EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF WESTLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 36 WELD STREET, HOKITIKA AND VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2026 COMMENCING AT 9.00 AM

The Council Meeting was live streamed to the Westland District Council YouTube Channel and presentations were made available on the Council Website.

1. KARAKIA TĪMATANGA OPENING KARAKIA

The opening Karakia was led by Her Worship the Mayor.

2. MEMBERS AND APOLOGIES

Chairperson:	Her Worship the Mayor
Deputy and Northern Ward Member:	Cr Burden
Northern Ward Members:	Cr Maitland, Cr Mackenzie
Hokitika Ward Members:	Cr Gillett, Cr Martin, Cr Walker
Southern Ward Members:	Cr Manera, Cr Munns
Iwi Representatives:	Kw Madgwick, Kw Tumahai

NGĀ WHAKAPAAHA APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Kw Madgwick and Kw Tumahai.

Moved Deputy Mayor Burden, seconded Cr Martin and **Resolved** that the apologies from Kw Madgwick and Kw Tumahai be received and accepted.

STAFF PRESENT

B. Phillips, Chief Executive; E. Bencich, General Manager District Assets; S. Lewis, Chief Financial Officer; D. Maitland, Quality Assurance Manager; M. Tahapeehi, General Manager Business Enablement; L. Webster, General Manager Regulatory and Compliance; J. Birnie, Strategy and Transformation Manager; N. Martin, Governance and Communications Officer; S. Hewett, Governance Administrator.

3. WHAKAPUAKITANGA WHAIPĀNGA DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Interest Register had been circulated to the Mayor and Councillors, and no changes have been made this month.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Her Worship the Mayor welcomed the members of the public who had taken the time to come in and speak to their feedback submissions on the Annual Plan and gave an overview of the process, emphasising that these hearings are about allowing councillors to hear directly from the public before making final decisions on the annual plan.

Speaker List:

4.1 Malcolm Lawson – Submission 39 – Via Zoom

- The submission focuses on concerns about the Jackson Bay Boat Ramp.
- It notes that the proposed fees are not explained in the plan and cannot be supported without further detail.
- The submitter does not believe the boat ramp justifies charging fees.
- They call for a more thorough analysis and a comprehensive development plan for the area.
- This plan should consider freedom camping, dog access, roading, wharf use, and parking.
- Overall, they prefer a well-thought-out, future-proof strategy rather than quick decisions.

The submission was noted by the Council and the Mayor stated plans to meet with the community when next down in Jackson Bay. It was acknowledged that the items mentioned in this submission largely relate to the Long-Term Plan and will be documented to be raised once planning starts for that document.

4.2 Reilly & Pamela Enstrom – Submissions 65, 66 & 78

- Suggestion to adjust hours (later openings and closings on some days) to maintain overall access while accommodating swim clubs and remote users.
- Reducing hours could result in 12–20 children per day missing lessons.
- Any fee increases should be introduced gradually.
- Highlighted the importance of recreation, rehabilitation, social connection, and water safety in a region with many rivers and lakes.
- Library access is also highly valuable, particularly for young families.
- When asked about external funding opportunities by councillors, stated that it may be possible for the swim club, but likely not the swim school.

Council thanked Reilly and Pamela for their submission, noting that it was useful for them to hear the number of children attending swim school in their decision making.

4.3 Hemi Bedggood – Submission 71

Speaking on behalf of Federated Farmers of New Zealand

- Wanted to bring attention to regional pest management as a key issue for West Coast farmers and would like involvement in related policies.
- Rural roads and infrastructure are a top priority, with appreciation for council efforts to secure NZTA funding.
- Concerns raised about land management and subdivision fees, particularly their impact on family farm succession.
- Debt reporting is seen as confusing.
- Overall, they support a "back to basics" approach.

Her Worship the Mayor noted that pest management currently falls within the West Coast Regional Council's remit but considering the potential upcoming local government reforms it is worth councillors understanding ongoing issues in the area. The main concern on the West Coast are pest plants and the West Coast Regional Council are currently seeking engagement on pest control.

4.4 Lez Morgan – Submission 42

- Concerns raised about illegal right turns into Railway Terrace, having observed members of the council doing it too.
- Asked council what the diesel price would have to decrease to in order to reopen the pool. Council responded to this that reopening of the pool does not only depend on fuel

cost but also on completion of annual maintenance and the work planned to upgrade the heating system, noting that they recognise the importance of the pool to the community and for that reason want to ensure that once the pool does reopen it can stay open.

- Questions raised around why the library isn't utilising property already owned by the council. Council responded that it was due to contractual obligations.
- Requested that the council increase their communication channels with the public, particularly, would like more utilisation of the paper as not everyone is on social media. Council recognised the need to improve in this area and will be looking to address this in the Long-Term Plan where council can make larger budgetary changes.

4.5 Alan Davidson – Submission 23

- Expressed confusion about how rate figures are presented as they appear different to what he would pay. This was clarified as the plan showing figures excluding GST, though council acknowledges the need for clearer communication and examples.
- There is also confusion around the stated 6% rate increase, as actual changes vary by area.
- Questions were raised about alternative pool heating options such as coal and solar; coal was not specifically discussed, and while solar was considered, it is not viable due to roof weight limits and risks of ground installation.

Council adjourned at 9:49am to allow time for the final speaker to arrive.
Council reconvened at 10:05am.

4.6 Kelly Stevens – Submissions 38 & 40

- Presenting on behalf of the Hokitika Amateur Swim Club as the current Club President, provided the council with a summary of the activities and membership of the club. Highlighting that if the operating hours of the swimming pool were to change, it would effectively make the Hokitika Swim Club inoperable as it would reduce their training hours by too much.
- Questioned whether the reduction in hours would lead to cost savings considering the amount the club pays per year, which would be lost, against the proposed amount that would be saved.
- Instead offered other potential solutions including:
  - The pool closes one day per week
  - A collaborative model where the pool opens late and closes late some days and opens early and closes early on others to accommodate the different groups that need access at different times
  - Allowing public access to pool while swim club and school have their sessions. They do not use the whole pool but the rule at the moment is that since it is outside of normal hours others cannot use the pool, including the parents and siblings of the swim club/school participants so it was suggested that allowing, and charging, for entry during this time could increase revenue.
  - An increase in entry fees, considers the current fees quite cheap and doesn't think that there would be much pushback if the entry fee increased slightly.

Her Worship the Mayor thanked the members of the public who had taken the time to come and speak in person and over zoom today, as well as everyone who submitted their feedback during the consultation period.

Council adjourned at 10:25am before going into deliberations.
Council reconvened at 10:37am.

6. ŪRONGO KAIMAHI
STAFF REPORTS

Draft Annual Plan 2026/2027 Submission Analysis Report
The Chief Executive tabled a staff report to add further context to the Submission Analysis Report circulated with the agenda, stating that staff have endeavoured to deliver a balanced approach between cost saving and service delivery and highlighting any issues raised that will need to be addressed during the Long-Term Plan process.

Moved Cr Burden, seconded Cr Gillett and **Resolved** that the report be received.

7. DELIBERATIONS

Councillors went through all public submissions one at a time, also taking into consideration staff analysis provided on the submissions, noting public feedback and highlighting any submissions that would feed into Long Term planning. (Appendix 1).

Council acknowledged that there were a small number of late submissions and it was moved by Cr Burden, seconded by Cr Walker and **Resolved** that the late submissions be accepted and considered.

8. DECISIONS

Item 1: Remittance of Rate Penalties

Staff provided additional clarification to councillors and the public that the penalty only comes into effect 3 months after the final due date but have suggested providing an earlier warning before the penalty kicks in instead of after the deadline.

It was noted that rate payers receive an annual rate bill at the start of the financial year followed by quarterly updates, totalling 4 reminders per year. The majority of rate payers in the district still receive physical mail from council rather than opting for electronic communication and it was suggested that during Long-Term planning council look at ways it could be incentivised to make the switch to reduce the cost associated with physical reminders.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received 8 votes
Option 2 received 1 vote.

Moved Deputy Mayor Burden, seconded Cr Mackenzie and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 1, "Council no longer remits (refunds) interest charges on overdue rate demands," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 2: Changes to Pool Operating Hours

Council suggested more work done during the LTP process to investigate user pay models. Staff explained that currently the swim school pay $15 per day of lane hire, a higher fee than the swim club, because they are a commercial operation and that members are not charged any additional entry fees. Staff are looking at options to change the lane hire model to an hourly rate instead.

Councillors discussed the issues raised by the Hokitika Swim Club and the revenue that would be lost by reducing opening hours, making the savings associated with the decision minimal.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received nil votes.

Option 2 received 9 votes.
Moved Cr Mackenzie, seconded Cr Munns and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 2, "Council continues to allow use of the pool outside standard operating hours," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 3: Changes to Museum Operating Hours

Staff suggested Option 1 (reduced hours) could be trialled for one year and reviewed through the LTP, with further analysis underway to better understand visitor patterns and strengthen the supporting metrics provided to Council.

While there is interest in adjusting which days are closed, this may have employment relations implications and will require further investigation before being reported back, without impacting the current Annual Plan decision.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received 8 votes.
Options 2 and 3 received nil votes.

Cr Martin abstained due to a perceived conflict of interest.

Moved Cr Manera, seconded Cr Gillett and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 1, "Reduce operating hours to better align with seasonal visitor demand," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 4: Changes to Library Operating Hours

Staff suggested Option 1 could be trialled for a year to build stronger supporting metrics, with library staff expressing clear support for this approach due to improved work life balance, while not supporting the further hour reductions proposed under Option 2. Staff noted the current model is impacting satisfaction, particularly with low Saturday afternoon foot traffic (2–4pm) requiring weekend work and indicated a preference for shorter hours to regain Saturday afternoons.

The library currently has a small room in the back available for hire and staff are investigating other ways for the library to generate revenue but are still in early stages. It was acknowledged that the library is an important part of the community that also provides assistance in other areas such as tech support, printing, and copying etc. that aren't readily available services elsewhere in the area and while closing slightly earlier will require a change of habits for community members, there are already mechanisms such as online book reservations to support this shift.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received 8 votes.
Option 2 received nil votes.
Option 3 received 1 vote.

Moved Cr Manera, seconded Cr Maitland and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 1, "Reduce operating hours to better align with usage and operating costs," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 5: Changes to isite Operating Hours

Discussions around the performance and metrics of the isite as it relates to the overall tourism experience, as well as the suggestions around combining it with other council facilities such as the library and museum, will need to be brought into Long-Term Planning. Staff indicated to council that option 2 is their preferred option, which proposes an even further reduction in hours for more savings.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received nil votes.
Option 2 received 9 voted
Option 3 received nil votes.

Moved Deputy Mayor Burden, seconded Cr Gillett and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 2, "Further reduce operating hours to prioritise cost savings," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 6: Library Reserves

Staff issued a reminder that it is only proposed to be a 1-year freeze on topping up the reserve while council look at how much is needed per annum moving forward to be presented to the council during the LTP process, and that the reserve will not be drawn down for anything else. The reserve amount as it stands would cover roughly 7 to 8 years of the current levels of expenditure.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received 9 votes.
Option 2 received nil votes.

Moved Cr Munns, seconded Cr Maitland and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 1, "Do not fund depreciation for the library reserve in the next financial year," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Item 7: Heritage Park

Staff informed the Council that the principle behind the depreciation is correct however in this instance the application isn't because council would not be responsible for the replacement of any buildings at the Heritage Park due to depreciation. It was reiterated that this proposal will not affect any council cash funding towards the Heritage Park already in place and that the depreciation fund was set up relatively recently so there is minimal reserves in there, however it would still require a Council resolution to be released for other use.

The councillors held a vote on their preferred option:

Option 1 received 9 votes.
Option 2 received nil votes.

Moved Cr Mackenzie, seconded Cr Maitland and **Resolved** that Council adopts option 1, "Council no longer funds the depreciation on Heritage Park buildings and releases funds already held in reserve," for the Annual Plan 2026/2027.

The motion was carried unanimously.

To conclude, it was moved Cr Manera, seconded Cr Gillett and **Resolved** that:

1. Council has heard and received the written and verbal submissions.
2. Council deliberated on the submissions to the Draft Annual Plan 2026/2027 in the open part of the meeting.
3. The Chief Executive be instructed to make the necessary amendments to the Draft Annual Plan 2026/2027 and present the Annual Plan 2026/2027 to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 June 2026.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Her Worship the Mayor informed councillors and the public that the May ordinary council meeting has been moved to 4 June 2026 and that the councillors have been invited to go and visit the Heritage Park that morning.

MEETING CLOSED AT 12.50 PM

DATE OF THE NEXT ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 4 JUNE 2026 AT 1.00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 36 WELD STREET, HOKITIKA AND VIA ZOOM

Confirmed by:

Deputy Mayor Reilly Burden **Date: 4 June 2026**
Chair