ABAIR BEAGAN
[ap-er bek-an]
‘Speak a Little’
A selection of Gaelic words and phrases
Pronunciation key

tch = the sound in English batch, catch, match
ch = the sound in Scots loch and German Bach
ou = the vowel sound in English noun
aw = the vowel sound in English law
oeu = is like the vowel sound in English food but said with the lips unrounded. Try saying ‘ooh’ then spread your lips flat.

*The stress in Gaelic words usually falls on the first syllable. We’ve tried to indicate this in the phonetics with bold text.

You can listen to these Gaelic phrases online!

If you would like to listen to sound files of the phrases included in this publication click on the Gaelic text on the following pages. You can also find these online along with a range of other Gaelic resources at: www.scottish.parliament.uk/gaelic.

We hope that you find this guide useful, however if you have any questions or for more information about the Gaelic Service at the Scottish Parliament, please contact:

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Greetings, welcomes and farewells

Madainn mhath [mat-een vah]  Good morning
Feasgar math [fesk-ur mah]  Good afternoon / evening
Fàilte oirbh [faal-tcha or-iv]  Welcome to you
Fàilte oirbh uile [faal-tcha or-iv ool-ah]  Welcome to you all
Fàilte gu Pàrlamaid na h-Alba [faal-tcha goo paarl-ah-mitch nah hal-uh-pah]  Welcome to the Scottish Parliament
Fàilte gu Taigh an Ròid [faal-tcha goo tie un rawtch]  Welcome to Holyrood
Ceud mìle fàilte [kee-ut meel-ah faal-tcha] 100,000 welcomes (a traditional Gaelic welcome)

'S mise ... [smish-ah ...]  My name is ... / I am ...

Tha e na thoileachas mòr dhomh a bhith ann an-diugh [ha eh nah hol-uch-us more gaw avee oun un-joo]  It’s a great pleasure to be here today

Tha mi duilich, chan eil Gàidhlig agam [ha mee dool-eech chan yayl gaal-ick akum]  I'm sorry, I don't speak Gaelic
Chan eil ach beagan Gàidhlig agam [chan yay-l ach bek-an gaal-ick akum]  I only have a little bit of Gaelic

Oidhche mhath leibh [oich-ya vah leev]  Good night
Beannachd leibh [b-yan-uch kleev]  Goodbye (formal)
Mar sin leibh [mar shin leev]  Goodbye (informal)

Forms of address and thanks

A charaid [ah char-ridge]  Friend (the traditional form of address)
*Try saying the English a carriage, change the ‘c’ to an ‘h’: a harriage, then strengthen the ‘h’ sound to a ‘ch’: a charriage
A chàirdean [ah char-jun]  Friends (the traditional form of address)
Oifigeir Riaghlaidh ’s a chàirdean [off-ick-er ree-al-ee sah char-jun]  Presiding Officer and Members/Friends
A Neach-gairm ’s a chàirdean [an yech ger-um sah char-jun]  Convener and Members/Friends

Tapadh leibh... [tap-ah leev]  Thank you...
...Oifigeir Riaghlaidh [off-ick-er ree-al-ee] ...Presiding Officer
...a Leas-oifigeir Riaghlaidh [ah less off-ick-er ree-al-ee] ...Deputy Presiding Officer
...a Phriomh Mhinisteir [ah freev veen-ish-tcher] ...First Minister
...a Mhinisteir [ah veen-ish-tcher] ...Minister
...a Rùnaire [ah roon-er-ah] ...Cabinet Secretary
...a Neach-gairm [an yech ger-um] ...Convener
...a charaid [ah char-ridge] ...Member/Friend
...a chàirdean [ah char-jun] ...Members/Friends

'S e ur beatha [sheh oor beh-ha]  You’re welcome
(often said in reply to receiving thanks)
Parliamentary phrases

'S math a rinn sibh! [smah ah rhine shiv] Well done!

Tha mi a' dol leibh [ha mee dol leev] I agree
Tha mi a’ dol leibh gu mòr [ha mee dol leev goo more] I strongly agree
Chan eil mi a’ dol leibh [chan yayl mee dol leev] I disagree
Chan eil mi a’ dol leibh idir [chan yayl mee dol leev eetch-er] I strongly disagree

'S math sin a chluinntinn [smah shin ah chloon-tchin] It is great to hear that
Rian is Riaghailt! [ree-an is ree-itch] Order! Order!

Tha mi air a shon [ha mee air ah hon] I'm in favour of it
Tha mi na aghaidh [ha mee nah ug-ee] I'm against it
Tha mi a’ seachnadh [ha mee ah shech-nug] I abstain

Scotland...

Alba [al-uh-pah] Scotland
Ball Pàrlamaid na h-Alba (BPA) [boul paarl-ah-mitch nah hal-uh-pah] Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba [paarl-ah-mitch nah hal-uh-pah] The Scottish Parliament
Riaghaltas na h-Alba [ree-alt-us nah hal-uh-pah] The Scottish Government
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd [korl-ya nah gayl-tach-k] The Highland Council
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar [korl-ya nun yay-lun sheer] The official name of the council for the Western Isles
Na h-Eileanan an Iar [na hayla-nun un yee-ar] The official name of the Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament constituencies for the Western Isles

Gearan! [g-yer-an] Objection!
Na togaibh mi gus an tuít mi [nah toke-iv mee goos un tootch mee] Please don’t interrupt me (lit. ‘Don’t lift me until I fall’)
Gura math thèid leibh! [goor-ah mah hage leev] Good luck!
’S math sin! [smah shin] That’s great!
...and beyond

An Rìoghachd Aonaichte (RA) [un ree-uch koeun-eech-tcha] The United Kingdom (UK)

Ball Pàrlamaid (BP) [boul paarl-ah-mitch] Member of the UK Parliament (MP)

Taigh nan Cumantan [tie nung koom-un-tun] The House of Commons

Taigh nam Morairean [tie num mor-er-un] The House of Lords

Seanadh Nàiseanta na Cuimrigh [shen-ug naash-unta nah koom-ree] The National Assembly for Wales

Seanadh Èireann a Tuath [shen-ug ayr-un ah too-ah] The Northern Ireland Assembly

Pàrlamaid na h-Eòrpa [paarl-ah-mitch na h-yore-pah] The European Parliament

Ball Pàrlamaid na h-Eòrpa (BPE) [boul paarl-ah-mitch na h-yore-pah] Member of the European Parliament (MEP)