

Wester Loch Ewe Community Council (WLECC)

Draft minutes of ordinary meeting held at 7.30pm on 4 February 2026 in Inverasdale School.

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

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: Kenny Mitchell.
3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting: Minutes were adopted without comment. Proposed by Fred, seconded by Willie.
4. Financial Report. Ally reported our bank balances as:

Main Account balance 04/02/26:	£7,914.84
Sub balances included in above:	
Village improvement funding balance:	£164.73
Car Parking balance:	£2,919.23
War Memorial balance:	£47.44
Heritage group balance:	£992.95
Xmas Lunch balance (inc £300 from Aultbea Xmas hampers):	£455.27
Ceilidh income balance:	£1,075.09

5. Matters Arising From Previous Meeting.

5.1 Pictish Stone protection and Red Smiddy interpretive facility. We are waiting to hear when the laser scan team will be able to do the scan of the burial ground that had to be postponed due to bad weather. In the meantime Jim and Ally will continue to investigate funding sources for the preservation work. On Chris' suggestion they will try the Community Regeneration Fund. We have not been able to cast the plinth for the Red Smiddy interpretive panel yet but will do so when the weather permits.

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

5.2 Sheep in Poolewe Burial Ground: We are waiting to hear from local Highland Council management and the Bereavement Services Manager about a meeting to move the matter forward.

Action: Ross to progress meeting.

5.3 Deer management update. We were pleased to welcome Philip McLachlan from Aultbea CC. Philip reported that the deer population problem is also severe on the Aultbea side. We understand that NatureScot is speaking to landowners and crofters but they have not reported back to us yet. Both CC's agreed to keep up their contacts with NatureScot to progress the matter.

5.4 Highland Council property maintenance. We are aware that some windows were replaced on one property but 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 group is not meeting while recruitment for the housing officer post is being completed.

5.6 Local Dentist Recruitment. We have written to Maree Todd MSP to make it clear that we found the

reply she received from NHS Highland unsatisfactory. Chris confirmed that the head of NHS Highland dentistry services had told him they would not consider buying the Gairloch surgery. We will ask whether they would consider leasing the premises instead.

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

6. Roads. We have received an update from Iain Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager documenting our agreed roads issues. The Traffic Regulation Order for the amended speed limits has been drafted and is under review. We will ask to see this so that we can verify it is correct before it is implemented. No-one from HC took up our invitation to attend this meeting so we will send them a list of our forthcoming meetings and re-state our invitation to attend.

7. EV Charger. Chris reported that he had been in contact with the HC Contracts Manager who confirmed that the charger management company (EZO) have prioritised the repair of the faulty charger and their team will be on site during the week beginning 16 February.

8. Ideas for making the Wester Loch Ewe community more attractive for visitors and locals. We have received the new benches and will install them as soon as practicable. We have also received an offer of a picnic bench from a member of the public and we will follow up this generous offer.

9. Wester Loch Ewe helipad and land acquisition. John and Ally reported that WLET has been awarded funding to cover a valuation report on the land which could provide an alternative road route into the housing area. The timetable for the new Scottish Land Fund has still not been announced and work continues on finalising the Stage 2 funding application to SLF.

10. Short term let control. Chris explained the current position. Highland Council asked the ward teams to decide if they were in favour of no short term let control, partial short term let control or complete short term let control. Ward 5 voted unanimously for complete control where recommended. HC will now conduct a full public consultation and decide what the short term let control policy will be, based on the results of the consultation. No timescale has been announced. We await the consultation and in the meantime Chris will search for the results of the pilot scheme which was run in Badenoch and Strathspey so that we will be better informed for further discussions.

11. Correspondence. We received a message from Frank Burden in which he wished to register two complaints against Highland Council. The first related to the lack of provision of public toilets and we have reiterated that HC have no statutory obligation to provide toilets so there is nothing that we can do about this. His second point was about the poor state of our roads during the recent snowfall. This is something we have heard from others and we would ask anyone who experiences road clearance problems to collect some photographic evidence, note the date, time and place and submit it all to us so we have hard facts to present to HC.

12. Any other competent business. John said that WLET are planning to hold a defibrillator training course in Inverasdale School and anyone who would like to attend should get in touch with him on 07967 115316 or wleccsec@gmail.com.

13. Contributions from members of the public. None.

14. Date of next meeting. Next meeting will be at 7.30pm on 4 March 2026 in Inverasdale School. **Note that venue is changed as Poolewe Village Hall is unavailable.**