



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: