

Wester Loch Ewe Community Council (WLECC)

Draft minutes of ordinary meeting held at 7.30pm on 3 December 2025 in Poolewe Village Hall.

Present: Ross Maclean (Chair), John Nicholson (Secretary), Ally Wright (Treasurer), Jim Buchanan, Willie Scambler, Fred Hughes.

1. Recording of meeting: Ross reminded everyone that an audio recording of the meeting would be made to help with compiling the minutes.
2. Apologies for absence: Mairi Mackenzie, Kenny Mitchell, Councillor Chris Birt.
3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting: Minutes were adopted without comment. Proposed by Jim, seconded by Ally.
4. Financial Report. Ally reported our bank balances as:

Main Account balance 03/12/25:	£7,914.84
Sub balances included in above:	
Village improvement funding balance:	£1,267.05
Car Parking balance:	£2,919.23
War Memorial balance:	£47.44
Heritage group balance:	£992.95
Xmas Lunch balance:	£902.47
Ceilidh income balance:	£1,075.09

5. Matters Arising From Previous Meeting.

5.1 Pictish Stone protection and Red Smiddy interpretive facility. The laser scan team arrived to do the scan but had to postpone because of the weather. Jim continues to seek additional funding sources for the Pictish stone restoration work. However, if full funding cannot be achieved, we have agreed to abandon the proposed work and use the laser scan analysis as a valuable interpretive resource. We have received permission from Historic Environment Scotland to go ahead with the interpretive plinth at the Red Smiddy. We agreed that we will cast the base slab for the plinth to ensure the orientation is correct and to make best use of the stonemason's time.

Action: Willie, Ross, Jim to cast base of plinth.

5.2 Sheep in Poolewe Burial Ground: We have asked for a meeting with local Highland Council management and the Bereavement Services Manager to see if we can move the matter forward.

Action: Ross to progress meeting.

5.3 Deer management update. NatureScot have informed us they are in contact with Tournai Estate and NTS and we await the outcome of these discussions..

5.4 Highland Council property maintenance. There has been no response from HC to our follow up enquiry about progress and we will continue to pursue this.

5.5 Gairloch affordable housing initiative. Ally reported that the job description for the housing officer post is being compiled. Wester Loch Ewe Trust is now represented in the group.

5.6 Local Dentist Recruitment. We agreed to publish the reply from NHS Highland to Maree Todd MSP about the position with the Gairloch dental surgery. We will write back to say we consider the reply unsatisfactory and ask for her to continue to put our case forward and look for new ways to address the problem.

5.7 Poolewe village signage. The designs for the village entrances and Riverside car park have

not yet been finalised.

Action: Ross and Jim to complete signage design.

5.8 Access to social housing and availability of empty property in Sydneys Way. We have not found any evidence of anyone having difficulty accessing the social housing register in Poolewe. We continue to follow up on the empty property in Sydneys Way.

6. Roads. Ross and Kenny met with senior management of Highland Council Roads on site in Poolewe to look at the road defects and speed limit issues around the village and they felt the meeting was productive. We await documentation of the outcomes from HC. It was agreed that we can invite a member of the roads team to our community council meetings whenever we feel it would be useful so we will do that as soon as we can arrange it.

7. EV Charger. We have not been able to contact the Highland Council EV charger team and we think it may have been disbanded. We agreed to ask Chris to pursue the matter at a high level in HC.

8. Ideas for making the Wester Loch Ewe community more attractive for visitors and locals. We have been asked to consider providing another picnic bench on the Poolewe village green and we agreed to do so.

Action: Ross to order a picnic bench.

9. Wester Loch Ewe helipad and land acquisition. John and Ally reported that WLET has been awarded £40k from Highland Council's Community Regeneration Fund towards the cost of the land purchase. There was a very good turnout for the two public drop-in sessions held in October and much useful feedback from the community was obtained. There was unanimous support for the proposed affordable housing and some concerns about potential traffic disruption in Clifton were expressed. The feedback will be addressed as work continues on the Scottish Land Fund Stage 2 funding application. The timetable for the new Scottish Land Fund has not been announced and may be subject to delay because of the Scottish Government elections in 2026.

10. Community Christmas Lunch. Note that the date has been moved to Wednesday 17 December and we have a small number of places still available. If you would like to go, please get in touch with Mairi on 781424, or Alison on 781202 by Friday 12 December. Our thanks to all who contributed raffle prizes.

11. Short term let control. We discussed the upcoming vote by HC Ward Committees about the possible introduction of short term let licensing into each ward. We have seen a reference to us being in favour of the measure but we have not reached a decision yet as there are several questions we need to have answered, such as hard evidence of the success of the scheme in Badenoch and Strathspey, statistics on the size of the problem in our ward, and clarification of how the governing guidelines would be drawn up as we would not want to penalise small local businesses contributing to the local economy. We agreed to write to our local councillors to clarify our position.

Action: John to write to councillors.

12. Future of Wester Ross Biosphere. We are aware that WRB has launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to ensure their continued existence as a UNESCO registered organisation for the next ten years. We want to record our wholehearted support for WRB's work with the community and we unanimously agreed to make a contribution of £200 to the campaign.

13. Correspondence. We received information about a scheme run by Tesco supermarkets which makes grants for children's play-parks. The amounts available are small and we couldn't see any possible use for such a grant at present so we agreed we would not pursue it.

14. Any other competent business. None.

15. Contributions from members of the public. None.

16. Date of next meeting. Next meeting will be at 7.30pm on 4 Feb 2026 in Inverasdale School.

