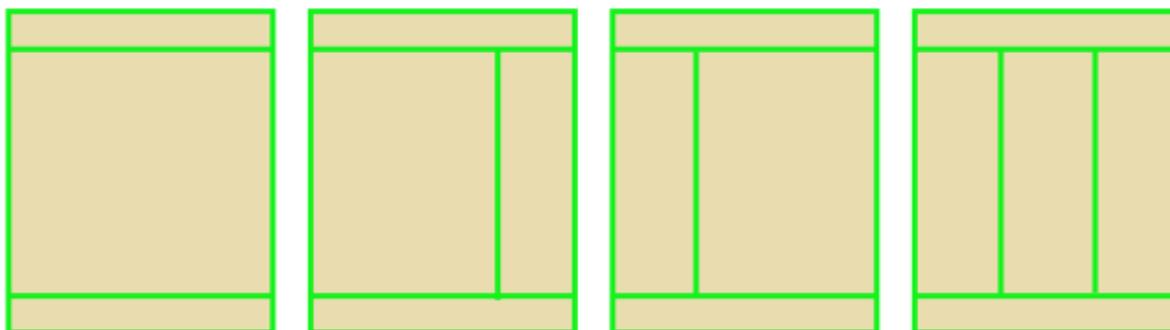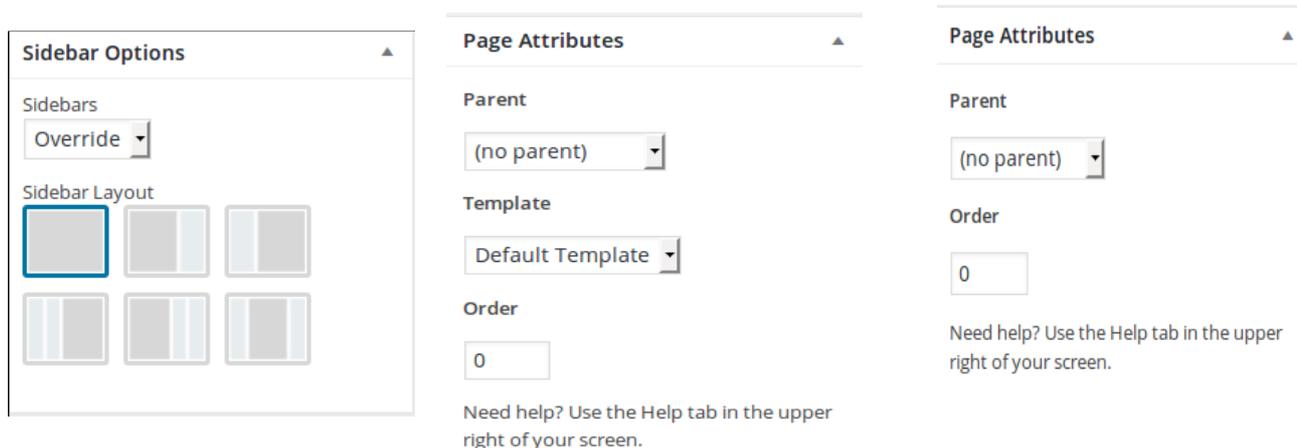Page Layouts

represent the structure of your page and are normally one, two or three columns with a header and footer. The column on the left and right is commonly referred to as a sidebar.


In Wordpress they are called templates, and each theme will come with it's own set. To see what templates are available go into Pages → Edit and look to the sidebar on the right. The following screenshots are from the Bloc premium theme, Ready Review and SeoWp respectively.


As you can see the options vary per theme, with Bloc offering a range of layouts for your site, Best Reviews offers just two – a full page layout and another with the sidebar on the right and Seo Wp doesn't offer a choice at all, the default is header, footer with sidebar on the right.

Another area you can look to quickly change the layout of your page is in Appearance → Customise
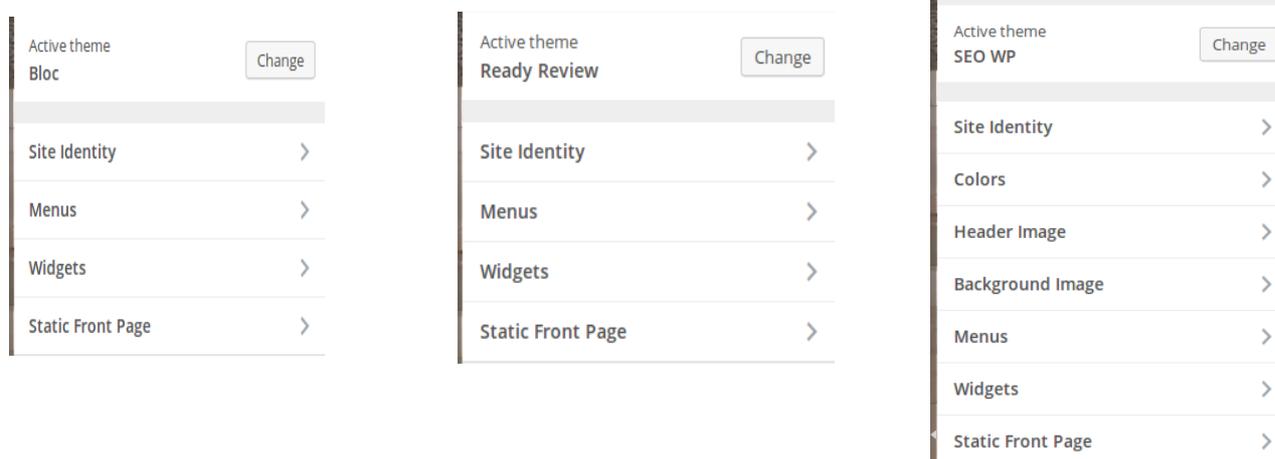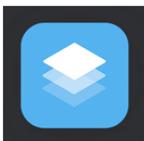
or Appearance → Theme Options which will lead you to your themes in browser editor. Of the example themes only Bloc (left) and Best Review (right) offer this option.
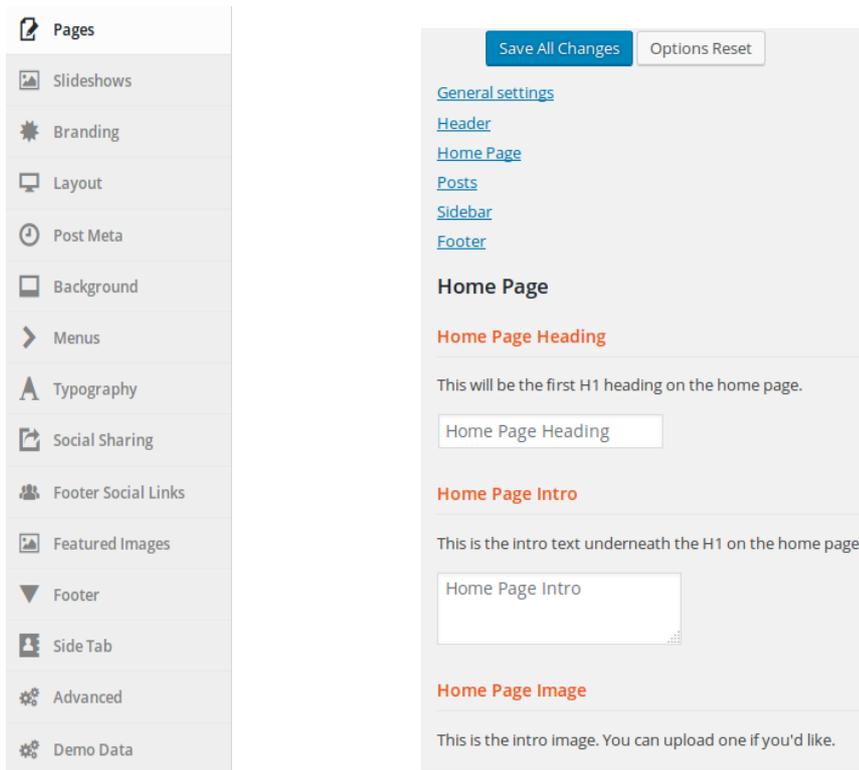
Using Seo-Wp as an example, currently it has a two column layout with a header and a footer. The sidebar is on the right, and the content in the main area is a grid format. There is also a footer on the bottom, outside of the screen grab. What if I wanted to change the layout to something a little more contemporary, such as the layout below right? And perhaps I only want this layout to be used on the front page?
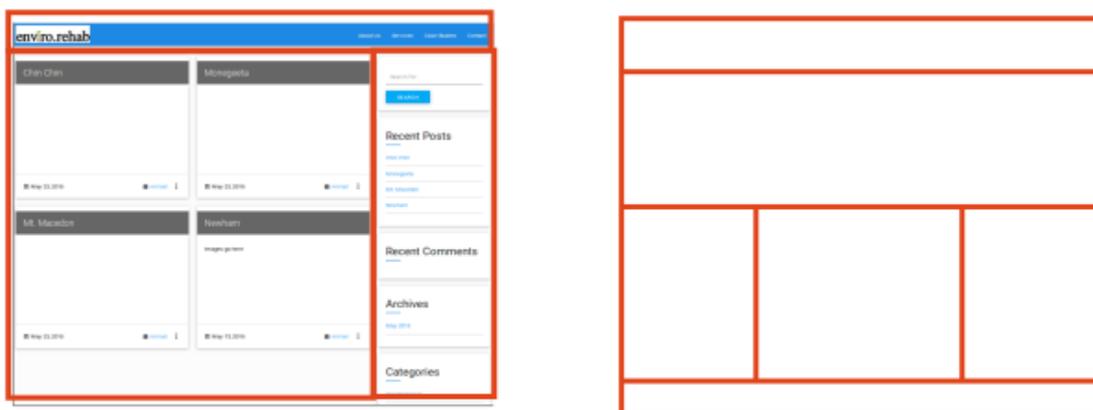
To achieve this, install a plugin. The one we're going to use is called Page Builder by Site Origin, this is a free plugin. Another very good option is a premium plugin called Visual Composer. The Bloc premium theme above uses this.

Once installed and activated go into Pages or Posts and edit a page or post. You should see a third tab available above your text editor.
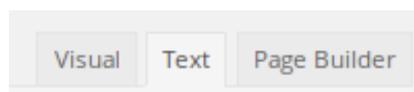
Going back to the front page of the Seo Wp theme, it is currently set to showing the latest posts and has a sidebar. Making changes to the page won't affect the sidebar, but we need to remove it, which is going to require a little bit of fiddling. Skip this section if you have a full width option in your templates.
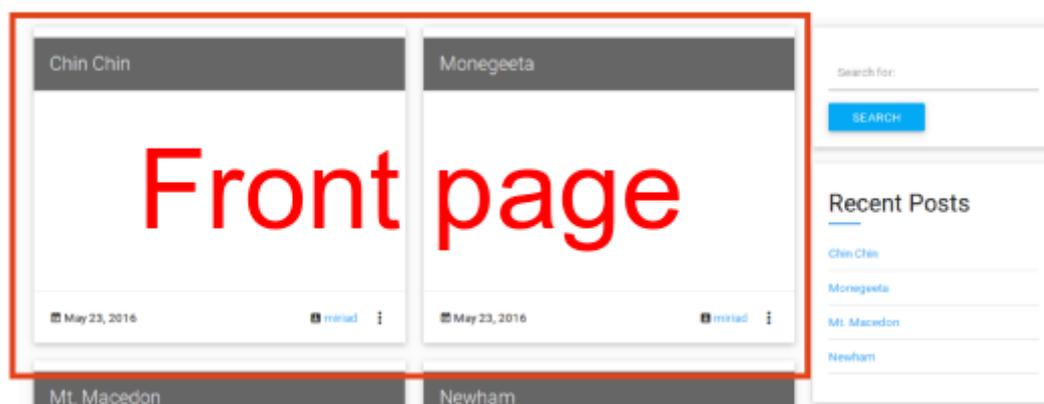

Go into Appearance and at the bottom of the list is a menu link titled 'Editor'. Click that to be taken to a screen which will allow you to see a list of Templates with .php extensions and CSS files with .css extensions. As we are about to edit the front page, we want to look for the index.php file. The Seo Wp index.php is listed under Main Index Template. Click on that to see the contents of the file in the main text area.
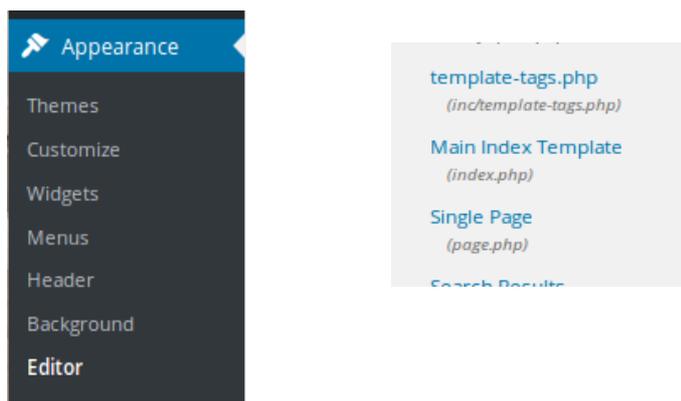

A Quick Note:

This may be more work than you want to do and it might be easier just to install a different theme with more options. However at some point you might run out of options and need to edit something in the code and this is where you would do it. Be warned though, if you don't save or backup your files prior to making changes there could be quite serious consequences (at least as far as your website is concerned).

Now, how do we know what page to edit? First off, we're editing the front page, so that's always index.php. If it were the template for all other pages it would be page.php, the sidebar – sidebar.php. A lot of the name's are fairly self explanatory.

Next, what is it that we want to change? We want to expand the main content area to the full width of the page instead of just ¾. So how do we know what to change there. Go into the front page of your site, the one you are about to edit and with the mouse right click over the main content area. A flyout menu will open up. Toward the bottom of that menu will be an option 'Inspect' or similar.
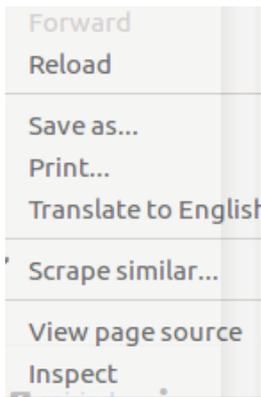
Click that. A pane will open with a lot of code in it. This is HTML. When you run your mouse over it, various objects on the screen will highlight. Look for the one which highlights all of the area you're looking to edit, in this case:

```
▼<div id="primary" class="content-area col l9 s12"> == $0
  ▼<main id="main" class="site-main" role="main">
```

div id primary. Going back into Wordpress, the index.php tempate has the same line of code. This is the line we want to edit. Reading further along it says class='content-area col l9 s12' , without going into too much detail the l9 part stands for 'large 9' meaning if the screen is large use 9 columns, the s12 means if the screen is small use 12 columns. This is taken from a principle called 'Responsive Design' which allows content to resize according to the size of the screen and arrived with the advent of smartphones. Anyway, we want the content-area to take up the entire width of the screen, so let's change the 'l9' part to say 'l12'.

The other thing we want to do is omit rendering the sidebar on the front page, so scroll down a little until you see:

<?php get_sidebar(); ?>

and change it to:

<?php //get_sidebar(); ?>

the two forward slashes indicate a comment which effectively tells the server to ignore the code. Right! Now we're done here so click 'Update File' and view your changes in the browser.

Now, back to the Page Builder. To create the structure mentioned earlier we need to create 2 rows, one of those (the one at the bottom) with 3 columns.
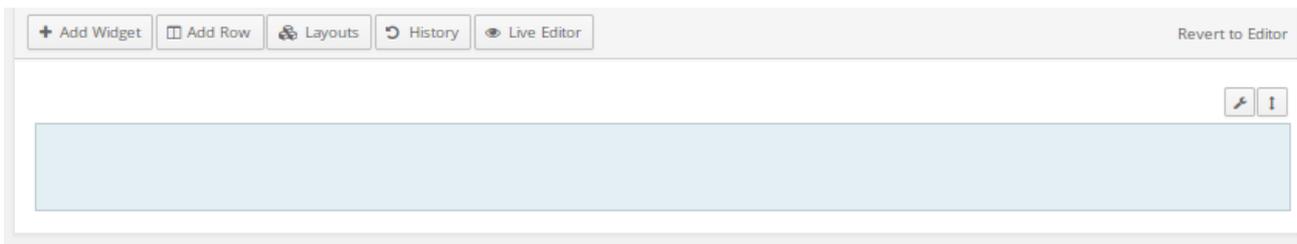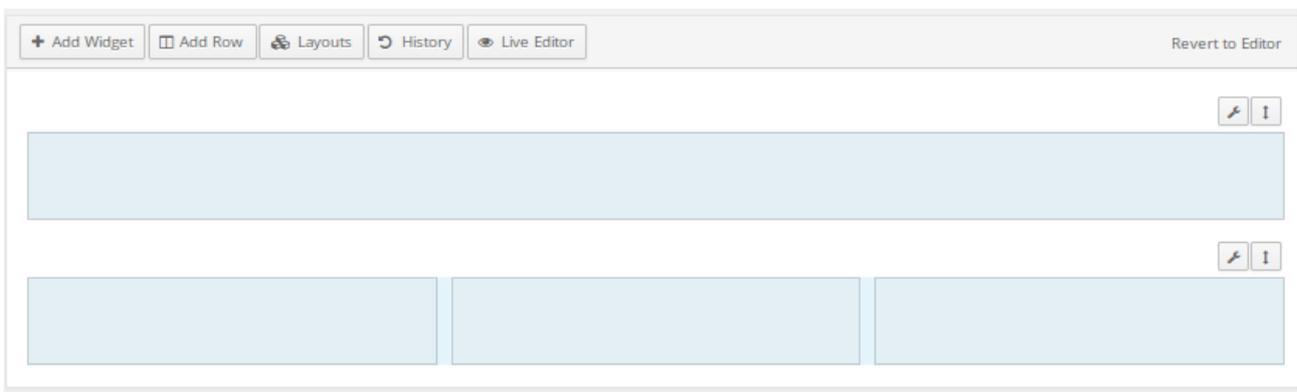
In Page Builder click 'Add Row'.
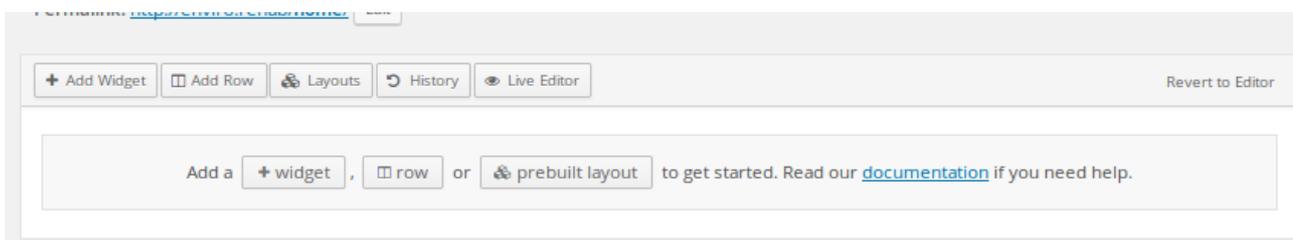
Next define the number of columns and click 'Insert'.
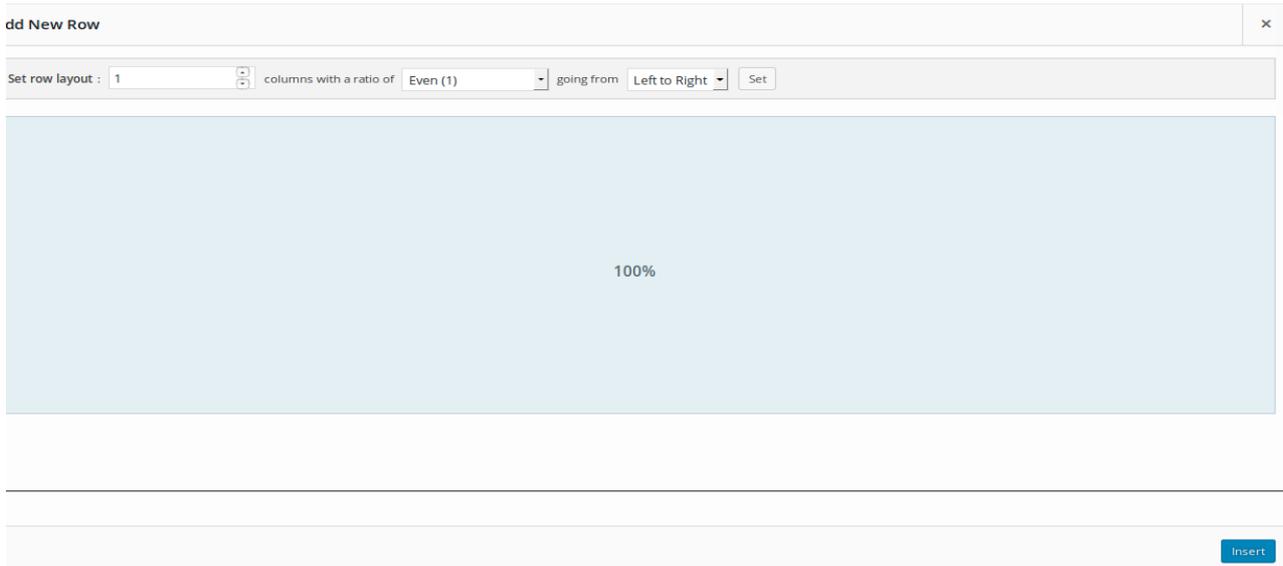

Your content editor should now look like this:

Now we need to add the second row. Click 'Add row' again and this time specify 3 columns. Cick 'Insert' and you should have the layout you're after.

To add content to any of the blocks, click on the block ensuring it's highlighted, then click 'Add Widget' and select the ones most suited to your requirements.
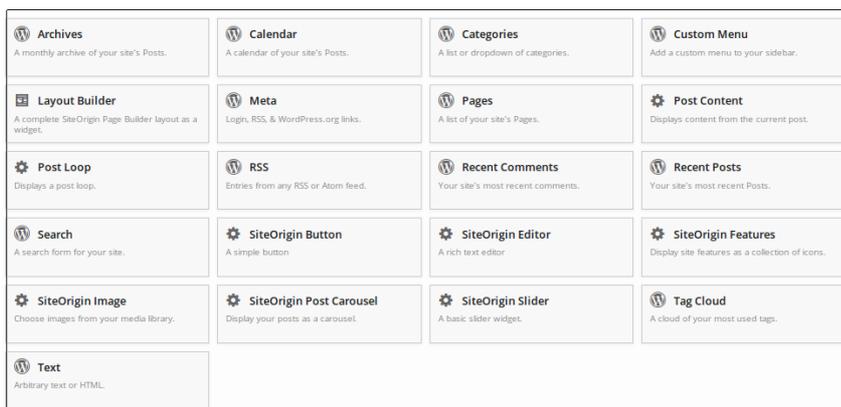
For instance in the top row I'll use an image slider, then for each of the columns, an image followed by text.
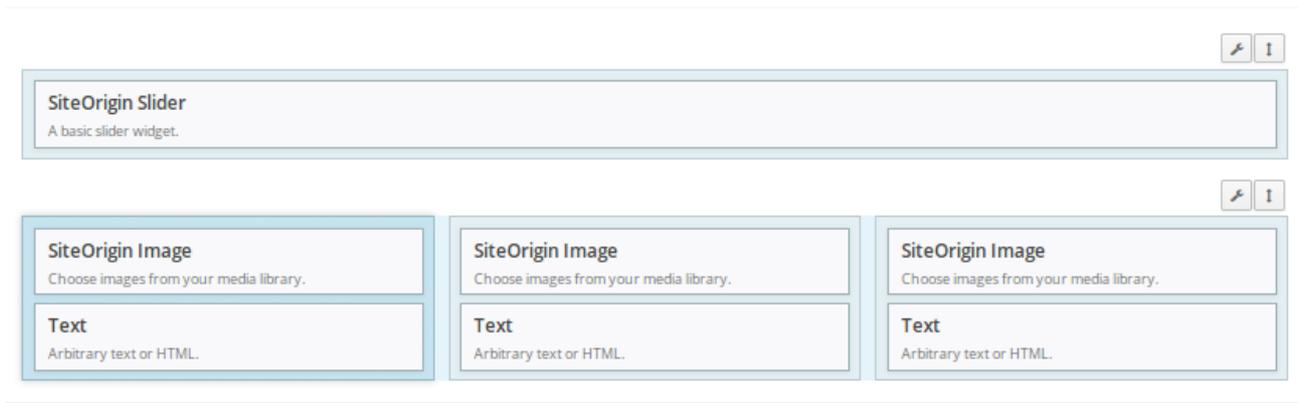
To insert content into any of the widgets, hover over the widget and select 'Edit'. We'll go over the contents of the widgets along with other content in the next section.

Finally, without using a plugin such as Page Builder, you can edit how widgets appear on your site by following the steps below.

Navigate to Appearance → Customise, the 'Widgets' → 'Sidebar' and you will see a list of items. Each of these represent what's called a 'Widget' in your sidebar. By hovering over the w