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## 9-1-4

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# Harris campaigners increase pressure to save primary school

Community representatives in the west of Harris have stepped up their campaign to save the local primary school from closure.

Shelibost School, which currently

has only 11 pupils, is one of a number of schools being considered for closure by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar as part of a widespread rationalisation programme.

While the local community accept the roll has dropped

significantly, they point out that the recent community buy-out of the West Harris Estate is expected to create opportunities and say retention of the school is central to any ambition of attracting new families.

A planning application has already been submitted to the council for six new house sites in the area which will be offered below market value and aimed specifically at those who have expressed an interest in becoming part of the regeneration of the area.

West Harris Trust secretary Neil Campbell said: "The trust has received a substantial number of applications for these sites. They will be allocated based on the trust policy in conjunction with our strategic housing partners.

"Priority will be given to young families and individuals or couples with skills to help regenerate the local economy. We have worked hard with our communities and partner agencies to make this happen."

Trust chair Murdo MacKay added that the housing proposal demonstrated the hard work and determination of various agencies in making the regeneration of the community-owned estate a reality.

"I think we are seeing the start of an exciting stage in the life of West Harris," he added. "There is the beginning of an air of confidence in the future. Over the past year we have seen a number of young couples returning or making a commitment to return to West Harris."

In a formal submission to the council, the trust envisage a minimum of 24 new families living in the area within five years and say "it is not unreasonable to project that this will mean an additional 20 to 30 children making Shelibost a viable remote rural school for many years to come".

The issue is set to be discussed at a meeting of the council's education committee on 2nd November.



## Kyleakin tops Milan for fashion!

With an "Alice in Wonderland" theme, models wearing Rag, Tag 'n' Textile clothes and hats wowed a large crowd in Kyleakin community hall last Saturday night.

Announcer for the night was Rag Tag chairwoman Cindie Reiter who, owing to a broken leg, had to remain seated for the duration. Before the show itself started she

gave the audience a potted history of the outreach organisation, which grew out of Tag Highland in 2002.

All the clothes were made from items that were going to be thrown out, Mrs Reiter said, but were rescued by a squad of committed individuals including Meg Grounds and Fiona MacEwen. Fiona and Meg were among the models showing off the outfits and each was presented with a

bouquet of flowers at the end of the show. They, in turn, presented Mrs Reiter with flowers as a mark of appreciation. Ray MacKenzie played ukelele during the interval.

Catering was provided by Strath Gaelic Choir and all the clothes shown on the night, plus much more, are available in Rag Tag's Balmacara store.

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