MINUTES

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL
Making this place home.

TE RŌPŪ AHI KĀ MEETING

Date:	**Tuesday, 9 June 2026**
Time:	**11.00am**
Venue:	**Council Chamber Rangitīkei District Council 46 High Street Marton**

Tumuaki:	Dr Heather Gifford (Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hauiti)
Tumuaki Tuarua:	Ms Kim Savage (Ngāti Parewahawaha)(online)
Nga mema:	Ms Marj Heeney (Ngāi Te Ohuake), Ms Grace Taiaroa (Ratana Pa) Dr Mike Paki (Ngā Ariki Turakina) Ms Moira Raukawa (Ngāti Tamakopiri) (online) Dr Katarina Gray-Sharp (Ngāti Rangi)(online) Cr Alan Buckendahl HWTM Andy Watson
Manuhiri:	Mrs Carol Gordon, Chief Executive Ms Katrina Gray, Group Manager – Strategy, Community and Democracy Mr Pā Rima Tamaiparea-Puki, Strategic Advisor – Mana Whenua Ms Crystal Johnston, Executive Assistant – Group Managers

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1 Karakia / Prayer

Dr Gifford opened the meeting at 11.07am.

2 Apologies

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/030

That the apologies received from Cr Raukawa, Ms Hiroa, Mr Winiata-Haines, and Ms Nepia be accepted and leave of absence granted.

Ms G Taiaroa/Dr M Paki. Carried

3 Public Forum

There was no public forum.

4 Conflict of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

5 Confirmation of Order of Business

There was no change to the order of business.

6 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/031

That the minutes of Te Rōpū Ahi Kā Meeting held on 14 April 2026 without amendment be taken as read and verified as an accurate and correct record of the meeting, and that the electronic signature of the Chair of this Committee be added to the official minutes document as a formal record.

Ms M Raukawa/Ms K Savage. Carried

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/032

That the minutes of Te Rōpū Ahi Kā Meeting held on 19 May 2026 without amendment be taken as read and verified as an accurate and correct record of the meeting, and that the electronic signature of the Chair of this Committee be added to the official minutes document as a formal record.

Dr H Gifford/Dr M Paki. Carried

7 Follow-up Action Items from Previous Meetings

7.1 Follow-up Action Items from Te Rōpū Ahi Kā Meetings

<u>CDEM Matters</u>

Members were advised that discussions had taken place with Horizons Regional Council regarding emergency management planning for Rātana. Officers confirmed that the appropriate HRC contact had subsequently been connected with Jordan to support ongoing coordination.

Northern and Southern tour of Marae in the District

An update was provided on hosting Council within the southern rohe. Members noted that no further correspondence had been received. It was advised that Ms Savage had requested the relevant contact details, with 17 September identified as the preferred date for the southern tour. The proposed date was noted, subject to confirmation with the southern members. It was also agreed that Mr Tamaiparea-Puki would be included in the arrangements.

The meeting concluded the item with whakawhanaungatanga, during which members formally welcomed and introduced Mr Tamaiparea-Puki to Te Rōpū Ahi Kā.

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/033

That the report Follow-up Action Items from Te Rōpū Ahi Kā Meetings be received.

Dr M Paki/Ms K Savage. Carried

8 Chair’s Report

8.1 Chair's Report, Including Updates from Pre-Hui June 2026

No chair’s report was presented due to an apology from the Chair.

9 Reports for Information

9.1 Mayor's Report - May 2026

The Mayor provided an update on a number of strategic matters affecting the district and the wider local government sector.

Central Districts Water

The Mayor acknowledged the leadership shown by iwi in the establishment of Central Districts Water, noting that their contribution had been well received and reflected within the Statement of Expectations.

Local Government Reform

The Mayor provided an update on the Government's proposed local government reform programme, advising that the proposed timeframes present significant challenges and are unlikely to allow sufficient time for a comprehensive process. It was noted that considerable engagement is underway between councils to understand each authority's preferred approach.

The Mayor outlined the Government's proposal to replace the current territorial authority and regional council structure with unitary authorities. Members noted that extensive public communication and engagement will be required throughout the process.

It was confirmed that the reform process is being driven by central government irrespective of whether individual councils support the changes.

Members expressed concern regarding the potential loss of local representation, particularly for communities such as Rātana. It was noted that while a future Rangitīkei Community Board may be established, its powers would ultimately be determined by the governing unitary authority, which may be centred on a larger urban area.

The anticipated efficiencies of amalgamation were also discussed. Members noted that there is limited evidence demonstrating that amalgamation alone will deliver financial savings and expressed concern that local communication and responsiveness could diminish under a larger governance structure.

Members also discussed the uncertainty associated with the forthcoming general election and the potential implications should there be a change of Government. It was noted that the Opposition had indicated it would not adopt a formal position until later in the year. The Mayor advised that discussions are continuing with neighbouring mayors and a range of stakeholders to better understand potential options and implications.

Relationships with Mana Whenua

Members discussed the implications of local government reform for relationships between councils and iwi. Questions were raised regarding Civil Defence Emergency Management partnerships and the future representation of communities such as Rātana.

Members expressed concern that Māori perspectives may be diminished under the Government's proposed reforms and discussed recent Government announcements limiting decision-making by non-elected members on council committees. It was also acknowledged that independent appointments, including Audit and Risk Committee members, are affected by these changes.

Members expressed sadness at the prospect of Rangitīkei being amalgamated and concern that smaller communities could lose influence within a larger authority. The Mayor encouraged both individual members and iwi groups to provide written submissions to Council outlining their views and guiding principles. It was noted that Rātana is well placed to provide this perspective, although other iwi groups may require additional support.

Discussion also considered the importance of maintaining relationships with Rangitīkei District Council while recognising that neighbouring councils may have differing approaches to iwi partnerships. Members observed that communities of interest are influenced by factors such as shopping patterns, healthcare access and river catchments. It was also acknowledged that previous attempts to establish broader regional iwi arrangements have proven challenging.

Local Water Done Well

Members sought clarification on the governance structure proposed under the Local Water Done Well programme.

The Mayor advised that Central Districts Water is a separate legal entity and is expected to remain unaffected by local government amalgamation. Members discussed how future ownership arrangements would operate under any new governance structure.

Members were advised that local government amalgamation is not expected to occur before CDW is established on 1 July 2027. It was noted that the legislation establishing CDW is already in place, whereas legislation relating to local government amalgamation has yet to be enacted.

The meeting adjourned at 12.03 pm and resumed at 12.17 pm.

Members discussed the opportunity for Te Rōpū Ahi Kā to prepare a collective position paper and, if required, convene an extraordinary meeting of approximately 30 minutes to endorse its position. The Mayor encouraged TRAK to articulate the principles that should guide any future governance arrangements and identify preferred partnership options ahead of the August deadline.

The Mayor concluded by providing feedback from a recent health hui, noting that the engagement had advanced discussions positively, particularly in relation to healthcare outcomes for Taihape.

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/031

That the Mayor's Report – May 2026 be received.

HWTM A Watson/Ms M Heeney. Carried

9.2 External consultations and reform update - May 2026

Officers provided an overview of the proposed National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga.

Members were advised that the proposed standards are intended to provide a nationally consistent planning framework for papakāinga development, with the aim of making it easier to establish housing on Māori land.

It was noted that the National Environmental Standards are expected to come into effect ahead of the wider Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms. Officers also clarified that the proposed standards apply specifically to Māori land.

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/032

That the report External consultations and reform update – May 2026 be received.

HWTM A Watson/Dr M Paki. Carried

9.3 Project Update Report - April 2026

The report was taken as read.

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/033

That the report 'Project Updates Report – April 2026' be received.

Ms G Taiaroa/Cr A Buckendahl. Carried

10 Discussion Items

10.1 Marae Development Fund - discussion

Members considered correspondence and recommendations received from Ngāti Tamakōpiriri outlining a proposed process for marae funding.

Discussion focused on the recommendations contained within the correspondence. Members expressed unanimous support for the first recommendation.

Members also discussed the proposed two-year funding approach. While acknowledging the intent of the proposal, members agreed that every marae should have the opportunity to apply for funding during each funding round.

The reporting requirements associated with the funding programme were acknowledged. Members discussed opportunities for Council and Te Rōpū Ahi Kā to provide support to marae prior to the application closing date. It was suggested that Council representatives or TRAK members could visit marae to assist with the preparation of funding applications.

Members also expressed a preference for marae funding to become an agenda item at the TRAK meeting immediately preceding the opening of the funding round. This would allow the Committee to review the funding guidelines, raise awareness of the process, and provide an opportunity for marae representatives and members of the public to attend and seek guidance.

It was further suggested that applicants submit supporting documentation in advance to a nominated Council contact to assist with reviewing applications and ensuring all required information is included before formal submission.

Members agreed that the objective should be to establish a supportive, transparent, and equitable funding process, with clear guidance provided on application requirements, supporting information, and key deadlines.

Resolved minute number 26/IWI/034

That the report Marae Development Fund – discussion be received.

Ms M Raukawa/Dr M Paki. Carried

The meeting closed at 12.40pm.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Te Rōpū Ahi Kā Komiti held on 11 August 2026.

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Chairperson