

Askham Bryan Annual Parish meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Parish meeting of Askham Bryan

held at 6:45pm on Thursday 6th May 2022 in the Village Hall.

PRESENT Simon Peers (Chair)

In attendance: Five other residents, Ward Cllr. Hook and the Clerk of the Parish Council (PC).

1. Election of Chair

As the Chair of the PC was not present (having resigned), it was agreed that the meeting be chaired by Simon Peers.

2. To approve the Clerk of the PC to take the minutes.

It was agreed that the Clerk of the PC take the minutes.

3. Notice Convening the Meeting

It was noted that in accordance with statute, the notice convening the meeting has been duly published on the Parish Council's Notice Board and on the website.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th May 2021.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th May 2021 having been circulated, be approved, all in favour.

5. Parish Council report

i. Chair's report

The Chair began by thanking the previous Chair of the PC, Andy Steele for everything he had done for the PC and the Village and then read out the following statement.

After many months of conducting business remotely via 'zoom' the council recommenced meeting face to face in June 2021. During 21-22 we processed 29 planning applications for developments and tree works within the parish.

We also launched a new PC website with much appreciated development work by Cllr Peers and our Clerk, Keith Langley. Cllr Smith was reappointed as the PC representative to the Village Hall Committee.

After many attempts to make the slide and 'mound' hazard free it was agreed to have both removed from the Recreational Area. The slide was sold with the funds raised being added to the pot for redevelopment and the mound is scheduled to be removed with the help of Cllr Walker. The council have agreed to the purchase and installation of a new infant climbing frame and two benches to replace the slide and mound.

A special thanks goes to Barrie Pine who single handedly cleared the pond of much of the overgrown and invasive vegetation that had almost

screened the pond from sight. Barrie is currently recovering from a fall from height and we wish him all the very best in his recovery. Also a big thanks once again to Jeff Challinor and Jo Fell who have unwaveringly kept the grass cut and the planters looking lovely.

Thanks to enthusiastic village volunteers we formally created the Natural Environment Committee and they continued work at the pond and right now it looks a picture. They have also recently planted 15 trees in the Recreation Area that were provided by the Woodland Trust in commemoration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Over the Christmas period the village once again looked lovely and it was great to see all the decorations and the illuminated stars in windows and gardens. There were two Christmas trees put up in the village, one in the Village Hall grounds, funded equally by the PC and the Village Hall Committee. A second tree at the pond was kindly donated by a village resident, Doreen Hopwood and both were decorated by volunteers and village residents.

ii. Statement of Parish Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Clerk of the PC had circulated a statement of Parish Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 and went through the report. The total receipts in the year were £19,913.85 and total expenditure of £8,755.23. The end of year balance was £16,682.49 of which £1,959.37 was earmarked being monies raised at the quiz night in March 2020 for the recreational area and £8,900 was grants from City of York Council for Recreational Area.

iii. Report on the Precept for 2022-23

The Clerk of the PC reported that the precept for 2022/23 was £9,983.45 having been £9,499 in 2021/22. This represented an increase of 5.1% in line with the consumer price index at the time that the request was submitted to City of York Council (January 2022).

6. Police report

The Clerk of the PC had circulated a document showing reported crimes on a month-by-month basis broken down into various categories. In total there were seventeen reported crimes from May 2021 to April 2022. Eight of these were in the "Theft" category and four of these took place in a single day at the caravan park when bicycles and a rucksack were stolen. There were no crimes in the "Violence" category, all crimes involving damage to, or theft of, property.

7. Village Hall report

A member of the Village Hall management committee gave the following report.

After two years of lockdown, semi lockdown and innumerable changes in Covid regulations and conditions, the Hall is now back to normal. This means that there are no restrictions and we can hire out the hall using to our normal terms and conditions.

Several of our previous hirers have resumed their activities, some haven't, and some have cancelled again. So we are not back to full capacity. A complete recovery will inevitably be slow and the current economic situation is not going to help.

Talking of the economic situation, we have faced a huge 64% increase in the cost of electricity to heat the hall. Fortunately, we took the decision in November to fix the contract for two years at a price below government cap. Never-the-less we have had to increase our hire rates to cover the additional costs.

Our main moneymaking event has always been spring plant fair and of course this had to be cancelled for the last two years. Happily is happening this year on Saturday 4th June, Jubilee weekend, when all proceeds will be going to Martin House, the children's hospice.

A 130 year old hall will never be short of maintenance needs. Over the last year or so, we have spent over £7000 on refurbishing the kitchen, replacing damaged bricks and re-pointing external brickwork and replacing the guttering. In doing the latter, we have exposed previous deterioration to the wooden structure of the roof along the western or weather edge of the building. Temporary repairs were made and although we are structurally ok at present, proper repairs will have to be made in the future.

This year we intend to redecorate the hall and we are still considering what do with our current heating system. Help from any heating experts would be welcomed.

Our committee is not getting any younger so we are currently looking at succession planning and trying to bring in new people might wish to serve on the village hall committee in the future.

8. Brownies report

The following report had been submitted ahead of the meeting:

Rebecca Kramm was thanked for providing an update from the Brownies:

1st Askham Bryan Brownies has eighteen registered girls (from Askham Bryan and the surrounding villages) and a leadership team of seven. Our leadership team has increased due to the recruitment of a weekly parent helper.

We welcome new members from the village Rainbow unit on a termly basis, plus others who hear about us from friends.

We are meeting in the village hall on a weekly basis, following the relevant Covid guidelines.

The Brownies are enjoying a range of activities from the Brownie programme and activities related to the seasons or calendar events.

We are delighted to be able to join with other units at events since the lifting of restrictions – a cinema trip and most recently the St. George's Day Parade in York.

When Brownies are ready to move onto the next section there is a new Guide unit which has opened in Bilbrough.

As always, we are very grateful to the parents and villagers for their continued support.

9. Natural Environment Committee Report

The following report had been submitted ahead of the meeting:

Report to Askham Bryan Parish Council from the Natural Environment Committee May 2022

1. Introduction

The Natural Environment Committee (NEC) is a subgroup of Askham Bryan Parish Council. It was established in June 2021.

The NEC is primarily responsible for championing the nature, quality, diversity, and conservation of the natural environment within the Parish. The Terms of Reference were agreed by the Parish Council.

The chair was elected at the first formal meeting of the group held on 15th July 2021.

The activities of the NEC are focused on management of the village pond (which was identified as the main priority for the year), management of the recreation area land and land near to 149 Main Street.

2. Work of the NEC in 2021/22

2.1. Management of the Village Pond

At its meeting on 16th September the NEC considered three reports: from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the University of York and Askham Bryan College. The NEC also considered information available from the Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT), specifically FHT “pond management principles”. Based on this information, a conservative approach was agreed; to start work gently and to monitor the results during the year before continuing with any further work. It was agreed to

- remove the weed and the self-seeded saplings at the circumference of the pond (adjacent to the road)*
- improve the health of the pond by increasing the amount of light and reducing the amount of leaf drop (excessive drop fall is detrimental to pond health as breakdown of dead*

leaves reduces the oxygen in the pond and can encourage algal bloom). To do this by cutting back and reducing the height of smaller the trees and crown-raising the larger trees to the rear of the pond.

A group from the NEC met on 26th October and cleared the self-seeded saplings and weed (filling three builders sacks).

The NEC accepted a quote for £500 to complete the tree work, which was planned to take place on 30th January 2022. However, the clerk had omitted to submit the planning application and therefore the work had to be delayed. Planning permission was agreed and notified on 4th February 2022. The work was rescheduled for 9th March (and subsequently for 17th March), but this could not go ahead as the water levels of the pond were too high. Given that tree work cannot be completed later than March (or the trees would potentially die) the work has been rescheduled for the autumn of 2022. Note; there has been agreement to carry forward the budget to fund this in 2022/23.

2.2. Recreation Area

David Hartley (the member of the committee who offered to lead this work) has been liaising with Askham Bryan College who have agreed to undertake tree inspections in the recreation area as a project for their students.

The college agreed to i) remove the ash trees that have ash die back, advising on suitable replacement ii) survey the land in April 2022 and iii) to start work in the summer term of 2022 to maintain, fell and replant trees and build a natural hide.

Storms in February/March 2022 led to some tree damage. Volunteers from the NEC cleared the recreation area of debris on 26th March. A tree also came down in early April, which prompted the Parish Council to consider felling a number of trees – see attached paper.

Trees to commemorate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee were planted on 26th March 2022. A brass commemorative plaque has been ordered to mark this.

2.3. Land near to 149 Main St

The chestnut trees were assessed in September 2021 and considered somewhat overgrown, they were therefore pruned, by Jo Fell, a member of the NEC. It was agreed that this approach would continue in 2022 (as the trees were planted by a deceased parishioner and of sentimental value to the family) and trees reassessed again in 2023. The NEC aims to develop a wildflower area on this land and anticipates starting this project in June/July 2022.

3. Budget 2021/22

The annual budget is £800.00 (agreed at the June meeting of the NEC)

£500.00 had been identified for tree works adjacent to the pond. This is to be carried forward to 2022/23

Planned expenditure to date for 2022/23; £250.00 for the development of a wildflower area.

4. Communication As part of its remit the NEC is committed to communicating its activities to the wider village community.

- 1. Following the work to clear the pond of weed and saplings a report was included in the village newsletter.*
- 2. It is planned that an article from Jo Fell on the development of a wildflower area will go in the village news later.*

5. Plans for 2022/23

During 2022/23 the NEC aims to.

- **Village pond:** Complete the tree work at the village pond and to monitor the pond to assess water levels (monitoring already in train, lead Jan Bennett). Assess wildlife and consider erecting an information board.*
- **Recreation Area:** to work with Askham Bryan College to assess the trees in the area and complete a management plan (David Hartley leading)*
- **Land near to 149 Main St;** to monitor the chestnut trees in 2022/23 and develop a wildflower area (lead Jo Fell)*
- **Review the arrangements for tree assessment/management,** and if required to commission an assessment in 2022, consulting City of York Council (CYC) for advice.*

Note: the last tree assessment was last undertaken in 2019, COY undertake their own assessments every four years.

6. NEC Members

The work of the NEC relies on the commitment of the members, the chair would like to extend thanks to members for their time and hard work

7. Recommendation

The Parish Council is asked to

- receive the report of the NEC and approve its contents.***
- note the recommendations in the attached paper regarding the management of the trees in the recreation area.***

***Lisa Marriott
Chair NEC***

10. Report of the Allotments for Stone and Gravel charity

The Clerk of the PC gave brief report of the activities of the Charity based on the minutes of the monthly meetings. In 2021/22 the Trustees had considered getting the constitution of the Charity updated and had given support to the Christmas 2021 decorations, in particular a Christmas tree. They had discussed plans for activities to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of her majesty Queen Elizabeth II but had been unable to make any firm proposals.

11. Open discussion of Parish affairs

Ward Cllr. Hook advised the meeting regarding City of York Council grass cutting schedules. There was a backlog due to nine members of staff being on long term sick leave. Six new members of staff had been recruited and efforts were being made to get back on schedule.

The meeting closed at 7:15pm

Signed

Chairman
May 2023