



# Recommended Terms

(For use alongside our Gaelic Place-Names Policy)

Last updated: March 2020

## Executive Summary

This recommended list of terms is a guide for use in forming new Gaelic names where appropriate, such as street names. They are not to be considered definitive; some interpretive flexibility is allowed, depending on context.

# 1. Nouns

This list is not to be considered definitive; some interpretive flexibility is allowed, depending on context. In particular the capitalisation of an element after a hyphen may be appropriate in certain cases.

<i>English</i>	<i>Gaelic</i>
<i>Arcade</i>	Aircèad
<i>Avenue</i> (formerly 'tree-lined street' originally 'approach to house in its own grounds')	Craobhraid
<i>Boulevard</i>	Bulabhàrd
<i>Bow</i>	Bogha
<i>Brae</i>	Bruthach
<i>Bridge</i>	Drochaid
<i>Buildings</i>	Togalaichean
<i>Business Park</i>	Pàirc Gnothachais
<i>Bypass</i>	Seach-rathad
<i>Causeway</i>	Cabhsair
<i>Centre (building)</i>	Ionad
<i>Circle/Circular (road)</i>	Cuairt-rathad
<i>Circular Route / Loop (footpath)</i>	Cuairt-cheum
<i>Close</i> (‘passageway to rear premises’ originally ‘enclosure, courtyard’)	Clobhsa
<i>Cottages</i>	Cotaichean
<i>Court</i> (‘complex of buildings’ originally ‘courtyard at rear of building’)	Cùirt
<i>Crescent</i>	Corran
<i>Croft</i>	Croit
<i>Cross(roads)</i>	Crois
<i>Cycle Route</i>	Slighe Baidhsagail
<i>Cycle Track</i>	Frith-rathad Baidhsagail
<i>Distributor</i>	Sgaoil-rathad
<i>Drive</i> (often ‘main thoroughfare’ originally ‘approach to house in its own grounds’)	Dràibh
<i>Flats</i>	Flataichean
<i>Gardens</i> (originally ‘town houses round central gardens’)	Gàrradh
<i>Gate</i> (Scots <i>gait</i> ‘street’ in the sense of a ‘way’)	Bothar
<i>Gate</i> (English <i>gate</i> in the modern sense)	Geata
<i>Glade(s)</i>	Glac
<i>Grange</i>	Grainnseach
<i>Green</i>	Àilean
<i>Grove</i>	Doire
<i>Heights</i>	Bràigh

<i>Hill</i>	<b>Cnoc</b>
<i>Houses</i>	<b>Taighean</b>
<i>Hub</i>	<b>Co-ionad</b>
<i>Industrial Estate</i>	<b>Raon Gnìomhachais</b>
<i>Industrial Park</i>	<b>Pàirc Gnìomhachais</b>
<i>Junction (interchange)</i>	<b>Ceann-rathaid</b>
<i>Junction (intersection)</i>	<b>Snaidhm-rathaid</b>
<i>Land</i>	<b>Fearann</b>
<i>Lane</i> (originally 'narrow way between houses or behind terraces')	<b>Caolraid</b>
<i>Link</i>	<b>Ceangal</b>
<i>Link Path</i>	<b>Ceum-ceangail</b>
<i>Loan(ing)</i> (grassy track to or between fields)	<b>Lànaig</b>
<i>Mall</i>	<b>Malla</b>
<i>Medway</i> (often 'link road' originally 'central, main thoroughfare')	<b>Meadhraid</b>
<i>Mews</i> ('stabling' originally 'falcon cages')	<b>Marclann</b>
<i>Orchard</i>	<b>Gart</b>
<i>Parade</i>	<b>Pairèad</b>
<i>Park</i> (also 'recreational area' originally 'field, grazing land')	<b>Pàirc</b>
<i>Passage</i>	<b>Bealach</b>
<i>Path</i>	<b>Ceum</b>
<i>Pend</i> ('vaulted or arched passageway, esp. to back of houses')	<b>Stuagh</b>
<i>Place</i> (originally 'residential square with garden or open space in centre')	<b>Ceàrn</b>
<i>Precinct</i>	<b>Àrainn</b>
<i>Promenade</i>	<b>Promanàd</b>
<i>Quay</i>	<b>Cidhe</b>
<i>Reservoir</i>	<b>Loch Tasgaidh</b>
<i>Retail Park</i>	<b>Pàirc Reic</b>
<i>Ring Road</i>	<b>Iadh-rathad</b>
<i>Rise</i>	<b>Uchd</b>
<i>Road</i>	<b>Rathad</b>
<i>Roundabout</i>	<b>Cearcall</b>
<i>Route</i>	<b>Slighe</b>
<i>Row</i>	<b>Sreath</b>
<i>Side</i>	<b>Taobh (see 3.2)</b>
<i>Slipway / Slip</i>	<b>Sliop</b>
<i>Square</i>	<b>Ceàrnag</b>
<i>Stairs</i>	<b>Staidhre</b>
<i>Steps</i>	<b>Steapaichean</b>
<i>Street</i>	<b>Sràid</b>
<i>Terrace</i> (row of joined houses, formerly along hillside, originally 'shelf in hillside')	<b>Barraid</b>
<i>Tower</i>	<b>Tùr</b>

<i>Towpath</i>	<b>Ceum-tarraing</b>
<i>Track</i>	<b>Frith-rathad</b>
<i>Trade Park</i>	<b>Pàirc Malairt</b>
<i>Trail</i>	<b>Slighe</b>
<i>Unit</i>	<b>Aonad</b>
<i>Vennel</i>	<b>Aisir</b>
<i>View</i>	<b>Sealladh</b>
<i>Walk</i>	<b>Ceum</b>
<i>Way</i>	<b>Slighe</b>
<i>Woodland Trail</i>	<b>Slighe-choille</b>
<i>Woodland Walk</i>	<b>Cuairt-choille</b>
<i>Wynd</i> (originally 'small winding street or lane round obstacles from a main street to rear premises')	<b>Lùb</b>

## 2. Affixes

<i>English</i>	<b>Gaelic</b>
<i>East(ern)</i>	an Ear
<i>Great(er)</i>	Mòr
<i>Inner</i>	a-Staigh
<i>Lower</i>	Ìochdrach (see 3.4)
<i>Main (+ noun)</i>	Prìomh (+ noun)
<i>Mid(dle)</i>	Meadhanach
<i>New (in the sense of 'newly made')</i>	Ùr
<i>New (in the sense of 'replacement')</i>	Nuadh (see 3.1)
<i>North</i>	a Tuath
<i>Old (+ noun)</i>	Seann (+ noun)
<i>Outer</i>	a-Muigh
<i>South</i>	a Deas
<i>Upper</i>	Uachdrach
<i>West(ern)</i>	an Iar

## 3. Usage Guidelines

### 3.1 New

*Nuadh* should be used when modifying an existing name.<sup>1</sup> When the element modifies a generic element representing a place that has not existed before then *ùr* should be used.<sup>2</sup> *Ùr* has the sense of 'newly (at the time) made'.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. New Elgin ~ Eilginn Nuadh (NJ218618).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Newton ~ Am Baile Ùr (NS667605).

## 3.2 Side

The usage of *taobh*<sup>3</sup> in traditional place-names is generally confined to usage as a generic element with an adjective.<sup>4</sup> English-named settlement names containing *side* may be translated as *taigh*.<sup>5</sup> In other cases where the name does not denote a settlement, other options may be used, for instance *bruach* ‘bank’ may be used in cases where the place-name represents a genuine path or way beside a linear feature such as a road or watercourse.<sup>6</sup> The word *side* may, on occasion, not be translated at all.<sup>7</sup>

## 3.3 Hill

In the absence of local parallels, and when the referent is not known, *cnoc* should be used. In some cases however ‘hill’ is used in Scots to mean: “a common moor where rough grazing rights are enjoyed jointly by neighbouring farmers; a piece of rough moorland where peats are cut, a peat-moss”.<sup>8</sup> In such cases *monadh* should be used.<sup>9</sup>

## 3.4 Upper / Lower

If there is an affix in English for *upper/over* or *lower/nether*, but there is no evidence for these affixes in Gaelic, *uachdrach* for *upper/over*, and *ìochdrach* for *lower/nether* should be used.

Where one of the following pairs is known the other is likely to be:

*uarach* ‘upper’ and *iarach* ‘lower’<sup>10</sup>

*àrd* ‘upper’ and *fhàn/ìosal/iseal* ‘lower’<sup>11</sup>

**On the east coast:**

*shuas* ‘upper/west’ and *shìos* ‘lower/east’<sup>12</sup>

**On the west coast:**

*shìos* ‘upper/west’ and *shuas* ‘lower/east’. *Shuas* and *shìos* literally mean upstream and downstream respectively, so usage will change depending on which watershed the places are in.

*uachdar*, ‘upland’ and *ìochdar*, ‘lowland, laigh’ (followed by the genitive form of the place-name)

*bràigh(e)* may be used for ‘upper’ in cases where this is geographically justified.<sup>13</sup> (see also 3.10.)

<sup>3</sup> In Sutherland Gaelic, it can refer to a district, such as Taobh Mhealanais ~ Melness District Grannd, 2013, 198.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Tubeg ~ An Taobh Beag (NC658634).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Braeside ~ Taigh na Leacainn (NN860488).

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Burnside ~ Bruach an Uillt (NG794327) with no evidence there was a settlement here.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Burnside ~ Taigh an Uillt (various).

<sup>8</sup> <http://swap.nesc.gla.ac.uk/database/?page=3&search=&view=table&order=1&d=2#results>

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Ochil Hills ~ Monadh Ochail (NN90).

<sup>10</sup> These are shortened forms of *ìochdrach* and *uachdrach* common in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Forsainn ~ Forsainn Fhàn (NC911489)/ Forsainard ~ Forsain Àrd (NC892438).

<sup>12</sup> E.g. West Strathan ~ An Srathan Shuas (NC563639)/ Strathan ~ An Srathan Shìos (NC575648).

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Falkirk High ~ Bràighe na h-Eaglaise Brice (NS891798).

### 3.5 -ton, -town

In general *baile* should be used if a Gaelic generic element is justified, especially if parallels exist elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> In some cases *baile* may be omitted for reasons of length or aesthetics.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.6 Head

If relating to a coastal promontory, the term ‘head’ should be represented as *rubha* (or, if appropriate, with another term such as *àird*), not *ceann*. *Ceann* as a generic element in place-names is generally used only as meaning the end of a feature.<sup>16</sup> There are some instances where *ceann* was used as a translation of Scots *heid*, or Scottish Standard English *head*<sup>17</sup> but this is not to be employed as a rule.

### 3.7 River

In cases where the English form of a watercourse name contains ‘river’ or ‘water’ as a generic element but the Gaelic form is not in evidence, *abhainn* should be used.

In general where the river-name is ‘primary’, i.e. it derives from the name of the watercourse and not some other feature such as a glen or settlement, the name should be in the nominative.<sup>18</sup> Otherwise the element should be in the genitive.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.8 Hall

*Taigh* should be used for ‘hall’ when in the Scots/English traditional sense of ‘a large and spacious building, esp. one which is the residence of a magnate’.<sup>20, 21</sup> *Talla* should be used for ‘hall’ in the more modern sense of a large room or long central room in a house, or in the sense of a community building primarily containing a large room for activities.<sup>22</sup> When used in an ironic sense *taigh* should be used.<sup>23, 24</sup>

### 3.9 Forest

Forest should be translated as *coille*, unless it refers to a deer forest (i.e. a large area in which deer live, not necessarily wooded), in which case *frìth* should be used.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> E.g. Milton or Milltown ~ Baile a’ Mhuilinn (NH766744) or Baile na Muilne.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Clynemilton ~ Clin a’ Mhuilinn (NC913069).

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Lochgilphead ~ Ceann Loch Gilb (NR862881).

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Peterhead ~ Ceann Phàdraig (NK124456).

<sup>18</sup> E.g. River Tay ~ Abhainn Tatha (NO1918).

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Peterburn ~ Allt Phàdraig (NG739831).

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/hall>

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Woodhall ~ Taigh na Coille (NS344739).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Corran Halls ~ Talla a’ Chorrain (NS763510).

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, S., with Márkus, G., 2012 v, 216.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Larkhall ~ Taigh na h-Uiseig (NS763510).

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Forest Lodge ~ Taigh na Frìthe (NN270422).

### 3.10 Brae

*Bruthach* ‘hillside’ is the equivalent of modern Scots *brae* ‘road which has a steep gradient’.<sup>26</sup> *Bruach* ‘bank or edge’ is a separate word. *Brae* is often confused with *bràigh* ‘upper part’, and though they have some overlap in meaning they are not equivalent. Despite this, in some cases *brae* is used as an anglicised form of *bràigh* in place-names.<sup>27</sup> *Bràigh* may be used for ‘upper’ if the place in question is physically higher.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.11 ‘Dale’

Gaelic *dail*, means ‘meadow by a river’.<sup>29</sup> Norse *dalr* ‘valley, dale’ generally appears at the end of the name as *-dal* in Gaelic.

### 3.10 Land

*Fearann* is to be used in the sense of ‘property or farm land’.<sup>30</sup> *Talamh* is to be used in the sense of ‘earth or soil’. *Tìr* is used in relation to ‘dry land as opposed to water’.

## 3. Religious Names

English	Gaelic
Mary	Moire (not Màiri)
Andrew	Anndra (not Andreas)
Peter	Peadar (not Pàdraig)

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/brae\\_n1](http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/brae_n1) meaning 3.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Brae Lochaber ~ Bràigh Loch Abar (NN2781).

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Falkirk High ~ Bràighe na h-Eaglaise Brice (NS891798).

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Dalneigh ~ Dail an Eich (NH654449).

<sup>30</sup> E.g. Ferrindonald ~ Fearann Dhòmhnail (NG648073).