



## **BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Allotments Committee Meeting**

**held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bideford on**

**Monday 29 September 2025 at 6.30 pm**

#### **PRESENT:**

East Ward	Councillor Mrs J Gubb Councillor J McKenzie
South Ward	Councillor S Inch
West Ward	Councillor T Inch
Pollyfield	Mr A Mitchell

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mr M Lamey (Marland, Chairman)  
Mrs N Wheeler (Handy Cross, Chairman)

#### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor S Inch was proposed by Councillor T Inch and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Gubb and

**RESOLVED: That Councillor S Inch is appointed Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.**

(Vote: For: 4, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

#### **2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Mrs J Gubb was proposed by Mr A Mitchell and seconded by Councillor T Inch and

**RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs J Gubb is appointed Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.**

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0)

#### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Members noted the apologies received and reasons for absence from:

Councillor K Hind

No apologies and reasons for absence were received from:

Councillor J Craigie

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There were no members of the public present.

6. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 September 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0)

7. **QUARTERLY INSPECTIONS**

Members reflected on **Minute 7**. (Quarterly Inspections) from the Meeting of 26 September 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor T Inch and

**RESOLVED: That Quarterly Inspections be introduced spearheaded by either the Chairman of Deputy Chairman of the Committee; all Members are welcome to attend with the Deputy / Town Clerk in attendance.**

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0)

8. **EXTENDING CATCHMENT AREA TO NON-BIDEFORD RESIDENTS**

Councillor McKenzie led discussion on the development of new homes within the Council boundary, questioning, with the influx of more residents, whether there was a need. Given the full occupancy of Pollyfield and Marland Sites, only two vacant Plots at Tricks (out of sixty) and similar numbers at Handy Cross Councillor T Inch expressed agreement.

Councillor McKenzie indicated that the status quo should remain but encouraged website / social media promotion.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor T Inch and

**RESOLVED: That the catchment area for plot applicants should not be extended beyond the Bideford Electoral role area.**

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0)

9. **MARLAND SITE**

Mr Lamey reflected upon what proved to be the very successful “Marland Allotment

Open Day,” held on Saturday, 16 August 2025 attended by the Chairman, Councillor S Inch,.

The Site has full occupancy, including the “raised beds.”

Future scheduled Events include Bonfire Night and a Christmas Party.

A successful “internal site challenge,” saw two thirds of tenants involved; the winner will not be eligible “to compete,” next year.

Whilst there have been positive results in badger and rat engagement a fox now is venturing onto the Site (!).

The Chairman thanked Mr Lamey for his contribution.

#### 10. **HANDY CROSS SITE**

The Chairman invited Mrs Wheeler, the Chairman of the Handy Cross Allotment Association, to update the Committee.

Mrs Wheeler, led by advising Members of the Site break in at the commencement of the year with thirty one sheds targeted and losses in excess of £3,000.

The year proved to be “lovely” for growing, with an abundance of fruit, although corn was not so great.

There have been seven new tenants with nine leaving. Those leaving included more senior members and those having multiple plots. There are sixty plots, in total.

There had been a “voluntary” rate rise, with an eighty per cent take up.

Water butts have been purchased and a “lean-to,” will be constructed in due course. The car park has been improved upon, is more tidy and accessible.

Mrs Wheeler alerted the Council, on Friday, 26 September, to National Grid works that had dug into the boundary leaving the Site insecure.

The Chairman had visited the Site, earlier today, Monday 25 September, with the Ranger Supervisor and Mrs Wheeler. He added that the digging was in excess of 400 metres stretching the full length of the boundary and beyond.

The Clerk had been in contact with the National Grid (and the Council’s Landlord, the Bridge Trust). An on site meeting has been arranged with the Contractor and the Ranger Supervisor for 8.30 am tomorrow, Tuesday 30 September 2025.

Note. Following the Meeting held on 30 September, the Contractor agreed, as an interim measure, to secure the site with Heras fencing. The National Grid Engineer, responsible for the works, will engage the Council week commencing 6 October 2025.

Members discussed a longer term solution including steeping / hedge laying and coppicing as a means for thickening up the hedge boundary from the base; willow and black thorn / hawthorn could be considered.

Mr Mitchell speculated on engaging the Environmental Department.

The Chairman felt fencing, on the inside of the boundary, would enhance protection.

Tenants had been advised on security of items; the large on site container is available to them.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Wheeler for her contribution.

#### 11. **POLLYFIELD SITE**

Mr Mitchell agreed that it had been a good growing season.

A tenant had been evicted. Another tenant, whose agreement commenced in 1983, had relinquished his plot.

Tenants had responded to letters from the Council to improve upon their plots, in the light of allotment garden demand, but he felt that so often a period of activity would again lead to neglect. He believed that there were six or seven plots that are poorly attended. Tenants need to commit to their agreement and cultivate.

On the whole, though the Site was operating to a satisfactory level.

#### 12. **TRICKS SITE**

- a. Update. In the absence of the Site Representative Councillor Mrs Gubb and the Clerk indicated that although four notices had been served the Site had genuinely picked up and was genuinely operating well with some impressive gardening.
- b. Correspondence. Members previously had sight of and considered correspondence from a resident whose property is sited on the other side of Backborough Lane, opposite the Tricks Site Boundary.

The Correspondent had written to all three tiers of local government citing the poor condition of the unadopted lane (TDC records show, "... a rural track," rather than a formally recognised street," believing it to be a health hazard for "many children and young mothers with push-chairs" traversing where dogs too have found the thoroughfare convenient.

The Clerk advised that over the years there has been much correspondence exchanged, with the Council having accommodated the resident's wishes, within reason, having had trees and the hedgerow cut back, and allowed for them to make arrangements for overhanging trees to be cut,also.

In terms of the detritus and rubbish, TDC had engaged their waste and recycling team to clear litter, on occasion.

Members expressed agreement that the Bideford Town Council are not the Highway Authority; they will, though continue to maintain their boundaries.

- c. Tricks Boundary Wall / Clovelly Road Residents. The Clerk had directed the Site Representative (who was somewhat alarmed) and subsequently the Ranger

Supervisor to the (leaning) Boundary Wall adjacent to the Clovelly Road Residents. The section behind Clovelly Road numbers 110, 109 and 108 is particularly precarious.

The Supervisor advised that the section would need to be taken down to base level, prepared and then rebuilt. He spoke of resource: a considerable amount of sand, cement and manpower – a job of three weeks for two Rangers. It will cost “thousands.”

Members discussed the question of responsibility: it has always been understood that the householders on Clovelly Road have an obligation to maintain their boundary wall (the Council deeds provide no reference) – work has been affected in the past - and the potential hazard to Allotment tenants.

The Chairman, having also viewed the wall, directed engagement with the householders, in the first instance, noting that private landowners are responsible for ensuring their property does not pose a danger to the public, including allotment tenants.

### 13. **INTER-SITE CHALLENGE REVIEW**

Mr Mitchell noted the ethos behind the inter-site challenge was to promote the standards for the allotment tenants and the Site as a whole. He believed that individuals were simply active in their daily / weekly endeavours and worked / benefited from their plots when they could; full time workers snatching time over the weekends.

No tenant had expressed interest in the Challenge this year.

Handy Cross, similarly.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Mr Mitchell and

**RESOLVED: That there would not be an Inter-Site challenge until further notice.**

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0)

The Clerk noted during the Quarterly Inspections, conducted by the Chairman / Deputy Chairman, plots could be identified and merited for their condition.

### 14. **BOUNDARY SURVEY WORKS**

The Clerk advised that the immediate work, identified from the previous year’s survey had been completed.

The secondary, less immediate work should now be engaged.

Proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gubb and

**RESOLVED: that the Chairman and Clerk arrange quotations and engage a suitably qualified tree / boundary arboriculturist / surgeon to complete the works.**

(Vote – For: 5, Against: 0)

15. **CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET FOR 2026/27**

The Clerk explained the costs incurred this year, the benefit of having a budget that would provide for the general activities and with an agreed contingency element (that need not necessarily be drawn upon).

Proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Mr Mitchell and

**RECOMMENDED: A budget of £10,000.00 for 2026/2027: the shortfall of £7,426.22 requested from Central Funds combined with an expected income (less expenses to date) of £4823.00.**

(Vote – For: 4, Against: 1)

16. **LEVEL OF RENT FROM 2026/27**

Members having made recommendation on the Draft budget, it was:

Proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gubb and

**RESOLVED: That the Council raise the level of rents to £50.00 for a full plot and £25.00 for a half plot for the year 2026/2027. The deposit rate will remain at £50.00. The rate charged per plot for the Associations will remain at £2.00.**

(Vote – For: 3, Against: 2)

The Chairman, having established that there was no further business to discuss, thanked the Members for their attendance and concluded the Meeting at 7.32 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor:..... Date:.....

Signature of Chairman:..... Date:.....

**DRAFT CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET FOR 2026/27**

	<b>Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>Expenses 2025/26</b>	<b>Income from Rents</b>	<b>Budget 2026/27</b>
<b>Pollyfield</b>			£1,619.00	
Fence Repair	£225.00			£250.00
maintenance	£250.00	£465.26		£500.00
Perimeter trees	£2,000.00			£1,000.00
Legal Fee				
Deposit Return				
<b>Tricks</b>			£3,000.00	
skip	£350.00	£924.00		£500.00
Perimeter trees	£2,000.00			£2,000.00
Shrub tree Management	£125.00			£125.00
Fencing	£100.00			£125.00
Deposit return				
<b>General</b>	£150.00	£109.96		£150.00
Allot Certificate Frames	£80.00			
Best Allotment cup				
Marland Lease	£500.00	£500.00	£82.00	£500.00
Marland Perimeter trees	£1,000.00			£500.00
Handy Cross Lease	£250.00	£250.00	£122.00	£250.00
Handy Cross perimeter trees	£2,000.00			£100.00
Contingency	£3,667.25			£4,000.00
	<b>£12,697.25</b>	<b>£2,249.22</b>	<b>£4,823.00</b>	<b>£10,000.00</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>£4,823.00</b>			
Expected Income less expenses to date:		<b>£2,573.78</b>	Amount required:	<b>£7,426.22</b>