



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

Name of Committee: Amenities Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 23 July 2026

Meeting Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Greenhouse, Riverbank House, Bideford EX39 2QG

Present:

North Ward

Councillor J Gordon

Councillor S Smith

South Ward

Councillor P Lawrence

West Ward

Councillor T Inch (substitute for Councillor S Inch)

East Ward

Councillor J Gubb

Councillor J McKenzie

Also Present

J Gardner, Town Clerk

R D Coombes, Deputy Town Clerk

Ms H Sheard, Friend of Ford Woods

17. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Clarke, C Hawkins, K Hind and S Inch.

Councillor C Craigie was not in attendance.

18. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

No declarations of interest or requests for dispensations were received.

19. Public Participation

No members of the public attended the meeting.

20. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Subject to amending the recording of attendance for Councillor Gordon, it was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Lawrence and **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 28 May 2026 as a correct record.

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

Allotments

21. Quarterly Site Inspections

Councillor Gubb confirmed that she and Councillor S Inch, had attend the Tricks Allotment Site on 12 June 2026 with the Site Representative.

They considered against a plot holder's request to introduce chickens to the Site. Having reviewed the plot and noting concerns having been raised over the conduct of their children (whilst on Site) they did not believe it would be appropriate.

The Deputy Town Clerk had subsequently visited the Site that led to two Notices to Quit and three letters of encouragement (to Tenants).

One Tenant, in clearing their plot, had caused disquiet through their bonfire activity. Once alerted they apologised profusely; the Town Clerk's Assistant with the Maintenance Team produced Notices that were posted at each allotment site providing advice on having bonfires during periods of prolonged dry weather.

The Deputy Town Clerk also visited the Pollyfield Site giving Notice to Quit to three Tenants and encouragement letters to one other.

Councillors Gubb and Inch will visit arrange to visit further the other Sites.

The Chairmans indicated that a letter would be sent requiring the National Grid to make good the Handy Cross Allotment boundary they damaged in September 2025. (There has been much correspondence between parties, including the Landlord – Bridge Trust – with no resolution to date.)

Decarbonisation and Environment

22. Ford Woods Woodland Management Plan

Members had sight of a report on the basis to progress the Ford Woods Woodland Management Plan.

Councillor Gordon explained the benefits of a working group based on the Friends of Ford Woods and the Bideford Sustainability Group, the latter having trustees and, importantly, a bank account. The Collaboration could provide for funding opportunities, not otherwise open to the Council, to finance the Management Plan. Although the Collaboration would provide for the future management and protocols for the Woods at each stage the Town Council would have the “power of veto.” At no point would the Council’s stewardship of the Woods be undermined. The Town Council would have ownership of the Management Plan and will agree / amend where necessary.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Chairman proposed the Suspension of Standing Orders to provide for Ms Sheard to make a contribution.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOVLED: To suspend Standing Orders.

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 0)

Ms Sheard introduced herself as a long term member of Friends of Ford Woods and trustee of Bideford Sustainability Group. She spoke of her association with the Woods and expertise that she brought to the initiative.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOVLED: To return to Standing Orders.

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 0)

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Gubb and **resolved:**

- a. That all parties enter into a written understanding clearly setting out the relationship between the parties to avoid misunderstandings including: the purpose of the collaboration, the roles of each group, decision making, financial protocols, liability and insurance, intellectual property, duration of collaboration and data protection.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 grand conditions and terms.
- d. 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.

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

Part II (Closed Session)

23. 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: 6, Against: 0)

24. Landlord / Tenant Matters

The Chairman advised members that Ms Austin had stood down as Market Representative.

Members appreciated her commitment and contribution to the Committee and Tenants; her enthusiasm for the Market's future and work on the Development Strategy were highlighted.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Harry Juniper had given Notice to Quit 19 Butcher's Row effective the first week of October 2026 having joined the Market in November 2011.

Members were sorry to hear the news, Harry having been a stalwart of the Market Community but wished him well.

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 7.30 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor:

Date:

Signature of Chairman:

Date: