

# ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of a meeting of the NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (NEC)

held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Jan Bennett (Chair)  
Julie Barber Kathryn Nolan

In attendance: Two students from Askham Bryan College representing the College's Hedgehog Working Group and Keith Langley (Parish Clerk).

### 1. Apologies for absence.

Steve Bassford, Peter Christopherson, Jo Fell and Lisa Marriott

### 2. Declarations of interest.

None.

### 3. Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

### 4. Presentation by Askham Bryan College Hedgehog Working Group.

Two representatives of the Askham Bryan College Hedgehog Working Group attended one of whom delivered a presentation explaining the work that they do. The College Hedgehog Working Group involves both students and staff who are interested in conservation working in conjunction with the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. Their Chair is Sophie Russell. They have worked to make the college campus hedgehog friendly and were now looking to extend their reach building hedgehog houses and feeding stations further afield. The group has achieved bronze accreditation and was working towards the next level, silver, with aspirations to achieve gold and platinum accreditation in due course. They had already liaised with Pikehills Golf Course who had accepted some of the recommendations of the working group and rotavated part of their grounds. They had obtained wildflower seeds from Natural England. They had held a meeting with the College groundskeeping team who had been very helpful and were raising awareness through notice boards on the College campus. It was suggested that they could contact Ashkam Bryan 1<sup>st</sup> Brownies and Messy Church (who meet at the college). These groups could make appropriate posters. They also planned to be involved in the Great Big Green Week (8<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024). The College would come and make bug hotels in the Recreational Area would encourage invertebrates which would provide food for the hedgehogs. There could be a feature in the next village newsletter (deadline 16<sup>th</sup> February) telling people what they could do to help. The Clerk was given email contact details for members of the Working Group but they are in the process of setting up a group email. The Village WhatsApp group could also be used as a vehicle to raise awareness. A poster would be created telling residents what they can do to help.

### 5. Minutes of the last meeting.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meetings of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and of 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be accepted as a true record and it was agreed that the Chair sign the minutes (the Clerk having incorporated any suggested changes into the minutes prior to presenting them for approval).

### 6. Recreational Area.

The Chair brought three matters to the attention of the Committee;

- i. The planting had been scheduled to be done over two days but with high winds being forecast for the second day, people stayed longer to ensure that all the planting was done on the first day. The badly pollarded lime tree had now been fully taken down and the remains had been taken away. All saplings were successfully planted. The College trainees (under the supervision of two members of staff) were brilliant with the hedgerows. Peter and David were

there. A letter thanking the College for their support would be sent to the Principal and there would be a note of thanks in the next newsletter.

- ii. A fallen branch near the side of the Recreational Area was noted.
- iii. David had sent an email regarding the band of trees expressing concerns that the brambles and other undergrowth was spreading outwards and wanting to clear the rubbish in the wood. It was noted that some of this rubbish was not vegetation. He was hoping to form a working party to deal with brambles and small wood off cuts. There had been a conversation with the two staff members of the College who had agreed to bring a wood chipper. Educational posters were needed as children playing in the Recreational Area scattered piles of wood left for small animals not realising the environmental benefits of leaving these piles untouched. The wood wasn't easy to walk through and there was an aspiration that there would be dens and pathways when the saplings had grown. It was **resolved** to agree in principle to David's request and the Chair would speak to him about his proposals and support would be sought from Peter. The Committee needed to establish when he would be doing the work. The College would be asked to look at the fallen branch and at the tree which had fallen from in order to establish whether any further action needed to be taken.

#### 7. **Pond Area.**

Following recent rainfall, the pond was now full and the Chair had counted eighteen ducks. The piles of vegetation from the previous pond clearance had now decomposed. New signs saying "Caution deep water!" were needed. It was noted that one of the nest boxes was now over the water.

#### 8. **Village Green.**

Steve had given Jo the prices of trees and Jo would talk to him about this. It was agreed to arrange a short meeting at 4pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January to talk about where to plant it.

#### 9. **Budget.**

Kathryn reminded everyone that she still had a bird box, it was suggested that David's working party help to fit it. There was still money in the budget which could be used for the purchase of bat boxes which were estimated to be £30-£40 each. Jo was still owed some expenses.

#### 10. **Date of next meeting.**

21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:23pm.

Signed

Chair  
21 March 2024