

BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL



The Green House
Riverbank House
Bideford
Devon
EX39 2HS

Telephone:
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Janine Gardner
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Thursday, 16 July 2026

To: Members of Bideford Town Council's Amenities Committee

You are hereby summoned to attend the following meeting:

Name of Committee: Amenities Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 23 July 2026

Meeting Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Greenhouse, Riverbank House, Bideford EX39 2QG

for the purpose of transacting the following business.

In accordance with The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 members of the public are welcome to attend. There is a legal right to film/record/photograph/report public meetings.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J Gardner'.

J Gardner
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda and note any requests for dispensation received by the Clerk prior to the meeting.

3. Public Participation

Public participation session of 15 minutes duration on items on the agenda.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2026 as a correct record.

Allotments

5. Quarterly Site Inspections

At the last Committee meeting on 28 May 2026, the Committee resolved that Councillors S Inch and J Gubb would conduct four quarterly site inspections and liaise with the Deputy Town Clerk to coordinate dates with site representatives (ref. minute 10). To receive an update.

Decarbonisation and Environment

6. Ford Woods Woodland Management Plan

To consider the attached report.

Part II (Closed Session)

7. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve to exclude members of the public and the press to progress a matter of a confidential nature under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings Act) 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, ss 100 and 102.

8. Landlord / Tenant Matters

MEMBERS OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors Clarke, Craigie, Gordon, Gubb, Hawkins, S Inch, McKenzie, Smith and Taylor

Allotment Representatives:

Voting: Mr A Michell, Pollyfield; Mr S Long, Tricks

Non-voting: Mrs N Wheeler, Handy Cross; Ms R Grant, Marland

Date of Next Meeting: 3 September 2026



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

Name of Committee: Amenities Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 28 May 2026

Meeting Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Greenhouse, Riverbank House, Bideford EX39 2QG

Present:

North Ward

Councillor D Bushby

Councillor K Hind

Councillor J Gordon

Councillor S Smith

South Ward

Councillor R Clarke

Councillor P Lawrence

West Ward

Councillor C Hawkins

East Ward

Councillor J Craigie

Councillor J Gubb

Councillor J McKenzie

Also Present

J Gardner, Town Clerk

R D Coombes, Deputy Town Clerk

Mrs G Lamey, Acting Chairman Marland Association

Mr S Long, Representative, Tricks Allotment Site

Mr A Mitchell, Representative, Pollyfield Allotment Site

1. Election of Chair

It was proposed by Councillor P Lawrence, seconded by Councillor K Hind and **resolved** to elect Councillor J McKenzie as the Committee's Chair for the 2026-27 civic year.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0, Abstention: 2)

2. Election of Deputy Chair

It was proposed by Councillor J McKenzie, seconded by Councillor P Lawrence and **resolved** to elect Councillor S Inch as the Committee's Deputy Chair for the 2026-27 civic year.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 0)

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Gordon.

4. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

No declarations of interest or requests for dispensations were received.

5. Public Participation

No members of the public attended the meeting.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

- a. It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor J McKenzie and **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Committee held on 29 September 2025 as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 9, Abstention: 0)

- b. It was further proposed by Councillor P Lawrence, seconded by Councillor R Clarke and **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee held on 9 March 2026 as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0)

- c. It was further proposed by Councillor J McKenzie, seconded by Councillor K Hind and **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Market Management Committee held on 23 April 2026 as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0)

7. Terms of Reference

The Committee considered its draft terms of reference.

Councillor P Lawrence led discussion on effective Committee membership numbers.

Councillor K Hind suggested an amendment to paragraph 6. To state “6. Its membership will be *a minimum of* nine councillors appointed annually by the full Council.

It was proposed by Councillor P Lawrence, seconded by Councillor K Hind and **recommend** approval of the terms of reference as amended to the full Council for adoption.

(Vote – For: 8, Against: 1)

(Councillor S Smith joined the Meeting.)

Pannier Market

8. Pannier Market Strategic Development

The Committee considered a report regarding the strategic development of the Pannier Market in the future once the construction works to refurbish the complex would be completed.

It was proposed by Councillor P Lawrence, seconded by Councillor S Smith and **resolved** to

- a. To endorse the above strategy statement and to recommend it to the full Council for adoption.
- b. apply for a development grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund to enable the development of a business plan on the basis of the Council’s strategy for the Pannier Market.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

9. Tenant Representation

Councillor Lawrence reflected on positive feedback following a recent visit.

The Chairman reflected on the signs to encourage visitors to the market by “cleaning” the pavement area incorporating a template that Mrs Austin had agreed to design.

Allotments

10. Quarterly Site Inspections

It was proposed by Councillor D Busby, seconded by Councillor J Craigie and **resolved** that Councillors S Inch and J Gubb will conduct four quarterly site inspections and liaise with the Deputy Town Clerk to coordinate dates with site representatives.

It was established there was no appetite to re-introduce the Inter Site Challenge. It was noted that the Associations had enjoyed their own (Site) initiative.

11. Request to Keep Chickens in Light of Avian Flu Restrictions having been Lifted

The Committee considered a request from a Tricks tenant to house 2-3 chickens. It was agreed that Councillors S Inch and J Gubb would visit the Tricks Site / Plot in the first instance.

12. Site Updates

- a. Marland. Mrs Lamey spoke of the former Chairman's positive impact upon the Site. She advised that the Association Committee had stepped forward in terms of volunteering for the betterment of the Site, working hard in completing necessary tasks.

The Plots are fully occupied but growing has been challenging with wet mud earlier in the year now turning to dust.

Concerns were raised over the Council's contracted tree surgeon who had left a felled tree on Site (in effect for the Marland Association Committee to take charge by default). In mitigation access to the Site is difficult. They should like to investigate access through Union Close.

Members agreed that Councillors S Inch and Gubb visit the Marland Site; whilst there would be benefits there could be "right of way" legal implications; Mrs Lamey alluded to a Ransom Strip.

- b. Handy Cross. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that efforts were ongoing in re-establishing the Site boundary which had been compromised by National Grid on an adjacent site. The Site Landlord, Bridge Trust, were party to the correspondence and on site meetings. A quotation for the works, by a local contractor, had been submitted to the National Grid for consideration.

Unfortunately, the Site experienced a break-in, that resulted in items being removed from the "secure(d)" container. CCTV evidence, clearly showing the faces of the villains, had been provided to the Police; action would only be taken on discovery of the stolen items where serial numbers were corroborated...

- c. Pollyfield. Mr Mitchell expressed disappointment at the still untouched damaged District Council owned railings adjacent to the Site car park. A vehicle had driven through the "metal scaffold pipe fencing," at the start of the year and despite inspection by Council officers there had been no corrective action. The issue had been further compounded by the lack of car parking provision for a BMX Bike event, that saw fencing removed allowing for a number of cars to drive down the grassed area and through the Allotment car park. Again, District Council attendance noting the impact, but no work.

He noted also that the grassed area had not been attended to.

Councillor Mrs Gubb was given to understand that the District Council were engaged with insurers precluding any corrective works.

Councillor Bushby (Chairman of the District Council) will investigate.

Mr Mitchell bemoaned the lack of site visits, highlighted the need for letters of encouragement to be sent to those tenants not tending plots and unnecessary delay in filling a vacant plot.

- d. Tricks. Mr Long believed the Site was operating well, new tenants had settled in, and has been liaising with the office in terms of encouraging absent tenants.

He explained that he does much of the on site maintenance, hedge / grass cutting himself and facilitating in plot provision.

(Mr Mitchell indicated that he too clears and prepares plots and assists (new) tenants.)

The Chairman thanked the Representatives for their contributions and attending the Meeting.

Decarbonisation and Environment

13. Pannier Market Rainwater Collection System

The Committee considered a report regarding the installation of a rainwater collection system at the Pannier Market.

It was proposed by Councillor J McKenzie, seconded by Councillor P Lawrence and **resolved** to not install a rainwater collection system at the Pannier Market.

(Vote – For: 8, Against: 0, Abstention: 2)

14. Ford Woods – Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and Woodland Management Plan

The Committee considered a report confirming the existence of a tree preservation order (TPO) dated 15 October 1971 which remained valid, as well as an update regarding the development of a woodland management plan in partnership with the Friends of Ford Woods.

It was proposed by Councillor J McKenzie, seconded by Councillor S Smith and **resolved** to note the existence of the Ford Woods TPO and that there is no requirement for the Council to apply, as well as the update regarding the development of a woodland management plan.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

Part II (Closed Session)

15. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Due to the sensitive or confidential nature of the following item it was proposed by Councillor J McKenzie, seconded by Councillor P Lawrence and **resolved** to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting on the basis of Section 1 paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 which stipulated that a council may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

16. Landlord / Tenant Matters

There is a confidential note associated with this item.

The business of the meeting having been concluded the Chair thanked the councillors for their attendance at the meeting, which concluded at 7.40 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor:

Date:

Signature of Chairman:

Date:

FORD WOODS WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

On 28 May 2026, the Amenities Committee considered an update on the Ford Woods tree preservation order dated 1971 as well as the creation of a woodland management plan for the Woods (ref. minute 14). At that meeting, the Committee noted that Cllr Jack Gordon acts as the Council's representative and point of liaison with the Friends of Ford Woods. Cllr Jack Gordon and the Friends were carrying out research stage with a view of making an application for the woodland management plan grant. They were hoping to collect together a few more surveys before moving to the next step as this will help better inform which avenues are available in terms of grant funding for a woodland management plan.

Development of a Woodland Management Plan

The Friends of Ford Woods would like to partner with the Bideford Sustainability Group and essentially form a working group of the latter. The Bideford Sustainability Group is set up with trustees and a bank account, which the Friends of Ford Woods lack. Cllr Jack Gordon is trying to obtain the Group's articles of association.

Any funding towards the development of a woodland creation grant would be received by the Bideford Sustainability Group for them to administer in accordance with any funding terms and conditions, rather than Bideford Town Council.

If the Town Council, the Friends of Ford Woods and the Bideford Sustainability Group intend to work together, particularly where one organisation will be applying for and holding grant funding on behalf of the project, it is good governance to have a written agreement in place.

The agreement does not necessarily need to be a complex legal contract drafted by a solicitor (unless the funder requires one or significant sums are involved), but it should clearly set out the relationship between the parties and avoid misunderstandings. The main issues to cover should be:

- Purpose of the collaboration, e.g. state that the parties are collaborating solely (or primarily) to develop and secure funding for a woodland management plan for Ford Woods, and explain that the Friends of Ford Woods will operate as a working group or project under the umbrella of the Bideford Sustainability Group for this purpose. Bideford Town Council is the landowner and responsible for strategic oversight.
- Status of the Friends group; clarify that the Friends of Ford Woods is not a separate legal entity.
- Confirm that it is a volunteer working group and does not create any legal or financial liabilities for individual members beyond those agreed.

- Role of the Bideford Sustainability Group including submitting funding applications; receive and hold grant monies; administer the project finances; ensure compliance with funder requirements; include the project within its governance arrangements.
- Roles of the Friends of Ford Woods including identifying project priorities; liaising with the woodland owner and local community; assisting in preparing funding applications; overseeing delivery of the woodland management plan on a day-to-day basis, report progress to the Bideford Sustainability Group and the Town Council.
- Decision-making, including which decisions can the Friends of Ford Woods make independently, which decisions require approval by the Bideford Sustainability Group trustees or committee and how disputes are resolved.
- Financial arrangements including who approves expenditure, who signs contracts, who owns any equipment purchased, what happens to any underspends, whether the Bideford Sustainability Group can recover reasonable administration costs (if any).
- Grant compliance, including clarity on who the accountable body is for any funders.
- Liability and insurance, including stating which organisation's insurance covers activities, clarifying responsibility for health and safety during volunteer work, confirming that no party can commit the other to contracts without authority.
- Intellectual property, including ownership of the woodland management plan and rights to reports, photographs and mapping.
- Publicity and branding, including how each organisation's name and logo will be used, who speaks publicly on behalf of the project.
- Duration including when the agreement starts, whether it continues beyond completion of the management plan, how either party may withdraw.
- Termination, including arrangements in case of funding being refused; the Bideford Sustainability Group wishing to cease acting as accountable body; the Friends of Ford Woods ceasing operating.
- Arrangements for remaining funds and records.
- Records and transparency, including minutes of meetings, access by Bideford Town Council and the Friends of Ford Woods to financial information relating to the project, record retention.
- Data protection, including responsibility for volunteer and supporter data, compliance with UK GDPR.

In addition, the Bideford Sustainability Group will need to confirm that:

1. their Articles of Association permit them to operate projects of this nature;

2. acting as the accountable body is consistent with their charitable or community purposes;
3. accepting the grant does not expose the Bideford Sustainability Group to obligations they cannot fulfil.

One route might be a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) rather than a heavily legal agreement where there is mutual cooperation and relatively modest funding. However, if the Bideford Sustainability Group will actually be receiving grant money and entering contracts with consultants preparing the woodland management plan, it would be better to use a Collaboration Agreement or Project Agreement, as this provides greater clarity about legal responsibilities.

Elements to Include in the Woodland Management Plan

Both the Friends of Ford Woods and representatives of the North Devon Biosphere have expressed a desire to hold more public events in Ford Woods. It is suggested that this ambition is articulated within the woodland management plan.

A second element for possible inclusion in the management plan might be placing a restriction and possible sanctions against any unauthorised use of the Woods, including but not limited to the construction of unauthorised structures in the Woods.

Recommendation(s)

- a) To authorise the Bideford Sustainability Group to act as the Town Council's agent to register Bideford Town Council in its capacity as the landowner of Ford Woods with the Rural Payments Agency which will enable the submission of funding applications for the development of a woodland management plan.
- b) To authorise the Bideford Sustainability Group to apply for funding to assist with the creation of the woodland management plan, and for the Bideford Sustainability Group to administer that funding and comply with any grant conditions and terms.
- c) To request the Bideford Sustainability Group to submit the woodland management plan for Ford Woods to Bideford Town Council for approval before any further funding applications are made in the future or any work carried out.