



CELTIC FRINGE, WESTER ROSS

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“**Celtic Fringe**” started out over eight years ago, following a series of locally held meetings on the subject of Rural Tourism. It became clear that many people felt that there was a need for a local community group who could identify and develop tourism based proposals for this area, and could work co - operatively with outside organisations such as HOST / RACE / Highland Council, and other groups.

“**Celtic Fringe**” was the result of this. We are a membership group, non profit making, and seek to develop our activities in a way that is both sustainable and responsive to the wishes of those who live and work in this area.

“**Celtic Fringe**” will NOT send custom directly to its members, unless visitors pick up details on the website. What we aim to do is to raise the profile of the area as a whole – this will have a long term effect of attracting more people to Wester Ross and ultimately into our homes, shops, or hotels.

To date, what has been achieved?

- With pressure from Celtic Fringe and its members, a new tourism trail was set up in conjunction with HOST, RACE, Highland Council. This is called the Wester Ross Coastal Trail, and features much improved signs across the area aimed at attracting and guiding visitors around Wester Ross.
- We have a website with information and links to other sites connected with tourism locally and in the Highlands. This can be found at www.celticfringe.org.uk
- We released a booklet for the region between Lochcarron & Braemore Junction, aimed at guiding visitors around Wester Ross in a friendly and informative manner (15,000 copies sold)
- We have strong links with a number of localised projects aimed at bringing benefits to the area in general.
- We have produced local accommodation packs carrying details of the many attractions and activities which the visitor can experience when they are travelling through Wester Ross. There are approx: 1,000 of these in circulation at present.
- We assisted and supported the Wester Ross Music and Arts Festival.
- We developed an “Activities Guide” for the area, which is a saleable item giving details of a wide range of activities for visitors to the area, and including details of childcare facilities, walks, fishing trips, leisure centers and many other attractions.
- Funding has recently been secured to allow up to six projects to obtain “seedcorn” funding which will enable their development over the next three years.
- All members are linked up on an e-mail based discussion group
- We are a founder member of “Tourism@ Wester Ross, which is developing a long term marketing strategy for Wester Ross as a strong identity on the world stage.

It hasn't all been plain sailing - we went very quickly from a small group in the immediate area of Gairloch to (now) 100+ members throughout the region. We have a committee formed by representatives from different areas, who are in regular contact on e – mail, using this as one of our principal development tools. Members receive regular news on email and by post, meetings are held, and we try to work together to address issues which concern us all.

The future? Looking at community transport issues, linking with similar groups in the UK / Ireland, developing local projects such as cycle and walking tracks, and finally, giving local people and visitors a voice - you tell us what you want done!

***And most importantly.....To promote this area to people across the world.....
Support “Celtic Fringe” where it matters.....work with us.***