BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

Name of Committee: Amenities Committee
Meeting Date: Thursday, 15 October 2026
Meeting Time: 6:30pm
Venue: Greenhouse, Riverbank House, Bideford EX39 2QG

Present:

North Ward

Councillor K Hind

South Ward

Councillor S Inch
Councillor P Lawrence

East Ward

Councillor J Gubb
Councillor J McKenzie

West Ward

Councillor C Hawkins

Also Present

J Gardner, Town Clerk
R D Coombes, Deputy Town Clerk
G Lamey, Chairman Marland Association
N Wheeler, Chairman Handy Cross Association

33. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Clarke and S Smith; Mr A Mitchell, also.

No apologies were received from Councillors Craigie and Gordon.

34. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillors Hind, Gubb and Lawrence declared pecuniary interests in agenda items 5 and 6. on account of their association with the Bridge Trust - Landlord of Handy Cross Allotment Site.

35. Public Participation

The Chaiman invited the Allotment attendees to provide a brief update on their respective site details.

The Deputy Town Clerk, in the absence of the Pollyfield and Tricks representatives advised that of the 100 tenants only two were outstanding on their rental payments. The representatives had indicated that the Sites were operating well, there had been some tenancy turnover with two and a half plots available at the Pollyfield Site. (Those on the waiting list will be invited to view / take on tenancies.)

Mrs Lamey, Chairman Marland Allotment Association, stated that the Site was fully occupied, fully paid up and as a consequence there would not be the traditional November bonfire event given there were no spare plots! She noted that gardening this term had been somewhat different reporting that she had picked strawberries only yesterday.

There have been a number of Community Working days and one further is planned at the end of November; they are planning the Site Christmas outing.

Prompted by Councillor S Inch further discussion covered the potential for an additional entrance although a number of bridges did need to be crossed. Mrs Lamey spoke about an approach to Pearce Construction, regarding a "ransom strip," who were content in principle but agreement with the Housing Association and Devon County Council would need to be established. Councillor S Inch advised that given the "complexity" it was important to proceed in the correct manner.

Mrs Wheeler, Chairman Handy Cross Association, advised that there were two and a half vacant plots and similarly the rental payments were up to date. The dying back of the hedgerow heightened the vulnerability of the Site.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there appeared to be movement with National Grid in terms of their repair work to the boundary although, despite hastening, correspondence had dried up; he will contact them again.

36. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Lawrence, seconded by Councillor S Inch and **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 3 September 2026 as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 0)

Allotments

37. Allotment Sites Budget and Rent

The Councillors had previously received the Draft Budget for 2027 / 2028.

Councillor Lawrence proposed that annual rental costs to the Council for the Marland (Bridge Trust) and Handy Cross (Devon County Council) Sites should be borne by the respective Associations in full and that the Pollyfield and Tricks Sites full plot rental charge should be reduced to thirty six pounds.

Forthright discussion ensued on the impact of such measures on individual tenants, some of whom would find the resultant increases unaffordable, the work of the Committees from organising and managing the respective sites to administration processing and (their) general support to tenants.

The proposal was not seconded.

Councillor Hind in noting the difference between the Associations and Council administered rent saw merit in freezing the Pollyfield (and as a consequence Tricks) rent.

Discussion followed on the budget with an agreed contingency element (£4,000.00 that need not necessarily be drawn upon), noting that recent boundary works should lead to only short term future essential works. (The Deputy Town Clerk will obtain allotment site tree surveys.)

Members agreed to the Draft Budget that would provide for the rent levels to remain the same (full plot £50.00, half plot £25.00 and, deposit £50.00. The rate charged per plot for the Associations £2.00).

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor S Inch **recommended** to adopt the Draft Budget of £9,000.00 for 2027/2028: the shortfall of £4,277.00 requested from Central Funds combined with an expected income of £4,723.00.

(Vote – For: 5, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

Due to the sensitive or confidential nature of the following item it was proposed by Councillor Lawrence, seconded by Councillor McKenzie 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: 6, Against: 0)

The Chairman thanked the Associations' respective Chairman for their attendance and input.

Part II (Closed Session)

31. Handy Cross Association Lease

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Lawrnece, seconded by Councillor McKenzie **resolved** the Handy Cross Allotment Site remains self-managed under the same terms as before, noting the rental will be subject to review, with an overall four year review of the lease in September 2030 (in line with the Marland Allotment Site).

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 0)

32. Pannier Market - Landlord / Tenant Matters

The Chairman indicated that an enquiry had been made in terms of the Café facility. It was noted that the present (long standing) tenant opens on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

Councillor Lawrence agreed to speak with the Café tenant regarding their future plans.

Further engagement would be made regarding the enquiry and their vision.

Councillors discussed the condition of the kitchen and the potential for change under Phase II of the Market refurbishment.

The business of the meeting having been concluded the Chair thanked the councillors for their attendance at the meeting, which concluded at 7.35 pm.

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

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

	Budget 2026/27	Expenses 2026/27	Income from Rents	Budget 2027/28				27/28
					P	£33.00	1	£33.00
Pollyfield			£1,619.00			£50.00	21	£1,050.00
						£25.00	19	£475.00
Fence Repair	£250.00			£250.00		£61.00	1	£61.00
								£1,619.00
maintenance	£500.00	£395.51		£500.00				
Perimeter trees	£1,000.00	£60.00		£500.00	T	£50.00	54	£2,700.00
Legal Fee						£25.00	8	£200.00
Deposit Return								£2,900.00
Tricks			£2,900.00		P			£1,619.00
					T			£2,900.00
skip	£500.00	£1,110.00		£500.00	M	£2.00	41	£82.00
Perimeter trees	£2,000.00	£700.00		£1,000.00	H	£2.00	61	£122.00
Shrub tree Management	£125.00			£125.00				£4,723.00
Fencing	£125.00			£125.00				
Deposit return					Dep			£50.00
General	£150.00	£54.64		£150.00				
Allot Certificate Frames								
Best Allotment cup								
Marland Lease	£500.00	£500.00	£82.00	£500.00				
Marland Perimeter trees	£500.00	£280.00		£500.00				
Handy Cross Lease	£250.00	£250.00	£122.00	£250.00				
Handy Cross perimeter trees	£100.00	£700.00		£600.00				
Contingency	£4,000.00			£4,000.00				
	£10,000.00	**£4,050.15**	**£4,723.00**	**£9,000.00**				
Budget	£4,723.00							
Expected Income 27/28:		**£4,723.00**	Amount required:	**£4,277.00**				

Draft Budget