

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

held on Thursday 20 November 2025 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

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

In Attendance: The Clerk.

1. Apologies for absence: Laura Hardie and Steve Bassford.

2. Declarations of interest: None.

3. Public Participation

There were no members of the public in attendance.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Natural Environment Committee held on 18th September 2025.

A revised version on the draft minutes had been circulated incorporating suggested changes. It was **resolved** that this version of the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th September 2025 (56-57) having been circulated, be approved and that the Chair be authorised to sign. In the absence of Steve, there was no update about the college hedgehog group and in the absence of Laura, no information about ideas for the information board at the pond.

5. Recreational Area.

David Hartley had emailed photos following the recent clearance of some dead ash trees and brambles. David was unable to attend the meeting but had suggested planting a tree in this area. There were still four trees to remove due to ash die back, although one, which is covered in ivy, will be left as the ivy provides a good habitat for wildlife. It was agreed to relocate one of the rowan trees from the Woodland Trust pack. Native bluebells and wood anemones had been planted. It was agreed to wait until the spring before undertaking any further underplanting. As for the copse, some things were growing back including brambles and it was noted that these needed to be kept in check. This would be reviewed in January with a view to work being done in March.

6. Pond Area.

Although the water was frozen at the time of the meeting, it was noted that the water level had increased and the ducks had returned. The clearance date had been put back to the end of October due to storm Amy and had been well supported. A lot of loosestrife and some saplings had been removed but there was an area at the back of the pond which still needed clearing. There would be a smaller clearance in 2026 to keep on top of things.

Laura had previously agreed to look into what could be included on an information board and the Clerk had circulated information about the National Lottery Awards for All grant scheme. To apply for a grant, quotations for the lectern/ pedestal are required. Jo agreed to make enquiries about an information board at a church in Slingsby. The size and style would need to be considered, in addition to the content. Laura would be asked for an update on her research to date.

7. Village Green.

The tree was looking healthy and additional spring bulbs have been planted.

8. Land at junction of Main Street and Saint Nicholas' Croft.

Excess growth would continue to be cut back and the grass cut by residents. The tree might need further pruning in a couple of years' time.

9. Plans for 2026.

- a. It was agreed to create a calendar of annual tasks: pond clearance etc, and perhaps a five-year plan to incorporate bigger jobs like tree pruning where additional funding may be required.
- b. It was agreed that the budget for 2026/27 be kept at £250.
- c. The date of the college plant sale was confirmed as 9th May 2026 and the village hall fair is the week after (16th May). At the fair, information on pollinator-friendly plants could be provided.
- d. Jo circulated an information leaflet about bug hotels. The best time to build these is in the spring or in the autumn and this will be discussed in the January meeting. One could be built at the back of the copse area, avoiding the areas where ivy is growing. A local resident who supports a hedgehog rescue centre would be contacted for advice on creating hedgehog friendly environments.
- e. The bat box purchased earlier in the year is still to be installed pending advice on a suitable location from the college conservation course students.

10. Date of next meeting.

15th January 2026 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:11pm.

Signed

Chair

15 January 2026