

# ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

**PRESENT:** Jan Bennett (Chair)  
Julie Barber Peter Christopherson Kathryn Nolan  
Steve Bassford Jo Fell

In attendance: Keith Langley (Parish Clerk).

### 1. Apologies for absence.

Lisa Marriott.

### 2. Declarations of interest.

None.

### 3. Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

### 4. Minutes of the last meeting.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 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).

Nothing had been heard from the Askham Bryan College Hedgehog Working Group who had addressed the Committee at its January meeting. Peter agreed to contact the 1<sup>st</sup> Askham Bryan Brownies to see if they had heard from them and Steve would make enquiries through the College.

### 5. Recreational Area.

A local resident had organised a team of volunteers to cut the grass in the Recreational Area having made an approach to the Parish Council (PC) to do so. He had since sent an email to the PC. He had had three work party days and another resident had done even more work in clearing the woodland of rubbish and fallen wood and the brambles were confined to two large patches. A beech hedge had been cut by another resident alongside her property and had cleared rubbish from the play area. He was suggesting some replanting in the autumn of a few trees and lower level shrubs and bushes (as the woodland now looked open without the brambles and with the ivy having been pulled off). and was asking the PC for funding. He was learning how to catch moles and had plans to fell a dying ash and wanted to know what plans the PC had for the mound.

The resident was using a WhatsApp group to advertise for help when it was required.

The Committee welcomed his enthusiasm but felt that there was an overlap between their responsibilities and those of this working party and wanted clarification from the PC regarding the remit given to this resident and the terms the working party was working to. There were concerns regarding health and safety, in particular it was noted that the resident sometimes worked alone in removing large tree branches using ropes. The Committee needed clarification regarding who was doing what and felt that there was a grey area in responsibilities which needed addressing. They needed clarification as to whose budget the replanting being requested would come from and needed advice on the planting and needed reassurances that any requests for tree work would come through the Committee. Plants had been unearthed by the work carried out. The resident was aware that rotting branches were needed for biodiversity.

Regarding the unsafe tree, due to its size, the College would be contacted about this.

**6. Pond Area.**

The pond was full and two nest boxes now needed moving to a more suitable location. The PC had considered the “Deep Water” signs at it’s February meeting, they would not be replacing the signs but would repair those already there.

**7. Village Green.**

The tree would be collected the next day. The College had offered to share the cost. As the PC could claim back any VAT, it was suggested that the invoice be made payable to the PC who would then invoice the College for their share. The tree would come bare-rooted and therefore needed planting promptly. Jo was happy to do this but needed at least one other person to hold the tree upright whilst she dug it in. Jan offered to help and they agreed to meet at 10am on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024. A tent peg had been placed as a marker for the location of the tree. The bulbs were coming up, there had been daffodils but no snowdrops. Jo volunteered to have responsibility for the grass cutting. Her mother had donated snowdrops and Jo was happy to plant these. The neighbouring property was still unsold and there was discussion about the plaque.

**8. Budget.**

It was noted that £82.07 of the budget had been spent leaving a balance of £167.93. Some of this would be used on the tree (see item 7 above) and there was discussion about whether to spend the balance on bat boxes or bird boxes. It was agreed to buy four more bird boxes of the birch type to be put up in the summer.

**9. Date of next meeting.**

16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:21pm.

Signed

Chair  
16 May 2024