

ASKHAM BRYAN PARISH COUNCIL

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

held on Thursday 24 July 2025 at 6:30pm in the Village Hall.

PRESENT: Jan Bennett (Chair) Jo Fell Kathryn Nolan
Julie Barber Laura Hardie
Steve Bassford

In Attendance: The Clerk.

1. Apologies for absence:.. Peter Christoperson

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 22nd May 2025.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22nd May 2025 (52-53) having been circulated, be approved and that the Chair be authorised to sign subject to names of individuals being removed from item 9. The fourth sentence would be changed to "It was noted that *one of the Parish Councillors* keeps bees . . . ". The last three sentences would be changed to "Julie would ask someone she knew regarding flowers. Another avenue which could be explored was to develop links with course tutors *such as the Level 3 course manager for Land and Wildlife*. Laura agreed to explore links with York University. It was noted also that *the person who cut the grass in the Recreational Area* was involved with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (Jan was also a member)."

There were no matters arising.

5. Recreational Area.

The seeds which Jan had sown had failed, probably due to the dry weather. Some students had been taken to the Recreational Area and the bird boxes had now been put up. The underplanting was overgrown and would be left until September. The bat box was still waiting to be installed, Steve would have a word with a member of staff who had a bat certificate. It was noted that Askham Bryan 1st Brownies sometimes use the Recreational Area.

6. Pond Area.

The water level was down but there were still ducks on the remaining bit of water (ducklings were known to go into the garden of the property next door). There was a big plastic box with water in. One person feeds the ducks by putting out seed. There was considerable growth of purple loosestrife. A clearance would be carried out on a Saturday in October. The next meeting would not be until September and the Committee was aware that the deadline for inclusion in the newsletter meant that a decision about a date for this would need to be made sooner. The clearance carried out last year was not particularly extensive (saplings had been taken out, but not the purple loosestrife) and it was felt therefore that a more thorough clearance was needed this time. The date would be advertised in the newsletter and via the village WhatsApp (nearer the time).

The Committee then considered what else might go in the newsletter article. Kathryn would put forward suggestions for plants for pollinators for the newsletter article in the autumn (noting that the Royal Horticultural Society offer plans for pollinators). Jo and Kathryn would work together to produce a newsletter article along the lines of jobs which gardeners could do in the autumn to encourage pollinators. The article would also explain that the pile of pallets in the Recreational Area was a bug

hotel and not a pile of discarded rubbish. This would be carried forward to discuss next time. Royal Horticultural Society publications often carry a feature on how to build bug hotels.

7. Village Green.

Jan had looked at the Village Green earlier that day and noticed there were a lot of horse chestnut saplings (maybe a dozen), possibly as the result of squirrel activity. Jo would see if they could be pulled out easily and if not, would dig them out. The grass had not been cut for a while (the person who did this had been away on holiday). Dock leaves (or similar) were growing where the tree had been removed from. Someone had dug a trench. Jan would order more bulbs, They would be ordered now ready for next year and would be used to make a drift of daffodils (all of the same variety). It was agreed that she could spend about £80 on these bulbs, not all of which would be planted on The Green.

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

Jan had been to have a look and seen the man who does the gardening. The choisya had grown back and a few brambles were coming through. Laura would ask someone to keep an eye on the brambles. The grass was suffering from the prolonged spell of dry weather. A really big clearance like the one carried out previously would need to be done once every two or three years.

9. Plans for next year.

There was discussion about an appropriate article for the October newsletter, having a stall for the spring fair and having an information board near the pond. Regarding the latter, the study of invertebrates carried out by a student of the college about two years ago would be very useful. The former Parish Council Chair had done the sign at the gate at the entrance to the Recreational Area. Laura would have a go at creating something. Permission would be needed. The board would inform readers about the seasonal variation to water levels in the pond and QR codes could be included.

Steve could provide pots. People buy plants and take cuttings from plants such as fuchsias in the springtime (April/May). There could be a talk about bees at the spring fair.

10. Date of next meetings.

18th September and 20th November, both at 6;30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7:15pm.

Signed

Chair
18 September 2025