges

Objectives and Responsibilities

Connect with universities and high schools, especially those with Celtic Studies Programs

Organize and oversee students attending on the working-scholarship program

Connect with GAA groups and other youth organizations across Canada. Offer language or cultural workshops for them (many run them but have trouble finding resources such as teachers), working with the cultural events meithleacha.

Possibly organize summer youth camping trips at the Gaeltacht site.

Partner with high schools or universities for writing contest submissions for the Oireachtas

Organize, maintain, and distribute any scholarships

Run cultural or language workshop aimed at children's groups, including local to Tamworth/Erinsville area

Work with Erinsville school to have children design a flag for the Gaeltacht

Connect with ICUF teachers across Canada to both support them and to involve them in the Gaeltacht activities

Reach out to newly established Kingston GAA (Dan Creighton)

Organize sport tournaments, especially ones not yet available in Canada

Partner with PR to engage with both youth and senior sport teams

Guiding Questions / Vision

Need more young fluent speakers, and we need to come up with strategies to recruit them and training aimed at them

We need to strongly promote the Ontario Heritage Language Program to have Irish available in more schools, especially the local school if possible

Promote research into the Irish language in Canada among students, including providing scholarships to Ireland if funds are available

We need to support intergenerational language transfer, with family language planning workshop or classes for parents provided



Tiomsú Airgid (Fundraising)

Meithleoir: Pól Mac Domhnaill

Objectives and Responsibilities

Complete funding applications: Find funding opportunities for the Gaeltacht, including government grants in Canada (Canadian Heritage) and Ireland (Glór na nGael). **This requires that the financial statements be completed by the spránaí.**

Rent the site, tents, or equipment if appropriate, such as for caterers or for weddings on site (liquor licence with us as co-insured). Consider renting the site for non-member camping (supervised by site maintenance).

Work with Site Maintenance and Site Development to organize a lease with the farmer for usage of the land, contingent on our development plans; this will require at least a 8-10 year contract, which is acceptable. Our hay is not suitable for livestock feed and either would need replanting or usage of the fields for another purpose, and so the farmer would need a lease to be assured of return for that work. In a lead position, work with Site maintenance and the farmer to complete reclassification of the land for agricultural usage for reduced taxes.

Organize and maintain a Gaeltacht store online, with learning supplies, flash cards, and other materials (many programs in Canada require purchase from Canadian suppliers for their accounting which is not possible. We could easily fill this role). Work with PR to promote this.

Look for funding sources specifically for building or purchasing of permanent structures on-site

Solicit donations, grants, and trust endowments for the creation of bursaries or scholarships to travel to Gaeltacht events, including for people from other areas of Canada or from other countries), or to travel to Ireland for Gaeltacht immersion

Work with Site Development to assess targeted fundraising needs

Solicit sponsors or vendors for events, including providing complimentary tickets

Work with the Oireachtas & Cultural Events working group to deliver cultural events in which proceeds or a portion thereof are donated to the Gaeltacht

Guiding Questions / Vision

We are competing with other languages for limited government money, can we use the history of the language in Canada to stand out?

Are there any local summer tourism initiatives we could connect into?

What business contacts would have Irish connections we could approach for funding or sponsorship?



FORBAIRT AN tSUÍMh (Site Development)

Meithleoir: Pól Mac Domhnaill

Objectives and Responsibilities

Water access on site is a high priority, electricity can be added later

Build more hygienic and comfortable toilet and shower facilities.

Create an overall site development plan with cost estimate for each construction, including well, 10 cabins, cultural centre, kitchen facilities, sport field, washrooms. showers, etc.

Cost and, pending approval, construct a simple cabin with sleeping and eating areas for storage use and use by site maintenance when they are on site. This may then be rented at a slight increase to people needing special accommodations during the immersion week.

Work with the township for approvals

Contract the building or oversee the buying of permanent structures on-site

Build more of a welcoming entrance to the site: Stone with Fáilte in ogham, flagpole

Develop a more permanent 'Celtic' presence on the site (ie. create mapped trails and information handouts connecting features of the site such as the Salmon river to Irish mythology, Irish Canadian history, and the history of the site itself)

Provide RV area and infrastructure

develop the remembrance oak grove with name plaques and seating

Fence dangerous area of shoreline by briar patch; Develop waterfront into recreation area

Guiding Questions / Vision

In 100 years, people have said they would like to imagine a Gaeltacht the size of a village with residents operating in Irish routinely, with the feel of a small sráidbhaile in the Gaeltacht. Another vision is of buildings and mini village with tiny rentable homes, and RV facilities for longer stays

Is there a way to build bothántaíocht into the layout of the cabins, in smaller groups where dialect-specific speakers can stay together?

A cultural centre, with an isolated place for artists to think and create and a garden

Something akin to the Cape Breton Gaelic College

A library, a store, a museum, and a café all in one building (like is found in most Irish Gaeltacht villages)



Cothabháil an tSuímh (Site Maintenance)

Meithleoir: Diarmaid Ó Maolagáin

Objectives and Responsibilities

Update the site maintenance plan as needed depending on changes or new infrastructure added; Create a budget for yearly maintenance of both the site and the equipment, including replacement costs of equipment/tents and projected life spans

Maintain the site and physical assets, including grass cutting and dead tree felling

Field and approve/decline visit requests to site, working with IT (all requests will go to the IT email and be forwarded, but how to promote online is your decision). If members are attending, provide simple tasks from the site maintenance plan for them to complete. If non-members are attending, a site maintenance rep should be present and the group will be charged a fee (fundraising group).

Organize work meithleacha through the year, creating a schedule of regular working days in advance, and expand working days into weekend events with Irish instruction and community events like dances or bonfires. Provide food for the working days if that is required to entice people to attend

With Fundraising in a lead role, enter talks with the farmer to secure a lease for his land usage, including our site plans so he knows what areas will be occupied in the future; Also continue with farmer in reclassifying land as agricultural for reduced taxation.

Fix the Gaeltacht sign at the road

Work with fundraising to sell the large water tanks on site and instead purchase cheaper smaller water tanks or use the money with development to construct a well

Develop SWP for equipment to be read and signed by users, and conduct training and maintenance on machinery. Maintain a list of people trained and authorized to use large equipment.

Guiding Questions / Vision

Site maintenance is of utmost importance if we are to maintain the value of the site

Bi-weekly inspection recommended

Can we promote the working days as informal times without structured classes that are pop-up gaeltachtaí? Days when you can just come and speak some Irish together?

Consider having longer “working weekends” to entice people from further afield (Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto)

Glacial erratics on site are to be left in their original locations on site and not repurposed or destroyed, these are a special feature of the site.



Suíomh Gréasáin 7 Teicneolaíocht Faisnéise (Website & IT)

Meithleoir: Émilie Lavallée-Funston

Objectives and Responsibilities

Redevelop and update the website with current information

Maintain the Wikipedia entry and website in Irish and English

Using content from PR, develop the website into a more useful hub of information, including history of the language in Canada, learning resources, information on the Gaeltacht, updated information on cultural events happening across Canada (eg. musical events, other language weekends), an online store for books/learning materials/art by members or local artists (Fundraising), recordings and archives of past oireachtais and learning articles and videos of oireachtas competitive events (Oireachtas), and biographies of important Canadian Irish speakers and local history

Setup for online events, including email distribution

Monitoring of info@gaeilge.ca email and passing along inquiries to the appropriate meithleoir

Include a donate button on the website

Build in from the start the ability to paywall content, for forthcoming annual membership members

Guiding Questions / Vision

The website should become the professional, polished face of the organization and a hub of information, along the lines of what Dáltaí na Gaeilge provides but with a Canadian focus, including connecting students with teachers and classes in their area through a centralized list

You have approval to streamline the IT requirements as you require, such as changing payment systems, changing platforms, etc.

We need to determine how to best digitize and archive records and allow access to these

Look to other Gaelic organization websites for guidance, such as other Gaeltacht commissions



Athbhreithniú CURaclaim (CURriculum Review)

Meithleoir: ----

Objectives and Responsibilities

This group consists of experienced teachers and learners in the Irish language, having experienced both positive and negative learning situations, as well as curriculum development experts

Curriculum and current teaching methods will be reviewed and restructured to:

- provide more guidance for teachers and aid in lesson planning
- provide a clear path of upward progression for students
- provide consistency between classes and courses in both content and approach
- to limit the grammatical approach of language acquisition and move to a model of immersive or functional language acquisition (ie. activity based)

Guiding Questions / Vision

Class levels will be tied directly to the established TEG levels, with teachers providing instruction in a rotating selection of topics limited to that level in order that should a student stay in a class for several years they will cover the required material to progress to the next TEG level. This will provide an upward push for student growth, as newer topics require a higher class level. This will also keep students on the lower end of levels from being exposed to information inappropriate for their level.

How can we bring a student with no Irish through to fluency with a graded system of upward progression?

How can we provide essential immersion learning through physical activities and experiential learning, rather than grammar drills?

What topics as subjects are appropriate for each class level?

How can we better connect with the Irish language courses across North America, to encourage students to maintain and enrich their language level during or after their education? (Significantly reduced rates? Offer a diploma per level completed?)

