

## SKYE'S £7.1M GAELIC CENTRE WILL CREATE UP TO 90 JOBS

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The future of the Gaelic language in Skye receives a major boost today with the launch of a £7.1million centre for creative and cultural industries.

The new centre - entitled Fàs, Gaelic for growth - will create up to 90 jobs and is to open next year, the Highland Year of Culture.

It will house a full broadcast standard digital television recording studio, a theatre and post-production facilities, a centre for visual arts and research, office space, a sound recording studio and a creche.

Former Runrig frontman Donnie Munro, who is development director of Skye's Gaelic college, said: "The college is the national centre for Gaelic and this will be an investment in the future of the language.

"It will focus on new media and bring together academics and the business community to encourage entrepreneurs to develop their ideas."

He said it would ensure the development of activity in Gaelic arts, culture and heritage, acting as an "incubator" for new businesses catering for the growing demand for Gaelic products and services across a wide range of new media.

The centre, which will be next to the college's existing campus in Sleat, will be a landmark in the college's development from a humble barn 30 years ago.

College director Professor Norman Gillies said: "The future economic well-being of the Gaelic community is essentially linked to the future health of the language and, while education is central to this, there is a need for greater synergy across sectors to ensure a holistic approach.

"Fàs will seek to create such synergies by bringing together academia, new media, the arts, cultural heritage, applied research, business and community, in a dynamic which will create opportunities for knowledge, generation and transfer and foster the conditions for sustainable enterprise and wealth creation."

Robert Muir, chief executive of Highlands and Islands Enterprise Skye and Wester Ross, said: "We are pleased to be

making this contribution and supporting these high quality jobs.

"Developing quality learning infrastructure is fundamental to the long-term growth and sustainability of the area.

"The mix of cultural and business activity will create a vibrant centre for creativity, promoting creative industry as well as creativity and the arts, in the context of Gaelic culture and language.

"The college has helped transform Gaelic into a language which is the expression of a vibrant, modern, forward-looking culture.

"We look forward to seeing the new building when completed and continuing to work with the college in the future."

Highland Council convener Alison Magee said: "Highland Council is delighted to have contributed towards the capital programme for this wonderful project, which places Gaelic language and culture at the cutting edge of development in new media and advanced digital technologies."