

## **Wester Loch Ewe Community Council (WLECC)**

Draft minutes of ordinary meeting held at 7.30pm on 3 June 2026 in Inverasdale School.

Present: Ross Maclean (Chair), John Nicholson (Secretary), Ally Wright (Treasurer), Willie Scambler (Vice chair), Mairi Mackenzie, Jim Buchanan, 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, and then deleted.
2. Apologies for absence: Kenny Mitchell, Councillor Chris Birt.
3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting: Minutes were adopted without comment. Proposed by Mairi, seconded by Ally.
4. Financial Report. Ally reported our bank balances as:

Main Account balance 03/06/26:	£7,739.26
Sub balances included in above:	
Village improvement funding balance:	£164.73
Car Parking balance:	£2,773.69
War Memorial balance:	£47.44
Heritage group balance:	£992.95
Xmas Lunch balance:	£1,328.27
Ceilidh income balance:	£1,075.09

Retrospective approval was given to a donation of £300 to Wester Loch Ewe Trust to assist with their bid to acquire community land in Poolewe.

### 5. Matters Arising From Previous Meeting.

5.1 Pictish Stone protection and Red Smiddy interpretive facility. Jim reported that he is in discussions with Laser Gulf about converting the data from the burial ground laser scan into a useable format. He is also pursuing the suggestion of having a replica stone made. Willie has organised the supply of stone for the Red Smiddy plinth so we are now waiting for the stonemason's availability.

5.2 Sheep in Poolewe Burial Ground: No progress to report.

5.3 Deer management update. We have arranged with the stalker who is culling on the Bac Dubh Rewilding Project ground to also cull on the adjacent estate ground so that most of the deer coming down of the Inverasdale Estate ground will be managed. Willie will be attending a meeting in July with NatureScot and the contractor they have employed to cull on Tournai Estate.

5.4 Highland Council property maintenance. We were pleased to receive a comprehensive update from HC Property Management on the state of repairs to HC property in Poolewe. With the exception of some outstanding work on the former Nurse's Home, all issues we are aware of have been addressed.

5.5 Poolewe village signage. Jim is investigating sources of funding to pay for the new Poolewe village signage and Ross has set up an online donation facility to make it easy for users of Riverside car park to donate. He will also order the signs for Riverside – we agreed to have a large one opposite the entrance and a smaller one on the donation box.

6. Roads. There has been no update from HC on our roads issues. We agreed to write with a summary of all outstanding matters and to repeat our invitation for someone from the Roads Dept. to attend one of our meetings.

7. Ideas for making the Wester Loch Ewe community more attractive for visitors and locals. Audrey and Tracy have agreed to continue to maintain the Poolewe village flower tubs – thank you Audrey and Tracy for the excellent job you are doing!

8. Poolewe community land acquisition. Wester Loch Ewe Trust have announced a final public consultation before submission of their funding bid on 3 July. There will be two sessions: 29 June 7pm in Poolewe Village Hall, and 30 June 7pm in Inverasdale School. There will be a short presentation on the funding bid and feedback will be invited on the proposed projects. Everyone is invited to come along and make their opinion heard.

9. Short Term Let Control Area Proposal. We spent some time discussing this complex issue and we can summarise our unanimous conclusions as:

- The subject material we have seen does not show clear evidence a Control Area would fulfil the stated objectives of reducing the loss of residential housing stock and helping address housing pressures for local people.
- We asked the consultation webinar if a Control Area would be able to distinguish between locals running short term lets on their property - which is a positive - and speculators from outwith the area buying up properties - which is extractive - and were told that the proposed Control Area legislation is not able to do so.
- We do not feel that any attempt to influence the housing market by depressing prices will be welcomed by home owners.
- We find the proposals risk depressing one of the main business activities in the community, and this on top of the significant reduction in accommodation providers resulting from the introduction of STL Licensing.
- This proposal is no substitute for building more affordable houses with a variety of tenure options such as social rent, or ownership under a rural housing burden, a mechanism which already exists.

We will submit our response to the consultation along these lines and in the meantime invite members of the public to make their opinions known to us.

10. Request for comments on Inverasdale School future plans. We wish to offer our full support for Wester Loch Ewe Trust's efforts to create a sustainable community hub in the Old School and we recognize that a steady income stream is crucial to that aim. Some suggestions we identified:

- Medium-term let accommodation like the proposed small flat would be ideal for incoming key workers while waiting to get established in longer term accommodation.
- There are opportunities to develop facilities which could be offered to Firemore campsite users so that the campsite itself could be left undeveloped.
- The success of the tearoom should be built upon.
- This would mean that the focus on better utilisation of the kitchen might be better directed towards functions such as weddings, birthday parties etc. or pop-up food offerings rather than aiming for a long term regular restaurant business.
- The school playground may be a potential source of income.

11. Correspondence. We have completed the Subject Access Request work we reported on last month and have since received a statement from the claimant saying: "Unfortunately it appears that I may have made my request incorrectly because an SAR does not necessarily answer the most relevant questions I need to ask". We therefore consider the matter closed.

12. Any other competent business. None.

13. Contributions from members of the public. None.

14. Date of next meeting. Our next meeting will be on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 at 7.30pm in Poolewe Village Hall.