

Introduction



You may recently have noticed details on the new “Wester Ross Brand”. This is a joint venture between the Ullapool Tourism and Business Association, Gairloch Business Association, Celtic Fringe Tourism Association, and the Lochcarron and District Business Association. **Why?**

- We know where Wester Ross is – the rest of the world does *not*!
- The brand image and logo is now on several websites and will be prominent on the forthcoming Wester Ross site. It will be central to many future promotional activities.
- As far as Visitors are concerned, our competitors include *everywhere* else: the rest of Europe and Asia, the USA, and “action” destinations such as the Alps and the Andes – we must persuade them otherwise!
- And we must sell the whole of Wester Ross, not just individual communities.
- To do this, we need an identity that says “Come here and have a memorable holiday, offering a blend of quality experiences that you can’t get anywhere else. Come to Wester Ross, and “*Live the Highlands*”

So, if you feel that you offer a quality tourism service or product, and can back that up with a commitment to working together with the rest of the industry in your home area, then join this new initiative.

Although there is an annual fee, this has been kept as low as possible: Only £10. For this, you will receive membership of the brand, downloadable logo to use, window stickers, Membership CD, and your contact details will be on the new Wester Ross website, currently being developed in parallel with the brand itself.

Simply print the application form at the end of this document.

To find out more about either this or the brand, contact
Kristine Mackenzie (Lochcarron, 01520 722882),
Douglas Gibson (Gairloch, 01445 712085),
or Lauri Chilton (Ullapool, 01854 612185).
Alternatively, e-mail: brand@visitwester-ross.com

Report on Wester Ross Brand Launch

Background:

The new Wester Ross brand Logo was developed with the help of David MacIntyre of “Valu8”, based in Lanark. The logo and strapline thus created have now started the long process towards becoming a brand identity for tourism businesses and operators based in Wester Ross. The organisations involved in the launch were the business associations of Ullapool, Gairloch, and Lochcarron, along with the Celtic Fringe Tourism Association.



Venues and publicity info:

Launches took place in Lochcarron, Gairloch, Ullapool. In each case, the local business association arranged venues and refreshments. These meetings took the form of a 20 minute presentation by David MacIntyre, then a short talk by Douglas Gibson (Celtic Fringe). Each section was followed by a Q & A session covering varied aspects of the logo's future and how the area could draw maximum benefit from the arrival of this important tool for promoting the area.

Advance publicity was through usage of email, local radio, newspapers, and a short report featured on STV a couple of days before. As a result of this, there was an excellent turnout at all three meetings, with a total of just under 100 people attending. Considering these were daytime meetings, and with the Ullapool meeting being on a busy Friday evening, this was a welcome display of interest in the brand.

Pre launch takeup of the logo exceeded expectations as well, with 26 signups against a target of 20. *(This has nearly doubled at the time of writing, 10 days later)*

What happened:

All three meetings had an enthusiastic audience, with fairly active Q&A sessions after the main presentation and talk had finished. DM went to some length to get the message across that what we had here was a **Logo** and a **Strapline** – this is not a “brand” yet. He emphasised that what we have to do now is to go out and put the image on to our own websites – printed matter – any literature such as leaflets and books – headed paper – bags / pens / sundry items. This is the process that could turn the initial logo into a brand that potential visitors from across the globe can begin to recognise and readily associate with Wester Ross. This is not a job for any single organisation, but something that we must all turn our hands to if possible.

There were questions from the floor about:

- **The area covered by the brand** (*now including part of the Lochalsh area in the South, and up to just past Achiltibuie in the North*)
- **Who will be taking the brand forward** (*Celtic Fringe are current managers*)
- **Questions about usage of the logo and who can be members** (*Any member of the brand can use this - £10 per annum*)
- **Benefits to members** (*Ability to use the logo, contact details on the forthcoming Wester Ross website, implied quality of service or product by association with the brand*)
- **“Policing” the brand standards of quality** (*Procedures for this are in the CD for members. The brand is expected to be largely self policing, however, and the “quality” is about levels of welcome and service, not furniture and curtains!*)
- **Future developments** (*See below*)

Note: We have already taken action on one point raised ie: area covered by the brand. This is now included on the brand members CD.

Items such as road signage were actively discussed at all three venues, and it has been agreed this will be one of the first actions followed up by the organising groups. The aim will be to have road signs placed at each of the roads into the area that clearly point to “Wester Ross” rather than a bland statement such as “The North” or similar.

On the subject of other brands active in the area, it was interesting to note that few people were aware of the NHTOG brand from Caithness and Sutherland. It was appreciated that Skye had a brand, though not everybody seemed to know this was a “Pebble”. It was agreed that we should work in conjunction with these where possible, and there was a firm invite from the Tourism Innovation Group to become more involved in their discussions.

Possible development of a DMO was discussed. This acronym stands for “Destination Management Organisation”. At present, Tourism@Wester Ross exists as an informal discussion group comprising the partner organisations involved in the brand launch. There was a growing appreciation from these groups that we will have to formalise T@WR in order to provide a single organisation with responsibility for developing and growing the brand, its management, and the inevitable side projects that will develop around this (ie road signage). As current brand managers, Celtic Fringe will be addressing this subject with the partner groups in the very near future.

In conclusion, this was a rewarding two days worth of discussion. There were several highly encouraging comments from attendees (“**excellent proposal**” “**will definitely be signing up**” “**good to see some action on this**” “**Long overdue**”). We look forward to taking this forward, and thank everybody that came along to the meetings.

“This is just the end of the beginning”



WESTER ROSS BRAND APPLICATION FORM

NAME: ADDRESS:

..... POST CODE.....

TEL: E-MAIL:

TYPE OF BUSINESS: SIGNATURE DATE.....

- I wish to join the Wester Ross Brand scheme and enclose payment by cheque in the amount of **£10.00** for my initial annual fee payable to **"Celtic Fringe"**.
- ****1** understand that the preferred method of payment of fees for second and subsequent years is by **Bank Standing Order** and have completed and signed the mandate below. I understand that this is **not** a Direct Debit and that I retain full control over the mandate, including the ability to cancel it if I wish.**
- I agree to abide fully by the Brand Criteria as outlined on Page 2 of this document.

When returning this form we would be most grateful if you would please agree to complete the standing order mandate below. The comparatively low pricing of the brand means that we need to minimise the overhead costs of sending out annual reminders or invoices as far as we possibly can. We will be very grateful for your co-operation in this respect. **N.B. please leave "our ref" blank to enable us to allocate a reference number.**

*** Please delete as appropriate ***

Bank Standing Order Mandate – Wester Ross Brand

To My Bank:-

Would you please accept this as my instruction to make regular payments as follows to the account of Celtic Fringe.

My Bank Details:-

Name of Bank:- Bank Address:-

..... Post Code:-

Account No.:- Sort Code:-

Payment Details:-

Amount:- **£ 10.00 (Ten pounds)** Frequency:- **Annually** Start Date:- **1st November**

Period:- **Until further notice** Please quote our ref:- **BRAND/** Payee:- Celtic Fringe Wester Ross

Bank Address:- Bank of Scotland, Lochcarron, IV54 8YD Sort Code:- 80-08-84 Account No.:- 06000411

My Name & Address:-

Name:- Address:-

..... Post Code:-

Signature:- Date:-

Please return the completed form to the Celtic Fringe treasurer:- James Mould, Tigh Charrann, Croft Rd, Lochcarron, Strathcarron, IV54 8YA. Tel/Fax:- 01520 722992. Email:- james.mould@btinternet.com



The Brand Criteria: What do YOU have to do to be able to use this?

1. You must be a business either based in Wester Ross OR carry out at least 70% of your activities in the area, meeting all necessary statutory obligations
2. Each business in a multi – business concern shall be treated as a separate applicant/user.
3. **All those using the brand should strive to be knowledgeable about the area, its facilities and its products. They must be willing to work with others in collaborative initiatives to raise standards of customer service**
4. Businesses using the brand are encouraged to be in membership of an appropriate and nationally recognised quality assurance scheme, and be working towards the National Hospitality Assured Scheme (see: www.bha.org.uk)
5. Businesses should be aware of the appropriate sectoral code of conduct, such as those for outdoor activity and/or wildlife operators. In particular, businesses are encouraged to meet the criteria of the national “Walkers Welcome” scheme (see: <http://walking.visitscotland.com/welcome>).
6. All those displaying the Wester Ross brand logo must be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to the protection of the environment by (for instance) membership of the Green Tourism Scheme and/or participation in some other national scheme (e.g. The Scottish Golf Environment Group Initiative)
7. Any business or event displaying the brand must have the appropriate licences and insurance and meet all statutory requirements.
8. Community bodies and associations using the brand should be able to demonstrate their commitment to the Wester Ross brand values through encouragement of member quality, high levels of hospitality and positive action for the environment.
9. Businesses should demonstrate their commitment to maintaining and enhancing the natural and built environment of Wester Ross by following Highland Council’s guidelines on design for sustainability (Included in this CD).
10. Finally, all those who use the brand must meet the agreed fee in order to support the brand and associated programmes or initiatives.

Note: It is felt that item (3) of the above criteria is a vital part of the area’s future development.

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